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PEDAGOGICKÁ FAKULTA

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Štěpán Jelen

Image of Native Americans in Early Colonial Literature in the
Colonial Period

Prohlašuji, že jsem závěrečnou práci vypracoval samostatně a použil jen uvedené prameny a literaturu.

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.....

vlastnoruční podpis

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Abstract

This bachelor thesis focuses on the literary portrayal of Native Americans in the 17th century in the North American colonies. Its main aim is to describe the gradually changing perception of Native Americans by European colonists in contemporary literature. With literature being a reflection of the public opinion, this thesis will also outline the perception of Native Americans in contemporary society.

1 Introduction

Over the last few years, Native Americans' past and present issues became one of the major topics in American society. The US government already acknowledges past horrendous crimes and harsh treatment towards Native Americans, and so does the majority of the American public.

Although, according to a recent survey by the *Reclaiming Native Truth* project, only 59 percent of the questioned Americans agreed that the USA committed genocide against Native Americans, and merely 36 percent thought that Native Americans experience significant discrimination nowadays.¹ That means, that this topic is still splitting American society today. That is one of the reasons why it is necessary to explore, analyze and understand Native American history and the history of their perception by European colonists. And one of the most reliable sources of exploring a society's attitudes and opinions is contemporary literature. Therefore, this thesis will focus on how early colonial literature depicted and portrayed Native Americans.

In the first chapter, *The Earliest Colonial Literature*, I will focus on the first colonial literary works dealing with Native Americans, written in the 16th century and beginning of the 17th century.

The following chapter, *Plymouth's and Massachusetts' Journals*, will analyze the written records of William Bradford and John Winthrop, who were the leading figures of the first permanent settlements in New England.

The third chapter, *Historical and Religious Works*, concerns the content of chronicles, diaries, travelogues and theological books throughout the colonial era and their diverse depiction of Native Americans.

The final chapter, *First Captivity Narratives*, will be dealing with the popular genre of captivity narratives and how it affected the image of Native Americans.

¹ Inbody, Kristen. *Survey: People think Native Americans don't exist/aren't discriminated against*. Great Falls Tribune [online]. 2018 [cit. 2021-04-08]. Dostupné z: <https://eu.greatfalls Tribune.com/story/news/2018/08/07/survey-people-think-natives-dont-exist-arent-discriminated-against/923250002/>.

2 The Earliest Colonial Literature

2.1 First Mentions of Native Americans in European Literature

The earliest mentions of Native Americans in North America in European literature come from travelers and colonizers at the end of the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th century. According to Benjamin Bissell, the first descriptions were usually superficial and very limited, due to lack of contact with Native Americans, and the fact, that the adventurers were rather interested in the newly discovered land and potential materials and commodities than in a complex description and understanding of local aborigines. Thus, they were mostly commenting on things such as different skin color of Indians, their odd clothing and use of feathers as accessories.²

The very first literary sources, regarding Native Americans, are comprised mostly of letters and accounts of travelers. Obviously, the earliest mentions can be found in the literature of early predominant colonial powers, such as Spain or Portugal. But as England began with colonizing a few decades later, so did their literature about Native Americans. According to Bissell, the first mention of Native Americans in English literature is in John Sparke's *The Voyage Made by M. John Hawkins Esquire*.³ Even though Sparke describes John Hawkins' entire voyage, which includes also Africa and West Indies, the most important part, as far as Native Americans' portrayal goes, is his description of the coasts of Florida. He writes about Florida's landscape, flora, fauna, and local aborigines, their traditions and way of life. The way John Sparke describes Native Americans in Florida could be generalized as sheer fascination. Obviously, he cannot resist seeing the people "using deer skins as their apparel" and "painting their bodies with curious knots" as savages, but mostly he omits any negative or positive commentary, and is only fascinated by their different culture.

In his account, Sparke focuses on the housing of the Floridians,

² Bissell, Benjamin Hezekiah. *The American Indian in English literature of the eighteenth century*. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1925. p. 1-2

³ Bissell. 1925. p. 2

Their houses are not many together, for in one house a hundred of them do lodge: they being made much like a great barne, and in strength not inferiour to ours, for it hath stanchions and rafters of whole trees, and couered with Palmito leaues, hauing no place diuided, but one small roome for their King and Queene.⁴

their weaponry and manner of fighting,

In their warres they vse bowes and arrowes... ..In their fight, being in the woods, they vse a marnellous pollicie for their owne safegarde, which is by clasping a tree in their armes, and yet shooting notwithstanding...⁵

or their manner of handling the fire,

There is one thing to be maruelled at, for the making of their fire, and not onely they but also the Negroes doe the same, which is made onely by two stickes, rubbing them one against another, and this they may doe in any place they come, where they finde sticks sufficient for the purpose.⁶

Most of the descriptions in earliest colonial literature are similar. As the European travelers were exposed to a hitherto unknown new world, their usual reaction was fascination and wonder. Therefore, works such as *Sir Humphrey Gilbert's Voyage to Newfoundland* by Edward Hayes or Arthur Barlowe's *First Voyage to Virginia* describe local aborigines in a similar manner.⁷

With religion being one of the main pillars of the 16th century Europe, Native Americans' mythology and spirituality became one of the essential parts of the Native American's description in the earliest accounts. According to Bissell, European travelers almost always looked down on aboriginal pagan religion, often mentioning the necessity of Christianization.⁸

⁴ Markham, Clements R. (ed.). *The Hawkins' Voyages During the Reigns of Henry VIII, Queen Elizabeth, and James I.* London: Printed for the Hakluyt Society. 1878. p. 52

⁵ Markham. 1878. p. 53

⁶ Markham. 1878. p. 52

⁷ Bissell. 1925. p. 2-3

⁸ Bissell. 1925. p. 2

2.2 Captain John Smith's Works

When studying early colonial literature and its portrayal of Native Americans, we cannot omit the essential role of Captain John Smith, who was an English traveler and the founder of the settlement of Jamestown in Virginia. Besides that, he is considered one of the key figures of early American literature. In his literary works he gives the reader a complex image of the New World and describes his extraordinary adventures. According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, John Smith also significantly contributed in encouraging new explorers and adventurers to travel and start a new life in America. Therefore, he indirectly aroused public interest in colonization.⁹

Regarding the Native Americans portrayal, Smith's descriptions are mostly focused on fascinating and significant characters, events and places. According to Long, Smith is picturing the Native Americans as gigantic and impressive creatures, almost completely omitting "greasy chiefs" or the overall squalor of an Indian camp. He is rather presenting the reader with emperors, queens, courtiers or the famous love story about Pocahontas.¹⁰

Even though John Smith's allegedly autobiographical works' reliability is often being questioned, as the only notation of the events he experienced is recorded by himself alone and often slightly vary in every other work, their veracity does not have any meaningful significance for exploring of literary portrayal of the Native Americans. Therefore, the following text will not take his works' reliability into account and will only analyze their content.

2.2.1 John Smith's Early Works

John Smith started writing his earliest works as soon as he settled in America. He established the colony of Jamestown in 1607 and his first work, *A True Relation of Such Occurrences and*

⁹ Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. *John Smith*. Encyclopedia

Britannica [online]. 6 January 2021 [cit. 2021-05-14]. Dostupné z: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-Smith-British-explorer>

¹⁰ Long, William Joseph. *American Literature*. Boston: Ginn and company. 1913. p. 5

Accidents of Note as Hath Hapned in Virginia Since the First Planting of that Colony, which is now resident in the South part thereof, till the last returne from thence, released a year later.

According to Tyler, this 1608 letter can be considered the very first book of American literature. While captive, Smith states, that his life was in no danger and describes the emperor Powhatan as friendly, knowledge-seeking and kind. Smith also speaks highly about the overall environment Powhatan lived in.¹¹

Beside a detailed description of Powhatan, Smith also writes about good manners of ordinary Indians, while being a captive. He is praising Native Americans' generosity and their treatment of a prisoner.

The Captain conducting me to his lodging, a quarter of Venison and some ten pound of bread I had for supper: what I left was reserued for me, and sent with me to my lodging: Each morning 3. women presented me three great platters of fine bread, more venison then ten men could deuour I had.¹²

He is not describing only Native Americans' positive traits though. From the rest of the book it is evident, that Native Americans are not allies of colonists. Quite the reverse, in fact. Smith for example mentions many Indian attacks or describes, that the Indians keeping Smith as a captive often threatened to assault the fort of the colonizers.

In 1612, Smith released *Map of Virginia: With a description of a countrey, the commodities, people, government and religion*. This work was the last one, he wrote in America. The work is comprised of the map of Virginia itself with two illustrations of local aborigines and a description of the land, its climate, topography, flora, fauna, and its earlier inhabitants. The overall work is written in a very amusing and picturesque manner.¹³

Regarding the Native Americans' image, Smith is giving the reader a complex insight into Native Americans' way of life, looks or their general mindset. As I mentioned before, the map is complemented by two illustrations of the natives. The first one is Powhatan, the emperor

¹¹ Tyler, Moses Coit. *A History of American Literature I*. New York: G. P. Putnam's sons. 1878. p. 21-25

¹² Smith, John & Arber, Edward (ed.). *Works: 1608-1631*. Birmingham: The English Scholar's Library. 1884. p. 16

¹³ Tyler. 1878. p. 30

of Indians, that Smith met with while being his captive, and the second one is a Susquehannock Indian. Later in the text, Smith also describe his illustrations in a detail. As to the Susquehannock Indian, he writes:

The picture of the greatest of them is signified in the Mapped. The calfe of whose leg was 3 quarters of a yard about: and all the rest of his limbes so answerable to that proportion, that he seemed the goodliest man that euer we beheld. His haire, the one side was long, the other shore close with a ridge over his crown like a cocks combe. His arrowes were fiue quarters [of a yard] long, headed with flints or splinters of stones, in forme like a heart, an inch broad, and an inch and a halfe or more long. These hee wore in a woolues skinne at his backe for his quiver, his bow in the one hand and his clubbe in the other, as is described.¹⁴

This extract very well demonstrates the precision and detail, in which was Smith describing the Native Americans in *Map of Virginia*. Apart from the illustrations and its descriptions, Smith is mostly concerned with the Indian population in Virginian geographical area. Therefore, he maps out the position and demographical composition of each tribe he knows of or describes how Indians use local natural resources and materials, what languages they speak by, or the alliances and enemies of the tribes. The overall work is very informative, with only a slight subjective connotation, as the original intention was probably to inform future travelers and colonizers.

The last of Smith's early works I would like to mention is *A description of New England: or the observations, and discoveries, of Captain Iohn Smith (Admirall of that Country) in the North of America, in the year of our Lord 1614: with the successe of sixe Ships, that went the next yeare 1615; and the accidents befell him among the French men of warre: with the prooffe of the present benefit this Countrey affoord; whither this present yeare, 1616, eight voluntary Ships are gone to make further tryall*. In this work, Smith is not focusing directly on Native Americans. He is mostly concerned by the overall environment, and opportunities and possible resources for future settlement. As for the Native Americans, he is pointing out the location of each aboriginal settlement, the tribe they belong to, the language they speak and their

¹⁴ Smith, John & Arber, Edward (ed.). 1884. p. 54

relationship towards the other tribes. The Native Americans are described here similarly as in the *Map of Virginia*.

2.2.2 Image of Native Americans in The Generall Historie of Virginia, New England, and Summer Isles and Smith's Later Works

John Smith released his most significant literary work in 1624, *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New England, and Summer Isles*. According to Vaughan, it is by far his most influential book. Similarly, to his earlier works, *The Generall Historie* is very nationalistic, often subconsciously calling all Britons to join the colonizing movement for the glory of the British empire. It is significantly influenced by his earlier works, with a few parts of the book being only reprints. Smith divided the work in six books, with each book examining a slightly different time period and topic. For the subject of the Native Americans, the most important is the third book, as it concerns events in Virginia during the years of Smith's stay. Apart from extracts of his past literature, this book was completed by many new events and experiences with aborigines, sometimes even distinctively altering his past statements.¹⁵

Similarly, as in his earlier works, Smith is not hiding his admiration towards the Native Americans and does not see them only as mortal enemies of colonists. For example, he praise the environment they live in and their generosity:

...the extreame wind, raine, frost, and snowe caused vs to keepe Christmas amongst the Salvages: where wee were never more merrie, nor fedde on more plentie of good oysters, fish, flesh, wild foule, and good bread; nor never had better fires in England then in the drie warme smokie houses of Kecoughtan.¹⁶

According to David Freeman Hawke, Smith also admires the Native Americans' dignity and pride as free humans. Hawke demonstrate this by speech of a Native American towards Smith, in which is he justifying his chief's escape from English imprisonment:

¹⁵ Vaughan, Alden T. *American Genesis: Captain John Smith and the founding of Virginia*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press. 1975. p. 177-179

¹⁶ Smith, John & Arber, Edward (ed.). 1884. p. 132

If he hath offended you in escaping your imprisonment, the fishes swim, the fowls fly, and the very beasts strive to escape the snare and live. Then blame not him being a man.¹⁷

However, these passages do not dramatically distinguish from Smith's earlier works. The most important and famous part of *The Generall Historie* is the character of the Indian princess Pocahontas and her encountering and rescuing of John Smith, that did not occur in any of his earlier works. According to Vaughan, Pocahontas strongly softened the picture of Indian-colonist relations.¹⁸ Therefore, she also improved the perception of the Native Americans by European readers. She was, after all, the first purely positive Native American major character of a colonial book.

Even though Pocahontas was already briefly mentioned in Smith's earlier works, only a little attention was given to her. Her popularity arose mostly because of *The Generall Historie*. The first mention of her in this book is the well-known rescue of John Smith from the Native Americans:

...two great stones were brought before Powhatan: as many as could layd hands on him, dragged him to them, and thereon laid his head, and being ready with their clubs, to beate out his braines, Pocahontas the Kings dearest daughter, when no intreaty could prevaile, got his head in her armes, and laid her owne vpon his to saue him from death: whereat the Emperour was contented he should liue to make him hatchets, and her bells, beads, and copper; for they thought him aswell of all occupations as themselues. For the King himselfe will make his owne robes, shooes, bowes, arrowes, pots; plant, hunt, or doe any thing so well as the rest.¹⁹

Then, she is mentioned, as she is bringing food to the colonists, helping them to survive:

¹⁷ Smith, John & Hawke, David Freeman (ed.). *Captain John Smith's history of Virginia; a selection*.

Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill. 1970. p. xviii

¹⁸ Vaughan. 1975. p. 179

¹⁹ Smith, John & Arber, Edward (ed.). 1884. p. 400

Now ever once in foure or fiue dayes, Pocahontas with her attendants, brought him so much provision, that saved many of their liues, that els for all this had starved with hunger.²⁰

Right from the first two mentions, Pocahontas' image is extremely positive in comparison to any other Native American. This extreme contrast is also one of the key reasons, why Pocahontas became a legend.

Pocahontas is not mentioned only in the third book though. In the fourth book, concerning history of Virginia after Smith's departure from 1609 to 1624, she plays also an important role. In here, there is described her imprisonment among the colonists, her love relationship with John Rolfe, an English colonist, and later their leave to England. Although, probably the most important is the encounter of John Smith and Pocahontas in London in 1616:

Being about this time preparing to set saile for New England, I could not stay to doe her that seruice I desired, England and she well deserued; but hearing shee was at Branford with diuers of my friends, I went to see her. After a modest salutation, without any word, she turned about, obscured her face, as not seeming well contented; and in that humour her husband, with diuers others, we all left her two or three houres, repenting my selfe to haue writ she could speake English, But not long after, she began to talke, and remembred mee well what courtesies shee had done.²¹

This encounter of Smith and Pocahontas is extremely significant, as it demonstrates the possible assimilation of the Native Americans among the English in the future. As Pocahontas learnt the English language, became a Christian, found an English spouse and was able to live her life outside of the Native American society, by Europeans seen as barbaric, she became a so-called "civilized savage". Until this very day, the story of Pocahontas was many times retold and she became a legend and one of the most popular characters of the colonial literature.

²⁰ Smith, John & Arber, Edward (ed.). 1884. p. 401

²¹ Smith, John & Arber, Edward (ed.). 1884. p. 533

The *Generall Historie of Virginia* is also supplemented by many Smith's own illustrations:



Fig. 1 Pocahontas 'saves' the life of Captain John Smith
by John Smith (1624)



Fig. 2 Captain Smith taketh the King of Pamunkey
prisoner, 1608 by John Smith (1624)

Interesting fact is that the Native Americans are often portrayed as gigantic human beings in contrary to the Europeans. Even though 2001 Ohio State University study showed that Plains Indians were the tallest people in the world at 1800s, the difference between them and the Europeans was not that flagrant, as an adult male Plains Indian averaged 172,6 cm and European American 171 cm.²² This phenomenon is occurring in the majority of contemporary illustrations of the natives and had pushed their image in an even more dangerous and beast-like direction.

²² Ohio State University. *Standing Tall: Plains Indians Enjoyed Height, Health Advantage*. Science Daily [online]. 29 May 2001 [cit. 2021-05-20]. Dostupné z: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2001/05/010529071125.htm>

3 Plymouth's and Massachusetts' Journals

Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation* and Winthrop's *The History of New England* are the first works of the two major English religious groups settling in the New World – Pilgrims and Puritans.

3.1 William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation*

William Bradford and the aforementioned John Smith are often considered the very first writers of American literature. Although, the two writers greatly differ in both, their style of writing and even the portraying of the Native Americans. William Joseph Long describes this matter very well in his *American Literature*. According to him, Smith is an exemplary Elizabethan with romantic enthusiasm, and is often exaggerating his own actions in spite of entertaining the reader. Bradford's style of writing is on the other hand mostly informative and objective. His goal is not to entertain the reader and boast about his actions and experiences in the New World, but rather to pass on information. Therefore, even their approach towards portraying the aboriginal people differs. While Smith focuses on significant and notable characters, places or events, Bradford is giving the reader a brief description of the Native Americans' appearance, environment, behavior, fighting skills and their chances against colonists' armies.²³

William Bradford arrived in America in 1620 on an English ship *Mayflower* together with fellow Pilgrims and co-founded the settlement of Plymouth in Massachusetts. His most notable work is *Of Plymouth Plantation*, which is a detailed journal, describing the life and adventures of the Pilgrims since their exile in Holland until the late 1640s in Plymouth. According to Richardson, even though the journal is written from a perspective of a Pilgrim Separatist author, it can be fairly considered impartial, as Bradford was trying to record a mere objective journal of happenings and occurrences of the colonists in the New World.²⁴ Tyler in his *History of American Literature* portrays the book similarly. He considers it to be mostly of a historical nature. There are often omitted the less significant events and it lacks a strong

²³ Long. 1913. p. 4-6

²⁴ Richardson, Charles Francis. *American Literature 1605-1885*. New York: G. P. Putnam's sons. 1889. p. 73-74

subjective opinion of the author.²⁵ Therefore, it is a perfect source of information about contemporary society's perception of the Native Americans.

The first contact made with Native Americans is their assault on the colonists, therefore are portrayed in a negative light from the very beginning:

...all on the sudain, they heard a great & strange crie, which they knew to be the same voyces they heard in the night, though they varied their notes, & one of their company being abroad came runing in, & cried, "Men, Indeans, Indeans"; and withall, their arowes came flying amongst them ... The crie of the Indeans was dreadfull, espetially when they saw ther men rune out of the randevoue towourds the shallop, to recover their armes, the Indeans wheeling aboute upon them. But some runing out with coats of malle on, & cutlasses in their hands, they soone got their armes, & let flye amongs them, and quickly stopped their violence. Yet ther was a lustie man, and no less valiante, stood behind a tree within halfe a musket shot, and let his arrows flie at them. He was seen shoot 3. arrowes, which were all avoyded. He stood 3. shot of a musket, till one taking full aime at him, and made the barke or splinters of the tree fly about his ears, after which he gave an extraordinary shrike, and away they wente all of them.²⁶

However, later in the book, Bradford writes about two Native Americans, Samaset and Squanto, who were cooperating with the colonists:

But about the 16. of March a certaine Indian came bouldly amongst them, and spoke to them in broken English, which they could well understand, but marvelled at it. . . . He became profitable to them in aquainting them with many things concerning the state of the cuntry in the east-parts wher he lived, which was afterwards profitable unto them; as also of the people hear, of their names, number, & strength; of their situation & distance from this place, and who was cheefe amongst them. His name was Samaset; he tould them also of another Indian whos name

²⁵ Tyler. 1878

²⁶ Bradford, William. *Of Plymouth Plantation*. New York: Capricorn Books. 1962. p. 65-66

was Squanto, a native of this place, who had been in England & could speake better English then him selfe.²⁷

This encounter with Samaset and Squanto greatly improves the overall portrayal of the Native Americans in the work. The cooperation among colonists and Native Americans continued, as they made a peace treaty with Massasoyt, the sachem of the Wampanoag, and Squanto even stayed with colonists to help:

...but Squanto continued with them, and was their interpreter, and was a spetiall instrument sent of God for their good beyond their expectation. He directed them how to set their corne, wher to take fish, and to procure other commodities, and was also their pilott to bring them to unknowne places for their profitt, and never left them till he dyed.²⁸

Squanto is shown here in a very good light, as he apparently decided to stay and live together with the colonists, which demonstrated a successful integration of a Native American in European Christian society. He is also called “a spetiall instrument sent of God”, thus openly linking him with the Christian God, which would have been seen as a great honor bestowed upon a Native American, as they were usually considered pagan savages and heathens. The passage mentioning the first Thanksgiving in 1621, when the Native Americans joined the colonists for a harvest is also of great importance:

They begane now to gather in the small harvest they had, and to fitte up their houses and dwellings against winter, being all well recovered in health & strenght, and had all things in good plenty; for as some were thus imployed in affairs abroad, others were excersised in fishing, aboute codd, & bass, & other fish, of which they tooke good store, of which every family had their portion. All the sommer ther was no wante. And now begane to come in store of foule, as winter aproached, of which this place did abound when they came first (but afterward decreased by degrees). And besids water foule, ther was great store of wild Turkies, of which they tooke many, besids venison, &c. Besids

²⁷ Bradford. 1962. p. 72-73

²⁸ Bradford. 1962. p. 73

they had aboute a peck a meale a weeke to a person, or now since harvest, Indean come to that proportion. Which made many afterwards write so largely of their plenty hear to ther freinds in England, which were not fained, but true reports.²⁹

Bradford does not mention the Native Americans' presence in *Of Plymouth Plantation* though. The key report of this essential event is in Bradford's other work, *Mourt's Relation Or Journal of the Plantation at Plymouth*, co-written by Edward Winslow, who was one of the leaders of Plymouth Colony:

...our harveft being gotten in, our Governour fent foure men on fowling, that fo we might after a more fpeciall manner reioyce together, after we had gathered the fruit of our labours; they foure in one day killed as much fowle, as with a little helpe befide, ferved the Company almoft a weeke, at which time amongft other Recreations, we exercifed our Armes, many of the Indians coming amongft vs, and amongft the reft their greateft King Majffafoyt, with fome ninetie men, whom for three dayes we entertained and feafted, and they went out and killed fiue Deere, which they brought to the Plantation and beftowed on our Governour, and vpon the Captaine, and others. And although it be not alwayes fo plentifull, as it was at this time with vs, yet by the goodneffe of God, we are fo farre from want, that we often wifli you partakers of our plentie.³⁰

Generally, Bradford's stance regarding the portrayal of the Native Americans and history itself is very sober and unpoetic. According to Long, he completely omits heroism and glory, when describing wars. In a similar manner he is approaching the portrayal of the natives, as he is trying to be as neutral and objective as possible.³¹ When the Native Americans are helping the colonists and acting in a fair manner, he gives them a proper acknowledgement and does not look down on them. On the other hand, when someone oppose or betrays him and his fellow country man, he is able to call spade a spade. Although the overall image of the Native

²⁹ Bradford. 1962. p. 80

³⁰ Bradford, William & Winslow, Edward. *Mourt's Relation Or Journal of the Plantation at Plymouth*. Boston: J. K. Wiggin. 1865. p. 133/

³¹ Long. 1913. p. 6

Americans is in the *Of Plymouth Plantation* very good. Mostly if we compare it with colonial works of later authors.

3.2 John Winthrop's *The History of New England*

John Winthrop was an infamous Puritan leader, who for his actions and literary works had significantly contributed to American literature and history. According to Dunn, Winthrop was highly respected by his fellow colonists and was a chief figure of the Puritan founders of New England. He arrived in America in 1630 on a ship *Arbella* with the intention of building an exemplary model Christian society. Since 1630, he was elected a governor of the Massachusetts Colony 12 times.³²

In *A History of American Literature*, Tyler boldly praises not only Winthrop's personality and intellectual power, but also calls his most notable work, *The History of New England*, "a treasure among price among our early historic memorials".³³ There is a broad consensus regarding Winthrop's personality and qualities. Long describes him as unselfish, kind and worthy of respect.³⁴ Richardson sees him very positively too, as he considers him intelligent, able to maintain friendly relations with both, fellow Englishmen and the Native Americans, and a natural leader.³⁵ According to Tyler, Winthrop started writing his infamous journal right before leaving for the voyage to America with the intention to capture the daily life and the most significant experiences of the so-called Winthrop Fleet. He kept on writing until his very death, making the journal a thorough historical source of the first years of Massachusetts Colony. Although, he was rather a governor and a colonist than an author, as he had a lot to do every day to be able to write much.³⁶ Therefore, there are for example omitted colorful descriptions of natives and events happening around him, keeping the work mostly a mere report. He was simply more concerned by the actual actions than the artistic quality.

³² Dunn, Richard S. *John Winthrop* | American colonial governor. Encyclopedia Britannica [online]. 1 April 2021 [cit. 2021-05-18]. Dostupné z: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-Winthrop-American-colonial-governor>

³³ Tyler. 1878. p. 129-130

³⁴ Long. 1913. p. 20

³⁵ Richardson. 1889. p. 90-91

³⁶ Tyler. 1878. p. 130-131

Regarding the Native Americans and their portrayal, it is very similar – he gives their description any bigger attention only if it is important for the colony. Because of that, they are often mentioned only briefly:

An Indian came aboard us and lay there all night.³⁷

However, when Winthrop gives the Native Americans any bigger acknowledgement, most often he describes them in a positive manner. He writes about how they were helping the colonists out, when they got into trouble,

By the way they met with two Indian squaws, who, coming home, told their husbands that they had met two Englishmen. They thinking (as it was) that they had been shipwrecked, made after them, and brought them back to their wigwam, and entertained them kindly; and one of them went with them the next day to Plimouth, and the other went to find out their boat and the rest of their company, which were seven miles off, and having found them, he help them what he could, and returned to his wigwam, and fetched a hatchet, and built them a wigwam and covered it, and gat them wood (for they were so weak and frozen, as they could not stir;) and Garrett died about two days after his landing; and the ground being so frozen as they could not dig his grave, the Indian hewed a hole about half a yard deep, with his hatchet, and having laid the corpse in it, he laid over it a great heap of wood to keep it from the wolves.³⁸

how they were enabling them to lodge in their settlements,

John Oldham, and three with him, went over land to Connecticut, to trade. . . . He lodged at Indian towns all the way.³⁹

and many other things.

³⁷ Winthrop, John. *The history of New England from 1630 to 1649*. New York: Arno Press. 1972. p. 27

³⁸ Winthrop. 1972. p. 40

³⁹ Winthrop. 1972. p. 111

On the other hand, it is obvious, that most Native Americans are not allies of the colonists, as he mentions many bad experiences and encounters as well:

...he mistook his path, and went till he came to a little house of Sagamore John, which stood empty. There he stayed . . . In the morning, there came thither an Indian squaw, but perceiving her before she had opened the door, he barred her out; yet she stayed there a great while essaying to get in, and at last she went away, and he returned safe home...⁴⁰

This extract is Winthrop's very own experience as he got lost and when in close proximity to an Indian squaw, he feels very threatened. Of course, the fear was probably justified, but it still shows us the immediate reaction of an Englishman towards an unknown Native American.

He also mentions many fights among the Native Americans and the Europeans, although very often with the Native American allies helping the colonists:

Our English from Connecticut, with their Indians, and many of the Naragansetts, marched in the night to a fort of the Pequods at Mistick, and, besetting the same about break of the day, after two hours' fight they took it, (by firing it,) and slew therein two chief sachems, and one hundred and fifty fighting men, and about one hundred and fifty old men, women and children, with the loss of two English, *whereof but one was* killed by the enemy. Divers of the Indian friends were hurt by the English, because they had not some mark to distinguish them from the Pequods, as some of them had.⁴¹

Generally, there is not an obvious positive or negative image of all the Native Americans in *The History of New England*. It depends on the tribe they come from and on each Native American's relationship towards the colonists. But what is described often similarly and what was for readers of the contemporary literature extremely important is Native Americans' brutality:

⁴⁰ Winthrop. 1972. p. 62

⁴¹ Winthrop. 1972. p. 225

...looking about, they found John Oldham under an old seine, stark naked, his head cleft to the brains, and his hand and legs cut as if they had been cutting them off, and yet warm...⁴²

John Tilley . . . went on shore in a canoe, three miles above the fort, to kill fowl; and having shot off his piece, many Indians arose out of the covert and took him, and killed one other, who was in the canoe. This Tilley was a very stout man, and of great understanding. They cut off his hands, and sent them before, and after cut off his feet. He lived three days after his hands were cut off; and themselves confessed, that he was a stout man, because he cried not in his torture.⁴³

This, and many other stories, show Native Americans as bloodthirsty, cruel and murderous human beings. In the succeeding chapters, concerning the later 17th century literature, this phenomenon was even strengthened, as according to Bissell, the later 17th and 18th centuries' literature shows Native Americans in the worst possible light – as revengeful, bloody savages.⁴⁴

⁴² Winthrop. 1972. p. 190

⁴³ Winthrop. 1972. p. 200

⁴⁴ Bissell. 1925. p. 6

4 Historical and Religious Works

In the following chapter, I would like to move on from the very beginnings of American literature, usually written by European travelers and explorers, encountering the New World for the first time, onto the 17th century non-fictional historical literature. Historical literary works are probably the best example of non-fictional literature, as they try to be very objective, impartial and omit any strong subjective opinions. As there are many significant historical writers of the early colonial period, I will focus mostly on those who greatly affected the Native Americans' image.

4.1 John Mason's A Brief History of the Pequot War

One of the key authors, whose work focused on Native Americans, is John Mason, who was a soldier leading the English in the Pequot War in 1637. According to Tyler, there were two major wars in New England that seriously tested the colonists and made them doubt the possibility of keeping their settlements there. The first one was the Pequot War, which made Mason an infamous hero, who was highly acknowledged not only by his fellow Englishmen, but allegedly, his very name also became a terror to the Native Americans.⁴⁵ The significance of the Pequot War is similarly described by contemporary historian Thomas Prince in the introduction of *A Brief History of the Pequot War*, as he had considered the Pequots to be the most terrible of all the Native American nations. They were extremely cruel, killing and torturing to death many Englishmen, with the intention to destroy and force the English out of the country.⁴⁶ According to Bissell, Mason, together with other historians dealing with Indian wars, strongly contributed to creating the savage-like, barbaric image of the Native Americans, as their work is filled with horror and cruel stories.⁴⁷

His most significant work *A Brief History of the Pequot War* is relatively short. Tyler considers it a “*plain but vigorous narrative of a very plain and very vigorous campaign*”. The

⁴⁵ Tyler. 1878. p. 147-148

⁴⁶ Orr, Charles. *History of the Pequot War: The contemporary accounts of Mason, Underhill, Vincent and Gardener*. Cleveland: The Helman-Taylor Company. 1897. p. 6

⁴⁷ Bissell. 1925. p. 6

work reflects negatively on Native Americans from the very beginning, as Mason starts by describing the pre-Pequot War situation between the English and the Pequots. It is an account of the Pequots' treacherous assaults upon the English, their terrible acts of violence, and finishes by how they drew other Native American tribes into a conspiracy to annihilate the white settlements in Connecticut.⁴⁸ The murder of John Oldham, which was already mentioned in Winthrop's *The History of New England*, is also described here.

...they having taken a Bark of one Mr. John Oldham, Murdering him and all his Company...⁴⁹

...the Pequots grew intraged against the English who inhabited Connecticut. . . . The Pequots falling violently upon them, slew divers Men at Saybrook; keeping almost a constant Siege upon the Place; so that the English were constrained to keep within their pallizado Fort; being so hard Beset and sometimes Assaulted...⁵⁰

Nine of the English were killed outright, with some Horses, and two young Women taken Captives.⁵¹

The rest of the work is a description of the rest of the campaign and mostly the infamous Mystic massacre. From today's perspective, we would probably not look upon the colonists as heroes, but rather as villains and upon the Native Americans as victims. Mason is describing the slaughtering of the entire tribe and burning their fort to the ground, making the overall campaign closely resemble a genocide. But taking the contemporary Native Americans' role into account, as they were seen as heathens and savages out to annihilate the colonists, the 17th century contemporary reader perceived the Mystic massacre to be rather an act of heroism and only contributed to worsen the Native Americans' already poor image.

⁴⁸ Tyler. 1878. p. 148-149

⁴⁹ Orr. 1897. p. 17

⁵⁰ Orr. 1897. p. 18

⁵¹ Orr. 1897. p. 18

4.2 Daniel Gookin's Works

Regarding the Native Americans and their image, Daniel Gookin is one of the most essential writers of the early colonial period. Long considers Gookin's works the best ones, dealing exclusively with the Native Americans. He labels him as a friend of the natives and one of the first writers to understand the character of Native Americans. Gookin's most significant works are *Historical Collections of the Indians of New England* and *An Historical Account of the Doings and Sufferings of the Christian Indians in New England*. He also wrote on the history of New England, a manuscript which unfortunately burned in a fire before its publishing.⁵²

Gookin is generally a highly respected author. Tyler praises his modesty, strength, devoutness and uncommon intellectual value. As a historian, he tried to be truthful, fair and lucid. He tried to be fair to the Native Americans even in very complicated circumstances, such as the King Philip's War. In Gookin's two essential literary works, he is mostly focusing on the Native Americans that converted to Christianity and therefore demonstrated they could integrate.⁵³

In *Historical Collections of the Indians of New England* he is mentioning the Native Americans' origin, where one of the conclusions is the one, we believe in today:

...suppose it should be so, that the origination of the Americans came from Asia, by the northwest of America, where the continents are conceived to meet; very near, which indeed is an opinion very probable...⁵⁴

He also provides a very objective description of their customs, manners, languages, religion or relationships between the different tribes:

The customs and manners of these Indians were, and yet are, in many places, very brutish and barbarous in several respects, like unto several savage people of America. They take many wives; yet one of them is the principal or chief in their esteem and affection. They also put away their wives; and the wives also leave their husbands frequently, upon

⁵² Long. 1913. p. 42-43

⁵³ Tyler. 1878. p. 151-156

⁵⁴ Gookin, Daniel. *Historical Collections of the Indians in New England*. Boston: Apollo Press. 1792. p. 5

grounds of displeasure or disaffection. They are very revengeful, and will not be unmindful to take vengeance upon such as have injured them or their kindred, when they have opportunity, though it be a long time after the offence was committed.⁵⁵

What is extraordinary for a colonist author is that he is not looking down on the Native Americans, or at least much less than a regular writer. He is also able to observe faults on the European colonists' side – such as introducing alcohol to the Native Americans. Although, he is still taking sides, and usually thinks much better about Christian Native Americans:

Their drink was formerly no other but water, and yet it doth continue, for their general and common drink. But of late years some of them planted orchards of apples, and make cider: which some of the worst of them are too prone to abuse unto drunkenness; though others of them that are christians, use it or any other strong drink with great sobriety. Many of the Indians are great lovers of strong drink, as aqua vitae, rum, brandy, or the like, and are very greedy to buy it of the English. . . . Hereby they are made drunk very often; and being drunk, are many times outrageous and mad, fighting with and killing one another, yea sometimes their own relations. This beastly sin of drunkenness could not be charged upon the Indians before the English and other christian nations, as Dutch, French, and Spaniards, came to dwell in America; which nations especially the English in New England, have cause to be greatly humbled before God, that they have been, and are, instrumental to cause these Indians to commit this great evil and beastly sin of drunkenness.⁵⁶

Most references to Native Americans are of a positive nature,

If any strangers come to their houses, they will give him the best lodging and diet they have; and the strangers must be first served, by themselves.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Gookin. 1792. p. 9

⁵⁶ Gookin. 1792. p. 11

⁵⁷ Gookin. 1792. p. 13

and when mentioning anything negative, he usually does it briefly, without any subjective connotation:

They are addicted to gaming; and will, in that vein, play away all they have.⁵⁸

Even when Gookin describes the position of women, which was entirely different from European women, he stays relatively objective, and does not look down on their different division of gender roles. I already gave an example of how he describes marriage, and how both partners can decide to leave it freely. He also writes about the incomparable strength of the Native American women:

...she, being great with child, fell into travail of child birth and had great pains and sorrowful throws for sundry days, and could not be delivered;—which is a thing unusual with the Indian women, who are ordinarily quickly and easily delivered; and many times are so strong; that within a few hours after the child's birth, they will go about their ordinary occasions...⁵⁹

The rest of the book is mostly concerned with the Native Americans that converted to Christianity – Gookin calls them “Praying Indians”. He thoroughly describes the process of Christianization, the situation in various “Indian praying towns” and the first Native American churches.

Gookin mentions the Native Americans also in his other work - *An Historical Account of the Doings and Sufferings of the Christian Indians in New England*. According to Tyler, the book’s composition was prompted mostly by the event of King Philip’s War, which incited the colonists against all the Native Americans. Therefore, in his work, Gookin is defending the “Praying Indians”, claiming they were not part of the conspiracy against the white settlers.⁶⁰ Although, this support of the “Praying Indians” comes at the expense of the pagan Native Americans, who were in a great majority, more than in his earlier work.

Generally, Gookin’s work show the Native Americans in a very positive light. When he disapproves with certain Native Americans’ behavior or customs, he is always trying to understand it first, rather than thoughtlessly denounce all the natives, which was very common

⁵⁸ Gookin. 1792. p. 13

⁵⁹ Gookin. 1792. p. 15

⁶⁰ Tyler. 1878. p. 156

with his contemporaries. Therefore, the readers of his work were able to understand the Native Americans better and formulate their own opinion.

4.3 Edward Johnson's The Wonder-Working Providence of Zion's Saviour in New England

Long, in his *American Literature*, describes Johnson as brave, self-reliant and religious – a fine type of settler. He was a Puritan and arrived to America with the Winthrop Fleet in 1630. Long likens his most notable work *The Wonder-Working Providence of Zion's Saviour in New England* to the biblical *Book of Exodus*, as it portrays the colonists as being “under the direct leadership of the Lord of Hosts, fighting the Lord's battles against seen and unseen foes”.⁶¹

According to Tyler, Johnson was a strongly devout Christian. He considered the Puritans to be Christ's soldiers on a spiritual crusade to New England, and their immigration to America was part of a stupendous religious campaign. Their main purpose was to build a pure church in the far-remote wilderness. Johnson is mostly focusing on religious history of New England, Salem from 1628 to 1651. Tyler considers the book to lack impartiality and critical judgement, although he thinks it accurately preserves the atmosphere of 17th century New England.⁶²

In his work, Johnson is often trying to understand the Native Americans, their customs and their behavior. For example, he describes the natives' first contact with the European colonists and what preceded it:

...the Indians report they beheld to their great wonderment that perspicuous bright blazing Comet (which was so famously noted in Europe); anon after Sun set it appeared as they say in the South-west, about three houres, continuing in their Horizon for the space of thirty sleepes . . . after which uncouth sight they expected some strange things to follow, and the rather, because not long before the whole Nation of

⁶¹ Long. 1913. p. 40

⁶² Tyler. 1878. p. 139-141

the Mattachusets were so affrighted with a Ship that arrived in their Bay, having never seene any before...⁶³

The Summer after the blazing Starre . . . even about the yeare 1618. a little before the removeall of that Church of Christ from Holland to Plimoth in New England, as the ancient Indians report, there befell a great mortality among them, the greatest that ever the memory of Father to Sonne tooke notice of, chiefly desolating those places, where the English afterward planted. . . . This great mortality being an unwonted thing, feare[d] them the more, because' naturally the Country is very healthy. But by this meanes Christ . . . not onely made roome for his people to plant; but also tamed the hard and cruell hearts of these barbarous Indians, insomuch that halfe a handfull of his people landing not long after in Plimoth-Plantation, found little resistance.⁶⁴

Even though he considers the uncivilized pagan Native Americans to be subordinate to the English, he sees significant differences among the Native American nations, as he briefly mentions a tribe of cannibals:

About this time the Indians that were most conversant among them, came quaking and complaining of a barbarous and cruell people called the Tarratines, who they said would eat such Men as they caught alive, tying them to a Tree, and gnawing their flesh by peece-meales off their Bones, as also that they were a strong and numerous people, and now comming.⁶⁵

Johnson's portrayal of the Native Americans is surely not a positive one, but when compared to his contemporaries, it is somewhere in the middle, as it is not overly negative or positive. He despises the natives for their religion, but apart from that he does not display much prejudice.

⁶³ Johnson, Edward. *Johnson's Wonder-working providence*. New York: Charles Scribner's sons. 1910. p. 39

⁶⁴ Johnson. 1910. p. 40-42

⁶⁵ Johnson. 1910. p. 78

4.4 Religious Literature and Cotton Mather

Even though the Age of Discovery and Renaissance were slowly weakening the Catholic Church, the 17th century society in Europe was still very closely connected to religion. The newly emerging colonies in America, with most of its population originating in Europe, were often even more religious - for example Puritans and Pilgrims.

The most significant theological writer, regarding the Native Americans' image, is probably Cotton Mather. Long describes him as a very significant, complicated person, and one of the most remarkable men in the history of American literature. Throughout his lifetime, he published approximately four hundred works, relating to religion, history, education and science. Mather is often harshly criticized for his participation in the witchcraft trials of Salem, often being accused of fanaticism. However, Long mentions him submitting the rules of evidence and successfully attempting to "cure" the alleged witches, by which he saved many of them from death.⁶⁶

Even though Mather's work is mostly considered to be part of the late colonial period, a lot of his writings are still from the 17th century. I will mostly focus on his most notable one, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, which is a seven-book chronicle of New England. Even though the majority of the book is of a strictly religious nature, the sixth book briefly mentions the Christianization of the Native Americans and the seventh book *Ecclesiarum praelia or A Book of the wars of the Lord* describes various problems that the colonists were confronted with, including the Indian wars and the Native Americans themselves.

Regarding the traditional Native Americans' gods, Mather does not doubt their very existence, he only considers them to be subordinate to the Christian God. But he is openly despising the natives' religion, often accusing the powaws, their spiritual leaders, of witchcraft. He also considered them to be able to bewitch others:

The one . . . who having been sometime greatly tormented, and now wholly impotent, his friends advise him to the powaws, concluding him to be bewitch'd. They being met, and dancing round a great fire, the sick lying by, some of the neighbours entred the house, being perswaded that a great powaw (now call'd to cure) had bewitch'd the

⁶⁶ Long. 1913. p. 59

sick: They threaten him that, as he had bewitch'd, unless he would cure the sick man, they would burn him in the fire. After many excuses, too long here to relate, they took him up, resolving at least to a little singe him; who no sooner felt the heat or the fire near him, but the sick immediately recovered. This was a thing publickly known to the English, as well as Indians, in the neighbourhood: there can be no doubt of it.⁶⁷

Throughout the entire chronicle, Mather is giving the reader one of the harshest portrayals of the Native Americans, showing them in the worst possible light. He is presenting them as barbarous, cruel and uncivilized savages with a deep-rooted hatred towards Europeans and Christianity:

Wequash, the Indian . . . When he had understood and embraced the Christian religion, he made a most exemplary profession of it . . . while he went up and down preaching of Christ among them . . . the Indians murdered him, and poisoned him for his religion.⁶⁸

...the Indians . . . cut out the tongues of the dumb creatures, leaving them alive in misery; and putting others of those poor creatures alive into hovels, they would set them on fire. . . . the worst part of the story is, that Captain Wadsworth, . . . with seventy men unto the relief of distressed Sudbury, found himself in the woods on the sudden surrounded with about five hundred of the enemy; . . . The Indians took five or six of the English prisoners; . . . they stripp'd these unhappy prisoners, and caused them to run the gauntlet, and whipped them after a cruel and bloody manner; they then threw hot ashes upon them, and cutting off collops of their flesh, they put fire into their wounds, and so with exquisite, leisurely, horrible torments, roasted them out of the world.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Mather, Cotton. *Magnalia Christi Americana*. Hartford: Silas Andrus & son. 1853. p. 426

⁶⁸ Mather. 1853. p. 555

⁶⁹ Mather. 1853. p. 570-571

Throughout his work it is apparent how thorough and descriptive he was, when depicting the horrors experienced by colonists. It is not certain, whether it was Mather's intention to emphasize the Native Americans' brutality, but it surely helped worsen their image.

The only Native Americans Mather does not look down on are the Christian Indians. He is mostly describing them helping the colonists in battles against the pagan Native Americans, by which they demonstrate their Christianity. Basically, Mather is convinced that the only way to help the Native Americans and make them more civilized and equal to Europeans, is through Christianization, as he considers their paganism to be the essential problem of Indian-European disagreements and conflicts.

4.5 Thomas Morton's New English Canaan and Its Abnormally Positive Portrayal of Native Americans

A very interesting piece of literature is the *New English Canaan* by Thomas Morton, which greatly varies from its contemporaries in its portrayal of the Native Americans, as it strongly favors the natives over the European colonists, especially the Puritans. According to Mark, the book was criticized by many and is considered to be the first banned book in the soon-to-be-founded United States of America.⁷⁰ Samuel Maverick, in his manuscript *A Brief Description of New England*, writes about Morton's arrest:

Morton was banished, his house fired before his face, and he sent prisoner to England but for what offence . . . nothing laid to his Charge but the writeing of a Booke entituled *New Canaan*, which indeed was the truest discription of New England as then it was that euer I saw.⁷¹

Regarding the Native Americans' image, the most important is the first book of this literary work, where Morton focuses on the origin of the natives, on their manners and customs, which he observed while living together with them. Right from the beginning of the book, it is obvious who the author favors:

⁷⁰ Mark, Joshua J. *New English Canaan*. World History Encyclopedia [online]. 2021 [cit. 2021-05-22]. Dostupné z: https://www.worldhistory.org/New_English_Canaan/

⁷¹ Maverick, Samuel. *A Briefe Discription of New England*. Boston: Press of David Clapp & son. 1885. p. 16

In the yeare since the incarnation of Chrif, 1622, it was my chance to be landed in the parts of New England, where I found two fortes of people, the one Chriftians, the other Infidels; thefe I found moft full of humanity, and more friendly then the other: as fhall hereafter be made apparent in Dew-Courfe by their feverall actions from time to time, whileft I lived among them.⁷²

He is also writing about their religion, and while he is not favoring their paganism over Christianity, he is not strictly against it and is rather defending it, while ridiculing other English authors speaking against it. Later in the book, he also praises the Native Americans' clothing, considering it as civilized as the Europeans',

They . . . being unwilling to be feene to difcover their nakedneffe . . . they feeme to have as much modefty as civilized people, and deferve to be applauded for it.⁷³

he is marveled by their astounding senses,

I have obferved that the Salvages have the fence of feeling fo farre beyond any of our Nation, that one would almoft beleve they had intelligence of the Devill fometimes, when they have tould us of a fhipp at Sea, which they have feene foener by one hower . . . their fight is fo excellent . . . And as they excel us in this particular fo much noted, fo I thinke they excel us in all the reft . . . in the fence of fmelling they have very great perfection . . . they are fo perfect in the ufe of that fence, that they will diftinguifh between a Spaniard and a Frenchman by the fent of the hand onely.⁷⁴

and values their respect towards age:

It is a thing to be admired . . . that a Nation yet uncivilized fhould more refpect age then fome nations civilized . . . the younger are always obedient unto the elder people, and at their commands in every refpect without grumblng . . . as the elder feede and provide for the younger

⁷² Morton, Thomas. *New English Canaan of Thomas Morton*. New York: B. Franklin. 1967. p. 123

⁷³ Morton. 1967. p. 144-145

⁷⁴ Morton. 1967. p. 165-166

in infancy, fo doe the younger, after being growne to yeares of manhood, provide for thofe that be aged.⁷⁵

Morton also appeals to European nations on fixing their “former errors” and become more dutiful, regarding their approach to elders.

Generally, *New English Canaan* could not vary more from its contemporaries, in the sense of the portrayal of Native Americans. While other authors usually considered the natives to be their subordinates, and this applies even to Gookin and others who were rather defending Native Americans, Morton is the only one seeing them as equals. Overall, throughout the book, there is no arrogance or self-glorification whatsoever. Quite the opposite, as Morton often mentions being ashamed of certain European habits or behavioral traits. From today’s perspective, it is probably the most objective work I analyzed in this thesis yet, as the author is not blinded by hatred towards the “uncivilized savages”, who were occupying the colonists’ dream land. And it is because of this openly pro-Native American approach that the *New English Canaan* was strongly criticized.

⁷⁵ Morton. 1967. p. 147-150

5 First Captivity Narratives

Regarding colonial literature overall, it is not always easy to exactly determine the border between fiction and non-fiction, as some authors present their literary works as purely non-fictional, even though it is not always entirely true. As for the captivity narratives, their reliability is even more questionable. According to Derounian-Stodola, the exact assessment of the actual authorship of captivity narratives is often complicated. Distinguishing of authentic first-person accounts from fictionalized or edited ones is almost impossible, as they were usually published in unclear conditions and underwent multiple authorial contributions. She also considers many individual captivity narratives to be an amalgamation of more voices and sources.⁷⁶

Even though most of the captivity narratives were not written earlier than in the 18th century, there are a few notable ones that were published at the end of the 17th century and initiated the subsequent extreme popularity of the genre.

5.1 A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson

The most significant and popular captivity narrative of the 17th century is definitely the *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* which, according to Tyler, is a very powerful portrayal of Native Americans' cruelty, described by Mary Rowlandson herself. She was the wife of the Lancaster pastor and lived in Boston. In 1676, she was taken captive, while the city was destroyed. The book gives a very authentic and horrifying description of the Native Americans' barbarity and harsh treatment of their captives. Tyler considers it "most effective in its artless touches of pathos; and is such an exhibition of Indian barbarity as must have driven still deeper into the minds of the New-Englanders their hate of the red men, and their quiet purpose of giving them over to doom".⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Derounian-Stodola, Kathryn Zabelle & Levernier, James Arthur. *The Indian Captivity Narrative, 1550-1900*. New York: Twayne Publishers. 1993. p. 10-11

⁷⁷ Tyler, Moses Coit. *A History of American Literature II*. New York: G. P. Putnam's sons. 1879. p. 138-139

The portrayal of Native Americans in this work is almost purely negative, as they are described as cruel, “barbarous creatures”. Right from the very beginning of the book, Rowlandson mentions their brutality in fighting:

Another there was who running along was shot and wounded, and fell down; he begged of them his life, promising them money (as they told me) but they would not hearken to him, but knocked him on the head, stript him naked, and split open his bowels.⁷⁸

The rest of the work portrays the Native Americans in a very similar manner, mostly describing her horrifying experiences while in captivity:

Among them also was that poor woman before mentioned, who came to a sad end . . . she would be often asking the Indians to let her go home; they not being willing to that and yet vexed with her importunity, gathered a great company together about her, and stripped her naked, and set her in the midst of them; and when they had sung and danced about her (in their hellish manner) as long as they pleased, they knocked her on the head, and the child in her arms with her. When they had done that, they made a fire and put them both into it, and told the other children that were with them, that if they attempted to go home they would serve them in like manner.⁷⁹

Even though Rowlandson presents the Native Americans mostly in a negative light, she mentions a few good experiences too – for example their occasional generosity, or the fact that they took into account her having a child, as during distant journeys they provided her with a horse.

Rowlandson also marvels, that during her captivity, no sexual abuse had taken place:

I have been in the midst of those roaring lions, and savage bears, that feared neither God, nor man, nor the devil, by night and day, alone and

⁷⁸ Rowlandson, Mary. *A Narrative of the Captivity, Sufferings, and Removes, 111111111 of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*. Boston: The Mass. Sabbath school society. 1856. p. 3-4

⁷⁹ Rowlandson. 1856. p. 28-29

in company; sleeping all sorts together, and yet not one of them ever offered the least abuse of unchastity to me, in word or action.⁸⁰

According to Derounian-Stodola, Rowlandson slowly changes her perception of the Native Americans throughout the work. Although, as Rowlandson came from a purely Puritan background with an indoctrinated deep-rooted hatred towards the Native Americans, she was not able to consciously admit the respect or liking for her captors. Therefore, Derounian-Stodola thinks that Rowlandson displaces this gradual acceptance of the Native American culture by gradually beginning to positively describe the food of the natives. At first, she is unable to eat anything, describing the food as being unable to “stomach”. Slowly, she starts to like the food and find it so “savoury”, that she is willing to steal a boiled horse’s foot from “one of the English Children”. By stealing food right from the child’s “mouth and hand” and also calling the children “the English Children”, she reveals her growing subconscious identification with the Native American culture.⁸¹

With the work being a first-person captivity narrative, thus extremely relatable for contemporary society, it strongly influenced the Native Americans’ image – mostly in a very negative manner. Of course, there are a few mentions of good behavior towards Rowlandson, but it primarily describes the horrifying, brutal occurrences the author experienced.

5.2 Other 17th Century Captivity Narratives

One of few other famous 17th century captivity narratives is the account of Hannah Duston, which was described by many contemporary authors and historians, including Cotton Mather. Duston is said to have massacred ten of her Native American captors, for which she was later glorified. According to Elshtain, Hannah Duston was the very first woman in America to be honored with a statue, erected in 1874.⁸²

Generally, her account presents the Native Americans much worse than Rowlandson’s did. While Mary Rowlandson’s story shows the Native Americans as willing to negotiate, as at

⁸⁰ Rowlandson. 1856. p. 108-109

⁸¹ Derounian-Stodola. 1993. p. 92-93

⁸² Elshtain, Jean Bethke. *Women and War*. New York: Basic Books. 1987. p. 175-176

the end, she is saved from her captors by paying a ransom, Hannah Duston's account suggests that the only way out of captivity is mass murder.

Mather is describing Duston's story without any euphemism, but rather accenting all her horrifying experiences, such as the murder of her infant child and many other captives:

About nineteen or twenty Indians now led these away, with about half a score other English captives; but ere they had gone many steps, they dash'd out the brains of the infant against a tree; and several of the other captives, as they began to tire in the sad journey, were soon sent unto their long home; the salvages would presently bury their hatchets in their brains, and leave their carcasses on the ground for birds and beasts to feed upon.⁸³

Even though Duston's story is very short in comparison to other captivity narratives, it generated a huge wave of hatred towards Native Americans among the public.

Another essential captivity narrative of the 17th century is the *God's Protecting Providence, Man's Sureft Help and Defence, in Times of greateft Difficulty, and moft eminent Danger, evidenced in the remarkable Deliverance of Robert Barrow, with divers other Perfons, from the devouring Waves of the Sea, amongft which they fuffered Shipwreck; and alfo from the cruel devouring Jaws of the inhuman Canibals of Florida* by Jonathan Dickinson. In the 17th and 18th century, the so-called *Jonathan Dickinson's Journal* became extremely popular, and according to Derounian-Stodola, it is one of the greatest American best-sellers.⁸⁴

The title itself indicates that the book portrays Native Americans very negatively. In his account, Dickinson describes his party's shipwreck and its aftermath, when they encountered different Native Americans and spent some time among them. All the encounters are portrayed quite negatively, as Dickinson mentions his constant fear for his and his family's lives and the uncertainty of the party's safety:

We all fat ftill, expecting death, and that in a moft barbarous Manner . . . they rufhed violently on us, rending and tearing thofe few Clothes we had . . . My Wife received feveral Blowf and an Indian came and took hold of her Hair and was going either to cut her Throat, or fomething

⁸³ Mather. 1853. p. 635

⁸⁴ Derounian-Stodola. 1993. p. 14

like it, having his Knife nigh her Throat, but I looked at him, making a Sign that he should not, so he defisted at which Time another Indian came, with a Handful Sea-fand, and filled our poor Child's Mouth.⁸⁵

However, he for example mentions, how cacique's (chief's) wife, when seeing Dickinson's wife oppressed, came to help her, or how when Dickinson's wife was not able to breastfeed her infant, the Native American women substituted for her.

Throughout the whole narrative, Dickinson is mostly concerned with his family and party rather than with colorful descriptions of Native Americans. Therefore, he contributes to Native Americans' image only by describing their actions – and those differentiate a lot, as Dickinson gradually encountered many different Native American tribes and each were portrayed differently. This was very good for their early image, as it was against the commonly held stereotypes, that presented all Native Americans as mortal enemies of the colonists.

Generally, captivity narratives damaged Native Americans' image quite a lot, with Derounian-Stodola considering the determinant factor to be their bipolar black and white portrayal. In the majority of captivity narratives and other contemporary works, they were portrayed as either “good” or “bad”. The phenomenon can be traced back to the very first explorers, such as Christopher Columbus, who described the aborigines as either generous and guileless people living in harmony, or as fierce and ferocious barbarians eating human flesh. Amerigo Vespucci differentiated between gentle, amenable and hospitable Native Americans, and monstrous, unwonted and very libidous ones.⁸⁶ This approach persisted in later works too, escalating in 17th and 18th century captivity narratives.

⁸⁵ Dickinson, Jonathan. *God's Protecting Providence, Man's Sureft Help and Defence, in Times of greateft Difficulty, and moft eminent Danger, evidenced in the remarkable Deliverance of Robert Barrow, with divers other Perfons, from the devouring Waves of the Sea, amongft which they fuffered Shipwreck; and alfo from the cruel devouring Jaws of the inhuman Canibals of Florida.* London: printed and sold by Mary Hinde. 1772. p. 31-34

⁸⁶ Derounian-Stodola. 1993. p.

6 Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to explore Native Americans' image in early colonial literature and assess its' development until the end of the 17th century.

As for the matter of Native Americans' overall image in the 17th century, most of the findings were as expected – majority of contemporary writings portray Native Americans negatively, as barbarians, savages and as the colonists' enemies.

Regarding their image's development, the results were rather surprising, suggesting that the image of Native Americans gradually worsened during the 17th century. In the first chapter, I analyzed the earliest literature about Native Americans, which was mostly relatively positive or neutral. It is clear, that the European authors looked down on natives, but the content of the first reports were dominated mostly by the fascination of encountering an entirely different culture. Major conflicts among colonists and Native Americans started with the first permanent settlements, such as Plymouth, Massachusetts and many others. As Europeans required bigger territories for their quickly growing populations, it started to interfere with Native Americans' interests. This clash of interests and its consequences is clearly reflected in the literary works of contemporary authors whose portrayal of Native Americans shifted from vulnerable, weak pagans to brutal, warlike, Christianity-hating barbarians. This was caused by many factors, including propaganda, subjective opinions of authors and the growing awareness of Native Americans' strength and power. Throughout the 17th century, this trend continued and the hatred towards the natives increased, and at the turn of the century, they were mostly considered a natural enemy of colonists and Christians, that should be defeated.

Generally, the findings of my research seem to indicate that the later the literature, the worse its portrayal of Native Americans. This phenomenon did not stop with the end of the 17th century, but rather extended into the following decades, deepening the differences between Native Americans and European colonists and thus reducing the chances of their possible reconciliation and coexistence.

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Fig. 1 Smith, John. *Pocahontas 'saves' the life of Captain John Smith*. 1624. Courtesy of Houghton Library, Harvard College Library. https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Pocahontas-saves-the-life-of-Captain-John-Smith-from-Smiths-The-Generall-Historie-of_fig1_279985210. Accessed 2 June 2021.

Fig. 2 Smith, John. *Captain Smith taketh the King of Pamunkey prisoner, 1608*. 1624. Captain John Smith's General History of Virginia. https://cs.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soubor:John_Smith_taking_the_King_of_Pamavnkee_prisoner_-_etching.jpg. Accessed 2 June 2021.

Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá vyobrazením původních obyvatel amerického kontinentu v raně koloniální literatuře a jeho vývojem od počátku objevení Ameriky až do konce 17. století. Hlavními metodami mého výzkumu bylo studium dobové literatury a sekundárních zdrojů, věnujících se americké literatuře koloniální éry či původnímu obyvatelstvu Ameriky. Co se týče dobové literatury, zaměřoval jsem se převážně na nejvýznamnější literární díla 17. století a díla, která se zabírala převážně původními obyvateli kontinentu či výrazně ovlivnila, jak byli vnímáni společnostmi. Výsledky mé práce ukazují, že evropská literatura popisovala původní obyvatelstvo Ameriky od samého počátku negativně. Čím dál častější kulturní a vojenské střety mezi kolonisty a původním obyvatelstvem oslabovaly vzájemné vztahy, což se promítlo i do dobové literatury. Během 17. století tedy dochází k postupnému zhoršení literárního obrazu původních obyvatel amerického kontinentu.

ANOTACE

Jméno a příjmení:	Štěpán Jelen
Katedra nebo ústav:	Ústav cizích jazyků
Vedoucí práce:	Mgr. Ivan Čipkár Ph.D.
Rok obhajoby:	2021

Název závěrečné práce	Vyobrazení původních obyvatel amerického kontinentu v raně koloniální literatuře v koloniálním období
Název závěrečné práce v angličtině	Image of Native Americans in Early Colonial Literature in the Colonial Period
Anotace závěrečné práce	Tato bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na literární vyobrazení původních obyvatel amerického kontinentu v 17. století v severoamerických koloniích. Jejím hlavním cílem je popsat postupně se měnící pohled evropských kolonistů na původní obyvatelstvo v dobové literatuře. Vezmeme-li v potaz, že literatura je obvykle odrazem veřejného mínění, tato práce také nastíní vnímání původního obyvatelstva dobovou společností.
Klíčová slova	Američtí Indiáni, původní obyvatelé Ameriky, koloniální literatura, kolonizace, vyobrazení
Anotace v angličtině	This bachelor thesis focuses on the literary portrayal of Native Americans in the 17 th century in the North American colonies. Its main aim is to describe the gradually changing perception of Native Americans by European colonists in contemporary literature. With literature being a reflection of the public opinion, this thesis will also outline the perception of Native Americans in contemporary society.
Klíčová slova v angličtině	Native Americans, colonial literature, colonization, portrayal, image
Přílohy vázané k práci	s. 15
Rozsah práce	46
Jazyk práce	Angličtina