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# Faithlessly or Faithless Lie?: The Name Symbolism Conundrum in Sedgwick's Hope Leslie

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Faithlessly or Faithless Lie?:

The Name Symbolism Conundrum in Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*

By

Erin Wade

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
Honors in the Department of English

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## ABSTRACT

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ADVISORS: Patricia Wareh and Jillmarie Murphy

This thesis focuses on the symbolic importance of names in Catharine Maria Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*. While, historically, other scholars have examined the title character's name, I argue that examining the oft-ignored significance of Faith Leslie's name is extraordinarily important to the thematic content of the novel and could be more interesting than an examination of Hope Leslie's name. To delve fully into the possible meanings of the dual pronunciations of Faith's name — as either faithlessly or faithless lie — I look at religious discrimination against Catholics and Natives during the 17th and 19th centuries, as well as literary traditions during both centuries in America, including colonial captivity narratives and the redefinition of the American literary canon during the early 19th century. I also interrogate the role of Sedgwick's family history in the crafting of her narrative, and the representations of religion and Native figures in her earlier novel, *Redwood*. I use a deconstructive lens to analyze Sedgwick's works and the critical conversation surrounding them, in an attempt to demonstrate the importance of an analysis of *Hope Leslie* that takes into account all of the text's sometimes contradictory implications and to reconcile the dichotomy that exists in scholarship on the text.

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#ThesisTakeTheWheel

## Introduction

Scholarship regarding Catharine Maria Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie* has largely represented somewhat dichotomous interpretations of her work. Many scholars have engaged with similar ideas in their writing on Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*. Generally, the following scholarly works tend to portray Sedgwick as mainly radical: Sandra A. Zagarell's "Expanding 'America': Lydia Sigourney's *Sketch of Connecticut*, Catharine Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*"; Suzanne Gossett and Barbara Ann Bardes' "Women and Political Power in the Republic: Two Early American Novels"; Philip Gould's "Catharine Sedgwick's 'Recital' of the Pequot War"; and Patricia Larson Kalayjian's "Revisioning America's (Literary) Past: Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*." In contrast, Maureen Tuthill's "Land and the Narrative Site in Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*" generally views Sedgwick as regressive and unfriendly to Native Americans. Finally, the following scholarly works, by and large, take the stance that Sedgwick had radical ideas that often terminated ambiguously in *Hope Leslie*: Karen Woods Weierman's "Reading and Writing *Hope Leslie*: Catharine Maria Sedgwick's Indian 'Connections' "; Karcher's introduction to the 1998 edition of *Hope Leslie*; and Judith Fetterley's " 'My Sister! My Sister!': The Rhetoric of Catharine Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*." The human need is to classify one interpretation as dominant or "right" (and the other as "wrong"), but a deconstructive lens can close the rifts between parts of the many seemingly opposing views about *Hope Leslie* and Sedgwick. Deconstruction is a literary theory created by Jacques Derrida<sup>1</sup> that examines mainstream, well-accepted interpretations of a given piece of literature in order to find the loose ends in those interpretations.

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<sup>1</sup> Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. 3rd ed. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2009. 63-65. Print. See Derrida's "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" (1966).

Deconstructionists pick at the loose ends until it is clear that, as Nietzsche was quick to point out in “On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense,” the ambiguity of language precludes definitive truths, thus precluding definitive interpretations of literary texts, because nothing constructed of ambiguities can be anything but ambiguous.<sup>2</sup> Conundrums pop up constantly in Sedgwick’s writing — and in writing about Sedgwick — and deconstruction often gives us a way of letting paradoxical interpretations live together in harmony.

Sedgwick engages in an extraordinarily nuanced conversation about religion in her novel, *Hope Leslie*. She examines Puritan and Protestant prejudices, Native American religious ideology (as it was understood in the early 19th century), and biases against Catholicism in the colonial era and first quarter of the 1800s. Her narrative is a revisionist work of historical fiction wherein she examines 17th century New England — specifically, the Pequot War — from a 19th century perspective. She chooses to express the multifaceted nature of religious representation in her novel through her characters’ words and actions, also utilizing name symbolism. This thesis looks at the unifying theme of Sedgwick’s portrayals of minor characters and minority religions within *Hope Leslie*.

In Patricia Larson Kalayjian’s critical essay, “Revisioning America’s (Literary) Past: Sedgwick’s *Hope Leslie*,” Kalayjian briefly posits that Sedgwick’s title could be “an ironic device,” wherein syllable emphasis can lead one to read the title —*Hope Leslie* — as either “hopeles[s] ly” or “hoples[s] lie.” Kalayjian poses questions about these two different readings of the title, including, “Is she commenting on the [19th century] impossibility of

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<sup>2</sup> Nietzsche, Friedrich. “On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense.” *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*. 3rd ed. Ed. David H. Richter. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2007. 452-459. Print.

improving white-Indian relations? ... the hopeless fate of the indigenous people?"<sup>3</sup>

Kalayjian, however, fails to address the fact that Hope Leslie, the novel's protagonist and title character, has a sister whose name is Faith Leslie. Faith disappears for enough of the novel and lacks voice in such a way that she can only function as a symbolic figure. Her name can be given the same treatment as that of Hope: it can be pronounced as either "*faithles[s] ly*" or "*faithles[s] lie*."

The multiple meanings of Faith Leslie's name are perhaps more interesting to analyze than those of Hope's, because "*faithles[s] ly*" or "*faithles[s] lie*" are clearly related to the way religion and spirituality — i.e. faith — are approached in the novel and are thus less ambiguous and unclear than the dual meaning of Hope Leslie's name. Faith, herself a member of the Puritan community, is adopted into the Pequot tribe, loses her ability to speak English, and converts to Catholicism, so she represents a loss of Puritan culture and subsequent fusion of two religious and spiritual ideologies frequently disdained by the Puritan community: Native religions and Catholicism. The ways Sedgwick approaches the representations of the Puritan and Native communities and the Puritan, Native, and Catholic religions in her novel is aptly summed up by Faith Leslie's name: "*faithles[s] ly*" or "*faithles[s] lie*." A more thorough examination of the binary oppositions in *Hope Leslie* and Sedgwick's other works could bring greater understanding of the social realities of the 19th century and the trends that influenced Sedgwick's thinking about religious life in the 17th century — including Sedgwick's own views and family history. Who was faithless, what group or groups did Sedgwick believe to be misrepresented in their faiths in 17th and 19th century America, and what ideas about faith colored Sedgwick's perceptions of faith and

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<sup>3</sup> Kalayjian, Patricia Larson. "Revisioning America's (Literary) Past: Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*." *NWSA Journal* 8.3 (1996): 71-72. PDF.

faithlessness? Is it a lie that a certain group was faithless — a “faithless lie”? Or did Sedgwick believe that that group lived “faithlessly”? Or could it be both?

But how can two ideas that are seemingly in direct opposition to one another exist within a single character’s name? Deconstruction is an especially useful approach, here, because deconstruction often seeks to break down what appear to be binary oppositions, and the reality is that there are a multiplicity of ways these seeming binary opposites could live together in a single character’s name. Sedgwick could be utilizing a form of moral relativism in its infancy to explore and portray the religions present in her novel. I examine this in my first chapter. She could be utilizing the Puritan captivity narrative and historical source material in her depiction of Faith, deviating from her sources to demonstrate significant ideas about the religions she chooses to represent in *Hope Leslie*. I analyze this in my second chapter. Sedgwick may even be using her representations of minor characters and minority religions, or lack thereof, as a way to contribute meaningfully to a distinctly American literary canon. This is the main focus of my third and final chapter.

## Chapter 1. Enlighten Me: Sedgwick and Relativism

One of the most dominant scholarly debates surrounding Catharine Maria Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie* is over her use of the Enlightenment principle of moral relativism in the novel. Moral relativism is "the view that moral judgments are either true or false only relative to some particular standpoint ... and that no standpoint is uniquely privileged over all others."<sup>1</sup> Most scholars contend either that Sedgwick employs relativism to great success, humanizing the Native American in a heretofore unprecedented way,<sup>2</sup> or that she attempts to treat Puritan and Native morality equally but ultimately fails to do so.<sup>3</sup> Judith Fetterley and Carolyn L. Karcher are two scholars who acknowledge the existence of complexities and contradictions in Sedgwick's portrayal of Natives and minor characters, but they do not discuss religion in the novel beyond brief acknowledgements within their primary discussions, usually the character Hope Leslie or Sedgwick's vision of America. I argue that Sedgwick's text exhibits traits of both the radical and the racist, the relativist and the xenophobe, and that she reconciles these traits in her treatments of minor and minority characters. Her portrayals of minority religions and minor characters reveal ambiguity as to her ability to apply relativistic principles to Native characters and her apparent inability to do so for Catholic characters.

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<sup>1</sup> Westacott, Emrys. "Moral Relativism." *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, n.d. Web. 6 Feb. 2016.

<sup>2</sup> See Sandra A. Zagarell's "Expanding 'America': Lydia Sigourney's *Sketch of Connecticut*, Catharine Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*"; Suzanne Gossett and Barbara Ann Bardes' "Women and Political Power in the Republic: Two Early American Novels"; Philip Gould's "Catharine Sedgwick's 'Recital' of the Pequot War"; and Patricia Larson Kalayjian's "Revisioning America's (Literary) Past: Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*."

<sup>3</sup> See Karen Woods Weierman's "Reading and Writing *Hope Leslie*: Catharine Maria Sedgwick's Indian 'Connections' "; Karcher's introduction to the 1998 edition of *Hope Leslie*; and Judith Fetterley's " 'My Sister! My Sister!': The Rhetoric of Catharine Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*." For an example of a scholar who does not think Sedgwick is even attempting to utilize relativism, see Maureen Tuthill's "Land and the Narrative Site in Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*."

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## I. Firm Foundations in Relativistic Thought

Sedgwick's preface, the foundation of her narrative, draws upon moral relativism directly and without dispute. She says, "... the enlightened and accurate observer of human nature, will admit that the difference of character among the various races of the earth, arises mainly from difference of condition."<sup>4</sup> Sedgwick here expresses the idea that the character of any person, regardless of race, depends on that person's upbringing. Her statement carries the implication that one's opinions of others' behaviors are often colored by one's own experiences and morals, as well. These ideas are essential to understanding the moral relativism and complex dynamics at work in race relations within Sedgwick's novel.

Relativistic ideas predated the Enlightenment, though moral relativism itself was born of the era, and concepts of moral relativism as they existed during the Enlightenment strongly influenced thinkers and writers of the early American republic. Sedgwick notes in her autobiography, *The Power of Her Sympathy*, that her father, "kept me up and at his side till nine o'clock in the evening, to listen to him while he read aloud to the family Hume ..."<sup>5</sup> The Hume of whom she speaks is David Hume, a Scottish Enlightenment philosopher who published *A Treatise of Human Nature* in 1740 and of whom Sedgwick writes in *Redwood* (1824), the novel she published directly preceding *Hope Leslie*. Because Sedgwick was aware of Hume's work, it is likely she had an understanding of Hume's concept of relativism, which he outlines in *A Treatise of Human Nature*:

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<sup>4</sup> Sedgwick, Catharine Maria. *Hope Leslie; or Early Times in the Massachusetts*. Ed. Carolyn L. Karcher. 1827. New York: Penguin, 1998. 4. Print.

<sup>5</sup> Sedgwick, Catharine Maria. *The Power of Her Sympathy: The Autobiography and Journal of Catharine Maria Sedgwick*. Ed. Mary Kelley. Boston: Northeastern UP, 1993. 74. Print.

The farthest we can go towards a conception of external objects, when supposed SPECIFICALLY different from our perceptions, is to form a relative idea of them, without pretending to comprehend the related objects. Generally speaking we do not suppose them specifically different; but only attribute to them different relations, connections and durations.<sup>6</sup>

Hume outlines the ideas of general relativism that are applicable to moral relativism. This concept of relativism includes the understanding of other objects — or, for my purposes, people or groups — as different from oneself in that their “relations, connections and durations” are different from our own. That is, our conceptions of difference, including “the difference ... among the various races of the earth,” arise “mainly from difference of condition,” as Sedgwick says, which stands in direct opposition to another prevailing theory of human differences during the early 1800s, phrenology.

During the 1820s, American scholars were engaged in a nuanced debate between relativistic theory and the theory of phrenology, and Sedgwick makes it clear that she stands firmly on the side of relativism in her preface. Phrenology was “a physiological theory of brain structure in which character and abilities could be determined from the size of mental organs (revealed by the contours of the cranium)”<sup>7</sup>, and editions of books advocating phrenology were published in America beginning in 1822.<sup>8</sup> Throughout the course of the 19th century, phrenological theory is widely acknowledged to have given scientific credence to racist attitudes, allowing examination of the various races’ skulls to suggest “innately fixed characteristics.”<sup>9</sup> Such ideas had existed in America before the

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<sup>6</sup> Hume, David. *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Ed. P. H. Nidditch. 2nd ed. 1740. New York: Oxford UP, 1978. 103. Print.

<sup>7</sup> Tomlinson, Stephen. *Head Masters: Phrenology, Secular Education, and Nineteenth-Century Social Thought*. Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 2005. xii. Print.

<sup>8</sup> Tomlinson 222.

<sup>9</sup> Tomlinson 352-53.

adoption of phrenology in popular culture, as exhibited by Thomas Jefferson's 1801 text *Notes on Virginia*, wherein he suggests "that blacks and whites might be distinct species."<sup>10</sup> Sedgwick's assertion that human differences are a product of their conditions, as opposed to innate characteristics, is her contribution to the ongoing debate between phrenology and relativism present in the early American republic and antebellum period.<sup>11</sup> In fact, Protestant religious elements debated amongst each other the validity of both theories; Calvinist church authorities did not believe in phrenology, while many liberal Christians were phrenologists,<sup>12</sup> which may have been, at least partially, why Sedgwick chose to make her contribution. George Combe, one of the leaders of the phrenological movement, was raised Calvinist,<sup>13</sup> as was Sedgwick, and both found Calvinism's messaging to be extreme and frightening,<sup>14</sup> both opting to convert to more liberal forms of Protestant Christianity later in their lives. Regardless of Combe and Sedgwick's similarities and Sedgwick's own parting with the Calvinist church, Sedgwick simply did not buy into the concept of phrenology. In the text of *Hope Leslie*, she asserts authorial voice to express her disinterest in phrenology in a manner that is almost unexpected and out of place, given the time period about which her novel concerns itself. She says, "... but regarding it as no concern of theirs, they listened, much as we listen to news of the Burmese war — Captain Symmes' theory — or lectures on phrenology."<sup>15</sup> She makes it clear that phrenology is "no concern of [hers],"

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<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Tomlinson 352.

<sup>11</sup> This debate was recently popularized in Quentin Tarantino's 2012 film *Django Unchained*, wherein Leonardo DiCaprio's character, Calvin Candie, a slave owner, expatiates on phrenology at the dinner table.

<sup>12</sup> Tomlinson 165-68.

<sup>13</sup> Tomlinson 100.

<sup>14</sup> For evidence of how extreme and frightening Calvinism can be, look at writings by Calvinist minister Jonathan Edwards. Particularly powerful is "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God."

<sup>15</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 89.

strengthening further her apparent alliance with the concepts of moral relativism in the context of 19th century.

While Sedgwick's upbringing in a Calvinist household where Hume's *A Treatise of Human Nature* was read aloud may have influenced her espousal of moral relativism, her portrayals of Hume and his theories in her second novel, *Redwood*, seem quite negative. Sedgwick's title character, Redwood, is portrayed as an "infidel," or nonbeliever in Christianity,<sup>16</sup> and Sedgwick seems to blame a man named Aslop for this. Redwood meets Aslop upon going to college, and he convinces the young Redwood to read Hume:

... [Aslop] possessed plausible talents and insinuating manners; but his mind had been contaminated by the infidelity fashionable at that period, and his vanity was stimulated by the hope of adding to his little band of converts a young man of Redwood's acknowledged genius.

The insidious eloquence of Gibbon, the audacious wit of Voltaire, *the subtle arguments of Hume, and all that reckless and and busy infidelity has imagined and invented*, were arrayed by this skilful champion against the accidental faith of Henry Redwood ... The triumph was an easy one. *Redwood's vision, like that of other unbelievers, was dazzled by the ignis fatuus that his own vanity had kindled; and like them, he flattered himself that he was making great discoveries, because he had turned from the road which was travelled by the vulgar throng.*<sup>17</sup>

Sedgwick, through her narrator, clearly states in this passage that, while Redwood could have been a virtuous Christian, he instead finds himself charmed into "infidelity" by Aslop and the reading of Hume, among other Enlightenment figures. Sedgwick identifies as vanity and ignis fatuus, or deception, the idea that reading these scholars was leading Redwood to "great discoveries," and, further, calls the scholars' writings "invent[ions] and imagin[ings]" of "reckless and busy infidelity." At the end of the book, Redwood, speaking to Westall, the son of his childhood friend, says:

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<sup>16</sup> "Infidelity." *New Oxford American Dictionary*. Electronic.

<sup>17</sup> Sedgwick, Catharine Maria. *Redwood; A Tale*. 1824. New York: Garrett, 1969. 43-44. Print. Italics added for emphasis.

“... Now I see nothing in what seemed to me their philosophic fortitude, but an obstinate vanity, a pride of opinion, a self-deifying, that made them render homage to their own consequence, when they should have sought the God of their spirits.

“Westall, I shudder at the thought of such a death as Gibbon’s, Hume’s, Voltaire’s — if their indifference to the future was unaffected, what a voluntary degradation to the level of the brute creation! if pretended, what mad audacity!”<sup>18</sup>

Though Redwood is ailing when he says this, and likely afraid of death, he seems sincere in his denunciation of the Enlightenment thinkers he once revered — whether the result of a genuine change of heart or because his “mind is enfeebled by disease.”<sup>19</sup> He goes on to give a glowing review of the Bible, saying, “I would give worlds for one year, nay one month of the life that in my folly and madness I have cursed as a weary burden imposed by arbitrary power, that my mind might be opened to the light which has dawned on it from that book — my heart reformed by its rules — renewed by its influence.”<sup>20</sup> It seems that, in *Redwood*, reading and believing the Enlightenment thinkers cannot coexist with reading and believing the Bible. This is, taken together, quite the negative view of a group of scholars whose “invent[i]ons and imagin[ings]” Sedgwick would draw upon in *Hope Leslie*, the novel she published subsequent to *Redwood*.

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## II. Relatively Native

Given the content of *Hope Leslie*, Sedgwick’s outwardly negative portrayal of Native Americans in *Redwood* is as surprising as her unflattering depiction of Enlightenment thinkers in that novel. In contrast to *Hope Leslie*, *Redwood* features only one Native character, an old man named Sooduck, who is an alcoholic and an accessory to kidnapping,

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<sup>18</sup> Sedgwick, *Redwood* 401-02.

<sup>19</sup> Sedgwick, *Redwood* 401.

<sup>20</sup> Sedgwick, *Redwood* 402.

tying him to immorality and criminality. Moreover, unlike William Fletcher's somewhat sympathetic treatment of Monoca in *Hope Leslie*, the first real description Sedgwick gives of Sooduck is almost terrifying:

Sooduck, the Indian, (for such he was) had all the peculiarities of his race. Though so old that he looked as if 'death had forgotten to strike him' — his gigantic form was still erect and muscular. In vain, Emily [the kidnapped woman] explored his long face, as the increasing light of day revealed its rigid lines and worn channels, for some trace of humanity, some signal of compassion; but it was a visage to pierce the heart of one who sought for mercy with utter despair — a visage in which brutal sensuality was mingled with a fierceness that neither time nor events could tame.<sup>21</sup>

From the outset, it seems that Sedgwick wants the reader to view Sooduck as a representative of all Native Americans, stating that he "had all the peculiarities of his race." By this logic, Natives are cast in *Redwood* as being inhuman and animalistic, dehumanizing Sooduck and all Natives. While having no "trace of humanity" is obviously dehumanizing, the dehumanization inherent in Sooduck's "brutal sensuality" is less plainly evident. Looking at the roots of the words "brutal" and "sensuality," one finds that "brutal," in its original meaning, suggested a relation "to the lower animals,"<sup>22</sup> while "sensuality" was a word "denoting the animal side of human nature,"<sup>23</sup> linking his physical description to his (in)humanity and invoking the phrenological. Both words of this adjectival pairing, then, serve to lower Sooduck, a representative of all Natives, to the semi-human, semi-animalistic state that Sedgwick's word choice creates for him. This treatment stands in stark contrast to Sedgwick's insistence in *Hope Leslie's* preface "that the elements of virtue and intellect are not withheld from any branch of the human family; and the enlightened and accurate observer of human nature, will admit that the difference of character among the various

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<sup>21</sup> Sedgwick, *Redwood* 286-87.

<sup>22</sup> "Brutal." *New Oxford American Dictionary*. Electronic.

<sup>23</sup> "Sensuality." *New Oxford American Dictionary*. Electronic.

racess of the earth, arises mainly from difference of condition.”<sup>24</sup> Such a disparity complicates Sedgwick’s portrayal of Natives, creating ambiguity within her representations of Native Americans throughout her works.

Throughout the novel, Sedgwick consistently uses Magawisca as a voice to argue for Native cultural and religious legitimacy in the face of Puritan prejudice. Often, Magawisca’s most poignant validations of her people’s values and beliefs occur in conversation with Hope Leslie, a Puritan — and one moment, in particular, occurs specifically because of Faith Leslie. Hope, shocked when Magawisca tells her that Hope’s younger sister, long ago taken into the Pequot community, has married a Native, exclaims, “There lies my mother ... she lost her life in bringing her children to this wild world, to secure them in the fold of Christ. Oh God! restore my sister to the christian family.” Magawisca, meeting with Hope in the cemetery in which both of their mothers are buried, responds sympathetically that her own mother is also buried there, and, “think ye not that the Great Spirit looks down on these sacred spots, where the good and the peaceful rest, with an equal eye; think ye not their children are His children, whether they are gathered in yonder temple where your people worship, or bow to Him beneath the green boughs of the forest?”<sup>25</sup> Magawisca invokes the idea of moral relativism here, attempting to bridge the gap between their cultures and prove the validity of her own — that she and her people do not live “faithlessly,” as she discusses Faith Leslie with Hope. She demonstrates that she believes their religious views both advocate goodness and peacefulness, and that the Great Being each of them worships views their people equally because they exemplify morality in their respective locations,

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<sup>24</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 4.

<sup>25</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 197.

whether in the churches where Puritans worship or in the forest where Natives worship. She speaks of equality in diversity.

It is only after Magawisca has attempted to imbue in Hope her belief in the equality of their people's morality that she tells the elder Leslie sister of the younger Leslie sister's religious views: "... your sister is of what you call the christian family. I believe ye have many names in that family. She hath been signed with the cross by a holy father from France; she bows to the crucifix."<sup>26</sup> Hope, apparently relieved that her sister has not fully converted to a Native American way of life and thinking "that any christian faith [i]s better than none," exclaims, "Thank God!" Magawisca, apparently aware of the sociocultural biases underlying Hope's exclamation, responds, "... there may be those that need other lights; but to me, the Great Spirit is visible in the life-creating sun. I perceive him in the gentle light of the moon that steals in through the forest boughs. I feel Him here,' she continued, pressing her hand on her breast ..."<sup>27</sup> This exchange is clearly Magawisca's continued attempt to validate her people's beliefs. She feels the need to convince Hope that Native religions are not inherently inferior to Christian religions, but she tries to create this understanding through a methodology that links Christianity and Native religions, unable to provide a justification for Native religions in their own right.

Magawisca's description of her religious beliefs in this passage, and throughout much of the rest of the book, is undeniably evocative of the Christian beliefs Hope Leslie espouses. Carolyn L. Karcher argues for this connection in her introduction to the 1998 Penguin Classics edition of *Hope Leslie*:

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<sup>26</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 197.

<sup>27</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 197-98.

Instead of accentuating Indian savagery, Sedgwick's narrative strategy works to foster recognition of the two peoples' common humanity — the prerequisite to preventing racial strife. Throughout the novel, parallels between Indian and white characters invite readers to view the two races in the same light.<sup>28</sup>

However, it is possible that Sedgwick's narrative strategy portrays the two races in too much of the same light, legitimating Magawisca's belief in the Great Spirit only because it is so comparable to Christianity's monotheism. One of Sedgwick's source texts indicates that "It is part of their religious belief, that there are inferior *Mannittos*, to whom the great and good Being has given the rule and command over the elements ..."<sup>29</sup> This indicates, contrary to Sedgwick's portrayal of Magawisca's beliefs,<sup>30</sup> that there was some kind of polytheistic worship occurring amongst Native tribes. It was also, apparently, common during the earlier part of the 19th century for people to think that New England Native Americans had disorganized religious systems that were sometimes polytheistic, according to the "Their Traditions and Religious Sentiments" portion of *A Selection of Some of the Most Interesting Narratives of Outrages Committed by the Indians in Their Wars with the White People* (1808).<sup>31</sup> Thus, Sedgwick's positioning of Magawisca and her kin as participants in a monotheistic faith easily could have been a reflection of Sedgwick's belief in a single God,

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<sup>28</sup> Karcher, Carolyn L. Introduction. *Hope Leslie; or Early Times in the Massachusetts*. By Catharine Maria Sedgwick. 1827. New York: Penguin, 1998. xxi. Print.

<sup>29</sup> Heckelwelder, John. *History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations Who Once Inhabited Pennsylvania and the Neighbouring States*. 1818. Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1876. 212. Print.

<sup>30</sup> And, to an extent, Heckelwelder's own portrayal of Native American religious beliefs. Heckelwelder often compares the Great Spirit "and the evil one" (212) to the Christian God and Devil, respectively, throughout his account. To that end, Sedgwick may be borrowing some of her language from his. However, he does explicitly indicate polytheistic practices, so Sedgwick's choice not to allow for any mention of polytheism is hers alone.

<sup>31</sup> Loudon, Archibald. *A Selection of Some of the Most Interesting Narratives of Outrages Committed by the Indians in Their Wars with the White People*. Vols. 1 and 2. 1808. New York: Arno, 1971. Print.

just as it could have been an attempt on Sedgwick's part to make Magawisca a more relatable and humanized character within a Christian society.

In contrast, Linford D. Fisher notes that New England Native American religions sometimes exhibited Christian characteristics as a result of their exposure to these religions. He says that Native American tribes exposed to missionary work often existed in “overlapping worlds of Native spirituality and Christian practice, one in which the rituals, symbols, and beliefs of European Christianity were adopted by Indians over time, either voluntarily or in response to the overtures of English missionaries.”<sup>32</sup> So, then, Native religious beliefs would merge with Christian beliefs and form a new Native religion — such as one, potentially, wherein there is a monotheistic worship of the Great Spirit, who is closely associated with nature. While it is unclear if Sedgwick was explicitly aware of this complex cultural diffusion at play, what can be said is that her portrayal of Native religion in *Hope Leslie* has the potential to humanize and make relatable to her readership Native characters, while also carrying with it the potential to white-wash them, fictionalizing and participating in a process that has obscured to modern understanding many of the pre-colonial religious and cultural practices of Native tribes. Could the story Sedgwick tells about Native faith be, in and of itself, a lie? Or could the lie be the separation Magawisca and Hope see between their faiths — faiths that influenced and changed each other in colonial America?

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### III. Vagrant and Vacant Papists

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<sup>32</sup> Fisher, Linford D. “Native Americans, Conversion, and Christian Practice in Colonial New England, 1640-1730.” *The Harvard Theological Review* 102.1 (2009): 102. PDF.

Though the main plot of *Hope Leslie* features most prominently Natives and Puritans in cultural conversation, there is a significant Catholic presence in subplots and minor characters of the novel and, it seems, Sedgwick does not attempt to apply moral relativism quite so strongly to Catholics, who are often depicted in a distinctly unflattering light. Among these characters are Faith Leslie, Rosa/Roslin, Sir Philip Gardiner, and a sailor named Antonio Batista, none of whom is described in the kindest of lights. Sedgwick, a Unitarian, would likely have had interesting views on Catholicism in a nation and era where Protestants were constantly pitted against Catholics, and anti-Catholicism was an unwavering force in America.<sup>33</sup> Nowhere is anti-Catholicism more apparent in *Hope Leslie* than in Sedgwick's choices for its male adherents.

Antonio Batista, an Italian practicing Roman Catholicism, is, without a doubt, depicted as a fool whose religiosity allows Hope Leslie to escape his comrades, a group of drunken sailors who seem interested in sexually assaulting the novel's heroine. Antonio is sleeping in the bottom of a dinghy when Hope commandeers the vessel in a desperate attempt to give the other sailors the slip after escaping from Oneco. When Antonio awakes to find the small vessel moving, he looks up to see Hope, clad in a "white dress and blue silk mantle" that gives her a "saint-like simplicity," and, naturally, he assumes that she is the

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<sup>33</sup> Anti-Catholicism rose sharply approximately two decades after Sedgwick published *Hope Leslie*. "An anti-Catholicism in the United States that was already well established in the colonial era became increasingly fierce in the nineteenth century as thousands of immigrants, many of them Roman Catholic, landed on American shores. At the same time, Protestant Americans increasingly saw their nation as an escape from and improvement on the tired systems of Europe, which included monarchical forms of government and authoritarian arrangements of religion. Raucous debate engendered bloody violence in American cities, such as Philadelphia, and in the American countryside. ... Anti-Catholicism would not vanish [following the Civil War], but it would never again have the coinage that it did in antebellum America" (Gjerde 7). For more on anti-Catholicism in 19th century America, see: Gjerde, Jon. *Catholicism and the Shaping of Nineteenth-Century America*. Ed. S. Deborah Kang. New York: Cambridge UP, 2012. Print.

“blessed virgin Mary!”<sup>34</sup> For her part, Hope, who “was half inclined to turn his superstition to her own advantage,” says, “I am not, my friend, what you imagine me to be,” with the “intention of dissipating his illusion.” However, instead of recognizing that Hope is not, in fact, “a celestial visitant,” Antonio continues to name off saints that she could be:

“Thou art not, thou art not, holy queen of virgins, and of all heavenly citizens — then most gracious lady, which of all the martyrs and saints of our holy church art thou? Santa Catharina of Siena, the blessed bride of a holy marriage?” Hope shook her head. “Santa Helena then, in whose church I was first signed with holy water? nay, thou art not? — then art thou, Santa Bibiani? or Santa Rosa? thy beauteous hair is like that sacred lock over the altar of Santa Croce.”<sup>35</sup>

Hope responds that she is not any of these people, though she never explicitly says that she is not a Roman Catholic saint or martyr, and so Antonio makes one final guess: “thou art then my own peculiar saint — the blessed lady Petronilla.” And, after this final attempt to ascertain her identity, Hope decides to play along — though she would not allow Antonio to think she was “the holy mother;” she believes her Protestantism allows her to “identify herself with a catholic saint,” and we, the readers, are to “pardon [her] for thinking that she might without presumption”<sup>36</sup> do so.

Despite multiple attempts on Hope’s part to convey to Antonio that she is not a saint or martyr, he is too foolish to see the reality of a frightened woman attempting to escape some drunk sailors. While it could be said that Hope herself holds some of the blame for Antonio’s perception of her as a saint, it should also be noted that their entire conversation is supposed to have occurred in Spanish, Antonio’s “native tongue, of which Hope fortunately knew enough to comprehend him, and to frame a phrase in return” — so it is

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<sup>34</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 252.

<sup>35</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 252-53.

<sup>36</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 253.

possible that the initial miscommunication about Hope's saintliness occurs as the result of a language barrier and not Hope's opportunism. However, regardless of whether or not Hope's original intent was deliberately to manipulate Antonio's faith to achieve her own escape, Antonio's willingness to believe Hope could be a saint is portrayed as foolishness. This folly, though, may be the only negative consequence of Antonio's Catholicism that Sedgwick allows to exist; Antonio, dimwitted as he may be, aids Hope in evading his immoral colleagues, with whom he does not imbibe in alcohol because he does "not inclin[e] to their excesses,"<sup>37</sup> and is nothing but kind and doting in his interactions with her. The Catholic sailor is overcome by the apparent superstitions of his faith,<sup>38</sup> unable to see Hope as anything other than a saint, but is ultimately moral and altruistic. Sir Philip Gardiner, the other Catholic man in the novel, is not so positively depicted.

Sir Philip is, without a doubt, *Hope Leslie's* rake, existing as the leading man in two seduction plots within the novel and, significantly, hiding his Catholicism from the Puritan community of colonial New England all the while. Though he never directly introduces himself as a Puritan, Sir Philip goes to great lengths to pass as one. On the ship to America, which he shares with Everell Fletcher, he inquires who the minister at Boston is, demonstrating familiarity with a previous minister there, Mr. Wilson, with whom he had

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<sup>37</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 252.

<sup>38</sup> Catholics' superstitions were the target of much criticism during the 19th century, according to Gjerde: " 'It is often said,' wrote the editors of the *New Englander and Yale Review* in 1852, 'that a system of religion [such as Roman Catholicism] so superstitious, absurd, and despotic, cannot long exist amid the growing light and progressive freedom of the present age' " (Gjerde 11). 19th century texts appear to indicate that superstitions were a negative byproduct of belief, leading people to follow blindly professed prophets when they should not. Heckewelder's *History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations* (1818) contains an entire chapter on Natives' superstitions about witchcraft, referring often to this strong belief as a foolish concept that often led their people to believe false prophets and preachers. Superstition was viewed as negative in 19th century America, while faith was not.

apparently hoped to stay (because he is “a stranger and wanderer”<sup>39</sup> to the town). He then indicates that he is aware of customs of dress in the Puritan community of Boston, saying that he has told his “page,” Roslin (later revealed to be his former lover, Rosa), that Roslin’s clothing is too “extraordinary,” as it violates “certain sumptuary laws” of Boston, and that he “hope[s] in good time to reform” his page.<sup>40</sup> If Sir Philip does not explicitly say he is a Puritan, he certainly goes to great lengths to ensure that he is perceived as one — and this strategy pays off for him, as Jennet certainly believes his performance, calling him “a godly appearing man”<sup>41</sup> and inviting him to dine with the Winthrops at the governor’s home when Sir Philip and Everell arrive in Boston. Though this could all be perceived as an innocent misunderstanding, it is later revealed that Sir Philip purposely conceals his Catholicism throughout the story, and so his Puritan act is revealed as an intentional deception.

The calculated nature of Sir Philip’s concealed Catholicism becomes apparent in the scene in which he visits Magawisca in prison, deliberately exposing his crucifix to her in an attempt to appeal to her belief in a God she does not even worship so that she will take the responsibility of Rosa, his unwanted concubine, off his hands. Sir Philip’s reason for assuming Magawisca is Catholic is that he “heard Magawisca during her interview with Hope Leslie, allude to the Romish religion,”<sup>42</sup> most likely during Magawisca’s explanation of Faith Leslie’s conversion — a mistake born of manipulation that soon costs Sir Philip his life. At her trial, Magawisca presents to the gathered community Sir Philip’s crucifix, which

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<sup>39</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 131.

<sup>40</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 132.

<sup>41</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 146.

<sup>42</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 268.

he “didst drop in [her] prison,”<sup>43</sup> at which point Sir Philip’s lies begin to unravel before all of Boston. The court adjourns, and Sir Philip arranges a private meeting with Governor Winthrop to explain all that has happened. Before they have the chance to meet, however, Sir Philip concocts a “cruel conspiracy” against Hope Leslie “to baffle well-founded suspicions — to disprove facts,”<sup>44</sup> so that he can retain his position in Boston society. He opts to convince Chaddock, and his crew of drunken sailors whom Hope Leslie had earlier encountered, to kidnap Hope for a large reward. Sir Philip intends, after Hope has been taken captive, to sail across the Atlantic and force her to marry him out of “stern necessity, which even a woman’s will could not oppose.”<sup>45</sup> Sir Philip knows that it would appear Hope had run away with him, leaving her virginity in question and rendering her a social pariah in 17th century Protestant cultures. Of course, Sir Philip’s plan does not turn out as he had anticipated: the sailors accidentally kidnap Jennet, and Rosa, overcome by grief after finding out that Sir Philip is trying to force Hope Leslie to marry him, throws her lantern into a barrel of gunpowder. Sir Philip, Jennet, Rosa, and all the sailors — except Antonio and one other crew member — die in the explosion. Antonio, the kind fool, was not on the boat when it exploded, but informs the governor of the abduction plans of “his sinful comrades”;<sup>46</sup> the other crew member, the sole survivor of the explosion, fills in all of the other details of the drama for the Boston community, who immediately begin searching for the bodies of those who died. They find all but that of Sir Philip Gardiner, and “the inference of our pious forefathers, that Satan had seized upon that as his lawful spoil, may not be

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<sup>43</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 305.

<sup>44</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 332-33.

<sup>45</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 334.

<sup>46</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 357.

deemed, by their skeptical descendants, very unnatural.”<sup>47</sup> To the last, Sir Philip is apparently the only truly evil character in the novel who, according to Sedgwick, “regard[s] neither the laws of God nor man,” lying in his espousal of his Puritanism and his devotion to Catholicism and living faithlessly.

This raises the question of why Sir Philip is portrayed as being so completely immoral and irreligious. Is it just some quality of his disposition — did Sedgwick simply need a villain? Is it Sedgwick’s attempt to demonstrate, through Magawisca’s capture and trial, that white men can be the true aggressors with Natives, and that it may not necessarily always be — or always have been, throughout the 17th century — the other way around? Or could it be Sir Philip Gardiner’s association with a religion, nobility, and man — “Thomas Morton, the old political enemy of the colony”<sup>48</sup> — whose roots are found in Europe, a cultural center from which America was trying to differentiate and distance itself during the 19th century, that allows for his deceptive, disruptive representation in *Hope Leslie*? These ideas are explored further in the third chapter of this thesis. Catholic womanhood proves to be equally multifaceted as Catholic manhood in *Hope Leslie*.

The novel features two Catholic women, Rosa and Faith Leslie, who share many, potentially unfortunate, similarities. Carolyn L. Karcher lays out the adjectival relationship between the two women that Sedgwick seems to create:

... Faith’s sojourn among Indians leaves her looking almost mentally retarded [sic]: “pale and spiritless,” her face is “only redeemed from absolute vacancy by an expression of gentleness and modesty” (237). This description of Faith links her to another character who “stare[s] vacantly about, as if her reason were annihilated” and who describes herself as having “lost my way” (174, 304): the fallen woman, Rosa, likewise a Catholic. ... The similarities between Rosa and Faith suggest that Faith, too, despite her expression of “modesty,” is

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<sup>47</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 369.

<sup>48</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 358.

in some sense a fallen woman and that she, too, is wearing a disguise (her Indian costume) that marks her as transgressive.<sup>49</sup>

This connection between the two Catholic women seems to hold water. It invalidates the practice of Catholicism, equating married Catholic women to unmarried, “fallen” Catholic women and insinuating that, therefore, Faith’s marriage to Oneco is not a valid, Christian marriage within the boundaries the novel sets. Sedgwick appears to corroborate this theory at the end of the book, after Faith has escaped Boston with Oneco and the community has noticed she’s gone missing:

Faith had been spiritless, woe-begone — a soulless body — and had repelled, with sullen indifference, all Hope’s efforts to win her love. Indeed, she looked upon the attentions of her English friends but as a continuation of the unjust force by which they had severed her from all she held dear. Her marriage, solemnized as it had been by prescribed Christian rites, would probably have been considered by her guardian, and his friends, as invalidated by her extreme youth, and the circumstances which had led to the union.<sup>50</sup>

Not only is Faith Leslie still “soulless” and “spiritless,” but she is also in a marriage that the Puritan community would have dissolved, despite its validity within the community with which Faith now identifies and within the Catholic church as a Christian religious authority; it is strange that the Puritans would choose to invalidate and dissolve a marriage performed within a Christian sect whose views on marriage are informed by the same book as those of Puritanism.

But, the connection Karcher draws between Faith and Rosa seems to insinuate that Sedgwick believes Catholics live faithlessly, a point with which Hope would clearly disagree. As discussed earlier in the chapter, when Magawisca tells Hope that Faith has married Oneco, Hope appeals to God to “restore [her] sister to the christian family,” to which

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<sup>49</sup> Karcher xxiii.

<sup>50</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 359.

Magawisca replies that Faith “hath been signed with the cross by a holy father from France; she bows to the crucifix.” Hope, believing “any christian faith was better than none,”<sup>51</sup> is relieved at this prospect, complicating Sedgwick’s messaging about Catholicism. If Sedgwick’s messaging about Native faiths is quite ambiguous and the majority of her messaging about Catholicism is apparently negative, then how can Catholicism, a Christian faith, be better than a Native faith? Is the moral relativism Sedgwick exercises working to condemn Catholicism? Or is the ambiguity present in Sedgwick’s portrayals of the minority faiths of colonial New England reflective of an ambiguity Sedgwick identifies in religious practitioners?

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#### **IV. What’s the Big Idea?**

The majority of *Hope Leslie* features strong anti-Catholic sentiments, though one brief section allows Catholicism to be privileged, at the expense of Native religious beliefs. This moment of Catholic triumph and Native derision is a microcosm of the constant ambivalence Sedgwick demonstrates toward both of these religious groups throughout the novel. Of course, the common denominator that allows scholars to assess the degree to which Sedgwick utilizes a relativistic lens in her depictions of such minority faiths in *Hope Leslie* is the religions’ monotheism. When one is privileged over the other, it is made more obvious because, at their cores, the religions preach many of the same tenets. The equality, or lack thereof, that we can find in comparisons of Sedgwick’s authorial choices for these religions — the faithfulness or faithlessness of their adherents — stems from the fact that

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<sup>51</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 197.

Sedgwick creates religions of equal merit, within the Western, Christian world in which she lived.

## Chapter 2. Deviations from the Record: Faith's Captivity Narrative in *Hope*

### *Leslie*

The captivity narrative is featured twice in *Hope Leslie* (1827), a work of historical fiction written about the Pequot War, and other scholars have spent much time analyzing the two captivity plot lines within the novel. The first of the two captivity narratives Catharine Maria Sedgwick incorporates into *Hope Leslie* is that of a Native American family, an entirely nontraditional idea in the genre of the American captivity narrative. Some scholars argue that Sedgwick inverts the form to demonstrate the effects of events like the Pequot War on Native Americans, which serves to undermine the dominant white narrative present in historical accounts that placed the Native as savage and the white man as morally right.<sup>1</sup> In scholars' discussions of the captivity narratives, they frequently only briefly touch upon the second, less outwardly unconventional of the narratives, that of Faith Leslie. These discussions of the second captivity narrative typically occur when scholars, such as Mary Kelley and Karen Woods Weierman, look at Sedgwick's familial ties to a prominent colonial captivity, pointing to Sedgwick's family history as the inspiration for Faith Leslie's conversion to Catholicism and willingness to stay with the Pequots.<sup>2</sup> I assert that Sedgwick's deviations from this historical record within Faith Leslie's captivity narrative are significant to the overall meaning of Sedgwick's text. The interplay of race and religion in these deviations often emphasizes an ambiguity and ambivalence toward these

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<sup>1</sup> See Patricia Larson Kalayjian's "Revisioning America's (Literary) Past: Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*" (page 67); Sandra A. Zagarell's "Expanding 'America': Lydia Sigourney's *Sketch of Connecticut*, Catharine Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*"; and, to an extent, Philip Gould's "Catharine Sedgwick's 'Recital' of the Pequot War." For the counterpoint to this argument, see Maureen Tuthill's "Land and the Narrative Site in Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*" (specifically, page 100).

<sup>2</sup> See Mary Kelley's introduction to the Rutgers UP edition of *Hope Leslie* (1987); Karen Woods Weierman's "Reading and Writing *Hope Leslie*: Catharine Maria Sedgwick's Indian 'Connections'"; and Patricia Larson Kalayjian's "Revisioning America's (Literary) Past: Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*" (70).

topics within the minds of Sedgwick's characters and within the discussion of Catholicism and Native religions in the novel overall.

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### **I. The Captivity Narrative and an 'Unredeemed' Ancestor**

The captivity narrative is an obvious choice for Sedgwick's novel, given that it is a work of historical fiction set during the Pequot War, a war between Puritan settlers and the Pequot Native American tribe that took place during the 1630s in colonial Massachusetts.<sup>3</sup> Captivity narratives existed across religious and geographical boundaries, but this chapter is primarily concerned with Puritan captivity narratives. Puritan captivity narratives served both religious and political purposes. They were usually written during wars between England and France in which settlers in Canada and New England became embroiled, or during conflicts between English settlers and Natives, who were usually allied with the French. Puritan captivity narratives feature English, Puritan settlers whom French-allied Native Americans take captive and bring to New France, where the captive Puritans are handed over to French-Canadian Jesuits as prisoners of war. The political motives in the genre are obvious — the narratives often show French colonists and French-allied Natives, with whom the French engaged in the fur trade, as barbaric. The religious motives are tied to the political: during the 1600s, France was chiefly Catholic and England was chiefly Protestant, and the disdain between the two sects of Christianity was still strong following the English Reformation. The Puritan captivity narrative essentially reinforces the barbarity of the Catholics and their allies, which in turn reinforces the validity of the Puritan mission in New England. These captivity narratives are supposedly nonfiction accounts of situations

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<sup>3</sup> Cave, Alfred A. *The Pequot War*. Amherst, MA: U of Massachusetts P, 1996. 1. Print.

in which Native Americans kidnap colonial settlers, usually during raids on the settlers' homes, and commit atrocities against the settlers, such as scalping, murder, and cannibalism.<sup>4</sup> Often, the still-surviving captive settlers are brought to Jesuit missionaries in Canada where they are taken care of until the settlers' families come to collect them or send for them to come home. Puritan captivity narratives conventionally contain either conversion narratives or redemption narratives, wherein Jesuit missionaries try to convert the Puritan captives to Catholicism and the Puritans either decide to adopt the Catholic faith, or proudly proclaim their ability to resist Catholic conversion, maintain their Protestantism, and remain Puritans.

John Williams, a Puritan minister who lived in Deerfield, Massachusetts, put forth such a record of his captivity, entitled *The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion*. His captivity narrative is interesting for a number of reasons, the first of which is that he was a relative of Catharine Maria Sedgwick on her maternal grandmother's side of the family.<sup>5</sup> As Williams' descendent, Sedgwick had a special connection to his narrative, which is apparent in Faith Leslie's captivity plot line, similar as it is to a part of Williams' story. This similarity necessitates a close reading of *The Redeemed Captive*, the motives behind Williams' words, and their potential significance within the context of Sedgwick's novel.

John Williams' captivity, occurring in 1704, began in the usual way: Native Americans raided his town, killing members of his family, taking others captive, and burning many of his neighbors' homes. Though they did not play a significant role in the initial attack scene of Williams' book, nor in most of the travel scenes, the French were also

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<sup>4</sup> Namias, June. *White Captives: Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier*. Chapel Hill, NC: U of North Carolina P, 1993. 22. Print.

<sup>5</sup> Weierman, Karen Woods. "Reading and Writing *Hope Leslie*: Catharine Maria Sedgwick's Indian 'Connections.'" *The New England Quarterly* 75.3 (2002): 419. PDF.

present and were chiefly responsible for the events that led up to the attack. Deerfield was a casualty of the War of the Spanish Succession, fought principally between France and England in Europe and jumping the Atlantic Ocean to New France, in present-day Canada, and New England.<sup>6</sup> In August of 1703, French forces and their Native American allies attacked various locations in New England, spurring English settlers' retaliation. The settlers proceeded to make an assault on about six Abenaki Native American towns, which drove the Abenakis to ask the French for their assistance in seeking revenge. The French, for their part, were happy to help, as their original goal in attacking New England, according to John Demos, was "to render the Abenaki Indians and the English colonists 'irreconcilable enemies.'"<sup>7</sup> So the French and several Native American tribes, including the Abenakis, set Deerfield in their sights, which was a strategic move for the French in their War of the Spanish Succession. The French knew, most likely, that John Williams resided in Deerfield and that Williams would make a good bargaining tool in convincing English forces in Boston to release a French pirate who had been an extraordinary asset to the French army.<sup>8</sup> This series of events led to John Williams' forced march to Canada with his Native American captors.

On his way to the Canadian city of Quebec, Williams lost his wife, several of his children, and many of his neighbors, but not once did he lose his faith in God. Williams makes note of his Native American master's tolerance toward his religion in his captivity narrative, mentioning specifically that, "On the Sabbath day (March 5), we rested, and I was permitted to pray, and preach to the captives." But, he says, this tolerance only existed while

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<sup>6</sup> Demos, John. *The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995. 9. Print.

<sup>7</sup> Demos 15.

<sup>8</sup> Demos 16.

he and his congregation were captives of the Natives; when they reached the French colonies, Williams says, “we were forbidden praying with one another, or joining together in the presence of God.”<sup>9</sup> This distinction, which Williams notes when his journey to New France has barely begun, immediately points to the political and religious motives behind his decision to tell his story. Namely, his position as a minister ensured that his word was well respected in Puritan New England, so his accounts of persecution at the hands of his French captors served to reinforce the animosity and disconnect between the French, English, and their colonies.

This divide between the religious elements of New France society and the English captives further intensifies as Williams’ narrative continues. When Williams reaches Shamblee, a French village he says is “about fifteen miles from Montreal,”<sup>10</sup> he cannot say enough about the hospitality of the French colonists he encounters — excepting, of course, his encounters with Jesuits, priests acting as Roman Catholic missionaries. He relays his first experience interacting with a Jesuit: “One of these Jesuits met me at the fort gate, and asked me to go into the church and give God thanks for preserving my life. I told him I would do that in some other place.”<sup>11</sup> A Catholic church was not, it seems, the kind of place Williams wanted to go to worship and give thanks. He says that, later that day, the Jesuit “justified the Indians in what they did against us ... and how justly God retaliated them in the last war, and inveighed against us for beginning this war with the Indians, and said we had before the last winter and in the winter been very barbarous and cruel in burning and killing Indians.” Williams objects to this claim, saying, “I told them that the Indians, in a very

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<sup>9</sup> Williams, John. *The Redeemed Captive, Returning to Zion*. 1706. Bedford, MA: Applewood Books, n.d. 19. Print.

<sup>10</sup> Williams 26.

<sup>11</sup> Williams 27.

perfidious manner, had committed murders on many of our inhabitants after the signing articles of peace; and as to what they spake of cruelties, they were undoubtedly falsehoods, for I well knew the English were not approvers of any inhumanity or barbarity towards enemies.”<sup>12</sup> He emphasizes, throughout this entire section of his story, the ways he feels religious leaders in New France are slandering his people, telling lies about the acts he and his fellow Puritans have committed. He then describes an exchange with one of the Jesuits at the fort during which the Jesuit says “the Indians would not allow any of their captives staying in their wigwams whilst they were at church, and were resolved by force and violence to bring us all to church if we would not go without.” Williams, of course, would not even go into the church to give thanks for his deliverance, and thus finds it “highly unreasonable so to impose upon those who were of a contrary religion, and to force us to be present at such a service as we abhorred, was nothing becoming Christianity.”<sup>13</sup> Again, he emphasizes his persecution at the hands of the Jesuits, conveying the forcefulness with which they attempted to impel him to attend Catholic services.

Williams experiences more frustrations with the Jesuits upon arriving in Montreal. Governor De Vaudrel “redeems” Williams “out of the hands of the captives”<sup>14</sup> as soon as he arrives in the city, and Williams learns that several of his children are alive and well. He is told that his youngest daughter, Eunice, is a captive of the Mohawks, so he goes to “endeavor for her ransom” with the governor. He writes a letter to the Jesuit in the Mohawks’ fort, to which the Jesuit replies that the Mohawks will not let Eunice go, and meeting with her would be a waste of time. The governor sees the letter and talks to the

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<sup>12</sup> Williams 28.

<sup>13</sup> Williams 29.

<sup>14</sup> Williams 34.

Jesuit, who then allows Williams to meet with Eunice, which he does twice during this trip. He reminds Eunice to study her catechism and Bible, but can do nothing more.<sup>15</sup>

Five or six years later, John Schuyler, John Williams' acquaintance, manages to secure a meeting with Eunice Williams at the Native American fort where she now lives. He confirms that Eunice has lost the ability to speak English, noting that he needs to "Employ [his] Indian Languister to talk to her," and that she has married a Native American man. Eunice's husband, in fact, is present during Schuyler's meeting with her. Eunice is also now a Catholic, married to her husband in a Catholic church by a Catholic priest. During the meeting, Schuyler asks Eunice to return to Deerfield and meet with her family, giving "her Assurance of liberty to return if she pleased," but Eunice says only two words during their hours-long meeting: "Jaghte oghte." Schuyler explains that these words are Mohawk, and "their Signification (is) maybe not but the meaning thereof amongst the Indians is a plaine denyall."<sup>16</sup> So Eunice has refused to return to her family in New England, favoring her adoptive one in Canada.

This story bears a striking resemblance to that of Sedgwick's fictional Faith Leslie. Sedgwick was aware of the fact that Eunice Williams was a distant relative and "was fascinated with the Williams branch of her family."<sup>17</sup> She wrote in her travel journal about missing an opportunity to meet with Eunice Williams' great-grandson, Eleazar Williams, an Episcopalian deacon, during a trip she took to Oneida, New York, in 1821.<sup>18</sup> Knowing, as she did, the captivity narrative in her family's own history and finding that part of her family

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<sup>15</sup> Williams 35-37.

<sup>16</sup> Schuyler, John. Quoted in *The Unredeemed Captive*. 103-07.

<sup>17</sup> Weierman 420.

<sup>18</sup> Sedgwick, Catharine Maria. *Life and Letters of Catharine M. Sedgwick*. Ed. Mary E. Dewey. 1871. London: Forgotten Books, 2015. 129-30. Print.

history so interesting, it is unsurprising that elements of the story might find their way into her writing.

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## II. Finding, and Failing to Find, Eunice in Faith

The story of Faith Leslie, Hope's younger sister, shares many of the characteristics of Eunice's story. Interestingly, Faith's and Eunice's stories also share a unique similarity with Monoca's story: someone else tells their stories for them, relieving them of their power of speech and relegating them to the realm of the symbolic. This voicelessness means the women's stories become manipulable and uncertain, calling for close inspection and reading, as liberties taken with their stories probably exist for a reason. It is with this in mind that I begin my analysis of Faith's captivity, knowing that it is based on Eunice Williams' story and that any discrepancies between the two likely serve a purpose.

The story of Faith Leslie's captivity begins, in many ways, just like the one John Williams conveys of the children captured during his own captivity. The narrator describes the Pequots' transport of Faith Leslie, apparently still quite young, during their removal of the Puritan settlers from the Fletcher home. The Natives "placed the little Leslie on the back of one of the Mohawks, and attached her there by a *happis*, or strong wide band, passed several times over her, and around the body of her bearer."<sup>19</sup> In his *The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion*, Williams describes Natives carrying young children in a similar manner during their trip out of Deerfield. Faith's story, as it is narrated from this point until she steps out of the spotlight when Everell escapes captivity, foreshadows her future role when the narrator mentions that Faith "scream[s] at her separation from Oneco" and only stops

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<sup>19</sup> Sedgwick, Catharine Maria. *Hope Leslie; or Early Times in the Massachusetts*. 1827. New York: Penguin, 1998. 76. Print.

when she is "permitted to stretch out her hand and place it in his."<sup>20</sup> Oneco and Faith are later married, a fact that deviates from the story of the Williams family; though Oneco is a Native American man, it is believed that Eunice married a Native man she met after arriving in Canada, not prior to her capture.<sup>21</sup> Sedgwick likely has Faith marry Oneco and not someone unfamiliar to the reader for the purposes of sentimentality; because the reader already knows Oneco as a character, and we are shown in many scenes at the beginning of the novel that he cares for Faith deeply and they have a special bond, their marriage evokes "feelings of tenderness"<sup>22</sup> characteristic of sentimental novels. Later in the novel, the narrator relays the events of the party's dinner on their first night together. Sedgwick describes Oneco's care for Faith, outlining the ways he makes a bed for her, feeds her, and fashions her a cup. Faith, for her part, only "receive[s the food] from him as passively as the young bird takes food from its mother."<sup>23</sup> This passivity, inaction, and dependency becomes a trademark of her character later in the novel, as discussed in the first chapter of this thesis.

Oneco continues to dote on "his little favourite," and the group arrives at a Native American village in the "lower valley of the Housatonick,"<sup>24</sup> where the story again diverges from the source text and other-worldly imagery is applied to Faith as soon as she enters the Native American community there. Mononotto and Everell separate from the rest of the group, and everyone else heads to the hut belonging to the sister of the village's chief. When Faith enters the hut, the sister "utter[s] a faint exclamation, deeming the fair creature a

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<sup>20</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 76.

<sup>21</sup> Demos 110-11.

<sup>22</sup> "Sentimental." *New Oxford American Dictionary*. Electronic.

<sup>23</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 79.

<sup>24</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 87-88.

messenger from the spirit-land.”<sup>25</sup> As Faith is pale-skinned and the Native tribe into which she has entered has had little contact with English settlers — hearing only from one of their hunters that “the strangers’ skin was the colour of cowardice”<sup>26</sup> — it is possible that this perception of Faith as a “messenger from the spirit-land” is simply an attempt by a woman who has never before seen a white child to make sense of Faith’s “fair,” potentially ghostly appearance. While this moment could be left at that interpretation alone, it is also significant to note that it could be an insertion of Sedgwick’s thoughts about Native religions into the seemingly personal narrative. The chief’s sister erroneously uses her beliefs about the afterlife to make sense of things she does not immediately understand, so Sedgwick’s writing could potentially serve as a commentary on the superstition, and consequent inaccuracy, Sedgwick sees in some Native beliefs. The second interpretation of this moment is not the only valid one, but it is a possibility for which the text allows. This scene is also significant because it is the last time anyone affiliated with the Leslie family sees Faith for over seven years, and it is the last time the reader is presented with a firsthand view of Faith for almost 150 pages.

In another deviation from the source material, Faith only appears again after Hope has noted that the governor has given a commander in Albany the task of discovering more information about Faith and that Hope, herself, has requested more information from a Native American woman, Nelema. While gubernatorial aid in finding the captive girl fits the Williams narrative, direct contact with a Native to obtain more information does not. Hope tells Everell in a letter about her contact with Nelema, saying that the information she has suggests that Faith is among the Mohawks and that the Mohawks are to coastal, “ ‘praying

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<sup>25</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 92.

<sup>26</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 89.

and catechised Indians' ... as wolves to sheep." Hope's bestial comparison between the Mohawks and "praying and catechised Indians" seems to hold negative implications for the Mohawks, especially as she goes on to say that she "cannot bear to think of [her] gentle timid sister, a very dove in her nature, among these fierce tribes."<sup>27</sup> Her desperation to get her sister back and keep her away from the "fierce tribes," with whom she "cannot bear" to picture her, eventually pays off. Hope's contact with Nelema leads Nelema to Magawisca, who finds Hope and brings Faith to her. Again, the roundabout methods Hope must employ to regain contact with Faith fits the Williams narrative, but the direct contact with Native characters who aid Hope in her quest does not. This deviation may serve to maintain a Native presence in the novel during the intervals where Magawisca is not in direct contact with Hope, underlining the significance of Native characters within a story that is, ultimately, about a white, Puritan woman's life.

When Magawisca comes to Hope and tells her that she can arrange a visit with Faith, Hope's reactions are quite true to Eunice's story, though the fact that Magawisca, a Native character, tells Hope of her sister's marriage and arranges the meeting between the two is, most decidedly, not. Magawisca speaks in euphemism to indicate Faith's marriage to Oneco, her brother, until this exchange occurs:

"Speak plainer to me," cried Hope, in a voice of entreaty that could not be resisted. "Is my sister?" — she paused, for her quivering lips could not pronounce the words that rose to them.

Magawisca understood her, and replied. "Yes, Hope Leslie, thy sister is married to Oneco."

"God forbid!" exclaimed Hope, shuddering as if a knife had been plunged in her bosom. "My sister married to an Indian!"<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 114.

<sup>28</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 196.

Interestingly, though this passage has always stood out to me as a moment when the protagonist of the story explicitly gives readers a view of her prejudices, this scene is in keeping with Eunice's story — Schuyler interrogates a Jesuit priest to understand why Eunice's marriage to a Native was permitted to happen, and several people who knew Eunice, including her family members, are so scandalized by her apparent marriage that they speak about it in letters only in euphemism,<sup>29</sup> never able, as Sedgwick says of Hope, to "pronounce the words." And, in addition, Sedgwick leaves open the possibility that Hope's expression of prejudice was meant, instead, as an expression of grief over the fact that her mother was dead and her sister had been lost to her permanently, as well. Magawisca reacts to Hope's exclamation with "proud contempt," apparently interpreting Hope's words in much the same way as I always have, while Hope's internal world seems to crumble. Her "first emotion" — the shock she expresses when she exclaims, "God forbid!" and "shudder[s] as if a knife had been plunged in her bosom" — gives way "to a burst of tears; she wept aloud, and her broken utterance of, 'Oh, my sister! my sister! — My dear mother!' emitted but imperfect glimpses of the ruined hopes, the bitter feelings that oppressed her." However, racial and cultural prejudice may still play a role in Hope's expressions of grief.

Sedgwick precludes the possibility that Hope's grief is not at least slightly racially (or culturally) motivated throughout the rest of this section. Directly after conveying her grief at the loss of both her mother and her sister, Hope says, "There lies my mother ... she lost her life in bringing her children to this wild world, to secure them in the fold of Christ. Oh God! restore my sister to the christian family." Hope's familial and cultural conditioning necessitate Christian practices to honor her mother, and her emphasis on any Christianity

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<sup>29</sup> Demos 99-101.

as preferable to Native religious practices appears again, when Magawisca informs Hope that Faith is now Catholic: “‘Thank God!’ exclaimed Hope fervently, for she thought that any christian faith was better than none.”<sup>30</sup> The relief Hope expresses at her sister’s conversion to Catholicism is decidedly uncharacteristic of the time period, especially if one looks at captivity narratives of that era — Jesuits and their Catholic faith were abhorred, as we see quite distinctly in John Williams’ captivity narrative. So, then, what purpose does Hope’s deviation from the historical record in her relief at Faith’s Catholic conversion serve? Perhaps it is there to underline Hope’s disdain for religions that do not fit within her limited scope of understanding. Her belief that Christian faiths are better than non-Christian faiths softens much of the anti-Catholic sentiment present in the novel, but it also privileges Christian faiths over Native ones. Magawisca replies to Hope’s views on Christianity with an explanation of her belief in the Great Spirit that echoes distinctly the beliefs of Christians, attempting to undercut the rhetoric Hope seems to employ. Sedgwick abruptly cuts off the possibility of a more complex and nuanced discussion of Puritan views of non-Christian faiths, however, when she has Magawisca say, “I feel Him in these ever-living, ever-wakeful thoughts — but we waste time. You must see your sister.”<sup>31</sup> Immediately, Sedgwick turns the topic from faith to Faith, from Magawisca’s perception of a faithless lie to Magawisca’s connection to Faith Leslie. And, of course, Hope sees her sister soon after this interaction.

As soon as Hope and Faith are reunited, Faith Leslie again becomes “Mary,” her name before arriving in America and being rechristened as a Puritan, a shift that is notable for its various possible symbolic meanings. Sedgwick explains this shift in terms of Hope: “we use

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<sup>30</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 197.

<sup>31</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 198.

the appellative by which Hope had known her sister.”<sup>32</sup> However, since Hope had known her sister as Faith for exactly as long as Faith/Mary had known her sister as Hope, it seems odd that Sedgwick would choose to refer to Faith as Mary while simultaneously choosing to continue to refer to Hope/Alice as Hope. This change of name does not fit with the Williams narrative upon which Faith’s story is apparently based, and it seems unlikely that the reason Sedgwick gives for the change of name is the sole reason for such a major modification of Faith Leslie’s identity — especially given that Faith Leslie, as she says to Hope, “No speak Yengees,”<sup>33</sup> and therefore cannot represent or identify herself during this interaction.

There are many potential reasons Sedgwick would prefer to call Faith “Mary” after referring to her as Faith for over 200 pages. Could she be showing respect for the fact that Faith Leslie no longer identifies as a Puritan and would likely no longer refer to herself using the “puritanical appellation”<sup>34</sup> Faith, if she understood English or the symbolic power of a name long since forgotten? Could she be drawing attention to Faith/Mary’s Catholicism, knowing that the Madonna is a favorite of Catholics? Could she be emphasizing the divide between the two sisters by removing the name that made them two sides of a Puritan coin, the faith and hope that were so symbolic of “the christian graces of their mother”<sup>35</sup> and Puritanism? Regardless of Sedgwick’s intent, we know Mary to be a biblical name, with two distinctly important women in Christ’s life bearing that name: the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene, representing apparent opposites in much the same way as the dual interpretations of Faith Leslie as faithlessly and faithless lie. Perhaps it is the

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<sup>32</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 238.

<sup>33</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 238.

<sup>34</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 30.

<sup>35</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 30.

irreconcilability of these women's conventionally represented sexualities — the virgin and the whore — within the singular character of Faith/Mary that explains why “Sedgwick departs from her historical source, the story of Eunice Williams ... in portraying the couple [Faith/Mary and Oneco] as childless.”<sup>36</sup> Faith/Mary and Oneco are implicitly childless within Sedgwick's novel, not explicitly so, and Schuyler's meeting with Eunice features only the woman and her Native American husband, with no children present, like Hope's meeting with Faith/Mary and Oneco, but the dichotomy of the virgin and the whore manifest within a single woman would be an interesting cause of the barrenness Karcher identifies in Faith/Mary and Oneco's coupling. The meaning behind the Mary moniker matters only for the length of the reunion of the two sisters, mediated by Oneco and Magawisca (wherein, it should be noted, Sedgwick deviates from Eunice's story by allowing Faith/Mary much more than two words of speech) because, just as the group is about to part and return to their homes, a group of men, including the governor, ambush their meeting place and take into custody Magawisca and Faith/Mary. As soon as Faith/Mary is (re?)captured, she again becomes “Faith Leslie, who was weeping like a child ...”<sup>37</sup> Gone is “Mary,” as quickly as the signifier had returned, and returned to the story is Faith. Faith is never again called Mary, and 100 pages later, she exits the story, returning to her home (where, presumably, she has an entirely different name in an entirely different language<sup>38</sup>).

The places in Faith Leslie's captivity narrative where Sedgwick intentionally deviates from her historical sources are ripe with meaning. They indicate sometimes contradictory

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<sup>36</sup> Karcher, Carolyn L. Introduction. *Hope Leslie; or Early Times in the Massachusetts*. By Catharine Maria Sedgwick. 1827. New York: Penguin, 1998. xxiii. Print.

<sup>37</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 243.

<sup>38</sup> Judith Fetterley suggests that Faith's Pequot name might be “White Bird” (504), presumably because that is what Oneco “call[s] the little Leslie” (Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 203).

ideas about Native religions and Catholicism that emphasize the ambiguity of these subjects in the budding minds of the young characters Sedgwick crafts and in a budding American nation. The next chapter will address the use of such distinctly American ideas, in all their ambiguity, within the realm of the literary.

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### **III. What's the Big Idea?**

Since beginning my study of *Hope Leslie*, I have always viewed the first captivity narrative — that of Monoca, Magawisca, and Oneco — as being less significant to the text as a whole than the narrative of Faith Leslie, for one simple reason: it takes up less of the book. While the first captivity narrative stretches for a mere 35 or so pages, the second manages to wind its way into approximately 120 pages of the text. The first seems to figure into the plot as the inciting force, an act of fate that brought the Natives into the lives of the Leslie sisters so that the second captivity narrative could occur. However, Monoca, Magawisca, and Oneco's captivity narrative has received much more scholarly attention for its radical (or seemingly radical while not actually being radical, according to Maureen Tuthill) structure and content. It follows, then, that Faith Leslie's story, though minor within the overall context and content of the main plot (i.e. the tale of Hope Leslie's youth) like the first narrative, should receive detailed analysis in its own right, taking into account not only its similarities to Eunice Williams' story, but also its dissimilarities.

### Chapter 3. A Novel Form: Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie* and an American Literature

Catharine Maria Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie* was published during a time when America was still in its formative years, 51 years after the Declaration of Independence was signed and 40 years after the United States Constitution was signed. The literary world of the new nation was fixated on nationalism, following the American victory in the War of 1812.<sup>1</sup> According to Carolyn L. Karcher, "The main imperative of Sedgwick's era was to create a national literature that differentiated itself from British and European precedents by capitalizing on what made America unique: its landscape, history, folk heroes, regional idiosyncrasies, potpourri of races and ethnic groups, and democratic social structure."<sup>2</sup> The editors of *North American Review* underline these ideas in their 1825 review of Sedgwick's *Redwood*: "Who then will undertake to say, that the hand of genius may not pencil off a few scenes, acted in our own vast country, and amidst our large population, that shall interest and delight the world? It is a native writer only that must or can do this."<sup>3</sup> Among scholars of Sedgwick's work, there is almost no debate about the fact that she was heeding this call. There is debate, however, over what fate she chooses for the young American nation in its dealings with minority groups: is she "imagin[ing] an America grounded in inclusiveness and communitarianism," as Zagarell and others believe,<sup>4</sup> is she, as Tuthill says, "imagin[ing]

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<sup>1</sup> Spencer, Benjamin T. *The Quest for Nationality: An American Literary Campaign*. Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1957. 73-76. Print.

<sup>2</sup> Karcher, Carolyn L. Introduction. *Hope Leslie; or Early Times in the Massachusetts*. By Catharine Maria Sedgwick. 1827. New York: Penguin, 1998. xi. Print.

<sup>3</sup> Review of *Redwood*. *North American Review* 20.47 (1825): 250. Web. 12 Mar. 2016. This quote is especially interesting because it invokes, to a degree, relativistic theory.

<sup>4</sup> Zagarell Sandra A. "Expanding 'America': Lydia Sigourney's *Sketch of Connecticut*, Catharine Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 6.2 (1987): 225. PDF. See also: Suzanne Gossett and Barbara Ann Bardes' "Women and Political Power in the Republic: Two Early American Novels"; Philip Gould's "Catharine Sedgwick's 'Recital' of the Pequot War"; and Patricia Larson Kalayjian's "Revisioning America's (Literary) Past: Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*."

a new political order that excludes Indians,”<sup>5</sup> or does the truth lie somewhere in between these extremes?<sup>6</sup> An analysis of the many religions present in the novel demonstrates hierarchical portrayals of the faiths Sedgwick represents and chooses not to represent, playing into several facets of the scholarly debate surrounding Sedgwick’s vision for America. Ultimately, this analysis calls into question whether the fates of Sedgwick’s characters in *Hope Leslie* represent her vision *for* the nation, or whether the end of the book is demonstrative, instead, of Sedgwick’s view *of* the nation as it existed in 1827.

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### **I. A Puritan, a Catholic, an Anglican, and a Native Walk into a Nation**

Sedgwick chooses to represent in *Hope Leslie* many different religions that existed in colonial America during the 1600s, presumably in response to the *North American Review*’s look at *Redwood*, which states:

The writer ... has not availed herself of the more obvious and abundant sources of interest, which would naturally suggest themselves to the author of a fictitious history, the scene of which should be laid in the United States. She has not gone back to the infancy of our country, to set before us the fearless and hardy men, who made the first lodgment in its vain forests men in whose characters is to be found the favorite material of the novelist, great virtues mingled with many errors, the strange land to which they had come, and its unknown dangers, and the savage tribes by whom they were surrounded, to whose kindness they owed so much, and from whose enmity they suffered so severely.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Tuthill, Maureen. “Land and the Narrative Site in Sedgwick’s *Hope Leslie*.” *ATQ* 19.2 (2005): 96. PDF.

<sup>6</sup> See, for examples of those who take more of a middle-ground approach to this concept: Karen Woods Weierman’s “Reading and Writing *Hope Leslie*: Catharine Maria Sedgwick’s Indian ‘Connections’ ”; Karcher’s introduction to the 1998 edition of *Hope Leslie*; and Judith Fetterley’s “‘My Sister! My Sister!’: The Rhetoric of Catharine Sedgwick’s *Hope Leslie*.”

<sup>7</sup> Review of *Redwood* 245. The editors of the *North American Review*, contrary to what this quote could imply, actually gave Sedgwick’s *Redwood* quite the positive review, in between declarations of the appropriate subjects for American literature.

After insisting that colonial American settlers and their interactions with Natives would make an excellent subject for American literature, the editors of the *North American* suggest that America's religious plurality is an equally unique feature of the new nation, including such varied religious groups as Quakers, Moravians,<sup>8</sup> Roman Catholics, Jews, Shakers, Seventh Day Baptists, Puritans, and Anglicans.<sup>9</sup> It seems likely that this review heavily influenced Sedgwick's writing, as *Hope Leslie*, the novel she published three years after *Redwood*, is set in colonial America, amidst a conflict with Native Americans, and represents four religious groups: Puritans, Anglicans, Catholics, and Pequot Native Americans. Within her novel, however, not all religions are created equal.

Because representation and voice play such a significant role in *Hope Leslie*, the number of times each religious group is mentioned could be an interesting metric with which to discern the hierarchical privileging of those groups within the universe Sedgwick creates.<sup>10</sup> Purely from a numbers standpoint, the language of *Hope Leslie* may demonstrate some of the bias inherent in the book. Upon close inspection, Sedgwick uses the phrase "Great Spirit," which refers to Hope's Pequot faith, 18 times. She uses "Puritan" 16 times, and she uses "Catholic" six times. She also uses other terms to refer to Catholicism; "Romish" is used six times, and "papist" is used once, leading to a grand total of 13 allusions to Catholicism in the book. For its part, "Church of England" receives only one mention,

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<sup>8</sup> The Moravians are another Protestant sect.

<sup>9</sup> Review of *Redwood* 253-54.

<sup>10</sup> Similar metrics are often used to discuss diversity in film. The Bechdel test, for example, looks at the number of women in a film, whether the women talk to each other, and whether they talk about something other than a man. More closely related to the approach I suggest in this chapter is the approach many studies and news media outlets take when discussing diversity in film; they measure the number of speaking roles allocated to specific minority groups to demonstrate discriminatory tendencies, despite the fact that the film or films being analyzed may not feature any dialogue or imagery that is outwardly discriminatory against those groups.

while the related phrase “Book of Common Prayer”<sup>11</sup> receives two mentions, leading to a total of three direct mentions of Anglicanism. It would seem, then, that Sedgwick privileges Pequots over Puritans, who are privileged over Catholics, who are privileged over Anglicans. When the terms “God,” which is always used in a Christian context, and “Christian” are taken into account, however, it seems that Christian spirituality may actually be favored in the novel. “God” is used 91 times, and “Christian” is used 40.<sup>12</sup> Even if occurrences of these words were divided evenly among the three Christian faiths present in *Hope Leslie*, “God” would still be used almost twice as often per Christian religion represented in the novel than “Great Spirit” is used per Native religion represented in the novel, and “Christian” would be used only 4.66 fewer times per Christian religion than “Great Spirit” is used per Native religion. So, even if Christianity is still invoked less frequently than Native religious signifiers, when divided by the number of sects present in the novel, the Christian God is invoked significantly more often than is the Great Spirit. The overt hierarchy of Pequots, then Puritans, then Catholics, then Anglicans still exists, but the covert privileging of the Christian God over the Great Spirit is present, as well.

I address the anti-Catholicism present in America in the first chapter of this thesis, which helps to explain why Catholicism is almost at the bottom of the religious hierarchy in *Hope Leslie*, but I have not yet addressed the political motives that may be at play in placing Anglicanism dead last, with only three direct mentions of religious practices specific to the Anglican Church in the entire novel, and only one practitioner of Anglicanism after the first 20 pages. There are, of course, obvious reasons for this choice; a mere 12 years before

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<sup>11</sup> The Book of Common Prayer is used only in Anglican sects of Christianity, including Episcopalianism.

<sup>12</sup> Sedgwick, Catharine Maria. *Hope Leslie; or Early Times in the Massachusetts*. 1827. New York: Penguin, 1998. Print.

Sedgwick published *Hope Leslie*, America had defeated England in the War of 1812 and was, in 1827, attempting to differentiate itself from its parent nation, in addition to the fact that Puritans had initially colonized Massachusetts to escape religious persecution from adherents to Anglicanism in powerful English governmental positions.

Dame Grafton, the sole Anglican character featured in *Hope Leslie* after the book's first 20 pages, is often portrayed in much the same way as Antonio, the well-meaning but foolish Catholic. In a letter Mrs. Fletcher writes to her husband at the beginning of the novel, she describes an occasion wherein Dame Grafton "even ventured to read aloud from her book of Common Prayer" — though the Anglican widow is "prevented from repeating" this "offence" when Everell, in the midst of a storm, brings her "her prayer-book" and encourages the frightened woman "to look out the prayer for distressed women, in imminent danger of being scalped by North American Indians."<sup>13</sup> Of course, there is no such prayer in the Book of Common Prayer, but Dame Grafton, "distracted with terror, seized the book, and turned over leaf after leaf, Everell meanwhile affecting to aid her search." Her belief that her prayer book could help her in throes of a violent storm, with "the hideous howling of the wolves" in the background as an added source of fear, is the butt of Everell's joke. Though Mrs. Fletcher expresses disapproval at her son's "someone profane jest," she also sees it fit "to commend the sagacity whereby he had detected the short-comings of written prayers."<sup>14</sup> So, while Mrs. Fletcher does not exactly endorse her son's mockery of Dame Grafton, chastising him for making the widow look foolish, she does approve of his motives; that is, Mrs. Fletcher agrees with her son's apparent assessment that Dame

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<sup>13</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 31.

<sup>14</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 31-32.

Grafton's Anglican peculiarities are foolish, creating a portrayal of the widow that is comparable to the Catholic Antonio.

Sedgwick not only creates comparable descriptions of Anglicans and Catholics, but also explicitly link Anglicanism to Catholicism during at least one key point within the book. At the end of the story, when the Bostonian characters have discovered the truth about Sir Philip Gardiner's lying, adultery, and Catholicism, Sedgwick reveals "that Sir Philip had formerly been the protégé, and ally of Thomas Morton, the old political enemy of the colony."<sup>15</sup> Morton was an Anglican who, during the 1620s and '30s, settled in Massachusetts, incurring the wrath of the Puritans and finding himself banished back to England after shooting at some Natives.<sup>16</sup> In revenge, and in an attempt to return to Massachusetts, he tried to get the English courts revoke the Puritans' patent to the land in New England, even going so far as to write a book chronicling his time in New England wherein he "scorns the self-righteousness of the purer-than-thou"<sup>17</sup> Puritans. Sir Philip, the villain of the novel, is connected to Morton, an Anglican, and this connection is portrayed as being indicative of Sir Philip's character, as "a Roman Catholic; ... and ... an utter profligate, who regarded neither the laws of God nor man."<sup>18</sup> The positioning of an Anglican and a

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<sup>15</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 358.

<sup>16</sup> Heath, William. "Thomas Morton: From Merry Old England to New England." *Journal of American Studies* 41.1 (2007): 157-59. PDF.

<sup>17</sup> Heath 161-63. Morton's book is called *New England Canaan*.

<sup>18</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 358. This connection also probably exists to clue the reader into the fact that Sir Philip Gardiner is supposed to be a stand-in for Sir Christopher Gardiner, who spent some time in Massachusetts, during the 1620s and '30s, with a younger woman who was believed to be his mistress. Word came from England that Gardiner had two wives there, and the Puritans in Massachusetts sent him back from whence he came. Gardiner's mistress apparently told the Puritans that she and Gardiner were Catholics. Mary, the mistress, promptly married and moved to Maine. Gardiner followed but eventually ended up back in England, where he joined Morton in his lawsuit to revoke the Puritans' claim to Massachusetts. For more on Gardiner, see Heath 160-61 and "Sir Christopher Gardiner — The Knight Who Fled Boston in Fear of His Wife," *New England Historical Society*, New England Historical Society, 7 Feb. 2015, Web, 26 Apr. 2016.

Catholic in political enmity with Puritan Massachusetts does not bode well for Anglicanism or Catholicism within the context of the novel.

Indeed, by the end of *Hope Leslie*, the only religious group that is textually represented as remaining in Boston is the Puritans. Of the Catholic characters, 50% are dead, with Antonio and Faith Leslie serving as the sole survivors. Faith Leslie has returned to the woods with her Native husband; Sir Philip and his mistress, Rosa, have died in a ship explosion; and Antonio has completely disappeared from the story, with no explanation, after informing Governor Winthrop of Sir Gardiner's true identity. Dame Grafton, the only Anglican, dies in England while visiting the "mother country"<sup>19</sup> with Hope and Everell, a fitting end for a member of the Church of England. Magawisca, the only Native character who discusses in detail her religious beliefs, has also returned to the woods, joining Faith, Oneco, and the rest of the "little remnant of the Pequod race" to begin "their pilgrimage to the far western forests."<sup>20</sup> None but the Puritan settlers — except Jennet, who also died in the ship explosion — remain to tell the tale of what transpired. But while Catholics, Anglicans, and Natives disappear by the end of *Hope Leslie*, there is at least one group that existed in colonial America during both the 17th and 19th centuries that is not represented within the context of the novel at all. If this book is intended to give Sedgwick's vision for America, then that vision does not include African Americans.

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## II. Black America

The African American community represented an extraordinarily vibrant and fascinating subset of religious life in America during the 17th and 19th centuries, and

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<sup>19</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 370.

<sup>20</sup> Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 359.

Governor Winthrop of Massachusetts, so important to colonial New England and *Hope Leslie*, himself held slaves during the time span in which the novel is set, so their absence in Sedgwick's novel is puzzling. Though it is unknown how many slaves Winthrop had at Ten Hills Farm, near Boston, he was given permission to keep slaves in 1639, two years after the conclusion of the Pequot War, and slavery was formally legalized in the Massachusetts colony two years later, in 1641.<sup>21</sup> Winthrop surely held Native American slaves, and, in a letter Winthrop's brother-in-law wrote to him in 1645, he alluded to the possibility that Winthrop held black slaves: "I suppose you know very well how we shall maintain 20 Moores cheaper than one English servant."<sup>22</sup> Slaves certainly existed in Boston, beyond the reaches of Winthrop's property, during the period in which *Hope Leslie* is set (1637-1646, approximately), as well. The first African slaves were documented as being sold in Massachusetts in 1638,<sup>23</sup> a single year after the Pequot War ended.

Sedgwick was not one to shy away from representing slavery or black characters; in *Redwood*, the title character is a slave owner, and "Slavery in New England" (1853) is the story of her childhood servant, Elizabeth "Mumbet" Freeman, who was the first African American whom the state court system emancipated from slavery after Mumbet challenged its constitutional legality in Massachusetts.<sup>24</sup> Sedgwick cared deeply for Mumbet, as evidenced by her memories of the woman in her autobiography: "Then come thronging recollections of my childhood, its joys and sorrows ... my love of Mumbet, that noble

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<sup>21</sup> Manegold, C. S. *Ten Hills Farm: The Forgotten History of Slavery in the North*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2010. 45-46. Print.

<sup>22</sup> Downing, Emmanuel, quoted in Manegold 49.

<sup>23</sup> Manegold 43.

<sup>24</sup> See: Sedgwick, Catharine Maria. "Slavery in New England." *Bentley's Miscellany* 34 (1853): 417-424. PDF.

woman, the main pillar of our household.”<sup>25</sup> In fact, Sedgwick credited much of the “formation of her character” to Mumbet’s influence, saying Freeman had “a clear and nice perception of justice ... an uncompromising honesty in word and deed, and conduct of high intelligence, that made her the unconscious moral teacher of the children she tenderly nursed.”<sup>26</sup> It is quite clear, based on her extraordinary love of and esteem for her black servant, that Sedgwick was not hateful toward or biased against African Americans.

Scholars have argued that the disappearance of Natives at the end of *Hope Leslie* is indicative of Sedgwick’s inability to envision a place for Natives in America,<sup>27</sup> and the same could hold true for Sedgwick’s choice not to represent African Americans in her novel; however, it is more likely that, given Sedgwick’s seeming racial acceptance, her story was not meant as a roadmap to Americanism and was representative of only a small sliver of her imagination and observation of 17th-century America.

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### III. What’s the Big Idea?

Though Sedgwick was probably not being racist in excluding African slaves from her fictionalized account of the Massachusetts colony in the years immediately following the Pequot War, it is still significant that she opted not to include African Americans in her novel. I believe that this decision was deliberate. While the inclusion of the Pequot Native American, Protestant, and Catholic religious groups in *Hope Leslie* seems a direct response to the *North American Review*’s call, within their review of her *Redwood*, for literature that

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<sup>25</sup> Sedgwick, Catharine Maria. *The Power of Her Sympathy: The Autobiography and Journal of Catharine Maria Sedgwick*. Ed. Mary Kelley. Boston: Northeastern UP, 1993. 68. Print.

<sup>26</sup> Sedgwick, *The Power of Her Sympathy* 70.

<sup>27</sup> See: Carolyn L. Karcher’s introduction to the 1998 Penguin Classics edition of *Hope Leslie*; Judith Fetterley’s “ ‘My Sister! My Sister!’: The Rhetoric of Catharine Sedgwick’s *Hope Leslie*” (specifically, see page 509); and Maureen Tuthill’s “Land and the Narrative Site in Sedgwick’s *Hope Leslie*.”

tackles these subjects, the *North American* noticeably does not include representations of slavery (and slave religions) in this call. There is another, vastly more important, North American document that did not, in 1827, include slaves in its wording, as well: the United States Constitution. Though in Article I of the Constitution, the Framers outline the three-fifths clause, which counts each slave in America as three-fifths of a person toward a state's population in the census, it refers to slaves obliquely as "all other Persons."<sup>28</sup> Similarly, later in Article I, the Framers refer to the slave trade as, "The Migration or Importation of such Persons as any of the States now existing shall think proper to admit,"<sup>29</sup> and, in Article IV, slaves are "Person[s] held to Service or Labour in one State, under the Laws thereof ..."<sup>30</sup> Like the Constitution and the *North American Review*, Sedgwick does not acknowledge, in her novel, the existence of African slaves in colonial and early America. Though a popular scholarly belief is that *Hope Leslie* is Sedgwick's imagination of an alternative future for America,<sup>31</sup> it is my argument that she only imagines her idealized, alternative history for America at the beginning and in the middle of her novel, revising the history of the Pequot War to fit her motives. By the end, when the only surviving and acknowledged population remaining is the white Puritans, Sedgwick is observing America as it is in 1827: a nation distancing itself from England (represented by Anglicanism), harboring anti-Catholic sentiments, driving Native Americans further and further west and away from their ancestral lands, and refusing to acknowledge formally the existence of slavery. Perhaps the intense ambiguity Sedgwick demonstrates toward many of the various religions she

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<sup>28</sup> *U.S. Constitution*. Art. I, Sec. 2, Clause 3.

<sup>29</sup> U.S. Const. art. I, sec. 9, clause 1.

<sup>30</sup> U.S. Const. art. IV, sec. 2, clause 3.

<sup>31</sup> See, notably, Karcher's introduction, Tuthill's "Land and the Narrative Site in Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*," and Zagarell's "Expanding 'America.' "

presents in the novel exists to reinforce her attempt to depict the country as she saw it, as America has always been a nation that can never fully agree on its interpretation of any given group.

## Conclusion

Throughout all the chapters of this thesis, several quotations from *Hope Leslie* are repeated and reanalyzed multiple times in different contexts in an attempt to demonstrate the abundance of ways Sedgwick's words can be interpreted. Scholarship of the novel, and of some of Sedgwick's other works, has also been indicative of the myriad ways single characters or quotes can be interpreted. My thesis specifically looks at minor characters and minority religions within the novel, seeking to demonstrate the ambiguity Sedgwick employs in representing the many faiths she includes (or conspicuously does not include). The first chapter focuses on Sedgwick's use of relativistic theory in *Hope Leslie*, coming to the conclusion that, though she professes her use of the concept, she portrays Native religions and Catholicism, especially, with extraordinary ambivalence. Next, I focus on Sedgwick's deviations from her historical source in Faith Leslie's captivity narrative, finding that the areas where these deviations occur often serve to underline sometimes-contradictory ideas about Native American cultural practices and Faith's religious name symbolism. The third and final chapter looks at *Hope Leslie* as an intentional contribution to a distinctly American literary canon, casting some doubt on the idea that Sedgwick's work serves as her imagination of an ideal America and suggesting that, perhaps, the end of the book leaves the reader with Sedgwick's vision of America as it is in 1827. My thesis's structure builds on itself, deconstructing religious representations in the novel in the first, second, and third chapters, and leading to the conclusion in the third that *Hope Leslie* is not a proxy for Sedgwick's firm assertions about what American life should be, but instead is a representation of American life as a hodgepodge of groups that often lack cohesion or willingness to understand one another.

As Carolyn L. Karcher notes, *Hope Leslie's* reception in 1827 featured some ambivalence, as well. Reviewers said Sedgwick romanticized Natives, creating for them personas that could not actually exist, or that Magawisca was not a good representation of Natives as a whole, though her traits could be found in some Natives. Reviewers had similar thoughts about her female characters, saying the novel would benefit from removing certain characters, or that certain characters were wonderful but their interactions were unrealistic.<sup>1</sup> These conflicting and seemingly irreconcilable interpretations of Sedgwick's writing foretell the current lack of consensus about her work, suggesting that, as Karcher says regarding responses to Magawisca's speech about Native Americans and whites at the end of *Hope Leslie*, "The novel allows room for both responses."<sup>2</sup>

Though I tried to avoid firm binaries in my thesis, it represents just one interpretation of the book. My contribution to the body of scholarly work regarding Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie* does, however, contribute several original thoughts and ideas to the scholarly conversation. The limited focus of this thesis leaves open many questions that I posed but did not take it upon myself to explore, as they did not fall within the purview of religion in *Hope Leslie*. Some of these questions suggest themselves nicely to future scholarship on the novel, including the absence of African American characters, and other deviations from historical source material within the novel that are not strictly tied to religious themes or captivity narratives. I "leave it to that large, and most indulgent class of [my] readers," scholars of Sedgwick, "to adjust, according to their own fancy" the ideas set forth in this thesis.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Karcher, Carolyn L. Introduction. *Hope Leslie; or Early Times in the Massachusetts*. By Catharine Maria Sedgwick. 1827. New York: Penguin, 1998. xxxiv-xxxv Print.

<sup>2</sup> Karcher xxviii-xxix.

<sup>3</sup> Text in quotations taken from Catharine Maria Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*, page 369.

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