

©2011

Kevin Robert Cattrell

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

COLONIAL NEW ENGLAND PSALMODY AND
THE POETICS OF DISCORD IN TRANSLATION

by

KEVIN ROBERT CATTRELL

A dissertation submitted to the
Graduate School-New Brunswick
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Program in English

Written under the direction of

Professor Meredith L. McGill

And approved by

New Brunswick, New Jersey

OCTOBER, 2011

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

COLONIAL NEW ENGLAND PSALMODY AND
THE POETICS OF DISCORD IN TRANSLATION

By Kevin Robert Cattrell

Dissertation Director:

Professor Meredith L. McGill

My dissertation explores the poetics of colonial New England psalmody from 1640 to 1730. This poetics, I argue, sought to consolidate textual, musical, spiritual, and social accord, blending the faithful translation of scripture, the agreement of voices, the mutual engagement of hearts, and the cohesion of churches. In many ways, however, colonial New England psalm singing was defined as much by its engagement of discord as by its pursuit of harmony. Through readings that span a broad range of genres—metrical psalm translations, war narratives, sermons, music primers, mission tracts, and meditational poetry—my dissertation attempts to trace out the forms of this engagement.

In the first chapter, I investigate the development of a unique discourse of congregational psalmody in Massachusetts Bay in the 1640s. Centered on a translation of the Book of Psalms compiled and first published in the Bay colony, this discourse

emphasized social and musical unison while acknowledging the psalter's thematization of alienation and miscommunication.

Chapter 2 explores the ways in which colonial representations of Praying Indians tested the Reformed doctrine of the psalms' universal translatability. Missionary writers in this period, I argue, conveyed to transatlantic audiences a sense of spiritually complex Indian Christian personhood by demonstrating the affective continuities between the experiences of native proselytes and the psalmists' godly but quintessentially human songs. Meanwhile, opponents to the mission used the psalms to expose what they suspected was the fundamental shallowness of Praying Indians' professed commitment to the Christian faith.

The third chapter centers on a long and public 1720s altercation between ministers in favor of "Regular Singing"—a more methodical approach to psalmody—and a surprisingly obstinate faction of laypersons who opposed these measures. According to the progressive, scientifically informed perspective of the proponents of Regular Singing, the purpose of the ordinance was—and always had been—to reflect reason and order back to its divine source. The colonists' failure to do so, the proponents of Regular Singing feared, implied that a chosen people were effectively willing their own degeneration into American savagery.

The fourth and final chapter explores the Westfield, Massachusetts minister Edward Taylor's lifelong commitment to psalmody as a poet, translator, and pastor. I argue that Taylor's verse not only makes use of a broad, polyglot lexicon of vocal and instrumental devotional music, but that it explores the rich aesthetic potential in discord. I

trace the early development of this exploration to Taylor's two discarded attempts to translate the psalms.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my grandmothers, Margaret Stoker Brewer and Nancy Bowers Cattrell, in grateful recognition of their love and support.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Dedication	v
Table of Contents	vi
List of Tables	vii
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: “Crotchets of Division”: Unity in Discord in Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts Bay	11
Chapter 2: Singing Indians and the Limits of the Psalms’ Universal Translatability	63
Chapter 3: Irregular Singing in Early Eighteenth-Century Massachusetts	116
Chapter 4: Edward Taylor’s Poetics of Discord	166
Conclusion: Wonderful Hindrance, Beautiful Disconnect	212
Acknowledgment of Previous Publication	221
Bibliography	222

List of Tables

Table 1

60

Kevin Cattrell

Fall, 2011

Colonial New England Psalmody and the Poetics of Discord in Translation

Introduction

The poetics of colonial New England psalmody sought to consolidate textual, musical, spiritual, and social accord, blending the faithful translation of scripture, the agreement of voices, the mutual engagement of hearts, and the cohesion of the church. In many ways, however, this poetics was defined as much by its engagement with discord as by its pursuit of harmony. My dissertation attempts to trace out the forms of this engagement across a broad range of colonial genres: metrical psalm translations, war narratives, sermons, music primers, mission tracts, and meditational poetry.

Whenever colonial New England congregations gathered to pray and to hear their ministers preach, all present—whether white, Indian, or African—were expected to join voices in humble but earnest songs of praise. Offering one of very few aesthetic outlets in a mode of public worship characterized by a preference for the “Plain Style” of verbal expression,¹ a dearth of set forms, and an emphatic rejection of church icons, psalmody was the only medium through which women’s voices could be heard in church services.² Until the 1740s, when hymns by Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley were gradually accepted into the liturgy, only psalms (and, occasionally, other scriptural songs) were

¹ For a useful discussion of the plain style as it related to Puritan poetry, see “Ars Poetica,” the second chapter of Daly’s *God’s Altar*.

² Miriam’s song, described in Exodus 15.20-1, set the precedent for female participation in the ordinance. John Cotton cites this verse in *Singing of Psalmes* (43).

sung in New England churches. The prohibition on hymns of human composure in public worship reflected early modern Reformed theologians' belief that, in the Book of Psalms, the Holy Spirit had indicted a body of work that anticipated all possible human spiritual experience and was amenable to all cultural and linguistic contexts.

In a coda to *Common Prayer*, a monograph on public worship and early modern English poetry, Ramie Targoff contends that while "Early American scholarship has focused enormous attention on those devotional practices whose texts were not prescribed and hence varied from day to day...it has largely ignored the significance of the far less sensational practice of singing Psalms, a tradition that was unique in engaging the entire body of worshippers in vocal and uniform devotion." Targoff associates this selective approach to New England devotional culture with a "familiar critical tendency to underestimate the force of paradigmatic and standardized practices in favor of individualized and spontaneous behavior." She concludes, "however committed the American Puritans may have been to abolishing the Prayer Book of their English past, they were equally serious about maintaining the congregational traditions surrounding the metrical Psalms. In a church shorn of all liturgies, the presence of a standardized Psalter represents a peculiar and compelling aberration" (122). On the one hand, these charges are undermined by their mischaracterization of the ends of Massachusetts Bay settlement: the colonists regarded themselves as English in the present, and their mode of public worship was never "shorn" of psalmody. Standardized congregational singing only seems an "aberration" in colonial New England churches if we posit a clean break with England and the Anglican church, which the New England settlers could not afford and did not want.

Furthermore, the relationship between common prayer and New England congregational psalmody is more complicated than Targoff suggests. One crucial difference between the two is that the psalms were not composed, edited, or compiled with an eye to liturgical unity: it is far more difficult to bring them under interpretive control. The fashioning of set prayers, however grounded in scripture, can be carried out selectively in ways that a faithful and complete metrical translation of the Book of Psalms cannot. In tension with their fixedness as texts, many psalms are characterized by ruptures in thought, obscure imagery, elliptical phrasing, temporal ambiguity, and sudden shifts in posture and tone.³ For the sixteenth-century translator Arthur Golding, these qualities signified a mind in transition, a recognizably human struggle to reconcile experience with an imperfect faith in the fallible medium of a human tongue. In the preface to his translation of Calvin's commentary on the psalms, published in 1571, he remarks,

The thing that is peculiar to [the Book of Psalms], is the maner of the handling of the matters wherof it treateth....forasmuche as it consisteth cheefly of prayer and thanksgiuing, or (which comprehendeth them bothe) of inuocation, whiche is a communication with God, and requireth rather an earnest and deuout lifting vp of the minde, than a loud or curious vtterance of the voice: there be many vnperfect sentences, many broken speeches, and many displaced words: according as the voice of the partie that prayed, was eyther preuented with the swiftnesse of his thoughte, or interrupted with vehemency of ioy or greef, or forced to surcease through infirmitie, that hee might recouer newe strength and cheerfulness, by interminding Gods former promises and benefites. (6)

For Golding, what makes the psalms effective as translatable models of “communication with God” and as catalysts of self-discovery is their raw and compelling immediacy—their realistic imperfection as speech and their lifelike subordination of eloquence to

³ Because of the ambiguity of Hebrew tenses, Gunkel points out, “even today...commentators sometimes waver over whether a poem should be conceptualized as a complaint about present need or as a thanksgiving for a fortunate deliverance” (2).

affect. No colonial New England author, to my knowledge, addressed the psalms' textual cruxes in quite this way, but many acknowledged the irreducible humanity of the psalmists' language. "The Psalms if the Scriptures be Compared to a Body," the Boston minister James Allen preached at the end of the seventeenth century, "may well be called the heart of it; in other parts of it God mainly speaks to man: In this there is the gracious mans pouring out his Soul to God, and manifests his holy affections to others" (9-10).

Nevertheless, Targoff's point about Early Americanists' unwillingness to regard the practice of psalmody as an important category of scholarly inquiry is well taken, especially within the discipline of literary study. Treatments of the psalms in colonial American literature often exhibit a tendency to valorize expressions of lyric selfhood over standardized, collective modes of worship. In a reading of Anne Bradstreet's Andover Manuscript poems, to take one example, Beth Doriani usefully outlines a number of the ways in which the colonial poet seems to have modeled her devotional verse on the Psalms, but frames her account with a selective reading of the following passage from Bradstreet's letter "To My Dear Children": "Among all my experiences of God's gracious dealings with me, I have constantly observed this, that He hath never suffered me long to sit loose from Him, but by one affliction or other hath made me look home, and search what was amiss....Then have I gone searching and have said with David, 'Lord, search me and try me, see what ways of wickedness are in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.'" Doriani comments, "By imitating David in the language, voice, stance, and thematic patterns in the poems of her notebook, Bradstreet takes on the voice of David, demonstrating her powerful identification with David: 'then have I said...with

David,’ she writes in her letter ” (67).⁴ As Bradstreet’s letter suggests, the psalms are an ideal medium for searching, for being searched, and for understanding the interrelatedness of these two elements of Reformed spirituality. The preposition “with,” however, suggests that the author aims at something other than imitation, emulation or the assumption of another voice, all three of which involve a distinction between original and copy. Instead, the writer claims to have mixed her voice with David’s. Subtle as this distinction might be, it expresses a crucial component of Reformed New England understandings of David’s example, the component of solidarity.

Augustine outlines this principle in a passage from his commentary on the fifth verse of Psalm 51. One of the penitential psalms, its subscript—“A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bath-she-ba”—invokes an episode from David’s life that is recounted in 2 Samuel 12.⁵ Augustine seizes on this connection in order to clarify the level of affective investment the psalm asks of the believer:

Ad te Nathan propheta non est missus, ipse David ad te missus est. Audi eum clamentem, et simul clama; audi gementem, et congemisce; audi flentem, et lacrymas junge; audi correctum, et condelectare. [To you Nathan the prophet is not sent, David himself is sent to you. Hear (David) crying and cry with him; hear him groaning, and groan with him; hear him weeping, and mingle your tears with his; hear him amended, and with him rejoice.] (cited in Kuczynski, 191)⁶

⁴ Bradstreet is apparently quoting from memory here: the Authorized and Geneva Bibles have different texts.

⁵ See Alter, *David Story*, 257-64, for a perceptive reading of this episode. According to Alter, the psalm’s “idea of offering God a broken spirit instead of sacrifice” is more consistent with later Hebrew devotional literature: “in all likelihood, this psalm is a general penitential psalm composed centuries after David” (*Psalms*, 180). Early modern commentators, however, accepted the attribution.

⁶ In the opening clause of this passage, Augustine invokes 2 Samuel 12.1: “And the LORD sent Nathan unto David.”

Ideally, the clamoring, groaning, shedding of tears and rejoicing are shared activities: Augustine suggests here that a strong sense of fellowship is crucial to the attentive Christian's experience of the psalms, even when it is private.

Literary scholarship on the devotional culture of colonial New England tends also to downplay the crucial musical elements of psalmody. Raymond A. Craig argues in "Polishing God's Altar" (1995), for example, that in Cotton's *Singing of Psalmes* and the Bay Psalm Book Preface, "we have an explicit statement of Puritan poetics that may in turn be applied to the poets and poetry that followed the Bay Psalm Book in the colony" (2). Craig provides nuanced readings of Bay Psalm 23 and Anne Bradstreet's "David's Lamentation for Saul and Jonathan" (an adaptation of 2 Samuel 1.17-27) in order to elucidate this poetics, and he argues persuasively that Cotton's writings on psalmody reflect a sophisticated poetic sensibility. Nevertheless, Craig merges Cotton's remarks about the practice of singing into a Puritan colonial *ars poetica*, a basis for writing original poems, bracketing the central concern of both of these works—singing.

By contrast, this dissertation attempts, as much as possible, to approach psalmody as a ritual involving music as well as texts; congregations as well as translators, poets, preachers, and readers; and singing voices as well as poetic sensibilities. The poetics it undertakes to excavate and explore is a poetics in the more broad sense of this term: while I am deeply interested, especially in the fourth chapter, in the production of original poetry, I have attempted to avoid collapsing psalmody and music into it.

In the first chapter, I investigate the early development of a discourse of Reformed congregational psalmody in Massachusetts Bay in the 1640s. Centered on a

translation of the Book of Psalms compiled and first published in the Bay colony, it took root in a well-established transatlantic Reformed tradition of devotional music, and it ran counter to the *translatio imperii et studii* model that shaped early modern European thinking about translation, colonization, and the Westward spread of Christianity.

Through close readings of the Bay Psalm Book (1640) and Cotton's *Singing of Psalmes, A Gospel Ordinance* (1647), I argue that the poetics of congregational psalmody outlined in these works was, in an important sense, a poetics of unity in discord. On a practical level, early colonial ministers believed that psalm singing facilitates peaceful relations in the church and resolves disparate hearts and dissenting voices into unison. This was not, however, because the psalms fail to register the painful experiences of social isolation and alienation from one's intimate circle: on the contrary, as I demonstrate through close readings of Bay Psalms 38 and 69, many of them meditate extensively on them.

According to Cotton's theology of singing, however, the psalms engage these themes in order to generate a fallible but reassuringly human grammar of praise, to remind Christian souls of their total reliance upon God's freely given grace, and to unite the church in a collective recognition of this dependence. Just as the Bay compilers regarded their infamously discordant verse to be contained within good conscience and fidelity to the Word, so congregational solidarity in psalmody encompassed fissures, distrust, and miscommunication. In the final section of this chapter, I argue that the Bay translation of Psalm 137—maligned by some prominent critics as the worst in the collection—offers an efficient poetic reflection of this concept of unity in discord, providing evidence that piety and the Bay psalter's poetics are far from mutually exclusive.

Chapter 2 explores the ways in which colonial representations of Praying Indians tested the doctrine of the psalms' universal translatability. Missionary writers in this period, I argue, conveyed to transatlantic audiences a sense of spiritually complex Indian Christian personhood by demonstrating the affective continuities between the experiences of native proselytes and the psalmists' godly but quintessentially human songs. In a similar way, positive accounts of Indian psalmody demonstrated that these proselytes were capable of maintaining harmonious relations with one another, as well as with neighboring English settlements. Not all colonists, of course, were willing to accept these depictions on their own terms, particularly in the decades that followed King Phillip's War (1675-6). Two high-profile survivors of Indian attacks in this period, Mary Rowlandson and Thomas Wheeler, used the psalms to magnify what they believed were the mission's flaws and to expose what they suspected was the fundamental shallowness of Praying Indians' professed commitment to the Christian faith. Their accounts of the Indians' failure to grasp the godly purpose behind all singing suggest that Indian music is uncontainably, irredeemably discordant. At the same time, however, these accounts were presented as dramatic backdrops against which white Christians could reframe their commitment to the psalmists' models of endurance in adversity, humble petition, and heartfelt praise.

The third chapter centers on a long and public 1720s altercation between ministers in favor of "Regular Singing"—a more methodical approach to psalmody—and a surprisingly obstinate faction of laypersons who opposed these measures. In the Singing Controversy, as this crisis came to be known, the discord at the heart of Reformed New England Psalmody erupted onto the surface. The bitter quarrel between the two sides, I

argue, was rooted in the incompatibility of two sets of ideas. The first was a growing emphasis on interiority, paired with a corresponding de-emphasis on fellowship and solidarity, in the pulpit rhetoric on psalm singing in the decades leading up to the controversy. The second was a reconceptualization, under the sign of an increasingly prestigious transatlantic discourse of natural history, of the relation between aesthetics and piety. According to the progressive, scientifically informed perspective, the purpose of the ordinance was—and always had been—to reflect reason and order back to its divine source. The colonists' failure to do so, the proponents of Regular Singing feared, implied that a chosen people were effectively willing their own degeneration into American savagery.

The fourth and final chapter explores Edward Taylor's lifelong commitment to psalmody as a poet, translator, and pastor. Taylor spent most of his life as the minister of a congregation at the Western margin of white New England settlement, and his voluminous poetry was never published. In spite of this cultural and geographical isolation, however, he was well attuned to the early modern Reformed discourse on congregational psalmody. I argue that Taylor's verse not only makes use of a broad, polyglot lexicon of vocal and instrumental devotional music, but that it explores the rich aesthetic potential in discord. I trace the early development of this exploration to Taylor's two discarded attempts to translate the psalms. The discrepancies between the original Hebrew words and the compromises that poetic form required Taylor to make are graphically marked in his manuscripts by parentheses. The words and phrases enclosed within these parentheses, I argue, represent Taylor's attempts to make praise out of what jars against the literal sense of scripture.

In making psalmody the focus of this dissertation (though I certainly consider translation, meditation, citation, and allusion as well as singing), I am attempting to provide a fuller and more nuanced account of a ritual that was central to the daily lives of all colonial New England Christians. My aim has never been to write the literary history of this ritual, but to provide a sustained and historically accountable close reading of one of its core concepts. In doing so, I hope to contribute to ongoing academic conversations about translation, colonialism, Puritan sociability, and early modern devotional aesthetics.

Kevin Cattrell

Fall, 2011

Colonial New England Psalmody and the Poetics of Discord in Translation

Chapter 1: “Crotchets of Division”: Unity in Discord in Seventeenth-Century

Massachusetts Bay

The first printing press in English colonial America arrived in Cambridge in October of 1638, less than a decade after the “Great Migration” of Protestant non-conformists, fortune-seeking “adventurers,” and their servants that marked the inception of the Massachusetts Bay colony. When Jose Glover, the minister who arranged for the press’s transatlantic passage, died on the voyage from England, his widow Elizabeth assumed ownership and entrusted its operation to the Glovers’ indentured servant, the locksmith Stephen Day(e) (Amory, 35, 39-40). John Winthrop, the colony’s first governor, reports in his journal that “the first thing which was printed was the freemen’s oath; <the next was an almanac made for New England by Mr. William Peirce, mariner> the next was the Psalms newly turned into metre” (*Journal*, 283).⁷ Minor as these details might seem, especially in the pages of a diary, it is curious that Winthrop says nothing about the local origins and authorship of the last of these items, a collection of psalms translated by an anonymous cohort of Massachusetts Bay ministers, titled *The Whole Booke of Psalmes Faithfully Translated into English Metre*, and now known as the Bay Psalm Book. The use of the word “turned” rather than “translated” in the entry is equally

⁷ The editors of Winthrop’s journal, Richard S. Dunn, James Savage, and Laetitia Yeandle, use angled brackets (<>) to designate material deleted from the text. Dunn notes that “no copies of the freeman’s oath or Peirce’s almanac have survived” (283, n. 36).

striking, given the fact that the Bay Psalm Book represented the transplantation of a central Protestant ritual to the region. These choices resonate, I would argue, with qualities that were crucial to the politics, style, and ritual function of the collection.

To show how and why this is the case, it is important to delimit the range of ways in which the term *translation* applies to the texts and ideas I will cover in this chapter. As Eric Cheyfitz has argued, translation and metaphor are “etymologically and ideologically...inseparable” in Western letters: both involve “the notion, first formally defined by Aristotle in his famous and still basic definition of metaphor, of *transporting* a term from a *familiar* to a *foreign* place” (35). According to this model, to translate something is to dislodge it from its native or natural context—to divest it of, or at least to challenge, its status as “proper.” Throughout *The Poetics of Empire* (1997), Cheyfitz presents vivid examples and brilliant readings of this mode of displacement and the forms of violence and exploitation it has been employed to underwrite, particularly in the context of the European colonization of the Americas. Not all forms of colonial American translation, however, were informed in quite the same way by this dynamic of dislocation, and not all white North American translators were eager to associate their work with the Western doctrine of *translatio imperii*. In early New England, the translation of Reformed psalmody to the colonial American frontier was imagined in universalist terms that were at odds with this age-old “notion...of transporting”: the compilers of the Bay Psalm Book emphasized their translation’s restorative powers, carefully dissociating the observance of the ritual from the concept of movement outward

across a border. With few exceptions,⁸ overtly translated, distinctively American psalmody can be found in the seventeenth century only in the missionary literature.

The Bay Psalm Book was compiled in part by ministers who would also contribute letters and reports to the series of mission-related promotional works known collectively as the Eliot tracts, among them John Eliot, Richard Mather, Thomas Weld, John Wilson, and Thomas Shepard (Clark 31-2; Haraszti 12-13). But despite this overlapping authorship, and despite the psalter's later canonization as a founding figure of North American book culture, the Bay Psalm Book seems carefully designed to resist any association with the *translatio imperii et studii* framework the missionary literature would go on to embrace. Furthermore, despite the North American habitation of the committee that produced it and the parishioners that would sing from it, and despite their collective rejection of much of the Church of England's doctrine, and many of its rituals, the Bay Psalm Book (1640) makes no reference to America, New England, empire, the colonies, or ecclesiology. The points of the compass and the central tropes of New England plantation—a howling wilderness, the encounter of civilized Christianity and irreligious savagery—are never invoked in its Preface, which is preoccupied instead with ritual purity and congregational accord.

Although John Cotton, the Preface's likely author (Haraszti 19-27) was the source of one of the best-known apologies for Puritan colonization, *Gods Promise to His Plantation* (1630), in the Preface to the Bay psalter he figures its new verse renderings not as graft or plantation, but as a kind of turning back to Christian primitivity, a

⁸ The only exception I have discovered is a passage from Edward Johnson's *History of New England...* (1651) cited in a 1933 article by John Atlee Kouwenhoven. In it, the 1635 settlers of Concord dig out a shelter for themselves in a hillside and support it with timber: the rains come through, "yet in these poore Wigwams they sing Psalms, pray and praise their God" (582).

restoration of textual and ritual standards that apply ubiquitously and are fully achievable within existing English literary and musical traditions. This liberal inclusivity is subtly inscribed on its title page, which records the year it was published, but not the place. Meanwhile, the Preface acknowledges at various points that the Bay psalms have benefitted from the groundwork laid in “our English bibles” and have been keyed to the forms and rhythms of “our english tongue,” “our english songs,” and “our english poetry” (i, viii-ix). The defiant break with aesthetic norms signalled in the Preface’s memorable defense of the collection’s austere translational poetics—“wee have respected rather a plaine translation, then to smooth our verses with the sweetnes of any paraphrase, and soe have attended Consience rather then Elegance, fidelity rather then poetry” (xii)—should be read in the context of this larger sequence of open-ended first-person-plural pronouns. Clearly, in the last case, Cotton means “we compilers of this translation,” but the edges of Cotton’s “wee” are left unsharpened, and its referent, never specified. Cotton frames the Bay Psalm Book’s intervention as conservative and corrective, not revolutionary—as a gesture that is meant to unify and revive, not rupture and displace.⁹

These qualities are thrown into dramatic relief when the Bay Psalm Book is read alongside *Mamusse Wunnutupanatamwe Up-Biblum* (1663), the first Bible printed in North America. By 1651, Eliot and his Native associates were already at work on this “Indian Bible,” which took fourteen years to complete (Clark, 13) and featured a singing psalter arranged in alternating lines of eight and six syllables. Although few contemporary native English speakers were capable of gauging its accuracy, logical and

⁹ This posture would not have been tenable in the absence of musical settings and adequate prose translations of the Bible (the Preface has no quarrel with the Authorized and Geneva versions). The work of anglicizing and composing had already been accomplished to the Bay Psalm Book compilers’ satisfaction; their task was to apply the fidelity standards of the prose translation to its rhyming, metrical counterpart.

grammatical consistency, or readability, the Massachusetts Bible was figuratively legible to them in the *translatio imperii et studii* framework that Western poets, historians and literary critics have associated with colonization since the Middle Ages. The opacity of the Massachusetts Bible's content was held in check for non-Algonquin speakers—such as King Charles, to whom the governor of the Corporation for Propagating the Gospel in New England, Robert Boyle, presented a copy in 1664 (Clark, 13-14; Bross, 72)—by its familiar alphabet, chapter and verse divisions, cross-referencing apparatus, and proper names. The regular appearance of, for example, “God” and “Jesus Christ” in the translation—names that are silently anglicized from their Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic equivalents—hinted at a westward movement of godly learning from the Middle East, through the British Isles, to America. Meanwhile, the web of pronounceable but inscrutable language that remained was less an impediment to the translation's legibility in this qualified sense than an asset, marking a clear ethnic boundary, containing and distancing an irreducibly American people in the same gesture.

As Kristina Bross has pointed out, Malachi 1.11, which begins, “From the rising of the Sun, even unto the going down of the same, my Name shall be great among the Gentiles,” served as an unofficial motto of the English missionary campaign in New England: Eliot's earliest Massachusetts sermon was based on it, and it later appeared on the title page of a number of missionary tracts, among them Eliot's *Indian Grammar Begun* (1666) and *Indian Dialogues* (1671) (62). The titles to many other Eliot tracts consolidate this prophecy with the *translatio imperii et studii* model's well-known metaphor of solar movement: *The Day-Breaking, if not the Sun-Rising of the Gospell with the Indians in New England* (1647), *The Clear Sun-shine of the Gospell breaking forth*

upon the Indians in New-England (1648), and *The Light appearing more and more towards the perfect Day or a farther discovery of the present state of the Indians in New England* (1651). The translation of the scriptures into a Native tongue, and the conversion of a language, a people, and a region this translation both facilitated and symbolized, were represented with clear geographical contours and plotted at the far end of the sun's westward trajectory.¹⁰

In making this comparison, however, I do not mean to suggest that the Bay compilers were indifferent to their parishioners' unique expectations and living conditions. Amy Morris has argued convincingly that the Bay Psalm Book "was adapted to the values, experiences, and needs of the settlers" in New England, reflecting, in textual form, one of their primary objectives for emigration, the enjoyment of purified ordinances ("Art of Purifying," 108). Nevertheless, the Bay Psalm Book's lack of interest in marking its colonial American origins or associating the labor of its scriptural translations with the spread of empire, learning, or Christianity deserves more careful consideration. Of course, the motives of its publishers, the timing of its printing (prior to the English Civil War), the local source of its funding, the financial self-sufficiency of the practice it seeks to cultivate, and the direct challenge it poses, however respectfully, to a canonical Church of England text, the Sternhold-Hopkins psalter, all set the Bay Psalm Book well apart from the missionary literature's solicitations, courting of royal and Parliamentary allies in a volatile political climate, and appeals to English curiosity about—and pity for—the denizens of distant, foreign places. Furthermore, as Morris

¹⁰ For Eliot, and those who shared his radical millennialist beliefs about the Hebrew origins of the Algonquins, the mission was also, in one important sense, more a restoration of God's favor to a destitute people than the introduction of something novel.

points out, the Bay Psalm Book was “a locus of negotiation between the New England leaders, the colonists they were overseeing, and the authorities and colleagues they had left behind in England” (107): the compilers’ awareness of the competing interests of these parties accounts, in all likelihood, for much of their restraint in matters of polity and doctrine. But there is more than diplomatic initiative at play in the Bay Psalm Book’s muted geography and its emphasis on common ground in anglophonic worship: these qualities align the publication of the collection with the theory of congregational psalmody articulated in its Preface.

In framing the act of translation as a restoration rather than a movement from familiar to foreign territory, the Bay Psalm Book’s compilers foregrounded the process by which—according to their theology of church music—psalmody itself translates collections of disparate voices, hearts, and intents into a singular accord. In the preface to the Bay psalter, Cotton asserts that only Biblical psalms, translated with scrupulous fidelity into the vernacular and matched with modest, sober, local melodies, were fit for liturgy, and that these should be performed in unison and without instrumental accompaniment: “not some select members,” he explains, “but the whole Church is commaunded to teach one another in all the severall sorts of Davids psalmes” (4; 2-3). Anglican and Catholic services, by contrast, admitted musical instruments as well as hymns inspired by, but not contained in, scripture, and permitted solo and choral performances during which portions of the congregation fell silent.

Summarizing a position reflected in the writing of Augustine, Calvin and Luther, Cotton explains in the Bay Psalm Book Preface that the Psalms “suit all the conditions,

necessities, temptations, [and] affections...of men in all ages” (iv-v). Faithfully executed, he argues, psalmody gives pure, ritual expression to this comprehensive inclusivity and constitutes “a joynt consent and harmony of all the Church in heart and voice” (iv).

Throughout the Preface and a more extensive treatise, *Singing of Psalmes a Gospel Ordinance*, published in London in 1647 and reprinted in 1650, Cotton developed these concepts into a working definition of congregational psalmody as the convergence of musical, spiritual and social accord: the blending of voices, the agreement of hearts, and the cohesion of the church were, for him, mutually reinforcing ends.

These concerns are brought together with startling wit in the figurative language of the Bay Psalm Book’s opening sentence: “The singing of Psalmes, though it breath forth nothing but holy harmony, and melody: yet such is the subtilty of the enemie, and the enmity of our nature against the Lord, & his wayes, that our hearts can finde matter of discord in this harmony, and crotchets of division in this holy melody” (Preface, 1). The first problem addressed here involves the torn fabric of a community: dissension over the significance and proper execution of an ordinance has pitted well-meaning Christians against one another and, as a result of their confusion, perversely opposed the collective to God’s wishes. Raising the stakes, Cotton crafts an elegant pun in the phrase “crotchets of division” that takes aim at the ornamental excess the Bay Psalm Book’s Preface would go on to condemn. In seventeenth-century English, “crotchets” could mean either “perverse and unfounded beliefs” or “quarter notes,” while “division” meant, in addition to its primary meanings, “the execution of a rapid melodic passage, originally conceived as the dividing of each of a succession of long notes into several short ones...especially as a variation on, or accompaniment to, a theme or ‘plain song’” (Oxford English

Dictionary). With this shrewd play on words, Cotton implies that divisive controversy among divines and scholars, disobedience to Biblical law (however subtle or unintentional), and the corruption of divine music's unadorned simplicity ultimately amount to the same discord. Division, whether of a plain melody into an embellished one, or of Christian worshippers into opposing factions, runs counter to the divine intention behind psalmody and undermines the Bay Psalm Book's universalist ambitions.

Underlying this ideal of a common consent was a conviction that the psalms' insight into the human spirit was infallible. In *Enarrationes en psalmos*, Augustine encourages his readers to see, hear, and speak themselves into an intimate identification with the psalmist in their meditations on certain passages. "Who is speaking in this psalm?" his meditation on Psalm 41.1 begins: "If we wish, we are." "Listen to it as if you were listening to yourselves. Listen as if you were watching your own reflection in the mirror of scriptures," he comments on Psalm 123.3 (McCarthy, 337). The identity between psalmist and penitent is so strong, the Bay Psalm Book Preface maintains, that it effectively bans human compositures from public worship:

the booke of psalmes is so compleat a System of psalmes, which the Holy Ghost himselfe in infinite wisdom hath made to suit all the conditions, necessities, temptations, affections, &c. of men in all ages; (as most of all our interpreters on the psalmes have fully and perticularly cleared) therefore by this the Lord seemeth to stoppe all mens mouths and mindes ordinarily to compile or sing any other psalmes (under colour that the ocasions and conditions of the Church are new) &c. for the publick use of the Church, seing let our condition be what it will, the Lord himselfe hath supplied us with farre better... (4)

And yet, as a corresponding passage in *Singing of Psalmes* clarifies, the psalms' expression of the Holy Spirit's perfect foreknowledge of every human "estate and condition" is a form of renewal, not a confinement in static repetition: "Psalmes being chosen out suitably to the new occasions and new conditions of Gods people, and sung by

them with new hearts and renewed affections, will ever be found new songs,” Cotton explains. “Words of eternall truth and grace, are ever old (as the Gospell is an eternall Gospell) and ever new....And to the new Creature all things are become new, 2 Cor. 5.17, 18” (25). Not only does this rationalization help account for New England Reformed Christians’ deep affective investment in the “Gospel Ordinance,” which I will explore further in Chapters 2-4, but it links the singer’s experience of self-recognition and enlightenment to the work of translation. Never simply a compromise enforced by linguistic and cultural differences, translation is a core element of Christian psalmody, bridging the “ever old” and “ever new” in Cotton’s formulation.

All the same, Cotton anticipates objections to the psalms’ occasional foreign idiosyncrasies. In his summary of the interpretive strategies that facilitate melody in the heart, the idea that the psalms are reflections of the speaker’s own condition comes last:

It is an ignorance of a mans selfe, and of the wayes of God, to thinke that any Psalme is unsuitable to his own condition. For every Psalme setteth forth either the attributes and works of God and his Christ, and this yeeldeth me matter of holy reverence, Blessing, and Praise: Or else it describeth the estate and wayes of the Church and People of God, and this affecteth me with compassion, instruction, or imitation: Or else it deciphereth the estate and wayes of the wicked, and this holdeth forth to me a word of admonition: Or else it doth lively expresse mine own affections and afflictions, temptations, and comforts, and then it furnisheth me with fit matter and words to present mine own condition before the Lord. (53)

The Bay Psalm Book offers no key (such as the table by Athanasius that features in the Sternhold-Hopkins’ prefatory matter) that matches psalm to occasion. Instead, Cotton implies here, the psalms require diverse modes of identification—some model pious behavior and prayer, some offer cautionary examples—eroding the differences among singers and readers rather than clarifying them and holding them up for scrutiny and reconciliation.

For all his concern for the purity of metrical translation, Cotton rarely ever discusses the content of a psalm. What holds constant across these modes is not the self recognized, but the pursuit of self-recognition in relation to a single norm of versatile piety.

More than orthodoxy is at stake in Cotton's definition of psalmody as a collective effort in which each participant plays an equal part and all hearts and voices are resolved into joyful unanimity. The Bay Psalm Book's publication followed closely on the Antinomian Controversy of the 1630s, which threatened to divide the Massachusetts Bay clergy against itself and to dishearten the colony's mainland English supporters. John Cotton was one of the central figures in this ordeal, which reached a climax when one of his parishioners, Anne Hutchinson, was banished from the colony for challenging the Calvinist orthodoxy of its ministers and undermining their interpretive authority in well-attended private meetings at her home.¹¹ To a certain extent, the Antinomian Controversy chafed against the high hopes of the colony's founders for solidarity across the ranks of their frontier society. In the often-quoted "Citty upon a Hill" passage from his 1629 lay sermon, "A Modell of Christian Charity," John Winthrop had outlined the spirit of fraternity and unity he claimed would be crucial to the New England experiment's success:

wee must be knitt together in this worke as one man, wee must entertaine each other in brotherly Affeccion, wee must be willing to abridge our selves of our superfluities...wee must delight in each other, make others Conditions our owne[,] rejoyce together, mourne together, labour, and suffer together, allwayes haveing before our eyes our Commission and Community in the worke...[so] that men shall say of succeeding plantacions: the lord make it like that of New England. (41-2)

¹¹ For a much fuller account of this critical episode in colonial New England history, see David Hall's introduction to *The Antinomian Controversy 1636-1638: A Documentary History*.

Winthrop's ideal of selflessness was predicated on a general complicity with class differences, as the proposition it sets out to prove—"God Almighty in his most holy and wise providence hath soe disposed of the Condicion of mankinde, as in all times some must be rich some poore, some highe and eminent in power and dignitie; others meane and in subjection" (28)—makes plain. The emphasis on Protestant and congregational accord in the Bay Psalm book preface, reinforced by its persistent, first-person-plural anonymity, might be read as an effort to cultivate the ritual enactment of a mutual "brotherly Affeccion" that was even more egalitarian than that which Winthrop prescribed.

Nevertheless, neither the Bay Psalm Book's social vision, nor its approving readership were limited to the colonies. A tract published in 1644 by the Independent theologian Nathaniel Holmes, titled *Gospel Musick. Or, the Singing of Davids Psalms*, evinces transatlantic solidarity on the issue of church music. While he celebrates melody's "pleasure" in ways that go well beyond Cotton's restrained acknowledgment of its utility ("mingled with heavenly mysteries," Holmes writes, it "causeth the smoothnesse and softnesse of that which toucheth the eare to conveigh, as it were by stealth, the treasure of good things into mans mind" [11]), Holmes closes the work with a reproduction of "the Judgement of our worthy Brethren of New-England touching singing of Psalmes, as it is learnedly and gravely set forth in their Preface to the Singing Psalmes, by them translated into Metre" (title page). Beginning a few years after *Gospel Musick* was published, twenty editions of the New England psalter were printed in England from 1647 to 1754; six more editions were printed in Scotland from 1732 to 1759 (Foote, 54-5).

In fact, I would argue, the transatlantic context for the Bay Psalm Book provided the grounding for the collection's poetics of placelessness. Situating the Bay psalter in the traditions of Reformed English music and vernacular psalm meditation—both of which were more than a century old in 1640—provides historical depth to two concepts that were fundamental to Cotton's theology of church music: psalmody as a social cause, and the propriety of musical worship. In order to appreciate these themes, as well as the Bay Psalm Book's polemical stance against paraphrase, it is necessary to outline the traditions with which the collection aligned itself as well as the trends and tastes it condemned.

The rhetoric of congregational unity in psalmody was far from original to the Massachusetts Bay colony's vision and practice: the double meanings of the terms "consent," "harmony," and "accord" were frequently exploited in early modern English writing on liturgy and church music, and the trope of many hearts and voices becoming one had become a familiar refrain as early as the mid-sixteenth-century. The first collection of English singing psalms to see print was Miles Coverdale's *Goostly psalmes and spirituall songes* (London, c.1535), which consisted almost entirely of translations of German hymns and psalms by Luther and others, accompanied by unharmonized musical notation. Including two repeats, it contains only fifteen scriptural psalms.¹² Coverdale, who had begun reading Luther with a small group of theologians at the White Horse Inn in Cambridge in about 1520, produced the first complete English-language Bible that

¹² Psalms 12, 2, 46, 124, 137, 128 (two versions), 51 (two versions), 130, 25, 67, 14, 147, and 133 (Leaver, 70-73; le Huray, 371). According to Leaver, Coverdale's translations from the German were often loose: "where the German text is based on familiar material, such as the Lord's Prayer, Creed, and the psalms, he exercises considerable freedom. Often one finds that Coverdale accepts the general metrical structure of the particular melody but follows the scriptural passage, or original prose text, in his own independent way rather than slavishly following the German hymn text" (73).

same year (Leaver, 62). Although his hymn book fell short of providing a complete psalter, stood at two or more removes from the Hebrew, and interspersed non-scriptural compositions with metrical psalm paraphrases without distinguishing between their suitability for public worship, the perspective on the social benefits of psalmody in his introductory matter resonates with that of the Bay Psalm Book's preface in fundamental ways.

Because there was no incumbent vernacular psalter to unseat, the ambition of Coverdale's modest collection was, in a sense, more comprehensive than any English psalm book that would follow. The envoy on page 1 titled "To the boke" advertises the author's plans to revolutionize what we might now call popular culture:

Go lytle boke, get the acquaintaunce
Amonge the lovers of Gods worde
Geve them occasion the same to avaunce
And to make thyr songes of the Lorde
That they may thrust under the borde
All other balettes of fylthynes
And that we all with one accorde
May geve ensample of godlynes (1-8)

In these lines, Coverdale imagines a progression from readers' casual contact with the hymn book, to their gradual submission to its influence, to a popular hostility to secular song that binds "the lovers of Gods word" together as exemplars of piety. In the prose preface that follows the poem, Coverdale fleshes out this vision (perhaps riffing on a passage from the introduction to Erasmus's 1516 edition of the Greek New Testament¹³):

Yee wolde God that oure carters & plowmen [had none (?)] other thyng to whistle upon, save Psalmes, hymnes, and soch godly songes as David is occupied withall. And yf women syttyng at theyr rockes, or spynnyng at the wheles, had

¹³ "Would that...the farmer sing some portion of [the Bible] at the plow, the weaver hum some parts of them to the movement of his shuttle, the traveler lighten the weariness of the journey with stories of this kind." Desiderus Erasmus, *Christian Humanism and the Reformation: Selected Writings*, ed. and trans. John C. Olin (New York: Harper, 1965), 97. Cited in King, 1.

none other songes to passe theyr tyme withall, than soch as Moses sister, Elchanas wife, Debora, and Mary the mother of Christ have song before them, they shulde be better occupied, then with hey nony nony, hey trolly loly, & soch lyke fantasies. (Leaver, 286)

Coverdale reduces the words of secular song to a musical babble at the end of this passage perhaps because he wishes not to dignify it with more substantive quotation. Regardless, the paraphrase has the benefit of implying that non-devotional song fails to signify anything at all. Coverdale's opposition to this popular and wide-ranging genre is uncompromising: "the comen sort of balettes which now are vsed in ye world....blynde so the eyes of [youths'] vnderstondynge, that they can nether thynke wel in theyr hertes, not outwardly entre into the waye of godly and virtuos lyvyng" (287). Hymns, on the other hand, foster patterns of thinking and feeling that translate into habits of beneficent, socially productive behavior among the non-Latin-literate.

Banned by Henry VIII in 1546 (Leaver, 84), *Goostly psalmes* did not survive long enough to effect the massive restructuring of musical and poetic tastes in England Coverdale envisioned.¹⁴ By the mid-1540s, the Reformation had diverted English church music into a major, if short-lived, transitional phase. The dissolution of the chantries under Henry VIII and his successor Edward VI in the mid-1540s led to the cancellation of most English "song schools" (Boyd, 13-14). As Peter Le Huray has pointed out, inflation in the second half of the fifteenth century made it difficult for English churches to raise money to support choirs since "the rents on leasehold properties" from which they derived income "inevitably lagged behind the rise in prices" in other economic areas (30-40). Meanwhile, the first three editions of the Book of Common Prayer (1549, 1552,

¹⁴ *Goostly psalmes*, however, was not a dead end in the tradition of English hymnody: Leaver has traced two psalms in the Anglo-Geneva Psalter to Coverdale tunes; this establishes a "line of continuity from the c.1535 collection to the early metrical psalms of St and H of 1547-9" (127-31).

and 1559) permitted music at Matins and Evensong, but said little about how it should be incorporated into public worship (Leaver, 240; Le Huray 19). The caution and ambivalence of crown and Church alike on the issue of church music echoed across the devotional literature of mid-sixteenth century England. Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1533 to 1555 and the first editor of the Book of Common Prayer, prescribed in his first Litany of 1544 ways of ensuring that public worship would glorify God “with one sound of the heart and one accord,”¹⁵ ambiguously blending literal and figurative harmony. In a similar vein, Anthony Cope’s dedication of *A godly meditacion upon .xx. select and chosen Psalmes of the Prophet Dauid* (1547) to Queen Katherine, Henry VIII’s sixth wife, effectively reduces both devotional and secular music to speech. David’s “harmonie is so swete & pleasaunt,” Cope remarks,

that the eares of the faythfull, maye scantly therwith be fully satisfied. The poetes faine that Orpheus made so pleasaunt harmonie on his harpe that he caused the beastes and stones dauncing, to folow hym. Theyr meanyng was, that his language was so plesaunt, and his entent so reasonable, that he brought the people to good ciuilitie, whiche before were rude and beastly. But our celestial Orpheus the prophete Dauid hath so sette forth his songes that they haue strength and force to cause men which be carnall and beastly, to become spiritual and heauently. (2)

Harmony is presented here primarily (and somewhat toothlessly) as a poetic figure for language, reason, and good intent, which combine to form an antidote to savagery, leaving the text unclear as to how music proper fits into this narrative of civic and moral reform. Like many of his compatriot contemporaries, Cope seems to have struggled to reconcile text and music in a way that could live up to the Reformation doctrines of *sola fides* and *sola scriptura*. While Hebrew texts, such as the Book of Psalms, could be faithfully translated into any vernacular, the tunes to which they were originally sung

¹⁵ J. Eric Hunt, *Cranmer’s First Litany, 1544 and Merbecke’s Book of Common Prayer Notes, 1550*. London: SPCK, 1939, p. 86. Cited in Targoff, 24.

were not so much untranslatable as irrecoverable. In an age in which every trace of innovation was stigmatized, and every potential impediment to the clarity of the Word was questioned, it seems the safest approach to music was to metaphorize it and align onself with its spiritual, over and against its sensory, properties.

Unsurprisingly, this principle was difficult to put into practice. A passage in *Jewel of Joy*, a 1550 devotional work dedicated to Elizabeth by Thomas Becon, chaplain to the Lord Protector during the juvenile Edward VI's reign, oscillates between rejection and grudging acceptance of music in worship:

A Christian man's melody, after St Paul's mind, consisteth in heart, while we recite psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, and sing to the Lord in our hearts....All other outward melody is vain and transitory, and passeth away and cometh to nought. Vain and transitory it is indeed; notwithstanding, music may be used, so it be not abused. If it be soberly exercised and reputed as a handmaid unto virtue, it is tolerable; otherwise it is execrable and to be abhored of all good men. So ye perceive that music is not so excellent a thing, that a Christian ought earnestly to rejoice in it.¹⁶

The closest Becon comes to an acceptance of the audibility of Christian song is in the opening sentence, where the act of “recit[ing]” is safely wedged between references to music in the heart. Music is effectively damned by heavily qualified praise throughout this passage, but particularly in its closing words: Becon seems to mean here that Christians ought not to be grateful for music in itself, but the ambiguity of the preposition “in” also suggests a discouragement of the use of music for earnest rejoicing.

Queen Elizabeth, whose lifelong passion for music belied Becon's dedication to her,¹⁷ addressed the question of church music in a paragraph in her royal injunctions of

¹⁶ Frere and Kennedy, XVI, p. 8; cited in Le Huray, 12.

¹⁷ For an account of Elizabeth's early training in, and lifelong enjoyment and encouragement of, music, see Boyd, 1-12.

1559 (the second year of her reign) that is sensitive to hard-line Protestant objections to the Catholic liturgy:

And that there be a modest and distinct song, so used in all parts of the Common Prayers in the Church, that the same may be as plainly understood, as if it were read without singing. And yet, nevertheless, for the comforting of such as delight in music, it may be permitted, that in the beginning, or in the end of Common Prayers, either at morning or evening, there may be sung an hymn, or suchlike song, to the praise of Almighty God, in the best sort of melody and music that may be conveniently devised, having respect that the sentence of the hymn may be understood and perceived.¹⁸

A few years later in 1562, the first complete edition of the metrical psalm paraphrase that would dominate Anglican church music for most of the early modern period, the Sternhold-Hopkins version, was printed in London. In all, twelve translators contributed metrical psalms for this collection, whose full title is *The Whole Booke of Psalmes: Collected into English Meeter by Thomas Sternhold, Iohn Hopkins, and others*. Little is known about the first of these, Thomas Sternhold, but that he served as Groom of the Robes to Henry VIII and Edward VI and died in 1549 after publishing nineteen *Certayne Psalmes* around 1547 (Leaver, 300). In spite of, or perhaps because of, the high rank of its dedicatee, Edward VI (who was in the first year of his reign, and ten years old, in 1547), the scope of Sternhold's ambition was far narrower than Coverdale's. His preface is a public address from one individual (a subject and royal attendant, a translator and composer) to another (the "defendour of the fayth," the first English king brought up as a Protestant), and his only reference to the relation between psalmody and the greater good is, at best, oblique: "your majestie hath so searched the fountains of the scriptures, that yet being young, you understande them better then manye elders, the verye meane to attayne to the perfyte government of this your realme, to goddes glory, the prosperitie of

¹⁸ Frere and Kennedy, eds., *Visitation Articles and Injunctions...*, iii. 23.

the publique wealthe, & to the comforte of all youre majesties subjects” (reproduced in Leaver, 300). The clergyman John Hopkins published an expanded edition of *Certayne Psalmes* in 1549, adding eighteen translations by Sternhold but never published by him, along with an appendix containing seven of his own. The resulting collection became the template for the psalters from which Protestant exiles on the continent sang after Mary Tudor ascended the throne in 1553 (Hannibal, 27).

The completed psalter, with tunes for all 150 psalms and a table by Athanasius matching each one to a spiritual occasion (“Against hipocrites and such as bragge to a mans face, saie to convert them withall, the 58. Psalme”), was published in London in 1562, a few years into Queen Elizabeth’s reign.¹⁹ What had begun as a modest selection of vernacular psalms ostensibly intended for private performances in court settings had grown into a centerpiece of the liturgy of the displaced, and from there into the Anglican mainstream. By the time the Bay Psalm Book went to press in Cambridge, Massachusetts Bay in 1640, more than 230 editions of the Sternhold-Hopkins had been printed;²⁰ between 1562 and 1696 (when it was replaced by a new translation by Nahum Tate and Nicholas Brady), it was printed approximately 700 times (Hamlin, 38).²¹

The theme of the concord of miscellaneous elements may be nowhere more thoroughly and playfully employed in this period than in Ravenscroft’s *Whole Booke of Psalmes*, a compilation of ninety-seven settings for the Sternhold-Hopkins psalter, first published in 1621 (Foote, 53). The work’s subtitle, *Composed into 4. parts by sundry*

¹⁹ The first complete English metrical psalter (and the first English psalter with harmonized music) was the printer Robert Crowley’s *Psalter of David newly translated into Englysh metre* (London, 1549), but it seems to have made little impact on English devotional culture (Le Huray, 371).

²⁰ Le Huray, 371; he cites E. B. Schnapper, *The British Union Catalogue of Early Music printed before 1801* (1957).

²¹ As Hamlin point out, in large part, this success can be attributed to the Stationers Company’s royally backed monopoly on published psalters through 1641, which effectively choked out the competition (41-2).

Authors, with such seuerall Tunes as haue beene, and are usually sung in England, Scotland, Wales, Germany, Italy, France, and the Nether-lands: Neuer as yet before in one volumne published, suggests that psalmody is the product of translation in more than one sense—not just of scripture, whose origin is singular and divine, but of music, too, which is polygenetic. Ravenscroft dedicates the preface to this work “To All That Have Skill, or Will vnto Sacred Musicke,” wishing them “Concord among themselues, with God, and with their owne Conciences.” The preface addresses them as “Harmonicall Brethren,” closes, “Your well according, / and best wishing Brother...” (1, 4), and claims that Hebrew psalmody was ordered and performed “so that not onely the voyce of the Singers, but likewise the sound of the Instruments agreed so well together, that they seemed to be but one Sound, and one Voice” (3). In Ravenscroft’s hands, harmony echoes across a range of diverse groupings—sundry authorship and regional origins of psalm tunes, singers and musicians of varying abilities, worshippers and their God, voices and instruments—that resolve, through careful study and practice, into a singular accord.

Although the Bay compilers differed sharply from Ravenscroft on the matter of musical instruments, they fully approved of its settings. “The truth is,” the Preface claims, “the Lord hath hid from us the hebrew tunes” of the original Psalms as well as “the course and frame (for the most part) of their hebrew poetry,” so that “wee might not think ourselves bound to imitate” them. This, in turn, authorizes Christians to make free use of “the graver sort of tunes of their owne country songs” and “the graver sort of verses of their owne country poetry” in their psalmody (9).²² As the “Admonition to the

²² According to Ramie Targoff, “these sentences contain within them early hints of New England’s eventual quest for independence....The repetition of the phrase ‘their own country’ within the context of a

Reader” at the end of the collection explains, each Bay psalm was rendered in a familiar vernacular form that lent it to a variety of English tunes composed for other texts. The New England translators, who had not brought musical type with them (Amory, 43) but seemed satisfied with the melodies already available, recommended Ravenscroft’s collection without reservation.

The title page to the first edition of the Bay Psalm Book signals its publishers’ intent to produce a text that was “Faithfully Translated” and radically restored to primitive-church purity, but that was also fit for Ravenscroft’s and other English composers’ melodies and made no conspicuous intervention in the growing archive of English vernacular psalters. The collection’s title, *The Whole Booke of Psalmes Faithfully Translated into English Metre*, differs only slightly from that of the Sternhold-Hopkins psalm book. The Bay Psalm Book reproduces the Sternhold-Hopkins’s epigraphs (James 5.13 and Colossians 3.16)²³ word for word as well, though in reverse order.

Nevertheless, it seems unlikely that seventeenth-century readers would have ever confused the Bay Psalm Book for its more popular mainland English rival. The first edition of the Bay psalter had a print run of 1,700, or about one copy per eight colonists—a staggering output for a seventeenth-century press at a North American outpost of European civilization, as well as a sign of a marked preference for quantity

Psalter explicitly created for use in the Bay Colony sets New England distinctly apart from the England it left behind” (130). Not only (as I argue at greater length in the opening pages of this chapter) did the Bay Psalm Book contain no place markers, however, but both the meters it uses and the tunes it recommends are from England.

²³ “Let the word of God dwell plenteously in you, in all wisdom, teaching and exhorting one another in Psalmes, Hymnes, and spiritual Songs, singing to the Lord with grace in your hearts” (Colassians 3.16); “If any be afflicted, let him pray, and if any be merry let him sing psalmes” (James 5.13).

over quality.²⁴ As Hugh Amory has revealed, the Bay Psalm Book's printer, Stephen Day, inelegantly isolated the definite article "The." as a running head for the verso pages of the Preface, "barely understood how to convey a new paragraph" and maintained a perfect inconsistency in the spelling of the running heads of the main body of the text (alternating "PSALME" on every recto and "PSALM" on every verso) (45-8). Only eleven copies of this edition are known to remain, and these are perhaps best known for the high prices they have fetched at rare book auctions (most recently, in 1947, one copy sold for \$151,000, setting a record for the highest book price to date). As Amy Morris points out, however, despite the Bay Psalm Book's appearance in two recent thrillers, Will Harriss's *The Bay Psalm Book Murder* (1983) and David Baldacci's *The Collectors* (2005), its "celebrity is ironic given that it made no claims to material greatness" ("The Bay Psalm Book").

The Bay translation made no claims to conventional poetic greatness, either. "Rare is the critical Samson capable of drawing honey from the carcass of the Bay Psalm Book," Norman S. Grabo commented in a 1961 essay, "How Bad is the Bay Psalm Book?" (606). Though few literary critics have disagreed, in the last decade, the collection has been recommodified in facsimile reprints by booksellers who seem cheerfully unconcerned with its original function in New England Reformed worship.²⁵ The front cover of a 2007 facsimile by Cosimo Classics, for example, designates "Stephen Daye" as the collection's author. Ignoring the "Bay" in its title, the back cover

²⁴ According to Hugh Amory, the colonists lacked a smaller type (pica) that would have allowed them to print their single-column psalter in octavo sheets and save approximately seventy-one reams of expensive, imported paper (Amory, 42-3). Amory notes that the Bay Psalm Book was "an oddity, the only one-column roman, quarto edition of the metrical psalms yet printed" (43). In revised form, twenty-six more editions of this collection would be printed in New England, the last appearing in 1762.

²⁵ In addition to the edition I discuss here, Applewood Books (2006), Cornell University Press (2009), and FQ Books (2010) have all recently published facsimiles of the Bay Psalm Book.

of this reprint conflates the Plymouth separatists with their spiritual brethren to the northwest, crediting “the settlers who landed at Plymouth Rock in 1620” for the translation, rather than an anonymous cohort of Massachusetts Bay ministers.²⁶

Abridging the doctrinal nuances and paradoxes of seventeenth-century Calvinism, the back-cover blurb goes on to claim that the Bay Psalm Book’s “authentic prose remains lyrical and lovely as it carries the Puritans’ simple message of God’s grace.” It is unclear whether this comment refers to the collection’s unsigned prose Preface, which accounts for 13 of the book’s 295 pages, or the work as whole, the rest of which is in verse. If the latter, as seems likely, the editors’ apparent confusion about the collection’s literary genre suggests that they found themselves caught between its rhymes and poetic *mise-en-page*, on the one hand, and the well-known disclaimer in its Preface on the other: “wee...have attended Conscience rather then Elegance, fidelity rather then poetry, in translating the hebrew” (12).

Although the Cosimo editors’ compromise, “lyrical” prose, is the exact inverse of what the Bay translators seem to have intended, it poses an important question about genre. Almost paradoxically, I would argue, understanding the Bay Psalm Book as poetry requires coming to terms with its relationship to the translation theory of contemporary English prose translations as well. The Bay translation departs most dramatically from its metrical predecessors in the extent of its compilers’ ambition “to keepe close to the originall” Hebrew. “Although wee have cause to blesse God in many respects for the religious indeavours of the translators of the psalmes into meetre usually annexed to our Bibles,” the Preface tactfully acknowledges, “yet it is not unknowne to the godly learned

²⁶ Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay were separate colonies until 1691. The early congregations at Plymouth, Salem and Ipswich used Roger Ainsworth’s translation, which was first published in Amsterdam in 1612 (Haraszti, 65).

that they have rather presented a paraphrase then the words of David translated according to the rule 2 chron. 29.30. and that their addition to the words, detractions from the words are not seldome and rare, but very frequent and many times needles (which we suppose would not be approved of if the psalmes were so translated into prose)” (10). As the parenthetical remark here suggests, the Bay Psalm Book’s core principle of translation theory might be condensed into a single, simple dictum: apply the standards already achieved in mainland prose translations to the verse as well. In 2 Chronicles 29.30, the source of the alleged prohibition of paraphrase, the Levites are “commanded to sing praise unto the LORD with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer”—the words of the psalmists, not hymns inspired by them, and not a loose approximation of them infested by literary vogue. In the judgment of the Bay translators, the metrical paraphrases already in circulation were oriented toward craven, worldly tastes. Their new offering, by contrast, was the product of a concerted, collaborative effort to correct these sins of omission and commission in order that latter-day congregations might restore liturgical purity.

Critically, the Bay Psalm Book’s title page lacks an equivalent for the Sternhold-Hopkins and Ainsworth psalters’ proper names. Like the Septuagint—the Greek translation of the Old Testament produced in Alexandria between the first and third centuries B.C.E. —and the all-prose Authorized Bible, the Bay Psalm Book presents a unified front to its readers, as if its collaborators were of a single mind about all matters of doctrine, semantics, and style. The character of this single mind, however, diverges in illuminating ways from the character projected by “The Translators to the Reader,” the unsigned preface to the 1611 Authorized Bible by Miles Smith. The committee of translators appointed by King James, Smith claims, has charted a middle course between

iconoclastic literalism and a Catholic reluctance to make the Word of God universally accessible:

we have on the one side avoided the scrupulosity of the Puritans, who leave the old Ecclesiastical words, and betake them to other, as when they put WASHING for BAPTISM, and CONGREGATION instead of CHURCH: as also on the other side we have shunned the obscurity of the Papists, in their AZIMES, TUNIKE, RATIONAL, HOLOCAUSTS, PRAEPUCE, PASCHE, and a number of such like, whereof their late Translation is full, and that of purpose to darken the sense, that since they must needs translate the Bible, yet by the language thereof, it may be kept from being understood.²⁷

This principle of moderation, Smith suggests, helps the Word achieve a kind of ecumenical self-identity in translation: “we desire that Scripture may speak like itself, as in the language of Canaan, that it may be understood even of the very vulgar.” At the same time, it underwrites a degree of liberty in diction: Smith defends the translators’ refusal to bind themselves “to an uniformity of phrasing, or to an identity of words” across the Bible on the grounds that “we cannot follow a better pattern for elocution than God himself; therefore he using divers words, in his holy writ, and indifferently for one thing in nature...we, if we will not be superstitious, may use the same liberty in our English versions out of Hebrew and Greek, for that copy or store that he hath given us” (147). Although it never cites this essay, the Bay Psalm Book Preface acknowledges that an almost identical leniency has been observed in the New England translation:

wee have with our english Bibles (to which next to the Originall wee have had respect) used the Idioms of our owne tongue in stead of Hebraismes, lest they might seeme english barbarismes. Synonimaes [sic] wee use indifferently: as *folk* for *people*, and *Lord* for *Iehovah*, and sometime (though seldom) *God* for *Iehovah*; for which (as for some other interpretations of places cited in the new Testament) we have scriptures authority ps. 14. with 53. Heb. 1.6. with psalme 97.7... Sometime wee have contracted, sometime dilated the same hebrew word, both for

²⁷ The “late Translation” Smith cites here is the Douay–Rheims Bible, completed in 1610.

the sence and the verse sake...as when wee dilate *who healeth* and say *he it is who healeth*. (13)²⁸

The scope of the Authorized translation, as well as its strictly prose format, makes for an altogether different kind of generalizing—I do not mean to conflate the two projects. And yet, where Smith defends the Authorized Version’s modest liberties as extensions of God’s own elocution, the Bay compilers entertain no such notions of scripture speaking “like itself” in their translation. Their subordination of elegance to conscience makes the seams visible and the mediation plain not out of any gratuitous “scrupulosity” or intent to chasten the vernacular, nor even because they were ungifted poets, but because of their conviction that near prose-caliber fidelity and formal regularity were nonnegotiable ends, and because of their assumption that attentive readers and singers would recognize any poetic infelicities as a reflection of this saintly commitment.

In the essay “On the Different Methods of Translating” (1813), Friedrich Schleiermacher defines translation in terms of interference: “The translator either (1) disturbs the writer as little as possible and moves the reader in his direction, or (2) disturbs the reader as little as possible and moves the writer in his direction” (*Western Translation Theory*, 229). The first of these approaches, which Schleiermacher concludes is the only legitimate of the two,²⁹ involves “an aura of impediment, of having been bent forcibly into the foreign semblance” (232). On the one hand, the Bay compilers’ vision of language and of their own role in the mediation of Hebrew songs into English verse

²⁸ Psalms 14 and 53 are nearly identical. As Alter points out, “in keeping with the general practice of the editor in the second book of Psalms,” in which Psalm 53 falls, “God, *’elohim*, is consistently substituted for YHWH, the Lord, in Psalm 14” (*Psalms*, 187). For a full catalog of the other differences, see his commentary on Psalm 53. Hebrews 1.6 is apparently a citation of the Septuagint translation of Deuteronomy 32.43, not of Psalm 97.7 as Cotton here suggests (Meeks, et al, 2252).

²⁹ As he later explains, “the goal of translating as if the source-language author had originally written in the target language is not only unattainable, but intrinsically null and void” because of the inseparability of thought and expression (234).

differs in clear and distinct ways from Schleiermacher's interest in the process by which "linguistic forms have seized and held the errant imagination" (228) of the primary-language author, and there is no trace of his affection for foreignness per se or of his admiration for successful translators' ingenuity (232) in the Bay Psalm Book.

Furthermore, while Schleiermacher intended his piece to move beyond questions of "translation after the letter and translation after the sense, translation faithful and free, and the other oppositions currently bandied about" (230), the Bay compilers were content to align themselves with fidelity: they had no interest in redirecting the discourse on a literary mode. Nevertheless, the principle of an "aura of impediment," so qualified, can help focalize one of the Bay Psalm Book's essential properties, something that distinguishes it from the mainstream assumptions about propriety in translation: its tendency to present itself as manifestly translated, impeded, powerfully and graphically governed by structures extrinsic to the target language. As Schleiermacher points out, "there can hardly be a more astonishing form of self-abasement" for an author than to embrace this dynamic in his or her writing: "Who," he asks, "would gladly...be censured like parents who give their children to be raised by acrobats, because he would not train his language in its own native gymnastics but must inure it to alien and unnatural contortions?" Like Schleiermacher's ideal translator, the Bay compilers position themselves far off from a method of translating "that...would shelter the reader against all trouble and toil by whisking the foreign author magically into his unmediated presence" (233). While Smith entertains no such fantasy of immediacy either, in large part because of his freedom from metrical constraint, he is free—to borrow Schleiermacher's memorable figure—to imagine that Hebrew and Greek gymnastics are

translatable into English: scripture can speak like itself. The Bay Psalm Book, by contrast, willingly submits itself to godly impediment.

In this sense, it far outpaces the metrical psalters produced in the decades leading up to the Bay Psalm Book's publication by the poet George Wyther (or "Wither") and the politician Francis Rous. Both figures had puritan leanings, and both consciously grounded their metrical psalms, as well as their rationale for producing them, in the Authorized Version's prose. Wyther's psalm book was printed in 1623. Prior to its printing, he produced a treatise on biblical poetry and psalm translation, *A Preparation to the Psalter* (1619), in which he argues that his only superficial knowledge of Hebrew and his relatively modest poetic gifts are assets for his work as a translator: "know that I have not undertaken to present the world," he declares, "with any new Translation of my owne, out of the Hebrew; but only turned that which we already have, into verse." Any single translator's facility in Hebrew, he argues, is ultimately beside the point: "it were arrogancie for any particular man, to thinke the Church should rather allow of his private endeavour, then of theirs who being many, and knowne to bee learned and reverend men, had the warrant and prayers of the Church for their undertaking." His personal contributions are therefore limited to "some few meditations, and such uses and observations, as I thought might bee most proper to the Psalme whence I drew them" (20). Even the hostile criticism his translation is likely to engender is cast as a virtue: "as S. Paul went to Damascus with an intent to persecute the Church," he reasons, "but returned an open Professor of Christ. So it may be, that many who intended to oversee

my labours, with a purpose to scoffe at them, shall in stead thereof, be moved in them to praise God” (21).³⁰

In ways that resonate with Cotton’s 1640 objections to psalters that aspire to conventional poetic greatness, Wyther argues that the Psalms “are not so sutable to mans naturall disposition, nor are they easie for flesh and blood to apprehend: and therefore both the matter and the manner of their Poesy, is neglected, whilst the same and much inferior flowers of Rhetorick, are observed and commended in other Inventions; even because the things they treat of, are pleasing to the sense, and commonly such as their muddy capacities can with lesse difficulty comprehend” (70). According to this line of reasoning, aesthetic sensibilities coddled by fallen contemporary tastes fail to register the psalms’ essential poetic and rhetorical power. On the one hand, Wyther claims authority as a translator on the grounds that he has trained himself to be sensitive to this power; on the other hand, it is difficult to distinguish between this sensitivity and his deference to the Authorized translation.³¹

Although Rous takes a more antagonistic stance in relation to the Sternhold-Hopkins psalter than Wyther, improved consistency with the Authorized version was also one of the main ends of his *The Booke of Psalmes, in English Meeter*, first published in Rotterdam in 1638. Knowing how well-accustomed to the old version his compatriots had become, Rous maintains in the first of two prefaces that he “assaied onely to change some pieces of the usuall version, even such as seemed to call aloud, and as it were undenyably for a Change” (3). Confident that “the Reasons of the Changes, will mostly

³⁰ Wyther could perhaps afford this stooped posture of self-deprecation because of his successful petitioning of King James’s backing, as the *Cum Priuilegio Regis Regali* on the title page of his *Hymnes and Songs of the Church* attests.

³¹ For a more extended reading of Wither’s *Preparation*, see Norton, 131-9.

apeare in the Changes themselves,” Rous groups them into three main categories: “Cadence,” “currence” of diction, and agreement “with the New Translation, yea, with the Originall it selfe” (4). In a second preface, Rous systematically marshals the evidence in his favor, first providing a list of 36 psalms that best demonstrate the progress his new version has made (5), then a sampling of nine specific “places, that seeme to call alow’d for amendment” in the Sternhold-Hopkins (6). The first, for example, is Psalm 24.6:

This is the Broode of Travellers
In seeking of his Grace
As Iacob did the Israelites
In that time of his race.

Turning to the same passage in Rous’s version, one finds:

This is the generation
Of them that seeke him right;
Iacob’s true seed, that of thy face
Doth seeke the blessed sight.

If readers were not persuaded by the obvious differences in cadence and logical sense, they could turn to the Authorized Version’s prose and confirm that Rous’s rendition accords far better with it (even if it shifts Jacob from vocative, and object, to patrimony of the generation in question): “This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah.” The Westminster Assembly in the House of Commons, of which Rous was a member, gave preliminary approval to his psalter in 1643, revised it, and finally stipulated in 1645 that, beginning on January 1, 1647, it would supersede the Sternhold-Hopkins version (Morris 2007, 109). Even with this mandate, however, Rous’s version never caught on. As Morris points out, not only was the House of Commons’ intervention opposed by the Stationers Company, but Rous had failed to gain support in

English churches and in the House of Lords, the latter of which preferred another a translation by William Barton (“Art of Purifying,” 110).

What most sets the Bay Psalm Book apart from these relatively contemporary metrical translations, however, was its emphasis on the integrity of the ritual that the collection was compiled to serve, its direction of all the labor associated with its production toward this end. In *Singing of Psalmes*, Cotton stakes his definition of psalmody as a gospel ordinance that coordinates the resolution of hearts and voices to a single biblical verse, Matthew 26.30, which narrates the events that immediately followed the Last Supper: “And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.” The critical expression for Cotton, “when they had sung an hymn,” translates a single Greek verb, *humnesantes*. Like the Authorized translators, Cotton understands this nominative plural participle to mean something like “they [that is, Jesus and the disciples] having sung a hymn.” As he acknowledges, however, the Greek word covers a much wider range of meanings: “Though the meaning be, they praised God, yet the word implyeth, they praised God with an Hymne; for it is improper in that language to translate the word to Praise (whether God or man) but either with a Song, or with a Poeme. It is more probable, then any reason can wave, that Christ and his Disciples did shut up the Lords Supper with singing one of their Hebrew Psalmes....Christ and his Disciples sang together, and therefore with the voyce as well as the heart” (8).³² The ordinariness of the phrase and the subordination of the clause in which it appears (to another relatively

³² In *Gospel Musick*, Holmes cites this verse as well, noting that “the ancient Hebrew copie of the Gospel of Matthew” specifies that Jesus and the disciples sing “one of the *Tehillim*”—that is, one of the Psalms (16). As Cotton probably knew, the verb *humneo* appears only a handful of times in the New Testament: Mark 14.26 and Matthew 26.30 are identical; the word can also be found in Acts 16.25 and Hebrews 2.12 (Kohlenberger III, et al, 5630-1).

colorless verb, “they went out” [*exelthon*]) serve for Cotton as perfect illustrations of the ritual’s embeddedness in early Christian devotional practice. In this sense, his citation of Matthew 26.30 resonates with Winthrop’s casual remark in his journal that the Cambridge printing press had issued forth “the Psalmes newly turned to meter”: no elaboration was necessary for something so self-evident and homogenous.

At the same time, however, Cotton imputes extraordinary medicinal and peace-keeping properties to the ordinance as well: endowed with “so many gracious effects, above nature or art,” he maintains, psalmody “allayeth the passions of melancholy and choler, yea and scattereth the furious temptations of evill spirits, I Sam. 16. 23.³³ Whence it also helpeth to asswage enmity, and to restore friendship and favour, as in Saul to David” (4). The mechanism behind this musical palliation is never described. I believe that it can be recovered, however, in the Bay translations that thematize abandonment, alienation, and discord. Bay Psalm 38, for example, opens in pain and supplication:

Lord in thy wrath rebuke me not
nor in thy hot rage chasten me.
Because thine hand doth presse me sore:
and in me thy shafts fastened bee. (1-2)

The speaker goes on to represent himself as a walking corpse: “There is no soundness in my flesh,” he laments in verse 3, and then repeats this observation in verse 7, adding, “with foul sores my loynes are fill’d.”³⁴ He accepts responsibility for his decomposing

³³ “And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.”

³⁴ Mary Rowlandson, reminiscing about the healing of a festering bullet wound in *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* (1681), cites the Authorized version of verse 5 in the Third Remove of her captivity narrative: “before the cure was wrought, I may say, as it is in Psalms 38.5-6. *My wounds stink and are corrupt, I am bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long.*” Interestingly, Rowlandson omits the psalmist’s admission of guilt in verse 5, which runs, in full (in the Authorized version), “My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness.”

condition, however, in a formulation whose flat-footed similitude and diction suggest that his imaginative faculties have also been impaired:

Because that mine iniquities
ascended are above my head:
like as an heavy burden, they
to heavy upon me are layd. (4)

Instead of soothing the speaker's wounds, the social dynamic introduced in part 2 exacerbates them: "My friends & lovers from my sore / stand off: off stand my kinsmen eke" (11). The chiasmus in the first half of the second line ("stand off: off stand") turns the parallel structure of the Hebrew versets in on itself, elegantly dramatizing the recoiling of the psalmist's loved ones.³⁵ Not only does their absence deprive the speaker of a human support network, it leaves him exposed to the "snares" and insults of a cohort of enemies who "falsly hate" him and wish him dead (12, 19).

The imperatives to God in the psalm's closing petition elegantly parallel those from the opening verse, but they also suggest spiritual progress: the speaker has moved from begging God not to inflict further punishment—righteous though it might be—to cataloguing the oppression he has suffered, to meditating on the isolation brought on by such suffering, to calling for God's intercession and recognizing the absolute power of his redeeming grace:

Iehovah, doe not mee forsake:
my God o doe not farre depart
from mee. Make hast unto mine ayd,
o Lord who my salvation art. (21-22)

³⁵ As Alter notes, "The man has suffered some terrible illness, including repellent malodorous sores visible all over his body. As a result, his friends have kept their distance from him, and others have chosen to revile him" (*Psalms*, 135-6). The Authorized translation renders the motive for separation more vividly than either Alter or the *Bay Psalm Book*: "My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand far off."

Many psalms are built on the same paradigm, which teaches that suffering, understood correctly, reduces human experience to a complete dependence on God. Although it probes the dark underside of the human condition, Bay Psalm 38 exhibits what Coburn Freeburn has called the psalms' "metamorphosis of weakness into strength" and their expression of "the essential unity of experience" (38). The isolation of the speaker in this psalm is implicitly contained within a superstructure that understands it as universally translatable, a reflection of every pious Christian's inner life.

In a more overt way, the resolution of Psalm 69 corroborates Cotton's emphasis on psalmody as a means of binding a community together, but it arrives there only after a nuanced meditation on the challenges of communication. Here, the psalmist's relation to his community is characterized by obscurity and frustration:

Who wayt on thee, Lord God of hoasts,
 Let not be shamd for mee:
 O never suffer them, who doe
 for thee inquiry make,
 O God of Israell, to be
 confounded for my sake,
 By reason that I for thy sake,
 reproach have suffered:
 Confusion my countenance
 hath overcovered.
 I as a stranger am become
 unto my bretherren;
 and am an aliant unto
 my mothers childerren. (6-8)

The Bay translators intensify the sense of muddled social relations in this text by covering the psalmist's face with "confusion" rather than "shame," which is how the Authorized translation has it. "Shame" registers remorse, a recognition that one has fallen short of a standard: it requires a more or less stable sense of the relation between individual and social group and implies a desire, however slight, for some kind of

reconciliation with the norm. “Confusion,” on the other hand, suggests a breakdown of understanding.

Like Bay Psalm 38, 69 represents the anguish of the psalmist’s separation from his kin by blood (“bretherren”) as well as in faith (“Who wait on thee, Lord God”), but with a fuller sense of the consequences of this division: it weighs the psychological cost of an individual’s zeal as well as its indirect but potentially adverse social effects. God has unmediated access to the speaker’s interior, as witnessed by verse 19—“Thou hast knowne my reproach, also / my shame, & my disgrace”—but human beings are obliged to rely on networks of ambiguous—and sometimes inscrutable—signs: in many respects, Psalm 69 is about the ways in which the apparent motivations of public exchanges can differ from the actual ones. Earlier, the psalmist has made a vague reference to his rendering of an unjustly extorted penalty or restitution:

mine enemies wrongfully
they are that would me slay,
mighty they are; then I restor’d
what I took not away. (4)

The psalm is a meditation on the impediments to consensus and mutual understanding, even among those of good faith. It never elucidates the precise relation between the material restoration invoked here and the speaker’s good faith, or the reason his enemies have made their disingenuous claim. Nevertheless, as a result of this bad publicity, bolstered by a mournful disposition (something that tends, throughout the Psalms, to draw mockery rather than sympathy), the psalmist finds himself bereft of support: “for some me to bemone / I sought, but none there was; & for / comforters, but found none” (20).

The cause of the sorrow, in this case, appears to be the psalmist's overinvestment of affect and energy in his faith:

For of thy house the zeale me hath
 up eaten: every one
 who thee reproach, their reproaches
 are fallen me upon.
 In fasts, I wept & spent my soule,
 this was reproach to mee.
 And I my garment sackcloth made:
 yet must their proverb bee.
 They that do sit within the gate,
 against mee speak they do;
 unto the drinkers of strong drink,
 I was a song also. (10-12)

Aware that his zeal has set in motion a kind of self-defeating positive feedback loop, in which all measures taken to behave more piously and all attempts to appease an enemy intensify the campaign against him, the psalmist represents himself as an utterly powerless victim of character defamation. The final item in this catalogue of disgraces hits especially close to home: the genre of the song has been profanely and mockingly turned against him, so that the speaker's loss of control over his public persona is aggravated by a threat to the authority of his singing voice.

The solution to this dilemma is to reappropriate the medium: in the final verses of Psalm 69, the speaker endeavors to reunify his spiritual community by means of a universal song:

Let heav'n, earth, seas & all therein
 that moves, his praises sound.
 For God will Iudahs cittyes build,
 and Sion he will save:
 that they may dwell therein, & may
 it in possession have. (34-35)

Psalm 69 associates collective praise with the building of a city and the restoration of a people's claim to a promised land as well as with the achievement of mutual understanding in the only sphere that matters. Here, spiritual and civic unity are aligned: the pious Christian is trained to look beyond social infelicities and indignity, toward the collective voicing of God's praise that effectively nullifies this inconveniences.

Whereas John Winthrop's "A Modell of Christian Charity" (1629) characterizes affect of as a linked series of mechanisms, the psalms tend to figure these aspects of humanity in direct, intimate, and personal terms. In "Modell," the motivation for charitable behavior is imagined in terms of efficient machinery:

when we bid one make the clock strike he doth not lay hand on the hammer which is the immediate instrument of the sound but settts on worke the first mover or maine wheele, knoweing that will certainly produce the sound which hee intends; soe the way to drawe men to the workes of mercy is not by force of Argument from the goodnes or necessity of the worke, for though this course may enforce a rationall minde to some present Act of mercy as is frequent in experience, yet it cannot worke such a habit in a Soule as shall make it prompt upon all occasions to produce the same effect but by frameing these affeCTIONS of love in the hearte which will as natively bring forth the other, as any cause doth produce the effect. (34)

Mercy, in this account, is both beyond reason and made accessible by means of it, subject to a "frameing," much in the same way that psalmody ideally serves, for Cotton, as a keeper of the peace endowed with "many gracious effects, above nature or art" (*Singing*, 4). Bay Psalm 69 suggests that in a social context, however, "knoweing" and "certain[ty]" are subjective; Bay Psalm 38 explores a mode of affliction so repulsive that it disables the mercy of the victim's loved ones. By directly engaging the theme of social discord, these psalms achieve a degree of psychological and affective suppleness that goes well beyond such prescriptive formulations as the sermon.

Bay Psalm 137, on the other hand, the translation with arguably the lowest charisma, the least poetic appeal, gives formal expression to the Bay Psalm Book's core principles of mutual consent and unity in discord, and it does so with ruthless efficiency.³⁶ Describing the plight of the Israelite captives in the aftermath of the 586 B.C.E. Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem, Psalm 137 is one of few psalms that narrate a particular moment in Hebrew history (Hamlin, 218), but its memorable imagery of exile and suspended music has served as raw material for countless allusions and adaptations in a wide range of cultural contexts. Arguably, Psalm 137 is the "metapsalm" par excellence, narrating the production of a song that faithfully invokes God's aid, commemorates a fallen Jerusalem without abandoning hope in its resurrection, and—in a master stroke—turns an enemy's mocking appropriation of psalmody against itself. Commanded to sing praises to a God who has failed (so far) to intercede in the routing of his chosen people—and, what is more, to sing them in an alien setting whose remoteness painfully reinforces his apparent absence—the surviving Israelites devise a way to resist and retaliate within the generic boundaries their captors have tauntingly imposed: a song of Zion. In the broad sense of the term, the speaker of Psalm 137 is an ingenious, if perhaps ethically reprehensible, translator—a literary innovator who understands well the

³⁶ The provenance of Bay Psalm 137 has been the subject of controversy. Scholars once attributed it to Francis Quarles. In *Account of Two Voyages to New England*, published in 1674, John Josselyn reports that he delivered translations of psalms 16, 25, 51, 88, 113, and 137 by Quarles to John Cotton in 1638. Haraszti notes that when one editor, Alexander B. Grosart, "included these 'hitherto over-looked' psalms in Quarles's collected works" on the basis of this claim, "American scholars surrendered the treasures without a word of protest." Haraszti suspected that the attribution was false, if only on stylistic grounds: "No one but the Bay Psalmists could have fabricated such inversions!" (55). More recently, a manuscript containing translations of psalms 1-8 and bearing Quarles's name (though in a spelling never used by him elsewhere, and in a "neat secretarial hand" not his own) was discovered by Karl Josef Holtgen in the Portland Collection in Nottingham in the early 1990s. In an article appending these psalms, Holtgen argues that they reveal "all those features of meditative paraphrase, verbal variation and 'polished' versification, which were anathema to the colonial psalms" (129). In the absence of conclusive evidence to the contrary, I am persuaded that Quarles's translational poetics were too paraphrastic and elegant for the Bay psalter. Of course, the Bay compilers themselves were not nearly as interested as modern critics in the question of authorship.

formidable challenges involved in a radical recontextualization of Hebrew musical worship (“How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?”) but faces them with dexterity and defiance.

In spite of its short length and its unity of setting and theme, latter-day composers and authors have frequently avoided bringing the psalm’s nine verses into focus as a coherent whole: late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century reworkings of Psalm 137 created for mainstream consumption tend to emulate its lyric power but retreat from its ethics of revenge. With the important exception of biblical scholars such as Robert Alter and James Kugel, few, it seems, have the stomach, or the faith in the propriety of Psalm 137’s literal sense to reconcile its moving representation of mourning in exile with its harrowing concluding image, one of the most vicious in all of scripture: “O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. / Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones” (137.8-9).

While equally brutal images of infanticide crop up elsewhere in the Old Testament,³⁷ most contemporary readers are likely to agree with Alter that “no moral justification can be offered” (475) for the psalm’s closing verse. The Anglican Church’s *Alternative Service Book* (1980), places verse 9 in brackets; two other well-circulated English prayer books, an ecumenical Protestant lectionary titled *The Daily Office* (1968) and the psalter in the Anglican Book of Common Prayer in Canada, cut the psalm short at verse 8 and verse 6, respectively.³⁸ Meanwhile, the lyrics to the two best-known contemporary pop songs based on 137 are similarly—and understandably—selective,

³⁷ See, for example, 2 Kings 8.12, Isaiah 13.16, Hosea 13.16, and Nahum 3.10 (Berlin, 69).

³⁸ Gillingham 1994, 7; Gillingham 2008, 255; Hamlin, 248, n. 19.

confining themselves to little more than a statement and reiteration of the psalm's opening lament. "The Rivers of Babylon" (1970), an upbeat Rastafarian anthem composed by Brent Dowe and Trevor McNaughton and first recorded by The Melodians, adapts the opening lines of Psalm 137 and suggestively merges them with a verse from Psalm 19, slightly modified, that petitions for appropriate speech and sentiment as if in silent disagreement with what follows in the original: "Let the words of our mouth and the meditation of our heart be always acceptable in thy sight."³⁹ From the folk-rock catalog, "Babylon" (credited as "Traditional"), the last track on Don McLean's *American Pie* (1971), consists of a single refrain sung in a round to a simple, haunting banjo riff: "By the waters, the waters of Babylon, / We lay down and wept, and wept, for thee Zion, / We remember thee, remember thee, remember thee Zion." Never proceeding from grief to resolution, these modernizations strand their speakers in static cycles of elegiac fragment.

If trimming the psalm of its exceptionable curse in modern-day church services and commercially released music, where redaction is a fully accepted practice, seems unremarkable, there is evidence of a corresponding tendency in popular literary criticism as well. Toward the end of a *New Yorker* review of Robert Alter's 2007 translation of the Psalms, James Wood calls 137 his "favorite...an exceptionally beautiful and complex lament," but curiously limits his treatment of the psalm's complexity to an encomium on the diction in the Authorized translation of verse 7 ("Remember, O LORD, the children

³⁹ The pronouns in Psalm 19.14 are singular. The German-based Caribbean disco-pop group Boney M recorded a popular but politically muted version of "The Rivers of Babylon" in the late 1970s, omitting the original's reference to Haile Salassie: where Dowe and McNaughton have "How shall we sing King Alpha's song in a strange land?" the Boney M rendition restores the less interesting, but scripturally more faithful, "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" For a fuller account of the influence of the psalms on reggae, see Murrell.

of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof”):

A few months ago, I was reading this psalm, in the King James Version, and wondering about the powerful repetition of “Rase it, rase it,” and as I said the words out loud I was struck by the genius of the Jacobean translators, who knew, working in the age of Shakespeare, a thing or two about puns and double meanings. “Raze it, raze it” is also, in English, “Raise it, raise it.” It is inconceivable that the seventeenth-century translators did not intuit this doubleness, which is what the poem is about, anyway: even as we remind ourselves that Jerusalem was razed, we are raising it up. Even as we refuse to sing a song of Zion, we are singing a song of Zion. Even as we stay silent, we are making music.

Wood’s insight into the Authorized translators’ clever refraction of the psalm’s irony provides a window onto the paradoxical dynamic of silence and song that was central to early modern Protestant psalmody.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, in ending his account of Psalm 137 here, Wood effectively equivocates two very different kinds of silence: the Israelites’ qualified refusal to sing the Lord’s song in Babylon and Wood’s own critical silence—his choice not to comment on 137’s disturbingly specific closing image, or to consider its role in the act of remembering Jerusalem. If 137 is fundamentally about doubleness, as Wood suggests, why does his account ignore the psalm’s double extremes of violence recalled and violence exhorted, of sublime lyrical pathos and what most modern readers regard as an utterly unconscionable ethical posture? How do these extremes come to bear on the beautiful complexity Wood claims to find here?

These patterns of elision and silence suggests that, in the broad sense of this term, Psalm 137 resists translation into contemporary Anglophonic popular culture. While its fourth verse, “How can we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?” has clearly felt timeless and placeless to so many readers, and worthy of so many repetitions, its

⁴⁰ The closing section of Chapter 2 examines this dynamic more closely.

harrowing conclusion seems, from the perspective of modern secular humanism, functionally immovable. In critical ways, this limited translatability echoes the challenges that sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English translators of the psalm seem to have experienced. According to Hannibal Hamlin, 137 is “perhaps the quintessential psalm of the Renaissance and the Reformation. Both of these were movements of renewal and rebirth, but they were based on the rediscovery and reappropriation of past cultures which remained fragmentary and to some extent irredeemably lost. In several respects many of the men and women of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were exiles, and the Psalm of Exile had particular resonance for them” (219). The quality of fragmentary resonance Hamlin invokes here is perhaps nowhere more clear than in the 1560 edition of the Geneva Bible, whose commentary and marginal apparatus present an overtly political reading of Psalm 137, self-reflexively invoking the book’s compilation in exile from Mary Tudor’s anti-Protestant backlash. Even here, however, the psalm resists a thoroughgoing localization of its contents: the commentary is split between reflections on ancient Middle Eastern history and thinly veiled allusions to the Marian exiles’ predicament.

When read alongside the heading, “The church in captiuitie,” at the top of the page on which it appears, the opening of the Geneva’s prose summary of Psalm 137 associates freely among multiple kinds of absence: “The people of God in their banishment seing Gods true religion decaie, liued in great anguish and sorowe of heart.” The first verse of the psalm is translated, “By the riuers of Babel, we sate, and there we wept, when we remembred Zion.” A marginal gloss on its first two clauses unabashedly blurs the line between the commentary’s editorial voice and the persona of the psalm: “That is, we abode a long time: & albeit that the countrei was pleasant, yet colde it note

stai our teares, nor turne us from the true seruice of our God.”⁴¹ A gloss on verse 6, which runs, “If I do not remembre thee, let my tongue cleaue to the rofe of my mouth: yea, if I preferre not Ierusalem to my chief ioye,” seems calculated to conflate these identities further, this time by identifying the destroyed Israelite city with the backsliding of mainland English Christianity: “The decaie of Gods religion in their countrei was so grievous, that no ioye colde make them glad, except it were restored.” Finally, the commentary on the psalm’s closing verses telescopes back into Babylonian history, reading the parting image as an allusion to Isaiah 13: verse 9 is kept at arm’s length as a prophecy of “Cyrus and Darius, whome ambition moued to fight against Babylon” and who served, however unwittingly, as “rods to punish [God’s] enemies.”⁴² Sixteenth-century readers were accustomed to reconciling allegorical, typological and historical readings of the same Old Testament text. Nonetheless, the high degree of mediation in the Geneva Bible’s presentation of the psalm, the way the apparatus juggles multiple layers of meaning indexed to footnotes scattered across the text, stands in vivid contrast to the Bay Psalm Book’s holistic approach, to which I will now turn.

Although nominally a branch of the Church of England, and although their separation from the motherland was self-imposed, the seventeenth-century settlers of Massachusetts Bay would seem to fall squarely into Hamlin’s broad category of Reformation exiles. Based on the parallels, however imperfect, between two kinds of collective experience—vanquished Israelites debating the propriety of singing divine

⁴¹ It is hard not to speculate that the editors intend here a polite nod to their Genevan hosts and allies.

⁴² Isaiah 13 narrates the “the burden of Babylon” (Isaiah 13.1); the key verses, in this context, are 5 and 16: “They [the agents of divine wrath] come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the LORD, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land”; “Their [the Babylonians’] children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished.” Commenting on this controversial verse, Calvin claimed that the Psalmist “does not speak under the impulse of personal feeling, and only employs words which God had himself authorized” (*Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, vol. 5, trans. Rev. James Anderson. 1949, p. 197; cited in Henwood, 182).

songs in Babylonian captivity, displaced English congregants modeling a radical reform of metrical psalm translation and congregational singing practices at the margins of the American “wilderness”—one might expect that Psalm 137 had special significance in New England psalm culture as well. In the decades after King Philip’s War, colonial writers did indeed invoke Psalm 137 to make sense of traumatic Anglo-Indian encounters. Unsurprisingly, for example, it turns up at key moments in white captivity narratives. In the Eighth Remove of *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* (1682), as Mary Rowlandson, an English hostage of the Wampanoags, falls “a-weeping” for the first time in her captivity on the banks of the Connecticut river, she recalls its opening verse: “now I may say as Psal. 137.1, ‘By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down; yea, we wept when we remembered Zion.’” The Deerfield minister John Williams relates, in *The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion* (1707), that when his Indian captors gave permission for an impromptu Sabbath-day service, they bade the English, “Sing us one of Zion’s songs” and “were ready some of them to upbraid us because our singing was not so loud as theirs” (177-8).⁴³ In *God’s Mercy Surmounting Man’s Cruelty* (1728), Elizabeth Hanson reports that her daughter, Sarah, was bidden by her Indian captors to sing along the banks of a forest waterway. Elizabeth, who was apparently elsewhere at the time, claims that the first three verses of Psalm 137 were then “brought into [Sarah’s] remembrance” (it is not quite clear whether she actually sung them) (233). The ambiguity surrounding these citations—the way that, in all three accounts, it is difficult to distinguish between narrative event and the scriptural lens through which it is focused—signals the practically irresistible suggestiveness of the tropes in the first half of the psalm. These translated more fluidly to colonial American soil than the psalm’s closing

⁴³ Citations of Williams and Hanson refer to Slotkin and Folsom, editors, *So Dreadfull a Judgment*.

verse, for which I know of only one citation in colonial New England writing. In the aftermath of King Philip's War, the West Bridgewater minister James Keith tentatively cited 137.9 in a memorandum of the scripture he considered relevant to the ministers' and magistrates' deliberations over the fate of King Phillip's nine-year-old son, but he acknowledged that it was in conflict with a verse from Chronicles ("neither shall the children die for the fathers, but every man shall die for his own sin" [25.4]) and stopped short of endorsing either passage (Lepore, 150-3; Phillip's son, whose name was not recorded, was ultimately sold into slavery⁴⁴).

As I argue in the opening section of this chapter, however, the Bay Psalm Book tends to resist localization of its contents, and its translation of 137, for all of the rich suggestiveness of the original's tropes, is no exception to this policy. The Bay psalter offers one of the period's most direct and dry-eyed renditions of Psalm 137. As Hamlin points out, early modern translators "often exploited the close connection" in this psalm "between the two streams of water, the river and the tears of the weeping Jews" (220) in its first verse. The Countess of Pembroke's version, for example, opens with an abundance of fluid:

Nigh seated where the river flowes,
That watreth Babells thanckfull plaine,
Which then our teares in pearled rowes
Did help to water with their raine... (1-4)

⁴⁴ The bitter irony is that Psalm 137 applies far more poignantly to Phillip's son than to the English who controlled his fate. I cannot help but wonder what colonial-era Indians who came across Psalm 137 thought of it. Unfortunately, no response, to my knowledge, survives. For an account of the ways white, printed captivity narratives obscure our view of Indian captivity, see Part 3 of Lepore's *The Name of War* (pp. 125-70).

The Bay Psalm Book, by contrast, neutralizes the sensory qualities of the affective gesture in the psalm's opening verse: "yea even then wee mourned, when / wee remembered Sion." Its treatment of the psalm's famous fourth verse follows suit:

The lords song sing can wee? being
in strangers land. Then let
loose her skill my right hand, if I
Ierusalem forget. (4-5)

Perhaps the best way to appreciate the uniqueness of the Bay translation of this pivotal passage is to read it alongside its best-known precedents. The Authorized and Geneva prose versions of this psalm preserve the original's paratactic relation between a first-person-plural reflection on a group activity and the self-directed curse of an individual that follows, leaving the reader to resolve what, precisely, this relation is: "How shall we sing, said we, a song of the Lord in a strange land? / If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget to play" (Geneva; the commentary does not address verse 4, or the relation between verses 4 and 5); "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? / If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning" (Authorized). The Sternhold-Hopkins rendition, on the other hand, posits a dramatic self-correction:

Alas (sayd we) who can once frame,
his sorowfull hart to syng:
The praises of our loving God,
thus under a straunge kyng?
But yet if I Jerusalem
Out of my hart let slyde:
Then let my fingers quyte forget
The warbling harp to guyde. (4-5)

In spite of its extravagant elaboration on the original,⁴⁵ the Sternhold-Hopkins version generally holds to an intuitive, conventional reading of Psalm 137's complicated irony.

⁴⁵ I cannot speak to the Hebrew, but the Authorized Version and Alter's translation confirm that there is no sorrowful heart, strange king, sliding, or warbling in the original.

The phrase “But yet” marks the psalm’s turning point, the speaker’s transition from a state of heartbroken powerlessness, located explicitly in the past (“said we”), to a present-tense, personal, vengeful conviction. The words that follow—that is, the psalm’s last four verses—provide an expedient solution to the question about the possibility of psalmody in the desolation of exile, captivity and mockery, culminating in the infamous curse.

In marked contrast to all three of these versions, the Bay translation’s possessive “strangers” muffles the quality of the psalm that has made it so portable across historical periods and cultural contexts—its beautifully understated expression of alienation—as if the translators meant to pitch down the psalm’s affect as much as possible without detracting from the text’s essential meanings.⁴⁶ Meanwhile, the adverb of means (“how”) is conspicuously absent: instead, sheer capability is emphasized over method or desperation. “The Lords song” is placed at the head of a stanza, but “song” clangs against the adjacent cognate verb “sing” and the verse’s reference to place is couched in an awkward subordinate clause and split across an equally awkward enjambment. Like the Sternhold-Hopkins, the Bay translation supplies the conjunction “then,” but—crucially—without marking the shift between verses 4 and 5 as a movement from reticence to a resolution to remember Jerusalem in an active, meaningful way. In fact, the full sense of the word in this context emerges only when the “if” clause in the following verse makes it clear that the word “then” actually belongs to an inverted conditional. Until the reader or singer makes the necessary semantic adjustment, the conjunction provides an element

⁴⁶ Henry Ainsworth’s rendition of Psalm 137.4, “Iehova’s song how sing shal wee; / Within a forreyn peoples land?” is the only early modern version I have discovered that features anything like the Bay Psalm Book’s possessive “strangers land.” Ainsworth, however, unlike the Bay Psalm compilers, seems to have deliberately lined up biblical verse beginnings with poetic line beginnings, and since he was working in long meter, amplification was necessary for this relatively short verse. The Bay translators, on the other hand, neither gained nor lost syllables in choosing “strangers” over (for example) “a strange”—and, as the examples I have cited so far indicate, they seemed to care little about poetic rhythm or metrical regularity.

of dissonance, suggesting a tenuous logical connection between the rhetorical question in verse 4 (“The Lords song sing can we? being / in strangers land”) and the offer to abnegate the right hand’s skill (“Then let...”). The overall effect of this syntactic disjointedness is an emphasis—unique, as best I can determine, to the Bay Psalm Book—on the speaker’s willingness to impose a self-defeating constraint on his or her musical power.

As modern critical accounts of Bay Psalm 137 make plain, this aesthetic self-denial is something more than rhetorical. One of the Bay Psalm Book’s best and most sensitive readers, the rare-book scholar Zoltán Haraszti, singled out this translation as “the most atrocious piece in the whole volume” in his 1956 monograph, *The Enigma of the Bay Psalm Book* (54). Harrison T. Meserole makes passing reference to 137 as the Bay Psalm Book “at its worst” in his 1985 anthology of *Seventeenth-Century Puritan Poetry*, noting its “utter rhythmic and syntactic wreckage” but charitably withholding it from his selection of four Bay Psalms.⁴⁷ It is unlikely that either of these critics had in mind the Bay rendition of the horrifying image of infanticide in the psalm’s closing verse:

O happie hee shall surely bee
that taketh up, that eke
thy little ones against the stones
doth into pieces breake. (9)

This stanza might well be the smoothest in the translation: it is metrically regular and contains only one inversion, in the last two lines, both of whose clauses coincide neatly with line lengths, which makes it easy to follow. Meanwhile, although the translation confronts the repellant violence conveyed in the original, it softens it, slightly, by

⁴⁷ Meserole encloses the second comment in quotation marks but makes no attribution.

omitting any reference to a part of the body. To my knowledge, however, no critic has ever investigated the reasons this Psalm has drawn such critical heat. I would argue that the 1640 Bay translation of Psalm 137 stands out conspicuously among the 155 psalms in the collection simply because of its poetic form.

In terms of its arrangement on the page, Bay psalm 137 is identical to the other 114 in the collection translated into common meter quatrains, but its ordinary margins and syllabic divisions belie the challenges its rhyme scheme must have presented to its translator(s). It has an internal rhyme at the fourth and eighth syllables in each of its octosyllabic lines, in addition to the end rhyme, standard in common meter, in its even-numbered lines:

The rivers **on** of Babilon
 there when we did sit downe:
 yea even **then** wee mourned, **when**
 wee remembred Sion. (1; my emphasis)

Although it was far from unique in colonial American poetry—Michael Wigglesworth’s best-selling *Day of Doom*, which would later be published, for the first time, in 1662, contains 224 octaves’ worth—137 is the only psalm written in this form in the Bay Psalm Book. The ratio of syllables to rhymes in this nine-verse, thirty-two-line composition is 9.33, compared with an average of 26.87 for the psalter as a whole. As Table 1 indicates, only six Bay psalms—all of which were written to accommodate a specific (and relatively rare) musical setting—come close to this proportion and the great majority of the others triple it⁴⁸:

⁴⁸ In the Bay Psalm Book, rhymes come only in pairs.

Stanza	number of psalms⁴⁹	syllables per stanza	rhymes per stanza	ratio of syllables to rhymes
8888 (_a_a)	14	32	1	32
common (_a_a)	113	28	1	28
6686 (_a_a)	15	26	1	26
8888 (abab)	2	32	2	16
888888 (aabccb)	1	48	3	16
888888 (ababcc)	2	48	3	16
common (abab)	1	28	2	14
66664444 (ababcddc)	6	40	4	10
Psalm 137	1	28	3	9.33

Table 1: Ratio of syllables to rhymes in the Bay Psalm Book

It is impossible to quantify the challenges of translating Hebrew poetry into English verse: the comparison this chart purports to make can only apply in the abstract. What I hope it demonstrates, however, at least provisionally, is that Bay psalm 137's translator(s) chose a uniquely taxing form, one that compounded the strain on the product's aesthetic potential already exerted by the Bay compilers' rigorously faithful translational poetics. As a result, at its most discordant (on the level of cadence and syntax), the Bay Psalm Book is also at its most internally harmonious.

The choice of such a demanding poetic form is no mere gimmick, however: it coordinates well with Bay Psalm 137's other distinctive qualities—the way that, at key points, it undercuts parallels one might be tempted to draw between the Massachusetts

⁴⁹ There are 155 Bay psalms: 51, 85, 100, 117, and 133 were all translated twice. I have omitted from my count the two isolated quatrains of Psalm 28 and Psalm 72 that were also, for unknown reasons, provided in common meter (Bay Psalm 28 and 72 are both in long meter).

Bay colony's beginnings and the situation of the Israelite captives in Psalm 137, the way it foregrounds the speaker's willingness to renounce his own musical power, and the way it trumps the psalm's clever reappropriation of hostile irony. Rather than foregrounding the rhetorical flourish with which the Israelites wrest away the Babylonians' irony and turn it back on them, Bay Psalm 137 presents a different, more radical form of reappropriation, one that requires no paratextual mediation: through poetic form, the Bay translators effectively seize the power of captivity itself—that is, they hold their own expressive capabilities, however muted, captive to a rhyme scheme that serves no clear practical purpose.⁵⁰ As if consciously echoing Psalm 68.18 (“Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive”), the Bay translation of Psalm 137 disciplines the ear and the tongue (in both senses of that word) by running the secondary text through the mill of such a particularly unforgiving form: it expresses self-mastery through self-restraint. The translation's alleged atrocity, I would argue, is the product of a harmony between form and message.

In a 1603 treatise on the subject, the poet Samuel Daniel argues that rhyme, when skillfully executed, liberates poetry:

Ryme is no impediment to [a poet's] conceit, but rather giues him wings to mount and carries him, not out of his course, but as it were beyond his power to a farre happier flight. All excellencies being sold vs at the hard price of labour, it followes, where we bestow most thereof, we buy the best successe: and Ryme being farre more laborious then loose measures (whatsoever is objected) must needs, meeting with wit and industry, breed greater and worthier effects in our language. So that if our labours haue wrought out a *manumission from bondage*, and that wee goe at *libertie*, notwithstanding these ties, *wee are no longer the*

⁵⁰ In *Singing of Psalmes*, Cotton points out that meter “make[s] the Verses more easie for memory, and more fit for melody” (55). If the Bay translators employed rhyme for its mnemonic properties, they never said so.

slaues of Ryme, but we make it a most excellent instrument to serue vs. (Cited in Kneidel, 72)⁵¹

In translations, of course, which involve entirely different matrices of choices, the stakes of rhyme's potential hindrance to poetic conceit are considerably higher than in the original poetic compositions Daniel has in mind here. Even so, however, his remarks help draw out the peculiar and compelling element of discord that structures Bay Psalm 137. The "wit and industry" of the rhymes in this translation jar as well as harmonize, and liberate as well as impede, providing a more technically poetic expression to the idea of unity in discord that structured Cotton's thinking about the gospel ordinance of psalmody.

⁵¹ Kneidel is quoting from *Poems and a Defence of Ryme*, ed. Arthur Colby Sprague (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1930), 31.

Kevin Cattrell

Fall, 2011

Colonial New England Psalmody and the Poetics of Discord in Translation

Chapter 2: Singing Indians and the Limits of the Psalms' Universal Translatability

In the late seventeenth century, colonial representations of Praying Indians tested Cotton's doctrine of the psalms' universal translatability. Missionary writers such as John Eliot and Experience Mayhew attempted to demonstrate the affective continuities between the experiences of native proselytes and the psalmists' godly but quintessentially human songs. At the same time, however, those who were skeptical of the mission's efficacy used the psalms to expose what they suspected was the fundamental shallowness of Praying Indians' professed commitment to the Christian faith. In order to appreciate the contours and explore the significance of this dynamic, it is important first to sketch out the mission's conceptual and political origins and to gain a sense of how its strategies developed in the decades leading up to King Phillip's War.

Colonial New England psalmody was polyglot and polyvocal, incorporating Algonquian as well as European and creole voices. *Mamusse Wunnutupanatamwe Up-Biblum*, the translation of the Bible into Massachusetts supervised by the missionary John Eliot and published in a first edition of 1,500 in 1663,⁵² provided prose translations of the

⁵² Salisbury, "Red Puritans," 42. The natives John Sassomon, Job Nesuton, and James Printer collaborated with Eliot on the translation and printing of this Bible (Wyss, 1). Salisbury suggests that Eliot merely "transcribed" the translations of his Indian "assistants" (42; see also n. 62 on this page). The "Indian Bible"

psalms for reading and meditation, along with metrical versions for singing. Unlike his counterparts on Martha's Vineyard, Thomas Mayhew Jr. and his grandson Experience, and despite his active involvement in Massachusetts Bay's two major psalm translation projects, the Bay Psalm Book and the "Indian Bible," Eliot said little about Indian psalmody in his published work. The scattered accounts of it in the Eliot tracts, a series of promotional pamphlets published in London from 1647 until 1671, are perfunctory and written by others.⁵³ In the early pages of a grammar of the Massachusett language, printed in Cambridge in 1666, however, Eliot suggests that the singing of psalms played a critical role in the mission's efforts to civilize its proselytes and rationalize their languages.⁵⁴

According to this work, whose full title is *The Indian Grammar Begun: Or, An Essay to Bring the Indian Language unto Rules, for the help of such as desire to Learn the same, for the furtherance of the Gospel among them*, Algonquian music has "perfect Harmony," but only to the extent that it accords with itself: to English ears, Indian singing is little more than a modulated howling. Since Massachusett "is not in Meeter," Eliot remarks, his proselytes are "much pleased to have their Language and Words in Meeter and Rithme, as it now is in The singing Psalms in some [p]oor measure, enough to begin and break the ice withal: These they sing in our Musically Tone." (4).⁵⁵ The

was reprinted in 1685, after which support for native-language ministry diminished in favor of a more complete "Anglicization" of the proselytes (Bross, 53; Clark).

⁵³ See Thomas Mayhew, Jr.'s report in *The Light appearing more and more towards the perfect Day* (London, 1651; Clark, 181, 184) and John Wilson's and John Endicott's letters in *Strength out of Weaknesse* (London, 1652; Clark, 233, 242).

⁵⁴ According to Wyss, in directing the translation of the Algonquin Bible and developing his grammar, Eliot "quite literally created a written language out of Massachusett following the practices of the Latinate languages, thus rendering the language more familiar to his English sensibilities" (53). Salisbury notes that Indian literacy diminished the dialectical diversity of the Algonquian languages ("Red Puritans," 43).

⁵⁵ To date, scholars have found no persuasive evidence that Hebrew poetry had regular patterns of stresses or syllables, either (Meschonnic).

phrasing in this passage implies that the translation of psalmody into Native vernacular worship not only empowers non-anglophonic Indian converts to “sing with the understanding,” fulfilling the Reformed imperative based on 1 Corinthians 14.15, but it imparts regularity and rhythm to what had previously been a wild, amorphous and affectively ambiguous collection of sounds.⁵⁶

Eliot associates metrical coherence not just with reason, but with affective range as well. On the same page of his *Grammar*, he breaks the “several sorts of Sounds or Tones uttered by Mankinde” into four categories:

1. Articulation in Speech.
 2. Laughter.
 3. L[ae]tation and Joy: of which kinde of sounds our Musick and Song is made.
 4. Ululation, Howling, Yelling, or Mourning: and of that kinde of sound is their Musick and Song made.
- In which kinde of sound they also hallow and call, when they are most vociferous.⁵⁷

In this account, the grafting of English devotional song onto the Indian tongue is a radically civilizing gesture: Reformed psalmody, the art of singing humble praise to God in one’s native tongue, richly compensates for the Algonquians’ rhythmic deficiency. In his study of the early New England soundscape, Richard Cullen Rath comments that by the logic of Eliot’s taxonomy, “‘Our music’ was rational, contained by language, and subject to rules and meter, while ‘theirs’ was emotional, outside of language, difficult to reduce to rules (Eliot was never able to complete his grammar), and without meter”

(151). I agree that Eliot has drawn a sharp line between the two cultures to the extent that

⁵⁶ Less than a decade earlier, Richard Ligon, a luckless one-time investor in Barbados sugar, commented that the music of the African slaves he encountered during his three-year tenure in the Caribbean “has but one tone,” produced by “Chorases” of drums: “and yet so strangely they varie their time, as ’tis a pleasure to the most curious eares...and if they had the varietie of tune, which gives the greater scope in musick, as they have of time, they would doe wonders in that Art” (214). His account reads as a perfect inversion of Eliot’s description of the harmonic but rhythmically uncoordinated music of the Indians.

⁵⁷ In the facsimiles I have seen on Evans and EEBO, the second letter of this word looks like a conjoined “a” and “e.” Rath transcribes this word as “L’ation,” adding, in brackets, “Lamentation.”

he aligns only one of them with animalistic howling, but find it difficult to polarize Eliot's third and fourth categories as rational and emotional, respectively: joy, lamentation, and mourning are all expressions of affect, which Reformed theology embraced as tightly as it did reason. Eliot's criteria for division, I would argue, has more to do with affective range: they reflect a conjecture that while English composers produce music suitable for both ends of the spectrum of human feeling (as Eliot understood it), native Indian song ranges from "Mourning" to a range of menacing but ambiguous exclamations, none of which reflect true, godly joy. Meter and musical rhythm not only convey a sense of order and feeling, they help confer it.

A careful balance between affect and civility had always been central to missionary efforts in New England. In the decade and a half immediately following settlement, the proselytizing of the Indians was structured by a concept that the historian Richard Cogley has termed "the affective model," which "taught that the Indians would yearn to participate in the English way of life once they had witnessed the virtues of the colonists" (5). This principle was codified in a clause in the Massachusetts Bay Colony's 1629 charter that grants the Governor and his delegates the authority to

make, ordeine, and establishe...Lawes, Statues...and Instructions whereby our said People, Inhabitants there, may be soe religiously, peaceablie, and civilly governed, as their good Life and orderlie Conversacon, mai wynn and incite the Natives of Country, to the Knowledg and Obedience of the onlie true God and Savior of Mankinde, and the Christian Fayth, which in our Royall Intecon, and the Adventurers free Profession, is the principall Ende of the Plantacion.

The Bay settlers were infamously "lax in their commitment to this 'principall Ende'" (Clark, 1). As the missionary literature of the 1640s attests, the earliest efforts to proselytize the Natives were characterized by an ambivalence that verged on outright contradiction. In *New Englands First Fruits*, for example, a short promotional tract

published in London in 1643, it is difficult to distinguish among pity, fear, revulsion, and hatred in the settlers' accounts of Indian life. As the title page of this anonymous pamphlet indicates,⁵⁸ its first part concerns the "conversion," "conviction" and "preparation" of the Indians, and its second part, the "progresse of *Learning*" at Harvard in the first few years of its existence. Its serpentine opening sentence massively qualifies the mission's prospects for success:

The Lord, who useth not to be wanting to the desires of his Servants, as he hath not frustrated the ends of our Transplanting in sundry other respects; so neither in the giving of some light to those poore *Indians*, who have ever sate in hellish darknesse, adoring the *Devil* himselfe for their *GOD*: but hath given us some testimony of his gracious acceptance of our poore endeavours towards them and of our groanes to himselfe for mercy upon those miserable Soules (the very ruines of Mankind) there amongst us; our very bowels yerning within us to see them goe downe to Hell by swarmes without remedy. (1)⁵⁹

Later, the pamphlet makes grateful reference to God's "sweeping away great Multitudes of the Natives by the small Pox a little before we went thither, that he might make room for us there" (20), a reference to the native-soil epidemic that ravaged Indian communities in coastal New England, reducing some by as much as nine tenths in the decades before the settlement of Massachusetts Bay (Salisbury, *Manitou*, 105). But even if the English settlers' attempts to save the souls of a people sits uneasily with their gratitude for the same people's decimation by infection, careful attention to the wording of the colony's charter suggests that they followed it to the letter. The charter makes no distinction between the legislation of civil and religious order among the English settlers and the fulfillment of the colony's alleged "principall Ende." It imagines no organized mission, no outreach of any kind, and makes no prediction about the Natives' worthiness

⁵⁸ The likely authors of *New Englands First Fruits* were Thomas Weld, Hugh Peter, and Henry Dunster. See Cesarini 2003 for the publication history and political context of this pamphlet.

⁵⁹ The authors almost certainly intended this secondary meaning of "yearn": "to be deeply moved; to be moved with compassion; to have tender feelings; to mourn, grieve" (OED).

of, or potential for, conversion: their acceptance of the Christian faith is imagined, instead, as a byproduct of the colonists' "good Life and orderlie Conversacon."

Appropriately, at no point do the authors of *New Englands First Fruits* articulate the relationship between the two halves of the pamphlet, as if they assumed that readers could see for themselves the link between Harvard graduates' commencement exercises, performed in languages understood only by academics, and the Christianization of a small quantity of willing Indians.

By the early 1640s, the colonies' offhanded approach to proselytizing the Natives was already threatening to become a minor public relations disaster: it provided ammunition, for example, for the repatriated former colonist Thomas Lechford's scathing critique of the New England Way, *Plain dealing, or, Newes from New-England*, published in London a year before *New Englands First Fruits*. In one memorable passage from this work, Lechford mocks the Puritan practice of avoiding "all memory of heathenish and idols names" in their ordinal designations for the days of the week and the months ("first" through "seventh" and "twelfth," respectively), commenting with abundant irony, "And surely it is good to overthrow heathenisme by all good wayes and meanes." In a move typical of Anglican critiques of non-Conformists, Lechford invites his readers to compare this fastidiousness with the colonists' "Neglect of instructing the Indians" on what he regards as questionable, if not disingenuous, grounds: "all Churches among them are equal, and all Officers equall, and so betweene many, nothing is done that way" (21). "Heathenisme," according to this view, was confronted by the New England colonies only in stiff, ineffectual, bureaucratic gestures. Meanwhile, the alleged

devil worshipping of the people who, from an early modern English perspective, embodied this heathenism was effectively condoned by Puritan non-intervention.

In one sense, the Reformed theology of the early Massachusetts Bay clergy underwrote this sluggishness. As Richard Cogley points out, according to the eschatology John Cotton articulated in a series of lectures on Canticles and Revelation delivered in Boston in the 1630s and 1640s, only very few non-Christian Gentiles (among whom he numbered the Indians) could be converted before the millennium. At least once, Cotton referred to the Indian exceptions as “first fruits” (16-17; 252). At times, the early mission’s agents pitched the slow conversion rate as a mark of pastoral integrity. The anonymous author of *The Day-Breaking, if not the Sun-Rising of the Gospell with the Indians in New England* (1647) comments proudly, for example, “wee have not learnt as yet that art of coyning Christians, or putting Christs name and Image upon copper mettle” (Clark, 93).⁶⁰ This was, presumably, a knock at England’s arch imperial rival: early modern English writers associated Spanish colonies with the pageantry of mass conversion (as well as mass slaughter).⁶¹ New England missionaries, *Day-Breaking* implies, contended diligently, and in good faith, with unique Indian souls, and they maintained justly high standards of civility and piety.

The early New England missionary literature figured Christian conversion as an abrupt, even traumatic metamorphosis in all aspects of the lives of Indian proselytes. *New Englands First Fruits*, for example, presents the Sagamore Indian John as a well-

⁶⁰ Clark suggests that this tract was written by Thomas Shepard.

⁶¹ For an account of the relation between the New England missionary literature and the Black Legend of Spain, see Bumas, who argues that Eliot represented himself “as a superior version” of Bartolome de las Casas, a Dominican friar, “Protector of the Indians” in the Spanish colonies, and author of the *Very Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (1552).

meaning, sympathetic supporter of the mission whose self-consciousness about acculturation jeopardized his salvation:

he desired to learne and speake our Language, and loved to imitate us in our behaviour and apparrell, and began to hearken after our God and his wayes, and would much commend English-men, and their God, saying (*Much good men, much good God*) and being convinced that our condition and wayes were better farre then theirs, did resolve and promise to leave the *Indians*, and come live with us; but yet kept downe by feare of the scoffes of the *Indians*, had not power to make good his purpose... (2)

In a last-hour attempt to redress this hesitation, the pamphlet approvingly reports, John committed his son to an English minister just before his death: “*my Child shall live with the English, and learne to know their God when I am dead; Ile give him to Mr. Wilson, he is a much Good man, and much loved me*” (2-3). Indian conversion is close to impossible, this passage implies, without a total eradication of Indian customs and a clean break from its society.

As John Eliot explained in a 1652 letter, the English mission operated under the assumption that Indians must “have visible civility before they can rightly enjoy visible sanctities in ecclesiastical communion” (Salisbury, “Red Puritans,” 28).⁶² Under his leadership, the affective model gave way to a more systematic eradication of the traces of Algonquian customs. Eliot emigrated to Massachusetts Bay in his twenties in 1631, serving briefly as a pastor at the First Church in Boston before assuming the role of teacher, and later minister, at the newly gathered church at Roxbury. He claims to have learned the “Indian tongue” from Cockenoe, an Indian captured in the Pequot war,⁶³ but it is unclear how long he studied Massachusett before preaching his first two sermons,

⁶² The letter is addressed to Jonathan Hamner and dated May 19, 1652. Salisbury cites Rendel Harris, ed., “Three Letters of John Eliot and a Bill of Lading of the ‘Mayflower,’” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, V (1918-1920), 104.

⁶³ *The Glorious Progress of the Gospel amongst the Indians of New England*, ed. Edward Winslow, 1649; Clark, 160.

aided by interpreters, in the fall of 1646 (Clark, 10). The early Eliot tracts and the diplomacy of Edward Winslow, a former governor of Plymouth who had helped forge peaceful relations between the Old Colony and the Pokanoket sachem Massasoit in the 1620s and 1630s, persuaded Parliament to establish the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New-England in 1649 (Clark, 11-12).⁶⁴ Under the auspices of the Society, Eliot founded a settlement for Indian converts at Natick, the first of fourteen “Praying Towns” modeled on the political structure Moses’ father-in-law Jethro proposes in Exodus 18.⁶⁵ In collaboration with the residents of the Praying Towns, Eliot drafted legal codes for each one. As Salisbury points out, “The codes’ very existence indicated that tribal legal mechanisms developed over centuries had suddenly been destroyed, while the contents of the codes called for a radical uprooting of native culture” (“Red Puritans,” 32-3). The laws they contained covered all aspects of town life, from labor and personal hygiene, to marital relations and home construction.

The toleration of native ways of life in *Indian Dialogues*, which Eliot published in Cambridge, Massachusetts Bay in 1671, stands in stark contrast with these austere policies. In this work, Eliot seems encouraged by the idea of a qualified transfer of missionary authority to a cohort of upstanding converted Indians armed with the recently printed Massachusetts scriptures. Kristina Bross has argued persuasively that the missionary tracts of the Civil War and Interregnum periods “were primarily directed toward events in England rather than the colonies”: their discussion of colonial issues

⁶⁴ For a detailed history of this organization, which came to be called “The New England Company” after the Restoration, see Kellaway.

⁶⁵ This structure appointed rulers of tens, fifties, and hundreds.

was “in service to the national, eschatological identity of England” (114).⁶⁶ *Indian Dialogues*, on the other hand, “is, above all, an intervention in local affairs” (Bross, 114). Like Roger Williams’s *A Key into the Language of America* (1643), to which it is often compared, *Indian Dialogues* blurs the line between history and fiction as it models affable exchanges between the pious and the unregenerate for an English-speaking readership. While Williams claimed to have “framed” each chapter of the *Key* as “an Implicite Dialogue”⁶⁷ between a godly Englishman and an unconverted Narragansett Indian, however, in Eliot’s work Algonquians occupy both roles.

The closing request from Eliot’s dedication of *Indian Dialogues* to the Commissioners of the United Colonies in New England makes it clear that he wrote it with a view to the long-term stability of the Praying Towns: “take care that due accommodation of lands and waters may be allowed them, whereupon townships and churches may be (in after ages) able to subsist,” he urges, “and suffer not the English to strip them of all their lands, in places fit for the sustenance of the life of man” (60). Well aware of his relative isolation as one of the colonies’ few steadfast public supporters of the mission, Eliot looked forward to the permanent establishment of a kind of legally sanctioned Promised Land for his proselytes. The psalms helped this cause in two complementary ways: first, by showing that the Indians are capable of seeing their own spiritual reflections in them, Eliot narrows the gap between English and Native interiority. Second, the psalms provide a ready-made social framework for communities

⁶⁶ As Salisbury points out, “missionaries in all the Puritan colonies were financially dependent on the benevolence from England; nary a shilling was collected from the settlers themselves.” New Englanders, he explains, were generally “afraid of and hostile toward all Indians” (“Red Puritans,” 31).

⁶⁷ Williams, “Directions for the use of Language,” *Key*. For an account of the political contexts and London audiences of this work, as well as its relationship to *New England’s First Fruits*, with which *Key* was in direct (if one-sided) competition, see Cesarini, “Ambivalent Uses.”

of Christian converts, encouraging Indians to commiserate and celebrate with one another and to edify and exhort themselves in ways that take the full range of human affect into account. Even in prose, the psalms impart the order that *The Indian Grammar Begun* claims is missing from their language.

In sharp contrast with the affective model's fantasy of Indian envy and voluntary submission to English acculturation, the missionary approach of *Indian Dialogues* centers on a rigorous promotion of native-language literacy, a partial demystification of English cultural superiority, and the idea that contact between the two ethnic groups can be safely and conveniently attenuated. As the Praying Indian Piumbukhou explains to an audience of sympathetic but doubtful brethren Indians in the first dialogue, the Bible "was written long before the Englishmen prayed to God, and Englishmen have learned all their wisdom out of this book. And now they have translated it for us, and if we attend unto it, it will teach us wisdom, as it hath taught them" (92).⁶⁸ Throughout the *Dialogues*, Eliot suggests that one of the most critical long-term goals of the mission is to ensure that the Indians have carefully mediated access to the texts, rituals, and doctrine available to English Reformed Christians. This would help consolidate their loyalty to English authority and mitigate tense intercultural contact and quarreling over resource allocation. These ends were all the more critical since the Praying Towns served as a "buffer" between English settlements and the Mohawks (Salisbury, "Red Puritans," 41; Bross, 113-14).

Indian Dialogues emphasizes the compatibility of Native and Christian culture: proselytes in this work are never asked to abandon wholesale their prior way of life.

⁶⁸ As Kelleter points out, Piumbukhou here suggests that "the European settlers are merely the fallible medium of divine revelation" (90).

Instead, pre-existing affective ties are readily translatable into the bonds of Christian faith and church fellowship. In a scene from the first dialogue, for example, the Christian Indian Piumbukhou is publicly confronted by a Pauwau from Nashaurreg, who counters the Praying Indian's gospel message with an eloquent appeal to tradition: "We have laws also by which our forefathers did walk, and why should not we do as they have done?" (87) Piumbukhou's mild response reflects a new standard for Praying Indians' treatment of the Algonquian spiritual leaders and authorities on medicine and religion, the Pauwas. Two decades earlier, a tract titled *The Light appearing more and more towards the perfect Day* (1651) had described an encounter between a Wampanoag Pauwau and a group of Martha's Vineyard Praying Indians led by the celebrated convert Hiacoomes which had an entirely different outcome. According to this account, written by Thomas Mayhew, Jr., when the Pauwau accused the Christian Wampanoags of being "lyars" for rejecting his authority and boasted that "the Pawwaws could kill all the meeting Indians if they did set about it," Hiacoomes subdued and ashamed him, replying "that he did put all the Pawwaws under his heel, pointing unto it" (Clark, 182). There is no trace of Hiacoomes' antagonism in Piumbukhou's response. Instead, he is careful to vilify only the traditions he knows are contrary to the Word: "When you pauwas use physic by roots, and such other things which God hath made for that purpose, that is no sin. You do well to use physic for your recovery from sickness. But your praying to, and worshipping the Devil, that is your great sin, which now God calls you to forsake. Use only such remedies as God has appointed, and pray to God" (*Indian Dialogues*, 88-89).

Despite his assumption that Indians will silently accept the God-devil polarity according to which early modern Europeans and New World creoles tended to define all

religion, in showing that Nipmuck traditional healing is partially preseservable, Eliot admits the possibility of a limited, carefully monitored form of cultural hybridity, suggesting that the role of the Pauwau, while subordinated to the ministers of “the true and living God” (88) (who are, in turn, subject to English authority), will not dissolve completely in the new religious order the mission seeks to establish. *Indian Dialogues* searches out the continuities, however scarce and threadbare, between proselytes’ prior way of life and their hoped-for Christian renewal. In order to help foster the long-term solvency of the Praying Towns, Eliot emphasizes the natural elements of Christianity over the satanic elements of Indian nature.

Toward the end of the first dialogue, Piumbukhou’s unnamed kinsman laments the profoundly decentering effect of his exposure to Christian doctrine: “I feel my heart broken and divided. I know not what to do” (89). As with the opening sentence in the preface to the Bay Psalm Book, the kinsman’s troubled sense of inward division correlates with a concern about his community. His “greatest difficulty,” he explains, addressing not only Piumbukhou but “a great company of his friends” (85), “is this. I am loth to divide myself from my friends and kindred. If I should change my course and not they, then I must leave and forsake their company, which I am very loth to do. I love my sachem, and all the rest of you my good friends. If I should change my life and way, I greatly desire that we might agree to do it together” (89). Whereas the isolated converts represented in the earlier missionary literature sought networks of support from adopted communities of English colonists (sometimes, like Sagamore John, installing their children in English households), Eliot recognizes here the relation between the already tenuous personal conviction of the Calvinist proselyte and his or her social context. The

psalms are ideally suited for the transition from missionary efforts directed at scattered individuals to the conversion of kin and tribal networks because of the way that, in Reformed theology and practice, they pair affective complexity with a sense of a common spiritual experience. At the same time, representations of the Praying Indians' engagement of psalms—whether in meditation, in private or public song, or in preaching—helps Eliot build his case for their spiritual kinship with white Christians who are spared from social contact with them.

The subtitle to Dialogue II, “About Calling home poor INDIANS,” expresses this relatively progressive missionary sensibility, associating conversion with homecoming rather than exodus or radical transformation. The dialogue centers on two sermons delivered by the minister Waban to a gathering of skeptical Indians at the town of Nipmuk. The text of the second of these is verses 8-11 of Psalm 2, the first of many psalms to make reference to the broad category of the “heathen”: “Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.”⁶⁹ In his comments (presented in truncated form, as if they were a parishioner's notes on a sermon) Waban differentiates between ethnicity and religious orientation:

1. Christ Jesus taketh possession of the heathen, and utmost ends of earth: and this is one description of our country. And now Jesus Christ calleth us to come to him. Some of us have submitted unto Christ, and he hath mercifully accepted us, and so he will you, if you will come in unto him.
2. See what Christ will do to them that will not come in. He will break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Thus Christ will deal with our sins, if we submit to him. But if we will not submit to him, he will thus

⁶⁹ Waban never quotes these verses in full.

deal with our persons, and destroy them that refuse to serve him, Luke 19:27.
(119)

Waban's reading blends confident, orthodox typology with a critical approach to the psalmist's geography. "Heathen," as Waban defines it, refers to the unwilling, the ones who fail to heed Christ's call. His treatment of this critical, and yet sensitive, concept is well tailored to his audience. Earlier the same day, at the conclusion of the morning meeting, an anonymous Indian had confessed, "we dare not come in to pray to God, for we hear you are very severe if any be found in sin." Waban's afternoon sermon, with its repetition of the neutral verb of submission used by the objector ("come in") is an implicit response to this Indian skeptic. Under the right circumstances, he goes on to reveal, the proper object of the church's severe discipline is not a people but a condition: for those who heed the call, Christian austerity is a means of purging sin, not of scourging the unregenerate "nations" implied in the word's alleged Greek root.⁷⁰ Waban's reading at once expands and reduces the dimensions of the heathen, locating it within each sinner. Through this gesture, Eliot suggests to his English audience both that Christianized Indians can be considered allies in the larger struggle against heathenism and that they can be trusted to follow the model of the pious English saint's diligent self-purging of sin.

Dialogues III and IV make use of the psalms to emphasize David's exemplary humanity and the identity between his condition and that of the Indians, affirming the distinction Piumbukhou makes in Dialogue II between ethnic and spiritual heathenism. In Dialogue III, the Indian missionaries Anthony and William Abahton prepare the sachem

⁷⁰ Roger Williams had earlier drawn on Psalm 113 in published remarks repudiating the use of the term "heathen" for Native Americans, claiming that "although men have used to apply this word *Heathen* to the Indians that go naked, and have not heard of that One-God, yet this word *Heathen* is most improperly, sinfully, and unchristianly so used in this sence." As Williams points out, the word derives from Hebrew and Greek terms that mean "*Gentiles, Nations, Heathens*" (*Christening Make Not Christians*, 2).

at “Paganoehket” (or Pokanoket), Philip Keitascott⁷¹—almost certainly a fictionalized representation of the Wampanoag leader and namesake of King Phillip’s War—for conversion. When he declares his opposition to the preaching and circulation of the Word among his people on the grounds that it “is too deep for ignorant people to meddle withal” and therefore encourages insurrection, Anthony counters with a reading of two psalms:

by reading of God’s word the ignorant may be made wise, Psalm 19:7, The law of God is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. David learned to be wise by reading the Word of God, wiser than his enemies, wiser than his teachers, wiser than the ancients, Psalm 119:98-100, and so may we.

With this teaching, Anthony corroborates—and embodies—Piumbukhou’s claim in Dialogue I about access to scripture: by means of literacy, translation, and diligence, Indians can aspire to David’s acuity. Indian piety, Eliot suggests, can go to the type itself, the Hebrew source to which the English have recourse—not out of envy for, or fear of, a race of technologically superior European transplants, but out of the pure desire for direct contact with the Word.⁷²

As modest a gesture as this might seem, it represents an important expansion of the missionary literature’s appeals to the emotions of its readership. Before *Indian Dialogues*, the authors of the Eliot tracts had frequently invoked the words, language and imagery of the psalms in gestures of affective solidarity with other Reformed Christians, but always in ways that marginalized the proselytes themselves. Thomas Shepard’s *The*

⁷¹ According to Bowden and Rhonda, there is no evidence that the historical Philip ever went by this name (*Indian Dialogues*, p. 166, n. 40).

⁷² For a more detailed reading of the politics of this imagined conversation with the Wampanoag sachem, see Bross, 120-9.

Clear Sun-shine of the Gospel breaking forth upon the Indians in New-England,

published in London in 1648, for example, closes with a passage from Psalm 67:

if it bee the good pleasure of Christ to look upon any of the worst and meanest of these outcasts in these Coasts of New-England, let us not despise this day of small things, but as the Jews did of old, so let us now cry mightily to God and say, and sing, *Let the people praise thee O God, yea let all the people praise thee, then shall the earth bring forth her increase, and God even our God will blesse us.*⁷³

Although the Indians technically have a share in the “praise” in Shepard’s citation of Psalm 67, as “outcasts in these Coasts of New-England” they stand at a far remove from this hortatory imperative: Shepard cannot even say with conviction that they have entered Christ’s field of vision. John Dury’s “Appendix” to *The Glorious Progress of the Gospel amongst the Indians of New England*, published in London the following year, opens with a meditation on a single verse from Psalm 111 that is designed to align the mission with the rhetoric of imperial commerce but distinguish it from the European exploitation of New World natural resources:

The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that love them, saith the Psalmist, Psal. 111.3.⁷⁴ The word which we render, *sought out*, hath a mighty Emphasis in it. Tis a word used sometimes to Denote the Elaborate care of digging and searching into mines. And sometimes its made use of to expresse the accurate labors of those who comment upon writings. Indeed there is a golden mine in every work of God; and the foregoing letters to a gracious eye, are as a discovery of a far more precious mine in America, then those Gold and Silver ones of India: For they bring tidings of the unsearchable riches of Christ revealed unto the poor soules in those parts. (Clark, 163)

In Dury’s reading, the “poor soules” native to America are more or less passive repositories at the far end of a circuit that begins and ends in England: they are the excavated, and have no share in the act of digging.

⁷³ *Clear Sun-shine*, Clark, 139; Ps 67:5-6.

⁷⁴ Clark notes, “i.e., Psalms 111.2.”

By contrast, Eliot's fourth and final dialogue, between "a penitent soul in great distress," who turns out to be a young sachem, and John Speen, "one of the teachers of the church at Natick," to whom the Penitent has come for "counsel and comfort" (149), legitimates the disillusionment of new Indian converts by identifying their affliction with that of the psalmist.

When the Penitent, troubled by the failure of the world to live up to its "fair" promises, confesses that he "know[s] not where to begin or end" relating his grief, John recommends meditating on Psalm 73:26: "My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." The main thrust of his counsel, however, comes from an unusually protracted reading of one of the bleakest psalms in the bible:

You further say, that your bright mornings prove black and cloudy days. It hath been so with other of God's children. Read the 88th Psalm, and you shall find the prophet just in your case in many verses of that psalm. I will mention some of the words, verses 6-9. Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. Thou hast put away mine acquaintance from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them: I am shut up, and I cannot come forth. Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: Lord, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee. Behold a dear child of God in as bitter distress as you are. Yet the first sentence of this psalm is a word of faith. He saith, O Lord of my salvation. It is some comfort to a distressed soul, to have good company with them.

John's faithful rehearsal of the many relevant words of the psalm—something especially conspicuous in a work that generally abbreviates Biblical passages longer than one line to chapter-verse citations—suggests that the intimate connection he identifies between the Penitent and the psalmist could not emerge in paraphrase. Taking care not to equivocate—John specifies that "many verses," not all, apply to the Penitent's condition—he models a double move central to Reformed understandings of the psalms, recognizing—and dignifying—the Penitent's sense of abandonment by showing how it is

shared by “the prophet” at the same time that he expands this connection into an implied solidarity with a “good company” of other sufferers. John’s advice moves expertly along a continuum of Christian affect, ranging from a common sense of “bitter distress” to “comfort.” By inverting the psalm’s order and concluding with the second of these, he frames the Penitent’s suffering—and all suffering like it—in terms of a promised salvation. This reversal powerfully expresses John’s effectiveness as a minister and teacher.

The mirroring of the Penitent’s condition in Psalm 88 resonates tellingly with remarks made by Eliot himself in *A Late and Further Manifestation of the Progress of the Gospel amongst the Indians in New England*, published sixteen years earlier in 1655. This earlier work centers on Eliot’s account of an examination of eight Praying Indians by a council of Massachusetts Bay Elders at Roxbury in 1654. In it, he reports that for the second time in two years, the Elders have elected to postpone the elevation of the Praying Indians into church estate (they would change their minds about a year later). The tract closes with an uncharacteristically personal reflection on Eliot’s ten years of largely thankless missionary labor: “Though I and some others know more of the sincerity of some of them, then others doe, and are better satisfied with them,” he manages to concede, “Yet because I may be in a temptation on that hand, I am well content to make slow hast in this matter, remembering that word of God, *Lay hands suddenly upon no man*”⁷⁵ (318). Eliot takes his counsel, in this case, from Psalm 37, verses 6-7:

Herein also my soule is strenghtned and quieted, to stay upon the Lord and to be supported against all suspitious jealousies, hard speeches, and unkindnesses of men touching the sincerity and reality of this work, and about my carriage of

⁷⁵ 1 Timothy 5.22.

matters, and supply herein. Which grace my soule receiveth by a particular improvement of that rich treasury of the Promise in these words, *vers. 6. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgement as the noon day.* And herein likewise I find supply of grace, to wait patiently for the Lords time, when year after year, and time after time, I meet with disappointments. Which grace I receive from the commanding force of that gracious Promise, *vers. 7. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him, fret not thy selfe,* either for one cause, or for another. Thus I live, and thus I labour, here I have supply, and here is my hope, I beg the help of prayers, that I may still so live and labour in the Lords work, and that I may so live and dye.

Eliot's careful and lengthy explication of these verses reconciles his bitterness to his faith, reassuringly calling the "gracious Promise" of the gospel to his mind in the face of such open second-guessing of the mission's achievements. That the citation registers Eliot's isolation within the community of the godly is not so much a lapse into self-pity as an invitation to the reader to recognize himself or herself in the struggle, in the impulse to search the psalms for consolation and edification, and in the culmination of this search in an act of resignation that is also a form of healing self-recognition. John's citation of Psalm 88 in the fourth Indian Dialogue works in much the same way: the psalms are presented as a reflecting surface, a balm, a guide, and a "fresh supply of grace" for the nameless sachem just as they are for Eliot or for any other Christian.

As he begins to make this connection himself, the Penitent acknowledges that his case is not as dire as he originally assumed: "The sweet experience that I have now found in those scriptures which you have produced, and applied to my case, shall make me, hereafter, to search and read the scriptures more than I have done. I do like Hagar, complain for water, when it is just by me, if I search. I hope I shall read the scriptures more than ever I have done" (153).⁷⁶ Fittingly, the Penitent recognizes what he discovers

⁷⁶ In Genesis 21.14-19, Sarah's handmaiden Hagar is cast out of Abraham's household with Ishmael, the young son born to her and Abraham during Sarah's infertility. Hagar believes that she and her son have been left for dead. Without her knowing it, however, God has already promised Abraham that, through

in John's citations—drawn from Psalms, the Pauline letters, and the gospels—as “experience,” not description, prophecy, or rule. It is not long, however, before the critical distance these passages supply leads to the meta-sorrow of compunction: the Penitent laments that his “griefs are indeed many, but they are worldly sorrow. I cannot say that I am converted” (154). John's response is a patchwork of glossed passages from the New Testament, Job, and the Psalms, the last of which dominates his account of “the use of sorrow...to embitter sin, and the world, and to drive the soul to Christ for relief and rest.” Drawing again on Psalm 88 and on Psalm 35, John builds to an illustration of the blessings of affliction: “whatever your griefs be, turn them into prayers, and cry to God for relief. And then your grief hath a sanctified end, and you will at last learn to say after David, in that high strained string of faith and experience, It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes, Psalm 119.71. And verse 67 of that Psalm, Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word” (155-6). The figure of the “high strained string” metaphorizes faith and experience as an instrument of praise. Throughout the *Dialogues*, Eliot's Praying Indian ministers endeavor to show that David's self-discipline and piety are not only fully accessible to native proselytes, but have the potential to bind them together in obedient Christian solidarity.

Eliot's strongest non-clerical ally, and arguably the most eloquent seventeenth-century apologist for the Praying Indians, Daniel Gookin, recognized these same qualities in the psalms and attempted to leverage them into greater English empathy for Praying

Ishmael, he will found a new nation. In the missionary context, this allusion to God's redemption of a severed family of destitute, despised outcasts corroborates the missionary refrain, “who hath despised the day of small things?” (Zechariah 4.10; this verse appears on the title page to *New Englands First Fruits* and *The Day-Breaking, if not the Sun-Rising of the Gospell with the Indians in New-England*).

Indians in the aftermath of King Philip's War.⁷⁷ A Cambridge-based magistrate and military commander for most of his adulthood, Daniel Gookin was born in either England or Ireland in 1612, moved to his father's plantation in Virginia by about 1630, and was exiled from the colony as a Non-Conformist in 1643. He arrived in Massachusetts Bay the following year and lived in Boston and Roxbury before moving to Cambridge in 1648, where he served as the town's Captain of the Trained Band and its representative at the General Court. In 1651, he became Speaker of the House of Deputies, and in 1652 an Assistant (a member of the colony's council of eighteen magistrates, which was third in command, after the Governor and Deputy Governor). Four years later, he was appointed Superintendent of the Massachusetts Indians, a position that involved assisting in the management of the Praying Towns, assessing their inhabitant's labor, and monitoring the education of Indian children.⁷⁸ Aside from a brief hiatus in the late 1650s, Gookin remained Superintendent until his death in 1687, a span that witnessed the bitter violence of King Philip's War in 1675 and 1676. As a result of this conflict, Eliot's representation of Praying Indians as affectively complex, suffering Christians, along with his attempts to foster confidence among the English that Praying Indians could proselytize and govern themselves without threatening the colonists' security and social stability, became unfeasible only a few years after *Indian Dialogues* was published.

⁷⁷ King Phillip's War pitted the Wampanoags and, later, the Nipmucks, Pocumtucks, Narragansetts, and Abenakis against the English and their Mohegan and Pequot allies. It broke out in June of 1675 when the Wampanoag sachem Philip launched a series of attacks on English towns in apparent retaliation for the hanging of three of his men, who had been convicted by English authorities of murdering an Indian minister, John Sassamon. When the war ended with Philip's death in August of 1676, three thousand Indians and six hundred English had been killed and twenty-five of a total of fifty English settlements were in ruins (Lepore, xi-xii).

⁷⁸ See the unsigned "Preliminary Notice" to the American Antiquarian Society's 1836 edition of this work (425-8).

Gookin's *An Historical Account of the Doings and Sufferings of the Christian Indians in New England, in the Years 1675, 1676, 1677* is sensitive to the mutual distrust and suspicion that characterized Anglo-Indian relations during the war and in its immediate aftermath. Throughout this work, which remained unprinted until the twentieth century, Gookin struggles to correct what he fears is a growing consensus among New Englanders that Praying and enemy Indians are fundamentally the same. The delicacy of his position as mediator, as well as the unfavorable odds of his success, are reflected in the great care he takes to avoid directly condemning the colonial magistrates whose policies betrayed intractable English prejudices against the Indian converts. Gookin laments that the Governor and Council (of which he was a member) are compelled "against their own reason and inclination" to abridge the Praying Indians' legal rights, restrict their mobility, and endorse dubious juridical proceedings against them in order "to satisfy the clamors of the people" (450, 481). Meanwhile, he emphasizes the vulnerability of the Christian Indians, distancing them as far as possible from the colonists' wartime enemies, the "barbarous heathen" (433) to whom he unapologetically applies Psalm 2.9: "the great God and our only Saviour hath for his name's sake rebuked their rage, and broken them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (495).

Like Eliot in *Indian Dialogues*, Gookin builds his case for the Praying Indians' integrity on their nuanced self-application of scripture in adversity. One of his most compelling examples is an account, compiled from disparate sources, of an incident involving the Praying Town of Wamesit, located near the confluence of the Concord and Merrimack rivers near present-day Lowell. On November 15, 1675, an English lieutenant's barn in nearby Chelmsford was burned down. The culprits, according to

Gookin, were “some skulking rogues of the enemy” (482), but the Wamesit Praying Indians were held responsible. The English settlement retaliated by dispatching fourteen armed men to surround the Praying Town wigwams. Calling the occupants out, two of the Englishmen opened fire, wounding five women and children and killing “outright a lad of about twelve years old, which child’s mother was also one of the wounded.”⁷⁹

Treading carefully as always, Gookin reports that the rash brutality of this non-proportional response was “very much decried by all wise and prudent men, especially by the magistracy and ministry” (483). The two English gunmen were tried and cleared for murder “to the great grief and trouble generally of magistracy and ministry and other wise and godly men” on the grounds of insufficient evidence, “but some feared it was rather a mist of temptation and prejudice against these poor Indians that darkened [the jury’s] way.” Their trust betrayed, the Wamesit Indians fled, but most returned within three weeks, “being put to great straits for want of food,” and the rest came back when a contingent of Englishmen, Eliot and Gookin among them, pledged their support (482-4).

The account closes with an anecdote passed on to Gookin by the Chelmsford preacher Thomas Clark, who claimed to have spoken with “the teacher of those Indians, named Symon Beckom” when they returned to Wamesit: “being questioned by Mr. Clark what they did in their absence, said Symon, ‘We kept three Sabbaths in the woods; the first Sabbath,’ said he, ‘I read and taught the people out of Psalm 35, the second Sabbath from Psalm 46, the third Sabbath out of Psalm 118.’” As Gookin points out, these particular psalms “being considered, were very suitable to encourage and support them in their sad condition; this shows, that those poor people have some little knowledge of, and

⁷⁹ This woman was Sarah, Sagamore John’s daughter, and her family (according to the note in the AAS edition) “were among the most distinguished Christian Indians.”

affection to the word of God, and have some little ability (through grace) to apply such meet portions thereof, as are pertinent to their necessities.” Because Beckom’s remarks do not survive, it is impossible to know which particular verses his teaching covered. With the diplomatically subtle phrase “being considered,” however, Gookin encourages readers to seek these psalms in their Bibles (or their memories) and judge for themselves the Indian teacher’s clerical acumen and the aptness of the texts. Strongly adversarial, the first of them, Psalm 35, bewails the malicious deceit of the psalmist’s enemies: “Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul: let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt” (4); “For without cause have they hid for me their net in a pit, which without cause they have digged for my soul” (7); “False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not” (11).⁸⁰ If we accept Gookin’s summary of the facts, these passages apply uncannily well to the Chelmsford militia’s unjustified attack on the Wamesit Christians (though they could also have applied, conceivably, to the crime’s actual perpetrators, whoever they were). Regardless, the eighteenth verse gestures beyond Psalm 35’s ruptured, discordant present toward the larger social context that underlies Reformed understandings of the psalms: “I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people.” These closing words counsel a long view of the suffering of the innocent, embedding the unjust affliction of a people in a master narrative of redemption.

The spirit of gradual convalescence and acceptance expands in scope in Psalm 46, which provided the text for the second woodlands Sabbath. This psalm celebrates God’s power over dislocation and human strife in ways that the Wamesit exiles might have applied to the devastating conflict in which New England was embroiled: “He maketh

⁸⁰ As noted above, John recommends this same psalm to the Penitent in the fourth Indian Dialogue.

wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire” (9). In a move that parallels Psalm 35’s reference to “the great congregation,” Psalm 46 puts the war—all wars—in divine-scale perspective, and it does so, crucially, without taking sides. Psalm 118 is the most ambiguous of the three, reiterating all of the themes mentioned so far but, undeniably, emphasizing the destruction of one’s enemies.⁸¹ Significantly, however, it models a classically Calvinist response to the survival of calamities: “I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord: the Lord hath chastened me sore, yet he hath not given me over to death” (17-18). Without taking these conjectures about a brief, third-hand account of a series of unrecorded sermons too far, it seems reasonable to speculate that Gookin reported Clark’s anecdote, complete with its citation of three specific psalms, in order to project what he believed was a cause common uniting his readers to the persecuted Wamesit Christians. The psalms provide a framework for the legitimation of suffering, the understanding of human powerlessness, the wonder of God’s mercy and the conversion of all of these humbling spiritual experiences into serial, collective praise.

Because Gookin’s *History* remained unpublished for centuries, most colonial New England readers would have been more familiar with the citations from Psalms 46 and 118 in a popular captivity narrative first published in Massachusetts Bay in 1682, Mary Rowlandson’s *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*. A resident of Lancaster, Massachusetts, and the wife of its minister, Rowlandson was taken captive by Wampanoag forces on February 20, 1675/6 and redeemed fourteen weeks later on May 2.

⁸¹ Commenting on the disjointed nature of Psalm 118’s segments, Alter notes that in some medieval manuscripts it is divided into five separate psalms (415).

In 1682, four separate editions of Rowlandson's account of her fourteen weeks among the Indians were printed, one in Boston (no copies of which survive), two in Cambridge, and another in London. According to the preface to the first Cambridge edition, signed "Per Amicam" and attributed by some scholars to Increase Mather, Rowlandson wrote her narrative as "a memorandum of Gods dealing with her, that she might never forget, but remember the same, & the severall circumstances thereof, all the days of her life." When "some friends" proposed that she publish it, "her gratitude unto God made her not hardly perswadible to let it pass, that God might have his due glory, and others benefit by it as well as her self" (3).

Rowlandson embeds her own brief apology in the narrative itself. During a chance meeting with her son Joseph, also a captive, along the Connecticut river, Rowlandson gives him her Bible, and he "light[s] upon" a passage from a psalm from which Symon Beckom had preached to the Wamesit exiles a few months earlier: "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord: the Lord hath chastened me sore, yet he hath not given me over to death" (118.17-18). "And here," Rowlandson reflects,

I may take occasion to mention one principal ground of my setting forth these lines: even as the psalmist says, to declare the works of the Lord, and His wonderful power in carrying us along, preserving us in the wilderness, while under the enemy's hand, and returning of us in safety again. And His goodness in bringing to my hand so many comfortable and suitable scriptures. (Eighth Remove, 319)

In spite of the differences, of both kind and degree, between their respective plights, the Wamesit Indians in Gookin's account, like Rowlandson, suffered attack and dislocation and witnessed God's "wonderful power...in the wilderness," where they have profited from "many comfortable and suitable scriptures."

Throughout her narrative, however, Rowlandson represents the war not only as an expression of God's displeasure at the colonies and as a test of her own perseverance and sensitivity to God's marvelous grace in the face of trauma, indignity and isolation, but as a means of gauging the piety of Native proselytes and the efficacy of the mission that produced them. As the historian Jill Lepore points out, the outcome of King Philip's War "drew new, firmer boundaries," however unstable, "between English and Indian people, between English and Indian land, and between what it meant to be 'English,' and what it meant to be 'Indian'" (xiii). Rowlandson's account reflects this dominant trend toward sharp distinctions, reasserting the limits of cultural translation that Gookin and Eliot had challenged by means of their separate but related appeals to a common humanity expressed in, and mediated by, the Psalms. Rather than directly addressing the place of the psalms in Christian Indian culture, however, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* plots the psalmist and the Natives as far apart as possible: the Indians' words, actions and rituals provide Rowlandson with a foil against which to illuminate the true Christian's emulation of the psalmist's perspective, humility, and forbearance.

In order to appreciate this dimension of the work, it is important first to sketch out the generative tension between displacement and stability that structures Rowlandson's narrative. Displacement is figured graphically in the series of numbered "Removes" that serve as section headings in the text and correspond to the twenty different wilderness relocations the author endures at the hands of her Wampanoag captors. At the same time, the proliferation of scriptural citations—or "places," as the author frequently calls them—provide a running counterpoint that checks the momentum of removal. This tension first emerges in the transition out of an elegiac digression in Rowlandson's account of the

attack that precipitated her captivity. Having described her sister's death from a bullet wound, she pauses to acknowledge her passing:

I hope she is reaping the fruit of her good labors, being faithful to the service of God in her place. In her younger years she lay under much trouble upon spiritual accounts, till it pleased God to make that precious scripture take hold of her heart, "And he said unto me, my Grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Corinthians 12.9). More than twenty years after, I have heard her tell how sweet and comfortable that place was to her. But to return: the Indians laid hold of us, pulling me one way, and the children another... (310)

The quick shift from serenity, comfort, interiority and the perseverance of faith across decades, all of it focused through a single, fixed "place" from scripture, back into the sensory chaos of the attack and the violent severing and dislocation of the Rowlandson family survivors initiates a pattern: throughout the work, scattered passages from the Bible ground the radical changes in the author's way of life—her diet, her place in the colonial economy, the deaths of loved ones. Rowlandson takes no books with her into captivity, but in the Third Remove an unnamed Indian returning from a skirmish at Medfield offers her a plundered bible. This episode not only foreshadows Rowlandson's own delivery out of the hands of the Indians at the end of her captivity, but it facilitates the merging of narrative frame and narrative content. Scripture—whether encountered in the captivity itself, remembered there, or applied retrospectively—offers commiseration, counsels spiritual resolve, and makes the captive's trials legible in the literal sense of this word.

Far more than any other book in the Bible, Rowlandson turns to the Psalms for this effect of stability,⁸² which echo back her physiological trials (festering wounds,

⁸² By my count, Rowlandson cites or refers to 53 passages from scripture over the course of her narrative. Here is a breakdown of the total by biblical book: Psalms (20), Job (5), Isaiah (5; counting twice the citation of Psalm 54.7 at two distinct moments in the Thirteenth Remove), 1 and 2 Samuel (3), Luke (3);

hunger) as well as her psychological affliction (isolation, displacement, separation from kin). In a provocative essay on the psalm citations in *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, Dawn Henwood argues that Rowlandson finds in them “a context for her misery, spiritual assurance, and emotional release,” in large part because of the way they “render publicly legitimate, even righteous, the captive’s very human frustration and rage and thus enable her, as well as the communal vision she is a part of, to survive” (170).

Although most of Rowlandson’s meditations on the psalms are private, however, at scattered moments her narrow social horizon widens to include another Christian. Shortly after acquiring the Bible, for instance, she encounters an English captive, Goodwife Joslin, who reveals that she is considering an escape. Rowlandson bids her

not to run away by any means, for we were near thirty miles from any English town, and she very big with child, and had but one week to reckon, and another child in her arms, two years old....I had my Bible with me, I pulled it out, and asked her whether she would read. We opened the Bible and lighted on Psalm 27, in which Psalm we especially took notice of that, *ver. ult.*, “Wait on the Lord, Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine Heart, wait I say on the Lord.”

The passage from Psalm 27 speaks in different ways to the two women, binding them together in their separate but related predicaments. As Rowlandson already knows, the Wampanoag party she is travelling with is breaking up: she is on the point of being divided from its nine remaining English captives, including her daughter Mary, and will shortly lose “that little company” she has (315). The injunction to wait in courage mollifies the unpredictable motions of the powers governing her as much as it corroborates her advice to Goodwife Joslin.

Occasionally, Rowlandson’s identification with the psalmist is more visceral. In the Third Remove, she treats an infected wound with oaken leaves and reflects, “before

Genesis, Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, Proverbs, and Micah (twice each); Ecclesiastes, 2 Corinthians, Judges, 2 Thessalonians, Daniel, Exodus, Amos, 2 Kings (once each).

the cure was wrought, I may say, as it is in Psalm 38.5-6 ‘My wounds stink and are corrupt, I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long’” (313). Toward the end of her captivity, weakened by rugged travels and light fare, she reflects, “Now I may say with David ‘I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me. I am gone like the shadow when it declineth: I am tossed up and down like the locust; my knees are weak through fasting, and my flesh faileth of fatness’ (Psalm 119.22-24)” (328). At times, Rowlandson seems to take genuine comfort from the psalms she reads or remembers. Her citation of Psalm 46.8⁸³, “Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth,” a response to the tableau of corpses and disemboweled victims crawling through their own blood at Rowlandson’s house immediately after the attack (311), puts a harrowing, traumatic memory into perspective as a part of God’s unpredictable and sometimes inscrutable providence. On other occasions, however, as in the citation of Psalm 38, the “may” in the formulaic phrase “I may say” implies a sense of genuine relish for the calamity as opposed to the cure. In these and similar cases, the therapeutic value of David’s precedent for the captive’s corrupt tissue, gauntness, and virtual homelessness seems hardly at issue. Instead, these experiences are valued for the ways they dislodge the captive from her complacency and clear her view. At these moments, the tension between the Word’s fixity and the Wampanoag party’s serial removal through the lightly settled New England woodlands is effectively reversed: scripture is animated and, in a sense, translated by the steady unpredictability of Rowlandson’s experience.

Reformed accounts of God’s mercy frequently suggest that it comes into sharpest focus in the turmoil of shock and dislocation. Anne Bradstreet’s “Verses upon the

⁸³ This the source of the text for Symon Beekom’s second exile sermon.

Burning of Our House,” for example, written less than a decade before King Philip’s War, provides a memorable illustration of this principle. In this poem, the persona’s sense of “a house on high erect, / Framed by that mighty Architect, / With glory richly furnished” (43-5) is conveyed not by the experience of living peacefully and entertaining guests in her earthbound home, but by witnessing its destruction and passing among its ruins. Along similar lines, Rowlandson claims in the Fifteenth Remove of her narrative that there are “many Scriptures which we do not take notice of, or understand till we are afflicted” (327). Her understanding of this last term is elucidated in a sobering passage at the close of the work:

Before I knew what affliction meant, I was ready sometimes to wish for it. When I lived in prosperity, having the comforts of the world about me, my relations by me, my heart cheerful, and taking little care for anything, and yet seeing many, whom I preferred before myself, under many trials and afflictions, in sickness, weakness, poverty, losses, crosses, and cares of the world, I should be sometimes jealous lest I should have my portion in this life, and that Scripture would come to my mind, “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every Son whom he receiveth” (Hebrews 12.6). But now I see the Lord had His time to scourge and chasten me....I see, when God calls a person to anything, and through never so many difficulties, yet He is fully able to carry them through and make them see, and say they have been gainers thereby. And I hope I can say in some measure, as David did, “It is good for me that I have been afflicted.” (340)

Rowlandson’s redemption from captivity secured, she blesses the scourge itself, rather than her deliverance from the unwitting agents of God’s loving wrath, as the turning point in her spiritual development. As her citation of Psalm 119.71 at the end of this passage suggests, the most prominent biblical figure called by God to withstand unforeseen “difficulties” and to recognize and express the otherwise counterintuitive truth about their meaning is the psalmist.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ A comprehensive account of the Reformed theology of affliction can be found in Cotton Mather’s sermon *Right Thoughts in Sad Hours, Representing the Comforts and the Duties of Good Men under all their Afflictions; and Particularly That one, the Untimely Death of Children*, published in London in 1689.

The Indians Rowlandson encounters in captivity serve as both providential catalysts and foils for these reflections. “Little do many think,” the author maintains in the First Remove, “what is the savageness and brutishness of this barbarous enemy, aye even those that seem to profess more than others among them, when the English have fallen into their hands” (312). The closed circuit of comparison in this passage conveys Rowlandson’s skepticism about the possibility of a Christianity shared across New England’s ethnic lines. “Professing” Indians are untranslatable: they can only properly be compared to other Indians, not to the saints they mimic, not to David. Although Rowlandson never invokes the contemporary missionary literature, this idea undermines Eliot’s optimism about the power of English cultural forms to effect long-term spiritual change in the hearts of Indian converts.

Toward the end of the Thirteenth Remove, she recalls fond memories of the Sabbath: “I remembered how on the night before and after the Sabbath, when my family was about me, and relations and neighbors with us, we could pray and sing, and then refresh our bodies with the good creatures of God; and then have a comfortable bed to lie down on; but instead of all this, I had only a little swill for the body and then, like a swine, must lie down on the ground” (326). On the surface, Rowlandson is comparing the social and creature comforts of a New England minister’s household with the harsh regimen of her captivity, but she is also implicitly opposing this ritual of weekly prayer and psalmody to the singing, howling and ranting of the Indians. Toward the end of her account of the Lancaster attack, she reflects, “It is a solemn sight to see so many Christians lying in their blood, some here, and some there, like a company of sheep torn

Mather, too, cites Psalm 119.71, and comments, “Nothing is more common than to hear a Christian after many Afflictions professing, *I could not have been well without any one of all my Afflictions, I had want of them all, I have good by them all*” (17).

by wolves, all of them stripped naked by a company of hell-hounds, roaring, singing, ranting, and insulting, as if they would have torn our very hearts out.” During her first night away from Lancaster, she witnesses what appears to have been a Wampanoag celebration of the successful assault: “This was the dolefullest night that ever my eyes saw. Oh the roaring, and singing and dancing, and yelling of those black creatures in the night, which made the place a lively resemblance of hell” (311). In a parallel moment in the Nineteenth Remove, in which Rowlandson witnesses a pre-battle “pow-wow” attended by at least one Praying Indian, she notes that the warriors present “all sang” at different points of the ceremony and that the singing preceded a general “rejoicing”—“as if the devil had told them that they should gain the victory” (331-2). Unlike Eliot in his brief remarks on Indian music in *The Indian Grammar Begun*, Rowlandson suggests that joy is a natural part of the Algonquian emotional palette, but only a devilish joy, a hollow, sinister inversion of the English equivalent.

Where quiet English meditation on David’s example jars with the devilish but inscrutable ranting of the “bloody heathen” (310) in Rowlandson’s narrative, an episode in Captain Thomas Wheeler’s account of a siege at Brookfield, Massachusetts in the summer of 1675 brings the comparison to the surface, offering a memorable glimpse at a hostile variation on Indian psalmody:

August 3d. they continued shooting & shouting, & proceeded in their former wickedness blaspheming the name of the Lord, and reproaching us his Afflicted Servants, scoffing at our prayers as they were sending in their shot upon all quarters of the house[.] And many of them went to the Towns meeting house (which was within twenty Rods of the house in which we were) who mocked saying, Come and pray, & sing Psalms, & in Contempt made an hideous noise somewhat resembling singing. (*So Dreadfull*, 248-9)

Like *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, Wheeler's anecdote implicitly counters Eliot's suggestion, published ten years earlier in *The Indian Grammar Begun*, that English psalmody orders and civilizes the "Howling" and "Ululation" that represent the Indian cultural default for musical expression. Here, a party of Indians turns the ordinance against itself, forcing Wheeler and his fellow English "Souldiers" (247) to recognize a distorted version of themselves, their own voices and their rigorously purified liturgy in the "hideous noise" that assaults their ears from the occupied meeting house.⁸⁵

Wheeler's account originally appeared in a fifty-page pamphlet published in Cambridge in 1676 under the title, *A Thankfull Remembrance of Gods Mercy To Several Persons at Quabaug or Brookfield*. Significantly, the Book of Psalms provides the scriptural backbone of both halves of this document: Wheeler's preface and fourteen-page narrative, and a thirty-two-page sermon by the Concord Pastor Edward Bulkley that was delivered in Brookfield "upon a day of Thanksgiving, kept by divers for their Wonderfull Deliverance there."⁸⁶ As in *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, the psalms offer a precedent for the publicly oriented mode of praise and thanksgiving Wheeler's work models and endorses: "the Lord hath made his wonderful works to be remembered, saith the Psalmist, and he would have his People to tell them to their Children, that they might also declare them to their Children" (240).⁸⁷ Wheeler claims that he has therefore "Adventured to publish" his "Narration" so that the "goodness of God...may be the better remembred by" the Brookfield survivors, "and others incited the

⁸⁵ This mockery of a Reformed ritual of self-recognition and solidarity also forges a suggestive link between violence and unsolicited invitations to worship—a link that the author never explores.

⁸⁶ The epigraph on the title page (Psalms 107.8, "Oh that men would Praise the Lord for his Goodness, and his Wonderfull Works to the Children of men") as well as the text for the sermon (Psalm 116.12, "What shall I Render unto the Lord for all his Benefits towards me") are drawn from the Psalms.

⁸⁷ Psalm 78.6 (Slotkin and Folsom, 240, n.).

more to magnify God with us, (as David calls upon others to do for Gods mercy to him, Psal 34.3.) and also quickned to put their trust on God all their dayes” (Preface, 3).⁸⁸

Wheeler’s choice of scripture here is telling: Psalm 34 is one of eleven that cross-reference an episode in David’s life as recorded in 1 and 2 Samuel; its subscript reads, “A psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed.” This heading grounds the text historically without limiting the scope of its potentially all-inclusive exhortation in verse 3, “O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.” Wheeler, like the David projected by this psalm, manages to invest the limited scope of the event in question with an almost universal significance, offering an otherwise personal, historically specific account of providence and survival as a subject for general thanksgiving and as a reminder of the unwavering necessity for conscientious expressions of gratitude. Though Wheeler consistently subordinates his vividly detailed account of the relatively minor skirmish at Brookfield to the affective and behavioral imperatives that have descended on its survivors, *A Thankful Remembrance* implies that a thorough understanding and articulation of God’s grace, as manifested on earth, is a critical part of the meditation process, too, helping the saint to fine-tune the cognitive mechanism that links the apprehension of divinity to the impulse to give public thanks. Praise worthy of the injunction in Psalm 34 involves a reaching out to others, a broadcasting of God’s mercy, and an invitation to the faithful to exalt in unison—none of which, Wheeler maintains, are possible without a complete sense of the events.

The title page of *A Thankfull Remembrance* effectively bifurcates these duties: by titling Wheeler’s account a “Collection of Providences,” it undermines the

⁸⁸ The preface is unnumbered; Wheeler’s and Bulkley’s texts are numbered separately.

account's narrative unity, suggesting that it is the sermon composed and delivered in response to it that gives this detailed remembrance its shape. Richard Slotkin and James Folsom, the twentieth-century editors of *So Dreadfull a Judgment*, a collection of King Phillip's War-era pamphlets, poems and histories, have commented that the lopsided ratio of the two parts of the work "suggests the proportionate weight to be given to heroism and theology" in this cultural moment. Understandably, they omit Bulkley's thoroughly conventional and far less colorful sermon from their collection (*So Dreadfull*, 234-5). And yet the second half of *Thankfull Remembrance* is worth more careful consideration for the way it throws the significance of the psalm-singing episode into dramatic relief. Bulkley's occasional sermon complements and even completes Wheeler's account to the extent that it puts the imperative to remember and praise into a broader perspective. The sermon opens with a reflection on the "several Conditions" of human existence and the "several duties" that correspond to them, culminating in a reading of the passage that provides the epigraph to the Bay and Sternhold-Hopkins psalm books:

The Christian Conversation is like a wheel[:] every Spoke taketh its Turn; God hath planted in man Affections for every Condition; grace for every Affliction, and a duty for the Exercise of every grace, and a Season for every duty; in which it is most beautiful; In the day of Trouble and Affliction, the duty then is Prayer and Petition; in the time of Deliverance and Prosperity Thanksgiving; giving praise to the God of our Salvation; and it is wisdom to perform what is most seasonable, Jam. 5.13. Is any Afflicted, let him pray: Aske mercy and deliverance from the evils at Gods hand. Is any merry by Reason of mercy received, let him sing Psalms of praise: exalting the lord for his free goodness and bounty therein.

Like Eliot in *Indian Grammar Begun*, Bulkley defines civil Christian devotion in terms of a broad affective range. Throughout the sermon, however, his musical figures apply to grateful individuals "in a Tune of Thanksgiving" (7), not (or not necessarily) to collectives in harmony: "When we praise the Lord," he explains, "we do but sing over

what he hath done, He acts it, and we acknowledge it. Think it is not an easy thing to praise the Lord; It is not only a lip labour, an easy Service; It is a Rendring to God. To play on Musick is pleasant, but it is hard to set the Instrument in Tune to play well; It is hard to get the heart in Tune, in a Spiritual lively, humble frame; Hence David so stirs up himself to it, Psal.103.1,2, and Deborah calls upon her self to awake, Judg.5.12” (10).

Harmony, in Bulkley’s account, has more to do with a cognizance of providential mercies, and a corresponding initiative to return them to God in the form of praise and confession, than with set combinations of tones. As the qualifying phrase “not only” in the second clause of this passage implies, however, these remarks are tacitly anchored in a concrete practice: assuming the Brookfield Church held to baseline Congregationalist standards, all those gathered to hear the sermon would have sung a psalm when it was finished. Bulkeley does not intend to efface sensory music, but to foreground its spiritual dimensions and remind his auditors of the self-searching and perspicacity it requires.

The sermon never mentions the besieging Indians at Brookfield, but the mockery in their invitation to “Come & pray, and sing Psalms” suggests a perfect inversion of psalmody’s divine purpose, a perfect confusion of the duties and seasons among which Bulkley exhorts his auditors to distinguish. This implicit comparison between godly and satanic singing emerges most thoroughly in Bulkley’s definition of praise in terms of reciprocity: “An Eccho is little else but a Reflecting Repetition of the first sound,” the pastor explains, “so our praises are Repetitions, reflecting the work on God” (10).

Toward the end of the sermon, he glosses the apostle’s reference to mirth in James 5.13: “You cannot praise the Lord aright, nor walk worthy of him, except you rejoyce in him, Psal 33[.]1 Rejoyce in the Lord you Righteous, for praise is comely for the upright” (27).

The joy is reciprocal, he continues a few pages later, “and that should make us more delight in this duty because it is so pleasing to God, Psal.22.3. *He Inhabits the praises of Israel*; He loves to sit by them, and to hear them when their hearts are in Tune, when they sound forth his high praises” (29-30). Ignorant of the “first sound,” God’s grace, of which psalmody is properly a “Reflecting Repetition,” the singing Indians in Wheeler’s account are condemned twice by their own actions: first, by their blasphemy, and second by singing from human models, for human ears.

The singers in Experience Mayhew’s *Indian Converts*, by contrast, are thoroughly competent in the performance and pedagogy of church music. By far the most richly detailed account of colonial Indian psalmody can be found piecemeal in this work, a biographical history of Native American Christianity on Martha’s Vineyard first published in London in 1727. Through a wealth of anecdotes and character sketches, *Indian Converts* demonstrates that psalmody has been domesticated and absorbed into all ranks and age groups of Martha’s Vineyard Wampanoag culture. In spite of stray imperfections in the converts’ devotional practices, the health of the ordinance of psalm singing in their communities provides evidence that Indian piety on the island is stable, intergenerational, and virtually self-perpetuating.

Unlike most white colonial missionaries, Experience Mayhew had grown up near Native settlements, spoke an Algonquian dialect, Wopanaak, with something approaching native-level fluency (Liebman, 1-2) and came from a distinguished line of missionary preachers: his father, grandfather and great-grandfather had all ministered to the Wampanoag communities on the island. Written about a half century after the works I

have already discussed in this chapter, *Indian Converts* is far more systematic and comprehensive in its depiction of Christian Indians: Mayhew divides the work into four chapters that catalogue the conversion, spiritual practices, and quiet deaths of, respectively, “Indian Ministers...who have been justly esteem’d godly Persons,” non-minister “Indian Men...who have appeared to be truly good Men,” “several Indian Women that have been justly esteemed Religious,” and “several Young Men, Maids, and Children, that have appeared to be truly pious.”

For both Mayhew and Prince, Martha’s Vineyard’s freedom from hostility during King Philip’s War is the most telling sign of the mission’s success. One of the island’s most celebrated converts, Japheth Hannit, of Chilmark, first distinguished himself in the mid-seventeenth-century as a magistrate and captain before he became a pastor (139): “Good Japheth was very serviceable to both those of his own Nation and ours on this Island,” Mayhew reports, “for being firmly set, if possible, to maintain and preserve Peace betwixt the English and Indians here...he was imployed by the English to observe and report how things went among the Indians: and to his Faithfulness in the Discharge of this Trust, I conceive that the Preservation of the Peace of our Island was very much owing, when the People on the Main were all in War and Blood” (141-2). The “high Esteem, and kind Treatment” Hannit garnered from the English, Mayhew goes on to explain, was paralleled by his good reputation among the Indians, who “not long after this called him to the Work of the Ministry among them” (142). As this account implies, the mission on Martha’s Vineyard was characterized by a far greater sense of balance and containment than that of its mainland Massachusetts counterpart. But even as he commemorates the efficacy of the mission and the civil Anglo-Indian relations it has

helped to cultivate, Mayhew is careful to acknowledge that flaws in Wampanoag Christianity are visible and pervasive.

The theme of the smooth, but emphatically not seamless, transition runs through Mayhew's serial accounts of Indians becoming Christians and pious converts ascending to heaven in the peace of a self-assurance fortified by saintly Indian fellowship. In the opening pages of the work, Mayhew anticipates his readers' expectations that his "History...be well attested and worthy of Credit" (81): a detailed affidavit of support signed by eleven ministers features prominently in the work's prefatory matter. As further proof of this conscientiousness, Mayhew frequently calls attention to the rough edges of Wampanoag Christianity on Martha's Vineyard, but he manages to make a virtue of these markers of human imperfectability—and not just an historiographical one. In large part because of Reformed associations of the Psalms with human fallibility as well as with the exemplary piety into which their best known author, David grew over the course of his life, Mayhew's representation of Wampanoag psalmody provides a means of negotiating this roughness, of understanding it as a marker of credibility rather than a sign of unregeneracy or a corroboration of cultural stereotypes about "savages" and "heathen." In this sense, it correlates well with the concept of manageable discord, prioritizing purity of conscience over a sparkling surface. The persistence of Wampanoag psalmody in the face of challenges and disruptions and in spite of the Indian converts' limitations serves as a subtle but crucial indicator of their resourcefulness and steadiness of faith—a steadiness, Mayhew implies, that anchors the piety of the individual and bolsters communities, congregations, and families.

Recent scholarship on *Indian Dialogues* has emphasized Mayhew's ethnography and epistemology. In a study of "the Science of Dying in Puritan Deathbed Testimonies," for example, Sarah Rivett has persuasively argued that, in *Indian Converts*, "divine knowledge...dissolves into a confrontation with what cannot be known and a reinstantiation of the epistemological limits placed upon [the] empirical pursuit" of the "evidence of grace upon the souls of the dying."⁸⁹ At key moments, however, Mayhew's history brings scribe, subject, and reader together in a humble acknowledgment of this core indeterminacy. One of the most graphic instances of Mayhew's encounter with the epistemological limits of grace can be glimpsed in a passage in which the unnamed sister of a dying Wampanoag named Abigail Kesoehaut is purported to have "plainly heard," in her sleep, "a Voice in the Air over the Top of the House" repeating a phrase in Wopanaak which Mayhew translates, "There is Favor now extended in Canaan." Before providing the anecdote, Mayhew cautions that what he is "now going to relate is not brought in as any Proof of [Abigail's] Sincerity, but proposed to the Learned for their Thoughts on it" (238). The tone and wording of this disclaimer invoke the objective posture of a dispassionate Royal Society fieldworker. Following the episode, however, Mayhew qualifies this detachment substantially in two short paragraphs:

Query. *Whether the Person that dreamed the Dream now related, ought to take any other notice of it, than she should of any common Dream; or what she should think concerning it?*

A Solution of this Problem would gratify both the Person that had the Dream, and him that has related it. (239)

In the brief sentence about gratification that closes this chapter of *Indian Converts*, Mayhew aligns himself with the ostensible object of inquiry, invoking his role as a

⁸⁹ Sarah Rivett, "Tokenography: Narration and the Science of Dying in Puritan Deathbed Testimonies." *Early American Literature* 42, no. 3 (2007), 471-494; 490.

counselor and advocate and foregrounding a shared humanity with a Wampanoag survivor, even if this humanity is grounded in ignorance.⁹⁰ By shifting the focus to Mayhew's portrayals of Wampanoag participation in an earthbound ritual of unison, consent, and praise centered on a collective acknowledgment of human frailty and dependence on God, one of my aims is to clarify the role of empathy and interethnic solidarity in Mayhew's missionary and ethnographic rhetoric. Doing so, however, requires first sketching out Mayhew's method of translation.

In the Preface, Mayhew confesses that he has incorporated doctrinal, interpretive, and factual inaccuracies committed to writing by Indian proselytes as credible indicators of a spiritual progress that falls well short of the ideal:

for the Satisfaction of such as may be thereby gratified, I shall, as occasion offers, translate and insert some such Passages written by them in their own Language, as I think will be subservient to the End herein aimed at. And however inaccurate such Writings may be, yet I shall chuse to keep as much as may be the very Words of the Indians themselves, that the Simplicity of their Intentions may, by their own simple Expressions, the better appear; since it is not the Learning of any, but the Piety of some, that is here designed to be discovered. (94)

Where Eliot's semi-fictional Praying Indian Anthony had allayed Philip Keitascott's fears about the political dangers of the Word's reputed impenetrability with the claim that a sustained engagement with scripture engenders Davidic wisdom in its readers and auditors, Mayhew here distinguishes between faith and intellect, earnestness and accuracy. He also dissociates Wampanoag ministerial efficacy from the scrupulous imitation of English pastoral rhetoric: in his lengthy biographical sketch of Japheth Hannit, Mayhew notes, "Tho his sermons were not very accurate, yet were they very serious, and had a great deal of good Matter in them, and he seem'd to me to do best

⁹⁰ In her reading of this passage, Wyss emphasizes Mayhew's uneasiness with the theological hybridity implied in Kesoehaut's sister's anecdote (74).

when he did not try to oblige himself to any strict Method in them” (144). Wampanoag preaching, in other words, is capable of flourishing when the form of the Indian sermon is left to develop organically, according to instinct: Indian ministers should not (or should not always) be measured according to their ability or willingness to reproduce the English methodology.

Laura Arnold Leibman has identified continuities between the miracles reported at second or third hand in Mayhew’s history and “the Wampanoag oral genre of the *memorate*: a concrete account of a personal encounter with the supernatural” told by aspiring pawwaws or pnieses “as part of the rite of passage to become a spiritual leader, advisor, or practitioner” (21). In this sense, Mayhew’s work shares with Eliot’s *Indian Dialogues* a mode of cultural translation that reconsecrates and reorients practices intimately associated with a prior religious order rather than insisting on their total erasure.⁹¹ Leibman argues that since “the conversion narratives told by Wampanoags in *Indian Converts* often reference the motifs, characters, events, and elements of the *memorate* tradition,” the work published under Mayhew’s name “serves as a generic hybrid of Puritan and Wampanoag stories of the supernatural” (22). Yet while hybridity is certainly a prominent feature of Wampanoag culture as Mayhew reconstructs it, his editorial control over the conversion narratives and biographies he assembles in print is somewhat more rigorously asserted than this statement implies. First, as Hilary Wyss points out, “the main criteria” for inclusion in Mayhew’s work is that “the individual in

⁹¹ According to David Silverman, seventeenth-century Martha’s Vineyard Wampanoags “filtered Christian teachings through Wampanoag religious ideas and terminology—a process that one might call religious translation,” and they did so with the blessing of the missionary Thomas Mayhew, Jr. (founder of the mission there). Silverman argues that “the Wampanoags’ adoption of Christianity did not involve the complete abandonment of their old religious beliefs and identity for an entirely new order after being overwhelmed by the gospel. Instead, it was a process in which the Indians thought they were digging deeper into ancient wellsprings of spiritual power to recover its purest, most potent form and truths that had been with them opaquely all along” (146).

question must be already dead” (63). At the same time, Mayhew’s strategy as a translator, compiler, biographer, and historian involves a ready willingness to identify his corrective interventions as just that: although he never uses the term *memorate* or recognizes it as a tradition of any kind, he typically marks Wampanoag accounts of the supernatural as probably “false” or “Mistake[n]” before carefully—but openly—adjusting them for a potentially skeptical reading public.

Passing along a report that Wuttinomanomin, deacon of the church at Gayhead, was visited by “far brighter Attendants, in human Shape, than any which this lower World could have afforded” shortly before his death, for example, Mayhew is careful to add: “but whether this Account be true or false I cannot determine, there being but one Witness now living, by whom the Affirmative is asserted; yet I doubt not but that the Man, to whom the Story relateth, died in the Lord, and was carried by the Angels into Abraham’s Bosom” (128). Throughout the work, when Wampanoag accounts of the supernatural threaten to taint an otherwise believable composite portrait of a pious Indian, Mayhew intervenes by aligning the supernatural with Heaven, the afterlife, and the metaphorical in an attempt to restore credible, cessationist dimensions to his history without impinging on the faith of its leading figures.

In ways that recall the translational poetics of the Bay Psalm Book, at times, Mayhew defines purity in terms of a surface imperfection. Frequently in *Indian Converts*, the attempt at a gesture or ritual in good faith collapses neatly into the content of the same. One of the most memorable instances of this felicitous conflation appears in Mayhew’s portrayal of Laban Panu. When the ten-year-old Christian was close to death, and “his Voice so failed him that he could not pronounce perfect Sentences, he still kept

praying to God, and saying, *Woi—Woi—Woi—*; which may be rendered in English, *I pray—I pray—I pray—*, which were the last Words he was ever heard to speak” (332).

Wish, expression, and action are set equal to one another in this gesture: Panu’s last words resolve into the repetition of a single diphthong (the pronunciation of which, in the italicized original, requires a slight movement of the lips and none of the tongue). The power of this scene derives not from any particular skill displayed by, or insight granted to, Panu, but from the timing of his utterance and its pure, practically irreducible simplicity.

At the other extreme of fluency in Christian ritual, Mayhew reports that at least one Martha’s Vineyard Indian, John Tackanash, a Teacher at the first local Indian Church who died in 1684, was capable of substituting for English colleagues in the administration of what was probably, after baptism, the colonial Reformed Church’s second most controversial ritual: “When there was no English Pastor upon the Island, some of our goodly English People very chearfully received the Lord’s Supper administered by [John]; and I suppose none would have scrupled it, had they understood the Indian Language” (110). Even if the author’s silence about the ratio of recipients to skeptics as well as about the identity of the former suggests a degree of padding or exaggeration, this inversion, but not subversion, of the normal missionary trajectory—that is, English agents ministering to Indian proselytes—can be read as a test case par excellence of translatability.

While examples of this high profile and magnitude were in short supply, however, the evidence Mayhew provides that psalm singing had been thoroughly domesticated in Wampanoag culture is more nuanced and broader in scope, and it comprises the

extraordinary as well as the unremarkably commonplace. A passage in Mayhew's account of the brief life of Joseph Peag, who died in 1723, "being four Years and twenty one Days old," provides what is perhaps the most comprehensive summary of the objective of psalmody in the missionary literature:

[Joseph] one Day asked his Father, For what End People sung when they went to Meeting? His Father told him, that it would be the great Work and Business of good People to praise God when they came to Heaven; and that singing being one Way in which they would then praise him, they were now before-hand learning to praise and glorify God's Name.—I desire then, said the Child, to learn to sing too, may I not, said he, do so? To which his Father answering him, that he might, he seemed to be mightily pleased with that Answer. And after this, whenever he heard persons singing of Psalms, which was frequently practiced at the House of an Indian Minister just by, the Child would slip away thither, and with great Sobriety attend that Exercise to the Conclusion of it; and did also frequently attempt to sing by himself, tho being but a Child, he therein acted as a Child. (346)

The Indian families in Mayhew's text comprise faithful practitioners of Reformed psalmody who grasp the meaning of the ordinance and, crucially, are capable of articulating it to one another. While curiosity, tempered by a docile obedience, structures Peag's self-prompted initiation into church music, Mayhew's description is free from the awe-stricken submission and dislocation that characterize the "affective model." Young as he is, Peag's actions in this passage are governed by reason, not a visceral attraction to music: before joining in the singing, he seeks its underlying rationale and learns its heavenly aim.⁹² His behavior, however imperfect, is guided by an intuition that psalm singing is a thoroughly serious activity, worthy of close observation and voluntary, ritual repetition. In *Indian Converts*, Wampanoag piety is never predicated on the renunciation

⁹² In *Gospel Musick* (1647), a mainland English pamphlet discussed briefly in Chapter 1, Nathaniel Holmes remarks, "Many that are not yet brought so home to Religion as they should, may be brought in to some love with religious duties for the sake of that sweet one singing of Psalms. The Indians are drawn to the Churches in New-England, by delighting in their singing day, that is, their singing on the Lords day" (10). Peag, by contrast, is drawn in only when he understands the objectives of psalmody.

of the way of life into which the convert was born, but is already a part of it. Psalmody as an institution has been thoroughly absorbed into Joseph's community: what he learns at home is mirrored by what he sees on the outside.

Peag's experiences are echoed in the disparate references to conventional congregational psalmody that turn up in all four chapters of the history. According to an account written by Japheth Hannit's son-in-law, Job Soomannah, and translated and extracted by Mayhew, "a little after Midnight" on the last day of the pastor's life, "having desired those that were with him to praise God, by singing the 13th Psalm, and then by Prayer to commit both him and themselves to God, his Breath failed, and he resigned up his Spirit to God who gave it" (147). Psalm 13 (at six verses, one of the shortest) begins with a pained interrogative ("How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? for ever?" in the Authorized Version) that gives way to petition ("lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death," 3) and closes with a concise summary of the temporal dimensions of human faith: the future tense, the perfect tense, and the self-reflexive union of future and present that inheres in the act of singing a promise to sing ("I will sing unto the LORD, because he hath dealt bountifully with me," 6). Not long before he passed away, according to Soomannah, Hannit remarked to the family and friends gathered around his dying bedside, "Now I shall quickly set out. Thus it has been wont to be, when a Thing has here no further Use to be made of it. But Oh, what sweet Melody is there now in Heaven!" (147) The singing of psalms establishes a powerful link between earthly experience and eminent heavenly reward, paralleling the collapse of present and future singing in the last verse of Psalm 13.

At times, this parallel collides with the limits of Mayhew's belief, as in his brief biographical sketch of Margaret Osooit. The "Daughter of a petty Sachim of Tisbury," Margaret "began to discover such things as gave some grounds to hope that she had the Fear of God in her" (285) in her early adulthood, though she succumbed briefly to "the Sin of Drunkenness" (287) that consumed her husband. Aside from a single rum binge and its relatively light consequences (a temporary loss of consciousness, followed by sickness and regret), Osooit's only publicly visible "Fault" was her refusal to "ask an Admission" to the local church. Her reluctance stemmed not from sloth or ignorance, Mayhew claims, but from her Biblical literacy: "she used to take her Bible, to which she was no Stranger, and turn to and read such Places in it as she apprehended to intimate what holiness was required to be in such as so drew nigh to God, as particularly *Psalm* xv. and xxiv.3,4. and many other places" (287). Although she later came to regret her lifelong abstention, Mayhew's account of her last hours suggests that it may have been of little consequence to her salvation:

Some Christians that were with her when she was dying, having at her Desire commended her to God by Prayer, and sung a Psalm of Praises to him, she manifested a Desire to be gone, and intimated, that the Messengers of Heaven were already come to receive her: and two Persons that were then abroad, near the House where she lay a dying, do affirm, that they then plainly heard a melodious singing in the Air, over the House where this Woman lay; but whether that be a Mistake or not, there is reason to believe that she dy'd well, and that she is gone to the innumerable Company of Angels, and to the Spirits of just Men made perfect. (289)

This passage exemplifies Mayhew's tendency to oscillate between confidence about the nature of his subjects' saving grace and a reluctance to admit Wampanoag accounts of wonders as straightforward evidence.⁹³ But while he translates the report of angelic

⁹³ According to David Hall, New England ministers began to express a growing "mistrust of the lore of wonders" in print in the 1690s, though a market for tales of wonder persisted (*Worlds of Wonder, Days of*

visitation in his account of Wuttinomanomin's death into a credible posthumous assessment of the Indian's spiritual condition, delicately dividing the believable (her pious life and death) from the supernatural (her visitation by non-human "attendants"), the parallel operation in his account of Osooit's death, the singing of psalms, subtly bridges this divide. It is only Osooit's intimation about the approaching "Messengers of Heaven" that requires Mayhew's mediation: the "melodious singing" reported by the unnamed witnesses in the vicinity of the house requires no translation into the realm of the figurative, since the group gathered at Osooit's dying bedside has been engaged in just this. What is more, the psalms neatly frame Osooit's spiritual development from her pious, but ultimately mistaken, reclusion to her entrance into "the innumerable Company of Angels," reflecting the way in which self-recognition in the psalms is always, in Reformed doctrine, an act of solidarity with other penitent sinners. Osooit's engagement of the psalms thus helps, in a sense, to offset her reluctance to become a full member of the church.

The scarcity of detail in most of these accounts suggests that the ritual is part of the fabric of the converts' spiritual life, not an exception, and requires little elaboration. Mayhew reports that William Lay (or Panunnut) of Chilmark, "being a better Singer than most of the Indians then were, used to set the Tune of the Psalm in the Indian Assembly to which he belonged" (120) before his death in 1690. Across the island, Samuel James of Edgartown "was taken ill on a Lord's Day at Meeting" in 1715 shortly before he died, "and was not able to set the Tune of the Psalm in the Afternoon, as for some time he had been used to do" (201). For the most part, however, Wampanoag psalmody crops up in

Judgment, 107). For an account of mainland Wampanoag popular religion in the colonial period, see Douglas L. Winiarski, "Native American Popular Religion in New England's Old Colony, 1670-1770."

Mayhew's work as one element in a generic regimen of pious domestic activity along with prayer, reading scripture, and exhortation.⁹⁴

In other cases, Mayhew's elaborations on Indian observance of the ordinance emphasize the flexibility and resourcefulness of the converted family in the face of disruption to their pious routines: Mayhew reports that Joseph Nahnosoo, for example, was "committed to the Care of Master Japheth Hannit" when his father died, but when his guardian was away from home "as about that time on necessary Occasions he often was, this sober and pious young Man read the Scriptures, prayed, and sung Psalms in the Family, as he himself did when at home with them" (308). Nor is this flexibility limited by gender: a young woman, Abigail Manhut, "learned of her Mother, with whom she lived after her Father's Death, to sing Psalm Tunes" and was "frequently heard singing Psalms by her self alone" (306). Mayhew makes it clear that while Wampanoag household piety typically centers on a stable, strict, but genuinely affectionate patriarch, families are capable of sustaining it in the absence of one as well.

Challenges to bodily integrity are met by Mayhew's singing converts as easily as challenges to the structure of the family. Abel Wauwompuhque of Nashowa-Kommuck, for example,

used to sing Psalms in his House, while he had a Family of his own to join with him in that godly Exercise; and, after he was blind with Age, and lived among his Children in their Houses, he continued to praise the Name of God, by singing to himself such Psalms as he had learned by Heart, while he had his Sight; as particularly part of the 18, also the 118, and 122. (193)

Even after Wauwompuhque's son lost his hearing in a 1690 epidemic that claimed about 100 lives,⁹⁵ Mayhew relates, he "delighted much to read and meditate" in the

⁹⁴ See Mayhew's accounts of the ministers Wunnauhkomun (113), Janawannit (114), Paul/Mashquattuhkooit (118), Thomas Sockakonnit (131), and Jonathan Amos (133), and of the layman Samuel Pashqunnahhamun (226).

Massachusset Psalter, a translation of the psalms prepared by Mayhew himself and published in 1709: “he therefore carried it about with him wherever he went to work, and whenever he sat down to rest him, he would look into it” (164). Although Mary Manhut, who died in her late adolescence or early adulthood in 1724, lost her voice in her last days, she found a way to involve herself actively in the psalm singing around her deathbed initiated by her father: “she seemed observably to attend to what was done,” Mayhew relates, “and particularly shewed her Pleasure in that Psalmody, not only by looking most earnestly and pleasantly toward her Father, while he read and sang, but also by stretching out her Hand, and laying it on his Book while he did so” (298). In a parallel passage from the last chapter of *Indian Converts*, neighbors called to the deathbed of Eleazar Ohhumuh, who died in 1698 when he was 16, sang

a Psalm of Praise to God his Saviour; which he being well pleased at, and not able to shew it by joining with his Voice, shewed his Consent to what was done, by laying hold with his Hand on the Book out of which they read and sung, and keeping hold of it till the Psalm was finished, and looking all the while with a most chearful Countenance. (312)

Manhut’s and Ohhumuh’s silent participation in this ritual of collective sound and exuberance confirms the young Joseph Peag’s apprehension of both the joy and the solemnity in psalmody. It is also, in eloquent if unsettling ways, the polar opposite of the howling and ululation Eliot associated with Indian music—obedient and unobtrusive, expressive and affectively complex. At the same time, it serves as a corollary to Japheth Hannit’s apprehension of a “sweet Melody...in Heaven” as death closes in: in all three cases, psalmody bridges life with its fallen and debilitated senses and afterlife with its perfect grace, binding together a small collection of humble, pious Wampanoag

⁹⁵ Leibman, 161 n. 267, citing David Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries: Colonists, Christianity, and Community among the Wampanoag Indians of Martha’s Vineyard, 1600-1871*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005., 126-7.

Christians otherwise separated from one another in terms of their faculties and their relative proximity to the Kingdom of Heaven.

In the 1720s, as I will discuss in the following chapter, devotional music had become a flash point for renewed debate over the relation between aesthetics and worship in mainland Massachusetts. Mayhew was a frequent visitor to the mainland and correspondent with Boston ministers (sermons that he preached in Boston were published in 1720 and 1725).⁹⁶ As he must have known, the docility, intense devotion, and—perhaps most important of all—ordinariness of Wampanoag psalmody on Martha’s Vineyard contrasted powerfully with the bickering of clergy and laity over scales and solfege elsewhere in the colony.

⁹⁶ *A Discourse Shewing that God Dealeth with Men as Reasonable Creatures* (1720) and *All Mankind, by Nature, Equally under Sin* (1725). The first of these closes with “A Brief Account of the State of the Indians on Martha’s Vineyard” and adjacent islands (appendix, 1). *All Mankind...* includes an application of the sermon’s doctrine “unto the case of a miserable People dwelling upon us, and bordering upon us: I mean the Aboriginal Natives of this Land,” and it appeals directly to “The Honourable Commissioners for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Indians” as well as the General Court for a “revival of the work” of conversion (24, 26).

Kevin Cattrell

Fall, 2010

Colonial New England Psalmody and the Poetics of Discord in Translation

Chapter 3: Irregular Singing in Early Eighteenth-Century Massachusetts

In compiling and printing 1,700 copies of the Bay Psalm Book, first-generation settlers had effectively purged their psalmody of the objectionable ornamental dross they encountered in precedent English translations. Beginning in 1647, when a lightly revised edition of the collection was published in London, editors began smoothing out the collection's metrical irregularities, unknotting much of its syntax, and striking a more felicitous balance between rigorous fidelity and poetic cadence.⁹⁷ The revisions of Harvard President Henry Dunster and Richard Lyons, introduced in the second edition printed in New England (1651), are substantial enough that scholars now know this collection—and later editions based on it, printed throughout the colonial period—by a different title, the New England Psalm Book.⁹⁸

Although no direct challenges to the theology of congregational psalmody articulated in the Bay Psalm Book's preface were published in the seventeenth century,

⁹⁷ In a copy of the Bay Psalm Book owned by the Old South Church in Boston, the fifth verse of Psalm 1, which reads, "Rise to stand in the doom," has been amended to reflect the metrical regularity in the 1647 edition: "stand upright in the doom." A high-resolution digital edition of this copy of the 1640 psalm book is forthcoming from the University of Alabama Press. As the verso of its title page attests, this copy was bequeathed to the Old South Church's library by Thomas Prince in 1758. Prince, who had served as the church's copastor for forty years, systematically revised the New England Psalm Book, completing his work on it about a year before his death. See *The psalms, hymns, & spiritual songs, of the Old and New Testament, faithfully translated into English metre. Being the New-England Psalm book revised and improved; by an endeavour after a yet nearer approach to the inspired original, as well as to the rules of poetry*. Boston, 1758.

⁹⁸ New England Psalm Book editions are numbered as if the Bay Psalm Book were the first.

the magnitude and longevity of its impact are difficult to judge. The editors of the New England Psalm Book replaced John Cotton's essay with a two-paragraph address "To the Godly Reader," a calm and concise defense of the updated translation that says nothing about the first edition, rival versions, congregational accord, or the psalter as a universal and infallible index of the soul. Beginning with this edition, the title page acknowledges that the collection is intended "For the use, edification, and comfort, of the Saints, in publick, & private, especially in New-England" and printed in "Cambridge in New-England," but these are the revised psalm book's only markers of place. Over a half century would pass before a fuller self-consciousness about the New England context of white congregational psalmody would emerge in print.

Although the New England psalter was in its twentieth edition in 1720 and would go through three more printings by the end of the decade, by this point its hegemony in the colonies was under threat. Across the Atlantic, the translation prepared by Nahum Tate and Nicholas Brady, first published in 1696, had replaced the Sternhold-Hopkins version in the Church of England's liturgy after a tenure of almost 150 years. The Tate and Brady version was printed in Boston in 1713 and 1720 (Foote, 60) and used in the first known New England singing school, which was organized on March 16, 1721. Isaac Watts' metrical psalm paraphrases and hymns would not achieve widespread popularity in New England until the 1740s, but early samples of this work were printed in Boston as early as 1710 (Music, "Cotton Mather," 6, 14).

The integrity of the text that New England churches sang remained a point of debate for a minority of colonists in this period. Cotton Mather's *Psalterium Americanum*, a rendition of the psalms in unrhyming verse (and the subject of a later section of this chapter), was

published in 1718, but there is no evidence that it was ever used outside Mather's own congregation. In the March 25, 1723 edition of James Franklin's *New England Courant*, Old Janus praised the New England Psalm Book (almost certainly with tongue in cheek) as "a bulwark against Popery" and panned the Tate and Brady translation in a doggerel couplet:

But O these Lines of Nic. and Nahum!
May no one sing or ever say 'um.

Aside from Mather and the Couranteers, however, few early eighteenth-century New Englanders seem to have concerned themselves with the quality and legitimacy of the translations in use.

Church music, on the other hand, was in crisis throughout the 1720s, as a surge of incendiary pamphlets, sermons, music primers, and newspaper editorials addressed an escalating controversy over the proper method of congregational psalm singing.

Unsurprisingly, ministers' works dominated this printed-text field. The quality of the colonists' singing, they claimed, along with the layperson's grasp of the fundamentals of music, had dropped off so precipitously that much of New England's church music verged on blasphemy, savagery, and even atheism. The Singing Controversy, as this surprisingly bitter, public standoff over the pedagogy and technique of psalmody came to be called, marked a departure from the colonial New England discourse on the "Gospel Ordinance" of psalm singing in the 1640s. Previously, ministers had held forth in print on the poetics of metrical psalm translation, the proper inclination of the psalm singer's heart, and the spiritual and social dynamics of congregational song. Never before, however, had the mechanics of singing and the aesthetic integrity of the psalm tune, as distinct from the text, been a subject of sustained public debate.

Thomas Walter, Cotton Mather's nephew and perhaps the most musically progressive New Englander of his generation,⁹⁹ summarized the ministers' case for reform in the introduction to his popular singing manual, *The Grounds and Rules of Musick Explained* (1721): "Our Tunes are, for want of a Standard to appeal to in all our Singing, left to the Mercy of every unskillful Throat to chop and alter, twist and change, according to their infinitely divers and no less odd Humours and Fancies" (3). With this reference to a lack of standards, Walter did not mean that printed melodies were unavailable, or that churches lacked singing directors. Over two decades earlier, the 1698 edition of the New England Psalm Book, the ninth, had become the first to introduce musical notation. It is difficult, however, to gauge the impact of this feature with any accuracy: the wording in the appendix, titled "Some few directions for ordering the Voice in Setting these following Tunes of the Psalms," implies that the main function of the woodcut musical staffs was to help the church deacons who led the singing, known as "precentors," estimate the "compass" of the tunes in question—the distance from the lowest to the highest note—and set an appropriate pitch for the first tone. It is unclear how many colonists were capable of using printed music as anything else but a kind of jog to their memories.

Throughout the colonial period, in most New England congregations, precentors set the melody through a process, apparently developed in Elizabethan England as a concession to illiterate parishioners and the limited availability of psalm books in many congregations there, known as "lining-out": he announced the tune by name ("Oxford," "Low Dutch," "York"), read one or two lines of the designated psalm aloud at a time, and

⁹⁹ For a biographical sketch of Walter, see Buechner. For an account of his theology of music, see Irwin, 183-7.

then sung them with the congregation (Foote, 373-4). As scattered entries in Samuel Sewall's diary suggest, however, lining out was far from infallible as a means of preserving and transmitting melodies—deacons were not necessarily better able to carry a tune, or remember it, than their fellow congregants.¹⁰⁰ At the same time, Congregationalist theology proscribed the use of non-vocal music in the church.¹⁰¹ Without musical instruments, and without a critical mass of colonists who could read music, the number of widely known tunes seems to have dwindled to a handful by the early eighteenth century.¹⁰² In churches across New England, the ministers complained, the singing of this limited quantity of psalm tunes was characterized by a kind of collective, uncoordinated improvisation that fractured their liturgies—which were already

¹⁰⁰ See Sewall's diary entries for December 28, 1705, July 5, 1713, and Feb. 2, 1718, in which Sewall records his forgetfulness and occasional tendency to transpose different tunes in the same setting (Foote, 94-5). Winslow suggests that deacons were not typically Harvard educated (Sewall would have been exceptions), and had little to no exposure to the fundamentals of music as a result.

¹⁰¹ In *Singing of Psalmes*, Cotton explained, "now in the growne age of the heires of the New Testament, externall pompous solemnities are ceased, and no externall worship reserved, but such as holdeth forth simplicitie, and gravitie; nor is any voyce now to be heard in the Church of Christ, but such as is significant and edifying by signification (1 Cor. 14. 10, 11, 26) which the voyce of Instrumts is not" (6). Had New England churches lifted this ban, perhaps the Singing controversy would have been shorter and less intense. Discordant psalmody had been publicly criticized in print in England at least nine years before it came under attack in the colonial press, but this was a far milder affair. The Anglican Bishop William Beveridge printed a polemical "Discourse on Church-Musick" in the fourth volume of his *Thesaurus Theologicus* (1711). Beveridge grumbles in its opening pages that mainland English subjects' confusion over the proper uses of music in worship reflected a "tendency to scruple every thing, but what they ought." Though he never mentions Dissenting congregations specifically, many of the remarks in this short piece were composed in response to positions on psalmody held steadfastly by their ministers—especially the opposition to the use of musical instruments in the liturgy. "The Usefulness" of instrumental accompaniment, Beveridge contends, "appears...[i]n that it keeps the People in Tune and Concord when they sing, and so prevents that Disorder and Confusion which we have often found, by Experience, in this and other Churches: Some singing one, and others another Tune, and very few singing any Tune aright. Which, as it breeds Confusion, it cannot be so pleasing nor so agreeable to him that is the God of Order, as to Praise him with one Voice, and in one Tone and Tune, as well as with one Heart. To which nothing doth nor can contribute more than Organs, or other Instruments of Musick" (IV, 212). For New England congregations, whose ministers, unlike Beveridge, regarded the presence of non-verbal music in church services as unwarranted by scripture, musical instruments were unavailable to standardize the melody and tempo.

¹⁰² Thomas Walter, in *Grounds and Rules*, sets the number at "eight or ten" for most churches (4); in *Utile Dulci*, Thomas Symmes marvels that the members of his congregation "should be so fond of Singing half a Dozen Tunes, nay One Tune, from Sabbath to Sabbath; till every body Nauseates it, that has any Relish of Singing" (25).

broken up by the reading of the precentor—into a pandemonium of personalized, untuned, and unsynchronized performances.

In 1723, a pamphlet co-authored by the ministers Peter Thacher, John Danforth, and Samuel Danforth (of Milton, Dorchester, and Taunton, Massachusetts, respectively) echoed Walter's criticism in a blunt assessment of the New England churches' "Irregular, Jarring, Disorderly Singing":

We have degenerated from the Right and Established Rules of Musical Singing; And many Congregations have Sung near one third too long, and some syllables have been Quavering as in the singing of Mass; and in their singing have borrowed and taken, some, half a line, some a whole line, out of one tune, and put it into another; and the singing of the same pretended Tunes in one Congregation, hath not been alike to the singing of them in another...and several Singers in the same Congregation have differed one from another in the turns and flourishes of the Tune which they have sung, and have been too discordant.

The pamphlet marshals a range of attack strategies, of which the subtle barb "Musical Singing" in this passage may be the most piercing: if in most other eighteenth-century English settings, this term would have been redundant, here in rural Massachusetts it was not. At the same time, the parishioners' fanciful embellishment of the melody savored of shallow, papist excess. The ministers regard "our Tedious Length of Singing, which is contrary to the Standard or Primitive Rule, and more like the Mass, than like our reformed English Musick" as a primary cause of the alleged degeneration: the slow pace of psalmody was a frequent sticking point in these publications, probably, in large part, because it tended to encourage uncoordinated vocal flourishes ("quavering[s]"). Claiming that few participants were even aware of a soundscape outside of their own warbling, these ministers hope that the introduction of "singing by note" will reclaim from "Absurdity" those "who sing so Loud, as that they can hear no Bodies Voice but their own" (14).

The groundwork for this method had been laid two years earlier in a pair of music primers, both first published in 1721,¹⁰³ John Tufts' *An Introduction to the Singing of Psalm-Tunes*, and Walter's *Grounds and Rules*. These works provided an introduction to music theory and modeled a systematic approach to voice modulation, alternately known as "Regular Singing," "singing by note," or "the New Way," which was designed to help singers of all talents and backgrounds bring music's temporal and tonal axes under control.¹⁰⁴ According to Sewall's journal, societies for the promotion of Regular Singing were meeting regularly in Boston by March of 1721.¹⁰⁵ The evident popularity of the style of singing already in use, known as the "Usual" or "Old Way," made the ministers' task especially difficult. As an unsigned pamphlet published in Boston in 1725 laments, "some affect a Quavering Flourish on one Note, and others upon another which (because they are Ignorant of true Musick or Melody) they account a Grace to the Tune; and while some affect a quicker Motion, others affect a slower, and drawl out their Notes beyond all Reason; hence in Congregations ensue Jarrs & Discords, which make the Singing (rather) resemble Howling" (*Brief Discourse*, 7). This complaint indicts the singers' own initiative as much as the lack of fixed musical standards, suggesting that parishioners reveled in the dissonance that issued from their untutored throats.

¹⁰³ The fifth edition of Tufts's work, the earliest extant, was printed in Boston in 1726; scholars now generally accept Irving Lowens's date of 1721 for the first edition. *Music and Musicians in Early America*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1964, 39-57, cited in Becker, 81, n. 6.

¹⁰⁴ The *Introduction* was reprinted ten times through 1744. The two copies I have examined at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, are bound, respectively, with the New England Psalm Book (it is unclear which edition) and a copy of Watts's *Psalms of David, Imitated* (discussed later in this chapter). *Grounds and Rules*, whose gifted author died of consumption at 28 in 1725 (Buechner, 59), went through six editions through 1764.

¹⁰⁵ Boston appears to have caught on to, and accepted, Regular Singing by 1723. Buechner points out that in the years following, little was printed about Boston psalmody and reports on Singing Schools disappeared from the Boston papers (53, 59). The bulk of the attacks that followed were lodged against country churches.

The same pamphlet goes on to project the long-term consequences of this dissonance and to remind its readers of the contingency of God's favor: "If Skill and Rule be decry'd in one thing, they may as well be so in another, 'till all Learning and Religion be Justled out, and all Rules and Precepts about the Worship of God (as much as in us lies) made void; and so a People favoured with the Word and Laws of God, and Rules how to Serve and Glorify Him, shall become like the Blindest and most brutish of the Heathen and those that know not God" (14). Even the anonymous, conciliatory pamphlet *A Pacificatory Letter About Psalmody*, printed the same year, manages to cast white New England's grasp of music in an unflattering light by implying that the ministers had correctly diagnosed a region-wide inability to register the difference between singing and other kinds of vocal sound. "A Person's Voice," it explains, in a passage that uncannily recalls Eliot's *The Indian Grammar Begun*, "may be called, Speaking, Laughing, Crying, Singing, according to the different way and manner in which he makes it audible, to be heard by others. The Voice must be kept at the same Pitch for a longer or shorter Space, and sometimes rais'd or lower'd, and extend to such or such a Number of Syllables...and this according to some stated Rules; otherwise a Person's making his Voice audible, may no more be call'd Singing than Hollowing, or any thing else" (3). Toward the end of his dispassionate assessment of the crisis, published in 1728, Nathaniel Chauncy suggested that a failure to mend the colonial churches' ruptured musical sense was, effectively, to blind oneself to the light of the gospel and to undo the work of plantation and civilization: "In case Man have no certain Rule, to guide him in this Affair, then so far, he goes as in a Wilderness, without any Path, in the Dark nor knowing whither he Steers right to his End or not" (30).

Accounts of New England psalm singing as dissonant, unsystematic, ametrical, and lacking a literate, rational basis suggest that the cultural binary in Eliot's definition of music a half century earlier had collapsed in on itself. In the appendix to *Bonifacius* (1710), which was printed a decade before the Singing Controversy's opening skirmishes, Cotton Mather had commended "the performances in the ordinary Congregations of the Indians," noting that "the Singing of Psalms, with a Melody out doing many of the English, in their Meetings, have been frequently observed with Admiration," presumably by English observers. "To see such forlorn Salvages, and the most rueful Ruines of Mankind, not only Cicurated into some Civility, but also Elevated unto so much Knowledge and Practice of Christianity, has to some appeared an amiable and admirable Spectacle!" (196) In light of the acute anxiety over the order of colonial civilization that would characterize the Singing Controversy literature, these remarks appear less flattering of the Christian Indians (and the good-doing missionaries who ministered to them) than they might otherwise. If Singing Controversy publications make virtually no mention of Indians, they are nevertheless haunted by a specter of American savagery, one that helps to distinguish their rhetoric from that of similar mainland English polemics. As holy melody gradually regressed into ululation, the chorus of Singing Controversy pamphlets warned, a chosen people were slouching into brute heathenism. Far from serving as an automatic agent for the refinement and conversion of the Indians and for the civilizing of a howling wilderness, psalmody had come to manifest the colonists' own vulnerability to degeneracy.

Not everyone blamed this degeneracy on the ignorance and innovation of the singers themselves. Pro-Regular Singing minsters' invocation of lawless heathenism and

the pathless wilderness in their accounts of “Usual Way” singing belies its one prominent ritual feature that was rigidly—even oppressively—formal, the practice of lining out the psalm. An incendiary letter printed in the *New England Courant* in February of 1724 and signed “Jeoffry Chanticleer” attacks this technique with ruthless wit. The letter opens with a complaint that the Regular Singing movement, for all its vigor, has not adequately targeted “that indecent, unwarrantable, and unedifying way of reading the Psalm Line by Line,”¹⁰⁶ in spite of the fact that lining out has long outlived its expediency: “It is certain, that this way of praising God by Peace-meal, between the Deacon and the People, was first introduc’d out of Condescension to ignorant People,” that is, the illiterate, “who attended the publick Worship.” Given the colony’s almost perfect literacy rate in latter days, Chanticleer argues, the persistence of this vestigial ceremony alienates worshippers, mutilates the Word, and even cultivates petty blasphemy, all with the clergy’s tacit approval. To sing one line at a time is to put the text at the mercy of the psalter’s arbitrary enjambment and lineation:

in many of the Psalms, there is no Meaning (to say no more) in many of the Lines, if we take them by themselves; so that we are often oblig’d to sing without a Meaning (which is like praying in an unknown Tongue) till the Deacon is pleas’d to give us the next Line, or perhaps two or three more....it is obvious to every one, that even Blasphemy may be pick’d out of the Bible by leaving out a part of a Sentence.¹⁰⁷

The author claims to have had first-hand experience of this blasphemy. Entering a church one day, he claims, he heard a deacon read a line from Psalm 119 that runs, in full, “Like Dross thy Laws I love therefore.” “Here I would willingly have join’d in the Worship,” he remarks, “but I consider’d, that if I sung that Line without knowing what came before,

¹⁰⁶ Jeoffry Chanticleer, “To old Master Janus.” *The New England Courant*, Monday, February 17 to Monday, February 24, 1724, 1.

¹⁰⁷ Note the likely dig at the New England translation of the Psalms embedded in the first parentheses, and the appeal to anti-Catholicism in the phrase “unknown tongue.”

or what follow'd, my own voice would have been a Witness against me that I lov'd the Law like Dross, and yet could not tell for what Reason."¹⁰⁸ Lining out the psalm, he argues, not only mutilates the text, irrationally privileging metrical unit over sense, but it divorces self from voice, and voice from reason. Even when the line coincides with a complete thought, "the Words are often murder'd or metamorphos'd by the Tone of the Reader": to illustrate this point, the author recounts that a woman recently miscarried "at the ungrateful and yelling Noise of a Deacon in reading the first Line of a Psalm." Finally, as a result of the deacon's tendency to modulate the tune he sings over the course of lining it out, the letter claims, "in Singing two or three Staves, the Congregation falls from a cheerful Pitch to downright Grumbling, and then some to relieve themselves mount an Eighth above the rest, others perhaps a Fourth or Fifth, by which Means the Singing appears to be rather a confused Noise, made up of Reading, Squeaking and Grumbling, than a decent and orderly Part of God's Worship." The emphasis on the role of the deacon in this account, which never mentions musical literacy or the improvisatory flourishes of the common singer, serves to distinguish it sharply from the ministers' pro-Regular Singing rhetoric. The "confused Noise" in the Congregation, the letter suggests, is not so much a degeneration of parishioners' musical sensibilities or an abandonment of the original New England settlers' vision, as a natural response from singers with finite vocal ranges to an outmoded and ridiculous Congregationalist policy.

The scholarship on the New England clergy's exasperated efforts to regularize congregational psalmody, however, tends to plot the Singing Controversy as the turning

¹⁰⁸ In the preface to *The Psalms of David Imitated* (1719), Isaac Watts expresses discomfort with lining out as well. To avoid the problem Chanticleer lays out in this letter, Watts advises the parish clerk to read the psalm in its entirety before lining it out, "that the People may have some Notion of what they sing; and not be forced to drag on heavily thro' eight tedious Syllables without any Meaning, till the next Line come to give the Sense of them."

point in a cultural-aesthetic conversion narrative, according to which well-educated and ultimately well-meaning ministers partnered with forward-thinking youths in a struggle to redeem their churches and societies from a nostalgic attachment to a stale, debased tradition. The historian Laura L. Becker, for example, has read the Singing controversy in terms of a steady erosion of clerical authority on civil, moral, and political matters, and a region-wide indifference toward public education. The musicologist Joyce Irwin argues that the Regular Singing movement registered the influence of rationalism, Baroque music theory, and Pietism, and reflected a larger “breakdown of Calvinist orthodoxy” (177). “The method of singing by imitating the precentor in one’s own rhythm and style,” she concludes, “had little to justify it from any historical, theological, or aesthetic standpoint.” Acknowledging the dearth of material in the archive written by the opposition,¹⁰⁹ she concludes that this “practice was the result of a decline in musical literacy, which seems to have coincided with a general cultural and religious decline in the late seventeenth century” (176-7).¹¹⁰

In spite of the valuable insights these studies provide, none of them acknowledge that the lay resistance to Regular Singing, along with the folk traditions that seem to underlie the “Usual way,”¹¹¹ are fully consistent with the theology of singing as preached from New England pulpits in the decades that preceded the crisis. As Ola Elizabeth

¹⁰⁹ Genuine dissenting accounts of Regular Singing are rare, if they exist at all. Samuel Niles, pastor of the Braintree church and one of the few ministers who favored the Usual Way, never joined the print debate, and a letter to the editor of the *New England Courant* that mildly protested Regular Singing reads like a fabrication; Foote assumes that it is (383-6).

¹¹⁰ Henry Wilder Foote’s *Three Centuries of American Hymnody* provides the best overview of early American psalmody in general and the eighteenth-century reformation of New England devotional music in particular.

¹¹¹ From an early twenty-first-century perspective, the flourishes, sustained passages, and transpositions loathingly recounted by the clergy resonate with familiar practices: modernist pastiche, the quoting and riffing of jazz musicians, even sampling and remixing. This makes it tempting to read the ministers’ charges as a description of a kind of folk aesthetic sensibility, one that seems all the more powerful for its lack of a spokesperson. Unfortunately, I can reconstruct too little of the “Usual Way” to advance this idea beyond speculation.

Winslow contends in *Meeting-House Hill*, “more than mere inertia and ignorant conservatism lay back of the Old Guard’s unwillingness” to accept the New Way. “Sung ‘regularly,’” he explains, “the Psalm would be a mere ceremony, without unction, without inspiration of divine grace....In so far as the battle concerned singing for its own sake, this phrase, so often used by the opposition, supplies the main motive for the whole uproar and violence of it” (152). Winslow cites no sources, but, as I will argue in the following section, support for this claim can nevertheless be drawn from two “*New Guard*” sources. Recovering these continuities, I believe, throws into relief a conservative tendency at the heart of the ministers’ animated rhetoric of reform: a tendency to figure the translation of psalmody to New England in terms of a purge of all trace of the local. As the New England ministers in favor of Regular Singing were painfully aware, congregational music gradually had become localized over the approximately three generations of its colonial existence: it had become translated in ways that Cotton’s 1640s rhetoric of psalm singing seems to have deliberately guarded against. To check this momentum, the clergy endeavored to recast the ordinance in a transatlantic discourse of natural history.

In 1721, as the singing controversy was gathering pace, the Boston minister Cotton Mather published a sermon that characterized the “Usual Way” as “the confused Noise of a Wilderness,” and the lingering popular attachment to it as “Degeneracy.” “They must have strange Notions of the Divine Spirit, and of His Operations,” he railed, “who shall imagine, that the Delight which their Untuned Ears take in an Uncouth Noise, more than in a Regular singing, is any Communion with Him” (“Accomplished Singer,”

22-3). Benjamin Wadsworth, minister at the First Church in Boston (and later President of Harvard), publicly endorsed Regular Singing as well, signing his name to a “Recommendatory Preface,” also endorsed by Mather and fourteen other ministers, to Walter’s *Grounds and Rules* (iii). In light of their earlier writing on psalmody, however, the support of these two figures for the movement is startling. In the years preceding the crisis, these prominent ministers from New England’s commercial and cultural center offered a moral and theological frame work for the popular opposition to Regular Singing by defining psalmody not in terms of congregational solidarity, but as an expression of the pious Christian’s sharp inward turn.

Following John Cotton’s *Singing of Psalmes* (1647), almost sixty years elapsed before psalmody reappeared as the subject of a discourse written and published in New England. When Wadsworth broke the silence in 1706 with a sermon titled *Psalms should be Sung, With Grace in the Heart*, he diverged sharply from the applied theology of his predecessor in defining the “edification” proper to psalmody as a reflexive rather than a collective endeavor, and by barely tolerating the audible components of church music. In his remarks on edification in his 1647 essay, Cotton had drawn on 1 Corinthians 14.15-16: “What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?” For Cotton, as for Paul, “understanding” in psalm singing is properly interpersonal: “such as sing in the Church,” he comments, “should not onely sing in the Spirit; but with understanding; that is, not onely with their own understanding (for all that sung with the Spirit did so)

but with the understanding of the hearers, that so he that occupied the place of the unlearned, might be edified, and say, Amen, at such giving of thanks” (*Singing*, 2).

Toward the end of the treatise, Cotton plays on the root meaning of “edify” (which derives from the Latin *aedifico*, construct) in order to defend the churches’ use of certain mediating structures, such as lining out the psalm, that lack an “expresse precept” in scripture. Christians are nowhere instructed to erect scaffolds in their churches, Cotton points out, “and yet the light of Nature easily suggesteth it, that they helpe to hearing, and so to edification, in as much as they draw multitudes of people to sit within the Ministers voyce; That which helpeth the very outward sence of hearing, helpeth also knowledge and understanding, and so edification” (62). On the one hand, constructing a platform to assist the minister in projecting his sermon figuratively contains his auditors within his speech: it is important not to overlook Cotton’s vested interest in sanctioning those adiaphora that help consolidate the preacher’s authority. All the same, however, such construction is designed, Cotton implies, to set all parishioners on equal footing and bind the church together in mutual consent. “Lining out” the psalm—a practice that many New Englanders would come to disparage in the early eighteenth century—operates in just this way, according to Cotton, drawing Christian singers together and facilitating the accord of their hearts and voices, the edification of their minds, and the strengthening of their church communities. All of these features of worship, in his vision, combine organically into a mutually reinforcing whole. Although Cotton shares with Wadsworth an Augustinian distinction between singing with “the Spirit of Grace” and singing with beauty “in the outward sence” (*Singing of Psalmes*, 52), he was (as I discuss in Chapter 1) an outspoken advocate of the peacekeeping qualities of psalmody, promoting its

capacity to help “assuage enmity, and...restore friendship and favour” (4) and claiming that one of its chief ends was “to stirre up our selves and others to serve the Lord with chearfulnesse and glad hearts” (45). As the “outward sence” of hearing was crucial to all of these activities, consonance serves Cotton as a useful figure for productive social relations throughout his work.

In the opening section of the 1706 sermon, by contrast, Wadsworth adjusts the wording of his text from Colossians 3.16, “Teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord,” reading “your selves” for “One another”: “for so the Greek word signifies,” he points out, “and so tis translated in the parallel Text, Eph. 5.19....Christians should speak to, should teach and admonish, *themselves*, in *Psalms, Hymns* and *Spiritual Songs*. Indeed *these* contain in them matter of good Instruction and Admonition, and the right Singing of them tends much to Edification” (43-4). Wadsworth’s accurate recovery of the reflexive pronoun in Paul’s injunction is emblematic of his understanding of congregational psalmody as a congress of edifying encounters between discrete selves and God, mediated primarily by text rather than performance.¹¹² Although grounded in a loosely coordinated spiritual autonomy (the singers are present with one another), psalmody as he defines it here is directed toward self-service rather than fellowship: “Our chief design in Singing Psalms,” he argues, “should not be to please the Ears of Men, but to please the Heart of God, and so to get good to our own Souls” (49). The ample space between the two terms Wadsworth opposes here is never mapped out in the sermon: God’s musical sensibility and the hearts of the congregation are left unexamined.

¹¹² Wadsworth’s reading of *heautous* is in line with the definition provided in Friberg, et al., eds., *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (124), as well as the Liddell-Scott lexicon.

Each time Wadsworth acknowledges the necessity for a uniformity of pitch and tempo, he is quick to subordinate temporal ears and voices to the inclination of the heart. Though he allows that “We should indeed regulate our Voice, and keep Tune as well as we can, for the better and more agreeable Harmony,” Wadsworth emphatically subordinates the mechanical and audible elements of singing to the spiritual posture of the participant: “our chief care should be, to have our Hearts ingaged in the Exercise of Grace. And the more seriously our Hearts are ingaged in this holy Duty, so much the more it will be for our own Instruction and Admonition, so much the more it will be for our own Spiritual Edification” (50). A straightforward account of how the balance between “agreeable Harmony” and “Hearts ingaged” should be struck is conspicuously absent from the sermon.

The practical concerns Wadsworth addresses in the concise “Use” section suggest that his lecture is addressed to at least two distinct, if not opposite, factions: those who abstain from psalmody altogether, and those overly preoccupied with the way their voices sound. The first category includes congregants who “never joyn with others in Singing in the House of God” (59) as well as those who remove themselves from the meeting house before it begins:

Reproof also belongs to such, *Who run away from God’s Publick Worship before singing*. Are there not many, who as soon as Sermon and Prayer is ended, away they go before *Singing of Psalms*, and before the *Blessing* is given? But what’s the matter with you? What, are you weary of God’s House? Are you tired and weary of his Worship?...Surely you are much to blame, for thus disorderly run[n]ing away from God’s Worship. Tis an Unchristian, Unbecoming disorderly Practice, for Persons (unless there be some urgent occasion for it) to break away from God’s House, before the *Singing of Psalms and giving of the Blessing*. I wish this disorder were amended. (60)

Wadsworth never speculates about the reasons for such delinquency: it seems likely that he asks the question “what’s the matter with you?” in earnest. The lack of scriptural citation in this appeal is equally striking, as if it were the expression of a personal wish. It is possible that some of his Bostonian congregants were as exasperated about the singing around them as the majority of New England ministers would become a little over a decade later. Even if this were not the case, however, the sermon does little to connect ritual participation to spiritual investment, as the next item in this section makes clear. In this sense, Wadsworth’s sermon recalls the uncertainty about how to reconcile spirit and ritual in the 1540s writing on psalm meditation discussed in Chapter 1 more than it lines up with Cotton’s rhetoric of solidarity in church music.

Wadsworth finds those that remain in the meeting house until dismissed, but lack the requisite humility and focus, to be equally deserving of censure: “How often have we caus’d our Voice to be heard by Men? But alas, what has been the carriage of our Hearts in all this? Have we not taken more notice of the Tune, than of the Matter in Singing? Have we not taken more care to please man’s Ear with our Voice, than to please God with our Hearts?” Strangely, Wadsworth equivocates between causing one’s “voice to be heard by Men” and “pleasing man’s Ear,” as if mutual audibility, and the edification and solidarity that depend on it, were contrary to God’s purpose. Moreover, the abundance of energy and attention lavished by this second group on the music and its sensory dimensions undermines their humanity. In bringing the sermon to a close, Wadsworth quotes approvingly a passage from John Wells’ *How we may make Melody in our Hearts to God in Singing of Psalms*: “In this Service, we must Study more to act the Christian, than the Musician. Many in Singing of Psalms are like the Organs, whose Pipes are filled

only with Wind. We must Sing David's Psalms with David's Spirit" (62).¹¹³ For Wadsworth, participation is mandatory, and yet it cannot be corrupted by any appeal to human ears. His sermon never endorses the kinds of performance decried by the proponents of Regular Singing, but it prescribes conditions under which it could easily have taken root.

In his *Psalterium Americanum*, a generously annotated translation of the psalms into unrhyming hymn meters published in Boston in 1718, Cotton Mather advances and refines the move toward self-reflexivity and individuation evident in Wadsworth's sermon. Although three years later he would join his Massachusetts colleagues in condemning, in print, parishioners' adherence to the "Usual Way," remarks about the quality of singing in New England congregations are absent from the thirty-six-page introduction to his psalter. Instead, Mather is concerned throughout the work to clarify the psalms' typology and eschatology, to instruct his readers in the discovery and adaptation of the "Frames of Piety, discernible everywhere in the Psalter" (*Proposals*, 3) and to defend his elimination of rhyme and his conservative, though complicated, position on the psalms' Old Testament character. As I mention at the beginning of this chapter, this work never threatened to supersede the psalters already in use in New England and seems to have had a minimal cultural impact even in Boston. In many respects, this is unsurprising: Sacvan Bercovitch has ranked *Psalterium Americanum* "among the dullest of biblical verse translations...inferior even to the awkward version it was meant to supplant" (191), and I can find little in the blank psalms themselves to encourage a reclamation project. And yet this work deserves close scrutiny: not only did

¹¹³ A *Supplement to the Morning-Exercise at Cripple-gate*, p. 176. Wadsworth does not identify this source.

it stretch Cotton's definition of the psalms as "ever old...and ever new" (*Singing of Psalmes*, 25), but it strove to combat discord by redefining the relationships among the psalms' divine inspiration, their Hebrew composition, and their Christian performance.

The question of form was critical to Mather's project. Although "P S A L M S" takes its own line at the top of *Psalterium Americanum*'s title page, the boldface, Gothic letters of the words "Blank Verse" dominate the visual field, graphically advertising the break with English psalmbook convention they represent. By this term, Mather evidently meant "common" (and occasionally "long") meter without rhymes, not lines of unrhyming iambic pentameter. In the Introduction, he explains that "the more than twice Seven Versions" of the Psalms in verse he has consulted "leave out a vast heap of those rich things, which the Holy spirit of god speaks in the Original Hebrew; and...put in as large an Heap of poor Things, which are intirely their own....merely for the sake of preserving the Clink of the Rhime" (vii). Implicit here is an association between the abrogation of musical instruments and Mather's abolishing of rhyme: because, in his translation, "the Christian Singer has his Devotions now supplied, with all that the Holy spirit of god has dictated...there is nothing besides the pure Dictates of that Holy spirit imposed on him" (vii-viii). This freshly restored equanimity of content defeminizes the liturgy and confers a quasi-prophetic status on the translator: "Tho' the Hymns have not the Triffle of Rhime, as a Lace to set them off, yet they are all Glorious within, which is the thing that Manly Christianity has its eye most upon; and in the Spiritual Songs thus enjoyed and improved, thou mayst hope to have the Holy Spirit of God, who indited them, speaking unto thee, even such Things as cannot be uttered" (viii). Mather's translational poetics parallels that of the compilers of the "Old Version"—that is, the

New England Psalm Book, to whose 1702 edition Mather had contributed one (or possibly two) metrical renditions of Isaiah 26 (Music, “Cotton Mather,” 5), but from which he carefully distances his own efforts—in two important ways. First, both translations disavow melopoiea as a concern for a godly translation: Mather shares the Bay Psalm Book’s subordination of poetry to fidelity, even if the question of what, exactly, his translation is faithful to is a more complicated matter. Second, both are marked by a Reformed conviction that, because of the Word’s absolute amenability to all vernacular contexts, an effective translation of scripture is, at base, no substantive transformation at all.

Metrical regularity, or at least a regular syllable count, which Mather acknowledges has no basis in the original Hebrew, is governed by a practical necessity: the fixed number of notes in the musical phrases of available psalm tunes. Rhyme, as his reference to the unutterable makes clear, is a liability not so much because it compromises a word-for-word translation, but because it obstructs something irreducible to human speech. Mather never promises that his unrhyming psalms correspond exactly to the Hebrew text, acknowledging that, at some points, indicated by italics, he has been obliged to insert “word[s] of supply” that reflect “the Intention and Emphasis of the Original” but not its language (ix) (the Authorized translators did the same). The theory of translation articulated in the Introduction thus pulls in two different directions, reflecting Mather’s double sense of the original: one part textual, the other part unutterable, both indicted by the holy spirit. At one instance, Mather appeals to “all that are Masters of the Hebrew Tongue, whether” *Psalterium Americanum* “be not much more agreeable to the Original, than the Old one, or than any that has yet been offered

unto the World,” and he reassures discerning readers, “We have tied our selves to Hebraisms, more scrupulously, than there is real occasion for.” Later in the same paragraph, however, he brackets this apparent philological good faith: “Yea, the just Laws of Translation had not been at all violated, if a much greater Liberty had been taken, for the beating out of the Golden and Massy Hebrew into a more Extended English” (ix). Where florid translations clink with rhyme, Mather’s resounds with the pounding of a blacksmith’s hammer on heated metal.

The terms of this arresting metaphor invite comparison with the classic Western definition of “Liberty” in translation, Cicero’s defense of his Latinization of Greek models in *De optimo genere oratore*: “And I did not translate them [Aeschines and Demosthenes] as an interpreter,” Cicero claims, “but as an orator, keeping the same ideas and the forms, or as one might say, the ‘figures’ of thought, but in language which conforms to our usage. And in so doing, I did not hold it necessary to render word for word, but I preserved the general style and force of the language. For I did not think I ought to count them out to the reader like coins, but to pay them by weight, as it were” (*Western Translation Theory*, 9). If for Cicero, the pedestrian translation practiced by a literal-minded *interpretes* was a matter of paying the reader coin for coin, while rhetorically supple translation was a matter of paying by weight, for Mather, translation is not a form of payment or exchange at all, but the application of controlled force to a precious, blunt, immovable substance. This figure of “beating out the Hebrew” also illustrates that while Mather’s eviction of rhyme and relative indifference to meter and poetic cadence might appear, from the outside, a generous extension of the Bay Psalm Book’s poetics, his endeavor to preserve the Word’s integrity across linguistic and

cultural contexts has a radically different character from that of his Massachusetts Bay predecessors. The central image in the Bay Psalm Book preface is of withheld labor and unhewn stone: “Gods altar needs not our polishings.” The gap between the methods advertised in the introductions to these psalters—the gap between the reverent abstention from force and the aggressive, even violent (if partially restrained), exertion of it—suggests an entirely different orientation toward the translator’s mediating role.

The aggression in this model can be traced to Mather’s association with the mainland English Nonconformist minister, theologian, and poet Isaac Watts, who had recently launched a campaign to purge church singing of a pervasive spiritual discord. In 1707, Watts prefaced a collection of his *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* with a sweeping denunciation of psalmody’s current lifelessness in England:

While we sing the Praises of our God in his Church, we are employ’d in that part of Worship which of all others is the nearest a-kin to Heaven; and ’tis pity that this of all others should be perform’d the worst upon Earth....To see the dull Indifference, the negligent and the thoughtless Air that sits upon the Faces of a whole Assembly while the Psalm is on their Lips, might tempt even [a] charitable Observer to suspect the Fervency of inward Religion, and ’tis much to be fear’d that the Minds of most of the Worshippers are absent or unconcern’d....That very Action which should elevate us to the most delightful and divine Sensations doth not only flat our Devotion, but too often awakens our Regret, and touches all the Springs of Uneasiness within us. (iii-iv)

The Christian heart is out of tune (its devotion is “flat”), Watts suggests, with the Christian singer’s perfunctory fulfillment of the ordinance. Addressing a similar indifference in New England a year later, Wadsworth’s strategy had been to rebuke non-participants with words that evoke a spurned lover or parent (“What, are you weary of God’s house?”). Watts, by contrast, implies that Christian churches who insisted on psalm-singing were committing themselves to the wrong literary mode: the problem, he claims, lies mostly with “the Matter and Words to which we confine all our Songs. Some

of 'em are almost opposite to the Spirit of the Gospel[,] Many of them foreign to the State of the New-Testament, and widely different from the present Circumstances of Christians" (iv). The gospel, according to this view, was not so much a corroboration of the psalms' prophecies as a correction of its "many deficiencies of Light and Glory" (vi) that jar against Christian doctrine. Watts therefore openly admits to having rooted out the Hebrew elements of the psalms on which his hymns are modeled, commenting, "After this manner should I rejoice to see a good part of the Book of Psalms fitted for the use of our Churches, and David converted into a Christian" (x).

Far from condemning this innovative spirit outright, Mather was one of New England's earliest and most enthusiastic supporters of the *Hymns*. In a journal entry for December 2, 1711, he rejoices,

By the gracious Providence of God, it is come to pass, that the religious, ingenious, and sweet-spirited Isaac Watts, hath sent me the new Edition of his *Hymns*; wherein the Interest of Piety are most admirably suited. I receive them as a Recruit and a Supply sent in from Heaven for the Devotions of my Family. There I will sing them, and endeavour to bring my Family in Love with them. I would also procure our Booksellers to send for a Number of them; and perswade my well-disposed Neighbours to furnish themselves with them; and in this way promote Piety among them. (II, 142)

Apparently in response to Mather's encouragement of his efforts to produce a complete psalter, in 1717 Watts sent his New England correspondent some metrical psalm paraphrases and imitations along with an essay that, he claimed, "will render some of my Reasons for this way of introducing y^e ancient Psalms in y^e wording of the N.T."

According to Henry Wilder Foote, this "must have been a draft of his preface" to the hymn collection later published in 1719 under the title *The Psalms of David Imitated*.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ Foote, 66. This collection was reprinted in Britain thirty-one times in the first half century of its existence and was reprinted in America in the eighteenth century ninety-nine times. Madeleine Forell Marshall, "Isaac Watts." *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, vol. 95, 333-44.

In the years leading up to the publication of *Psalterium Americanum*, Mather and Watts maintained a respectful, mutually flattering correspondence despite a sharp difference of opinion over the propriety of singing human “composures” in church.¹¹⁵ On the one hand, the Boston minister appears to have sympathized with Watts’s efforts to refresh Christian devotions with a repertoire of songs that would not alienate Christian readers and singers with Hebrew figures and sentiments that seemed antithetical to New Testament values and Reformed Christian practices. On the other hand, Mather refused to compromise on two orthodox Congregationalist beliefs: first, that in the Hebrew psalms, the Holy Spirit had provided, perfectly and completely, for all the sorts and conditions of humanity, and second, that the liturgy should on no account deviate from, or localize, scripture. As in the Bay Psalm Book, no particular sense of place frames or informs these principles. Watts’s loose psalm paraphrases and hymns were excellent devotional aids—as his diary attests, Mather was something of an amateur hymnist himself¹¹⁶—but had no place in the church service.

In many respects, Mather seems to have followed Watts’s lead as much as possible in *Psalterium Americanum*, but without abandoning or modifying the letter of scripture. He reads the Book of Psalms as a “Gospel according to David” (xiii), for example, as well as an Old Testament text, the translation of which is governed by laws that forbid the suppression of its evident peculiarities. The task of the committed Christian, Mather’s approach implies, is not to redact or ignore that which is difficult or apparently inconsistent in scripture, but to engage with it tirelessly until its underlying

¹¹⁵ Their relationship would later sour. in a letter from January of 1726 to the Boston minister Thomas Prince, Mather condemned Watts for the purportedly Arian slant of his *Disquisitions* (Foote, 68).

¹¹⁶ See, for example, the entries for May 12 and September 10, 1683, which contain two of Mather’s hymns. He is also believed to have prepared a collection of his own hymns for publication, but this has not been recovered.

truth comes into focus. As a result, much of his commentary is bluntly, even aggressively, confrontational. Where Watts proposes converting David, Mather imagines a wholesale conversion of a benighted and estranged people: “If a Jew would but believe the Songs of Zion, which once were sung in his own Land, he would soon turn a Christian, and would his Nation do so, it would not be long, that they should be put upon Singing them in a Strange Land” (xiv).¹¹⁷ Mather’s first apostrophe to Jewish readers crops up early in the “Illustrations.” Psalm 2 concludes, in his rendering, “Kiss ye the Son, lest He be wroth, || and you fail in your way: || For his hot wrath will quickly flame. || Blest all that trust in Him.” Mather glosses this verse with a direct provocation: “JEW, Think of this, and leave thy Judaism.” Many of the Illustrations do little more than reassert Mather’s conviction that the Psalms are addressed to Jews and Christians alike: “There was a Kabala among the true Israelites,” he remarks in a comment on Psalm 119, “which instructed them in the Glorious Truths of the Gospel, which lay under the Shadows of the Law” (343). In support of this reading, Mather cites from a variety of rabbinical sources, among them the Midrashim, the eleventh-century poet and scholar Abraham ibn Ezra, and the eleventh- and twelfth-century commentator David Kimhi. At times, however, he cites no authority at all, as in his commentary on Psalm 51, the well-known “Penitent Psalm” whose subscript invokes David’s adultery with Bathsheba: “Behold the Jews confessing the Murder of the Messiah” (124). No rationale is offered here for the inclusion of this psalm in the Christian liturgy. The Illustrations frequently

¹¹⁷ At the end of the Introduction, Mather claims that in Reformation France, the singing of vernacular psalms “charm’d the Souls of the Court and City, Town and Countrey” and helped bring about “the Downfall of Popery, which the Popish Clergy railing at, they never gave over until the profane and obscene Odes of the Pagan Poets, had among many People of Quality thrust out the Psalms of David” (xxxiii). The scope of Mather’s ambition, however, extends far beyond the conversion, or reconversion, of Catholic France.

superimpose multiple interpretive frames, shifting without comment between typological and historical readings, sometimes acknowledging David as a particular psalm's composer and the self-conscious crafter of its acrostics and elegant, untranslatable puns (138-9), other times suggesting that "the Prophetic Spirit" operates independently of its fallible and often unwitting human medium (100).¹¹⁸

The catch-all approach of the Illustrations makes it difficult to assess Mather's ultimate intentions for the psalter's use. He never comes clean on his intentions for *Psalterium Americanum*. A prospectus intended to court subscribers, also printed in 1718, maintains that there is "no Design to supersede the Version of the Psalms now used in our Churches" (2), but there is no such disclaimer in the collection itself. In his summary of the psalter's virtues in the Introduction, Mather first calls it "A Prayer-Book" and then catalogues the uses of its counsels, comforts, palliatives against oppression and affliction, and prophecies, before closing with a brief discussion of psalmody proper: "And if in the Prosecution of these Designs, we add the method of Singing, which is the way to be filled with the Spirit, from whence the Psalms are dictated, Behold, the Spritual Songs now put into a Condition for it, that we may in our Heart make Melody unto the Lord" (v-vi). Singing is integral to Christian worship, but is cast here as an auxiliary practice whose main function is to receive, not to express. Beginning with the Geneva Bible, "verse" could mean either a poetic line or a unit of scripture.¹¹⁹ Though Mather "fitted" his psalms "unto the Tunes commonly used in our Churches,"¹²⁰ the layout of *Psalterium*

¹¹⁸ According to Barbara Lewalski, questions about the degree of David's agency in the composition of the psalms were commonly raised in early modern commentaries, often in response to the psalms' polyvocality (232).

¹¹⁹ Oxford English Dictionary entry for "verse."

¹²⁰ *Psalterium Americanum*, title page. Mather rejected Philo's, Josephus's, and Jerome's claims about the psalms' metrical regularity in his introduction (viii).

Americanum reflects this generic flexibility: rather than lineating his psalms as poetic verse, as most metrical psalters and (all editions of the New England Book do), he arranges them into verse paragraphs, using a single vertical line to indicate the end of an octosyllabic or hexasyllabic unit. A passage from the prospectus that addresses the benefits of a verse rendering corroborates this ambivalence about poetic form: “Had this Version been only in Prose, yet being Satellited with such Conveniencies, it might have come in for a share, with many Volumns, which have been offered as Presents unto the Church of God: But the Version, being such as to be Sung in all the more usual Tunes, it is thereby more abundantly adapted unto the Uses, the Intents, and the Delights of Christianity” (5). Although space constraints must have come into play—even in its paragraph format, the psalter was over 400 pages long—Mather seems to have hedged his bets with respect to the collection’s function and market share, casting as wide a net as possible.

This flexibility of purpose is reinforced by the collection’s most visible stylistic quirk. All 150 of Mather’s psalms are in rhymeless common meter, but nine of them,¹²¹ including the longest in the collection, 119 (which has an eight-verse section for each of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet), are also “accommodated for” other meters “by putting in Two Syllables of the Black Letter” in the shorter, even-numbered lines, “which are, without any Damage to the Truth of the Translation, found enclosed between Two such Crotchets as these, [] And which being left out, the Metre, with the Sense yet remaining entire, is again restored unto the usual, Eight & Six” syllables (xxxv-xxxvi). As Kenneth Silverman points out, Mather seems to have borrowed this technique from

¹²¹ 23, 51, 103, 110, 116, 119, 130, 136, 145. Most, if not all, of these psalms were cited with great frequency in early modern English writing. Mather recommends Psalms 51 and 130 to “Repenting Sinners” in *Family Religion Urged* (10).

Richard Baxter's *Paraphrase of the Psalms of David in Metre* (1692) (56, n. 22). In the abstract, this practice, too, echoes Mather's goldsmith metaphor: having achieved the requisite semantic critical mass in translation, the psalms can be extended or compressed without violating the Holy Spirit's indictment. In practice, however, as the following example from Psalm 145 attests, the thick, gothic letters of the bracketed syllables throw into anticlimactic relief the words of the translation that are, by Mather's own admission, literally redundant—the least relevant, least crucial to the text's message:

19 He'l the desire fulfil of them || that have the [**Godly**] fear of Him; ||
 He'l also hearken to their cry, || and He'l [**save and**] deliver them. ||
 20 In safety the eternal God || keeps all that have His Love [**in them:**] ||
 But all them that are impious ones || He'll utterly destroy [**forever.**] ||
 21 My mouth shall utter forth the Praise || of [**Him who's**] the Eternal
 God; || and all flesh bless His Holy Name || ever [**Let it**] and evermore. || (397)¹²²

The intentionally gratuitous syllable pairs in the even-numbered lines of this psalm signal an unabashed preference for metrical versatility over a lyrical economy of phrase, but they also make the already strained verse more cluttered and prosaic. If the Illustrations frequently make the psalms seem redundant to Christian worship, the crotchets device only intensifies the effect.

Mather's deployment of this technique in *Psalterium Americanum* is puzzlingly infrequent, however, and the rationale behind it, never disclosed. Baxter, by comparison, used the black-letter-in-crotchets format in approximately 100 of his psalms and made his reasons for devising it clear: "1. Because Nature, weary of the same, is recreated with variety of Tunes; And some are more for one, and some for another. 2. Because when brevity causeth obscurity, the additional words are seen by them that use the Books, as explicatory of the rest, when they be not spoken: And the great difference of the Letters

¹²² The boldface type here represents the Gothic font of the original.

makes it no stop to the Readers.” Mather makes no such claims, perhaps because his gaze was, at all times, on the “pure dictate” of the psalm, rather than on its words. Ultimately, for him, the aim of a Christian engagement of a psalm—whether in prose, verse, or song—is to achieve the state of rapture under which the text was originally composed. This objective is perhaps given clearest exposition in Mather’s treatment of a handful of indeterminate Hebrew words that turn up frequently in the psalter and appear—according to scholars’ best reckonings, then and now—to signify musical directions. While Mather’s presentation of these words in their familiar Romanized form may seem, on the surface, an acknowledgment of their inscrutability, they in fact illuminate his attempts to cultivate a hermeneutics of singing that privileges initiative and the routine disruption of temporal regularity over congregational harmony and rhythmic coordination.

“Michtam,” he suggests, has two meanings: “a thing that is covered with Gold” and “A Sanctified Thing.” The speculations in contemporary Hebrew lexicons bear the reading of “gold” out, but Mather (unlike his contemporary Edward Taylor) ignores their references to song:

The sense which concerns the Types, is a piece of Canvas, on which the Holy Spirit has inlaid the Mystical sense, which concerns our Saviour, as a Golden Embroidery. If David be the Canvas, in any of the Mictams, the Holy Spirit has inwrought a Golden Idea of our Saviour into it, and curiously Embroidered it, with some of his Incomparable Glories. Verily, There are more Mictam’s in our Psalter, than those which have this Term in the Titles of them. They are not the only ones, that have His Unutterable Glories Exquisitely Embroidered in them.
(xv)

In a remarkably short space, what begins as a philological task—the recovery of the meaning of an arcane Hebrew term—elides into a gilding typology that reinforces Mather’s reading of the psalms as a Gospel: the Old Testament word’s indeterminacy represents not so much a hermeneutic impasse as an interpretive *carte blanche*, an

invitation to identify the word with “our Saviour” and to read it even where it fails to appear.

Mather’s translational fidelity is not so much *to* as *through* the Hebrew letter, designed to consume itself in the pursuit of the elusive pure dictate. This pursuit calls for interpretive versatility, not philological consistency, as indicated by Mather’s remarks about “selah,” a Hebrew word that occurs 71 times in the Book of Psalms (always in the text, never in the subscripts) and is traditionally associated with a musical pause. Mather mentions in passing “the various, and very many Interpretations, which the Criticks have left that Word in the dark withal,” dismissing these in favor of an entry “in the large, *Thesaurus Philologico-Theologicus* lately published” that defines it as “a proper Name of the Blessed God our Saviour” signifying “*The Magnificent One, or One that is exalted on high*” (xvi). Here, however, rather than dissociating an alleged musical meaning from the Christian prophecy he claims to have recovered, Mather embraces it, encouraging his readers to make a virtue of its disruptive force: “Allow me to propose every selah as an Invitation for thee to make a pause, upon the Magnificence of thy saviour....In the psalms, every where think on thy saviour. And if a selah stop thee, think, before thou go on, O my saviour, How Magnificent art thou!” (xvi-xvii). For Mather, psalmody in its highest form occurs here: more than any note or verse, it is the pause in the song that facilitates the singer’s unity with the psalmist and the making of melody in his or her heart. But because he advises that, like michtam, selah can and should be read throughout the psalter, not just in the psalms that contain it, the timing and placement of the pauses are left to the singer’s discretion.

Psalmody gives way to a kind of conversation between the individual and the Word that takes place at these pauses. Mather calls this form of engagement “the Porismatic way,” and he applies it to both reading and singing:

Reader, Make a Pause upon every Verse, and see what Lessons of Piety are to be learnt from every Clause. Turn the Lessons into Prayers; and send the Prayers up unto the Heavens: As Arrows from the hand of a mighty Man, send them with lively Ejaculations up unto the Heavens. The Singer gives himself Time, to do the part of such a Reader; And, Oh, what a Melody does he make unto the Lord! They who have tried this way of Reading...have seen cause to Bless a Glorious God, for instructing them in this Method of Communion with Him, and Rejoyce in this way of conversing with his Testimonies, more than if all Riches had been bestowed upon them. (xvii-xviii)

With “gives himself Time,” Mather approaches Wadsworth’s understanding of church music in terms of self-stewardship and the isolation of the singing voice from others’ ears as well as from the singer’s own self-consciousness. In Porismatic singing, text and melody resolve into pause and conversation: the garnishing of psalmody with “lively ejaculations,” vocalized or not, implies a kind of improvised pacing inimical to synchronization. This sense of disjointed movement is reinforced in a passage that outlines the affective resonance the psalms were meant to cultivate. Following a summary of the “Affections working in the minds” of the writers of the psalms, Mather urges,

Now Christian, Discover which of these Affections may be most obvious and evident, in the Sentence, which may be now under thy consideration: And make a Pause!—But Restless until thou find the same Affections beginning to stir in thy own Soul, and marvelously to Harmonize & Symphonize, with what the Holy Spirit of God raised in His Amanuensis, at the moment of His Writing it. Be not at Rest until thou feel thy Heart-strings quaver, at the Touch upon the Heart of the Sacred Writer, as being brought into an Unison with it, and the Two Souls go up in a Flame together. (xxiii-xxiv)

The scope of harmony and symphony, those crucial elements of musical (and, by extension, aesthetic and spiritual) accord, is limited here to the Christian’s affiliation with

God's "Amanuensis," reduced to a private, intimate encounter between an individual singer and the psalmist.

Remarkably, however, in spite of this apparent trend toward individuation, Mather's psalmody has a prominent interpersonal dimension as well.¹²³ A private devotional practice he recorded in his diary over three decades earlier helps elucidate the inwardly oriented form of sociability in play in his conception of psalmody. Under the heading "Mantissa" (meaning a supplemental or lesser work) in his entry for February 9, 1684, Mather explains that he will now record one of his recreations "for the Instruction of those few Friends, with whom I may leave (if at all I leave!) these Memorials of my sinful Conversation," indicating that he intends this practice to be exemplary, at least for some. "It has been a frequent Thing with mee," he explains, "to redeem the silent, and otherwise, thoughtless, Minutes of my Time, in shaping Thousands of ejaculatory Prayers for my Neighbours."¹²⁴ A record follows of some two dozen of these prayers and the sights or experiences that prompted them, arranged into two columns, respectively titled "Casting my Eye upon" (or, a little further on in the same entry, "Upon the Sight of") and "Ejaculations." In each case, Mather isolates a publicly visible feature of the person he has observed and converts it into the subject of a prayer. Seeing "The Gentlewoman that carved for us" at a dinner, for example, he reports having prayed, "Lord, carve, of thy

¹²³ The Porismatic method expressed a principle that was central to Mather's devotional ideals, and he it applied to Christians of all vocations. In *Family Religion Urged*, a manual aimed at "Prayerless Householders" (title page) and published in 1709, Mather explains that with a few simple adjustments of person, tense, or mood, the Psalms are readily converted into prayer (where the psalm says "Blessed he who" + verb, for example, one can pray, "Lord, let us" + verb) (10). In the section of *Bonifacius* addressed to ministers, Mather makes the following proposition: "And, what if while you are studying your sermons, you should at the close of every paragraph, make a pause, and endeavor with acknowledgments and ejaculations to Heaven, and with self-examinations, to feel some impressions of the truths in that paragraph on your own souls, before you go any further? By such a practice, the hours which you take, to make and write a sermon, will prove so many hours of devotion with you." Reading, composing, and singing are never self-sufficient practices for Mather, but always buttressed by prayer and reflection.

¹²⁴ Mather, *Diary*, February 9, 1684; I, 81.

Graces and Comforts, a rich portion, unto that Person.” The ambient features of any social setting become raw matter for a silent gesture of good will.

Unknown quantities figure in this practice as well: “In passing along the Street,” Mather confides, “I have sett myself to bless thousands of persons, who never knew that I did it; with secret Wishes...sent unto Heaven for them” (83). Among these unwitting beneficiaries are “A Negro” for whom Mather prays, “Lord, wash that poor Soul white in the Blood of thy Son”; “A Man, who going by mee took no Notice of mee,” which prompts: “Lord, help that Man, to take a due Notice of the Lord Jesus Christ, I pray thee”; and “One whom I know not: (and saw no other singular Circumstance about him, to shape any Thoughts upon),” whose failure to register any particular impression inspires: “Lord, lett this Person be so known to, as to bee sav’d by, the Lord” (84). This enumeration of fleeting, anonymous contact uncannily resembles Walt Whitman’s exploration of the spontaneous attraction that can adhere strangers to one another, even if only momentarily, in *Leaves of Grass*.¹²⁵ In each of these cases, Mather’s close but secret observation of the unknown figures that people his social environment represents a form of insubstantial encounter grounded in coincidence and consummated only in prayer, in the spiritual conversation between the observer and God.¹²⁶ His early eighteenth-century conception of psalmody operates in a strikingly similar way: for Mather, congregational

¹²⁵ There are limits to this anachronistic comparison, but I have in mind moments such as line 281 in “Song of Myself”—“The young fellow drives the express-wagon, (I love him, though I do not know him)” —and poems from the Calamus cluster such as “Passing Stranger” and “Among the Multitude.” Of course, in his descriptions of encounters with strangers, Whitman never rules out subsequent physical or verbal contact, as Mather seems to here. Nevertheless, these disparate figures share an understanding of group cohesion as potentially enriched by the secret attractions between strangers. (See Kateb for an account of the role of “sexual cruising” in Whitman’s democratic philosophy ([564]).

¹²⁶ These silent, subtle, and effectively one-sided encounters should be read alongside Mather’s encouragement of more practical forms of sociability. In *Bonifacius*, he recommends that his readers aid afflicted neighbors by pitying them, visiting them, giving “all the assistances that may answer their occasions,” advising them, speaking on their behalf to others, and finally, “if it be needful, bestow your Alms upon them; deal thy bread to the hungry; bring to thy house the poor that are cast out; when thou seest the naked, cover him....Si nihil habes, da lacrymulam” (58-9).

coherence in the liturgy is less a matter of communication, interpersonal relations and outward performance, and more a bond among a collection of individuals linked by common purposes, but not necessarily through overt expressions of fellowship.

Congregants are linked in their co-attachment to God and their containment under the same roof, but not in their explicit attachment to one another.

And yet, when Mather joined his colleagues in condemning the “Old Way” of singing psalms, his critique had as sharp an edge as any of the authors I have already cited: in some congregations, he declares,

singing has degenerated, into an Odd Noise, that has had more of what we want a Name for, than any Regular Singing in it; whereby the Celestial Exercise is dishonoured; and indeed the Third Commandment is trespass'd on. To take notice of the Ridiculous Pleas, wherewith some very weak People, go to confirm this Degeneracy, would indeed be to pay too much Respect unto them. And they must have strange Notions of the Divine Spirit, and of His Operations, who shall imagine, that the Delight which their Untuned Ears take in an Uncouth Noise, more than in a Regular singing, is any Communion with Him.... We ought certainly to Serve our God with our Best, and Regular Singing must needs be Better than the confused Noise of a Wilderness. (*Accomplished Singer*, 22-3)

While the soundscape is hardly ever directly addressed in the introduction to his 1718 psalter, and the mechanics of singing, not at all, these are Mather's central concerns in the “Use” section of the sermon. Nevertheless, the bulk of *The Accomplished Singer*'s 24 pages is a rehearsal and, in some key places, an expansion of the individuating approach from the introduction to *Psalterium Americanum*. It is difficult not to read the sermon as a parcel of mixed messages: “Be sure,” Mather cautions, “’Tis not a meer Noise in the Throat, that will be a Singing acceptable unto God; No, Tho’ it be never so finely, artific[i]ally, regularly managed, yet the Singing may be but an Howling, before His Holy Majesty.” In support, he provides a quotation from Latin (“a famous Distich”), and a verse translation that reprises the combustion metaphor from *Psalterium Americanum*:

“’Tis not the Voice, but the Desire / Not Noise, but Hearty Love: / Not Loud Cries, but a soul on Fire; / That God’s Ear will approve” (11).

Four of the sermon’s paragraphs on the psalms as prophecy—the section on “Mictam” I have discussed earlier—are transcribed wholesale into the pamphlet and attributed to “a well-known edition of the Psalter in Blank Verse, with Illustrations” (19). Mather coyly neglects to mention that this edition neatly fulfills a wish he has expressed thirteen pages earlier:

The Psalms might easily be so turned into Blank Verse, that there should be All, and Only, what it has pleased the Holy One to give us in the Original. And no doubt there will a Time come, when Myriads of Christians will chuse to Serve God with such a Pure Offering, and present unto Him what is purely His own, rather than have their Devotions in Danger of being palled, by the sense of Humane Debasements [such as can be found in rhyming psalters], upon what they Address unto Him. (8)

As these parallels and overlaps suggest, there is a paradox at the center of Mather’s approach to church music: he imagined that his rhyme-free psalter, its attendant hermeneutics, and its program of improvised, porismatic engagement could activate the dormant regions of the singer’s heart and, in the same stroke, radically undermine the congregational discord it seems to encourage. For Mather, however, restoring the harmony of spirit and text was entirely compatible with eliminating audible discord from the liturgy.

Psalterium Americanum previews the encounter between science and devotional aesthetics that was central to the ministers’ attacks on the “Usual Way” in the following decade. Mather’s commentary on the psalms recasts a mode of Christian searching that Anne Bradstreet had explored, by means of a verse from Psalm 139, in the “Letter to My Dear Children.” There, a penitent sinner’s spiritual quest culminates in the abnegation of

her capacity to seek: “Then have I gone searching and have said with David, ‘Lord, search me and try me, see what ways of wickedness are in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.’” In *Psalterium Americanum*, the identification between psalmist and Christian reader is never imagined in such vivid, intimate terms. At times, Mather claims that David’s behavior is exemplary,¹²⁷ or that his pronouncements on certain secular activities set precedents,¹²⁸ but these moments are vastly outnumbered by his reflections on the psalms’ mysticism, eschatology, and messianic prophecy. The general remarks that preface Mather’s Illustrations on Psalm 139 register the theme of searching called out in Bradstreet’s letter, but hold it at arm’s length: “The Prophetic Spirit here teaches the Jewish Nation [Oh! *Would they learn!*] how little able they are to hide themselves from the Judgments of God.” The commentary on verses 13-15, however, thrusts Mather’s passion for natural history into the foreground:

13 For my most hidden Reins thou hast || in thy possession held; || Thou in my Mothers Womb, as with || a Tent hast cover’d me. ||
 14 Ill praise thee for with wonders I || have separated been; || Thy Works are wondrous, and my Soul || knows this abundantly. ||
 15 My strength was not hid from thee; when || I was in secret made, || in the Earth’s lowest parts I was || most curiously wrought. ||

After cross-referencing similar observations about God’s ubiquity and the wonder of his creations in Plato and Galen, Mather offers a long meditation on the findings of the Italian anatomist Lorenzo Bellini (1643-1704), author of the *Exercitatio anatomica de structura et usu renum* (Anatomical Exercise on the Structure and Use of the Kidney) (1662):

¹²⁷ See the Illustration on 23.1 “And, Christians, Why should not you find in your Secular Employments, the Occasions of Divine, Devout, Heavenly Reflections! David, a Shepherd, is led by Shepherdry, to think on the Heavenly Shepherd.”

¹²⁸ See the Illustration on 15.5 (Mather translates the opening of this verse, “His Coin he does not put unto / a biting Usury”): “Usury, regulated with Charity, is among us to be allow’d of.”

The Modern Improvements in Anatomy add infinitely to the Occasions. [B]ellini would begrutch his Time and Cost and Pains, [in] searching out the Astonishing Workmanship, in the several Parts of an Humane Body, if it were only to discover a Work of meer Chance, or of one who were not infinitely Wise and Good and Glorious. No, he *does* (as every just Contemplator *must*) find himself compelled into the Admiration of a Glorious God, and thrown into those Transports and Raptures and Flames, which extort these Exclamations from him, *Magnus Dominus! Magnus Fabricator Hominum Deus! Magnus atque admirabilis. Conditor rerum Deus, quam magnus es!* O Thou Maker of Man, How Great and Glorious art Thou!

For Mather, “Transports and Raptures and Flames” are not just compatible with the dissection of the kidney and the cataloguing of its passageways, but flow naturally from this diligent searching. This citation of Bellini anticipates Mather’s own ecstatic musings on the parts of the human ear, and their functions, in the essay “Of Man” in *The Christian Philosopher*, which was published three years after *Psalterium Americanum* in 1721:

What a suprizing Spectacle the Helix, which in its tortuous Cavities collects the sonorous Undulations, and gives them a gentle Circulation, with some Refraction, and conveys them to the Concha, that large and round Cell at the entrance of the Ear! Then to bridle the Evagation of the Sound when arrived thus far, but at the same time avoid any Confusion thereof by Repercussions, what a curious provision is there made by those little Protuberances called the Tragus and the Antitragus of the outward Ear, softer than the Helix, and blunting the Sound without repelling it! (261)

Although the science of these reflections has since been disproven,¹²⁹ they offer an important insight into Mather’s understanding of music. According to this account, the auditory organs do far more than passively register stimuli: they circulate, soften, and “bridle” sound once it has been collected, governing its motion and nullifying any reverberatory “Confusion” introduced in these transmissions. Further on in the same essay, Mather claims that the sizes of the “semicircular Canals” in an individual’s inner ear are calibrated to prevent discord:

¹²⁹ Solberg points out that, for example, the “the tragus and Antitragus are vestigial aspects of the ear that have nothing to do with the sense of hearing” (261, n. 96).

How will the Wonders grow upon us, if we pass now to the Labyrinth! And there survey the wonderful Structure of the Vestibulum and the Cochlea, and yet more particularly the semicircular Canals! These last are three, and of three different Sizes. Valsalva thinks, that as a part of the auditory Nerve is lodg'd in these Canals, thus they are of three Sizes, the better to suit all the variety of Tones; and tho there be some difference as to the Length and Size of the Canals in different Persons, yet lest there should be Discord in the auditory Organs of one and the same Man, those Canals have always in the same Man a most exact Conformity to one another. (264-5)

In understanding the study of this biological intricacy as a catalyst for pious praise, Mather implicitly distances himself from Wadsworth's deprecation of "Men's ears." In many respects, the Regular Singing movement expressed New England ministers' belief in the compatibility of the science and Reformed Christianity. Mather was at the center of this movement, as *The Christian Philosopher*, the *Biblia Americana* (a massive and comprehensive commentary on the Bible, heavily inflected by contemporary scientific discourse), and his involvement in the Smallpox Controversy has made clear.¹³⁰

An English poem reprinted as the frontispiece to the fifth edition of Joseph Tufts' *An Introduction to the Singing of Psalm-Tunes*, published in Boston in 1726, opens suggestively,

We Sing to Thee whose Wisdom form'd
The curious Organ of the Ear.

More than a pat recognition of God's status as beneficent creator, these lines resonate with Cotton's observations in *The Christian Philosopher* and signal a burgeoning

¹³⁰ Mather began work on *Biblia Americana* in 1693 and kept adding to it until his death in 1728. He never found a publisher for its six massive folio manuscript volumes, but The Mather Project, an international contingent of scholars led by Reiner Smolinski and Jan Stievermann, is currently editing it for publication. The first of ten projected volumes, Mather's commentary on Genesis, was published in the fall of 2010. See <http://matherproject.org/node/29> for a description of the project and a summary of Mather's method. For the Smallpox Controversy, see Breitwieser and Mulford.

transatlantic interest in the natural history of music and hearing, implying that the ear is a category of inquiry as well as a site where the desire for knowledge takes place.

In the 1720s, the ministers in favor of Regular Singing attempted, in effect, to untranslate congregational psalmody as a ritual marked by provincial debasement, and redefined it in terms of universal, scientific rules: psalmody's universalist basis in a transatlantic discourse of natural history. As Susan Scott Parrish has shown, over the first century of its charter, the Royal Society's extensive research networks were strongly dependent upon colonial American volunteers (125). In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, New Englanders such as the Connecticut governor John Winthrop, Jr., the bookseller Hezekiah Usher, Jr., the mathematician Thomas Brattle, the lawyers John Leverett and Paul Dudley and the ministers Increase and Cotton Mather filed reports with the Society's London clearing house, corresponded regularly with its fellows and officers on natural historical matters, and shared copies of its *Philosophical Transactions*.¹³¹ Although it attracted far less attention than botany or meteorology, music was the subject of dozens of treatises written, reviewed, or read aloud by the Royal Society's members through the early nineteenth century. Surveying its archives over the period from its founding in 1660 until 1806, Leta Miller and Albert Cohen have determined that "the greatest interest in musical topics at the Royal Society occurred within the first fifty years of its activity" (45), a period roughly coincident with the

¹³¹ Stearns, 201-3; Parrish, 103-35; Kennedy, *passim*. Cotton Mather also read the "German Ephemerides," the annual publication of a German society, the *Deutsche Akademie Naturforscher* or *Collegium Naturae Curiosum*, and a "French History of the Academy of Sciences," which Solberg identifies as the *Histoire de l'Academie Royale des Sciences* (*Christian Philosopher*, xl and 268, n. 130). Increase and Cotton Mather helped found a relatively short-lived New England offshoot, the Boston Philosophical Society, which is believed to have convened twice a month from the spring of 1683 until 1688 to discuss current developments in natural history, though no records of its meetings have survived (Holifield, 72). As *The Christian Philosopher* (1721) and the *Biblia Americana* manuscript attest, Cotton Mather's passion for natural history long outlived the Boston Society.

decades leading up to the Singing controversy. The Society treated music as a science of vibrations, proportions, and intervals which overlapped with mathematics, anatomy, medicine, and what would later be called ethnography: acoustical science, the function and impairment of the auditory and speech organs, rumors about music's curative powers, the invention and modification of musical instruments, ancient music (in theory and reported practice), Persian and Hindustani hymnody, and Western music theory all fell under the Society's purview.¹³²

In emphasizing music's orderly, systematic nature and its governance by fixed, universal laws, the proponents of Regular Singing in New England sought to rationalize devotional song in the language of contemporary natural philosophy. In one sense, the endeavors of the musical reformers parallel the Bay Psalm Book's universalist reach: the 1640 Preface shares with the Singing controversy polemics of the 1720s a tendency to conceptualize psalmody in terms of standards that apply across geopolitical contexts and effectively minimize the evidence of translation. But while for John Cotton this universalism and placelessness was grounded in an understanding of the psalms as a complete record of all forms of human affect, and of psalmody itself as a productive mode of sociability, the Regular Singing polemicists of the 1720s understood psalm singing as a ritual that ought to reflect God's reasonableness and propensity for order and harmony.

¹³² Miller and Cohen, 3-4. Indirectly, New England psalmody made its way into the Royal Society's archives: the Journal Book of the Royal Society records that Thomas Brattle's son, William, submitted a work by his father titled *Psalmody Explained and made Easy*, "written in New England being the art of singing psalms by notes" in response to a request for his papers. Sadly, this work has not been recovered (vol. 12, p. 76; cited in Kennedy, 586, n. 4). Brattle had brought New England's first chamber organ to Boston in 1689 (Kennedy, 592), later bequeathing it to the Brattle Street Church; ultimately, it ended up at King's Chapel, "where it was probably the first organ used in public worship in New England" (715, n. 22).

This connection is nowhere more apparent than in the work of the Bradford, Massachusetts minister Thomas Symmes, which provides the most comprehensive (and arguably the most aggressive) extant critique of the popular rural embrace of the “Old Way” in early eighteenth-century New England. Symmes opened the print phase of the Singing controversy with *The Reasonableness of Regular Singing*, published in Boston in 1720, and followed this anonymous pamphlet up with *Utile Dulci: Or, a Joco-Serious Dialogue Concerning Regular Singing* in 1723. Over the course of his interventions, Symmes attempted to revise the conventional wisdom—articulated in Wadsworth’s sermon—that singing technique could be unproblematically subordinated to the inclination of the heart. A pious will is not enough to indemnify a poor singer against the charge of dissonant psalmody, he claimed, especially when a case for reform has been clearly and publicly made: singing without an adequate grasp of music theory and vocal mechanics fails, in fact, to qualify as singing with the spirit.

The subtitle to Symmes’s earlier pamphlet, *Singing by Note; In an Essay, To Revive the True and Ancient Mode of Singing Psalm-Tunes, according to the Pattern in our New-England Psalm-Books*, hints at the pains he would take in both works to characterize Regular Singing not as “a New-way...obtruded upon” congregants who have faithfully upheld the musical standards of their forebears (as many apparently claimed), but as a method “known to, and approved of, by the first Settlers of New-England” and studied at Harvard “for many Years after its first founding” (*Reasonableness*, 5-6). Singing by note, Symmes argued, has always been integral to the Reformed colonial heritage: the so-called “Usual Way” that had usurped its place was a sign of the “gradual and insensible” neglect to which this heritage was prone despite the good intentions of its

guardians. “How many amongst us,” he laments in the introduction to *Utile Dulci*, “thro’ a misunderstanding & miserable misrepresentation of the Errand of our Fathers into the Wilderness, have still Retarded, and very much Obstructed the execution of their Noble & Glorious Intention, in coming Hither?” (*Reasonableness*, 8; *Utile Dulci*, 2) As the language of apprehension, representation, and original intention in this passage suggests, Symmes imagines the Usual Way as the product of a kind of mistranslation of tradition—a betrayal, however unwitting, of placeless, timeless standards. Symmes opposes these to “Fancy”: “It is most Rational in any Art or Science to practice according to the Rules of it, especially in that which is us’d in the Joint-Worship of God; where every Man’s following his own Fancy, and leaving the Rule, is an Inlet to great Confusion and Disorder, which is very contrary to Him, who is not the Author of Confusion, but the God of Order, as in all the Churches of the Saints” (*Reasonableness*, 10). Learning to sing in what we might call an oral tradition, through the mere imitation of one’s peers, Symmes goes on to explain, is no less fanciful: “a Parrot can imitate us in many Words and Sentences, yet has not Skill or Understanding in Speaking” (12).

Symmes redoubles his commitment to science in *Utile Dulci*, a dialogue “between a Minister for Singing by Rule” and a “Neighbor...vehemently set against it” (7) which was “publickly had” in October of 1722 in a “Particular Town” (presumably Bradford) according to its title page, and later committed to print in the hopes that it might “serve some other places in the same Climate.” The Neighbor’s opening line is first-person-singular lament that borders on a caricature of Davidic dejection: “Alas! Sir, I have met with a great deal of Affliction in my time; I’ve had a great deal of Sickness, been exercised with many Crosses and Disappointments, but indeed never met with any thing

in all my life, that made me so uneasy, as this New Way of Singing, that's forced in upon us" (8). The Minister is quick to orient the discussion away from affect, toward the logical and rational underpinnings of singing by note. In his response to the Neighbor's objection that Regular Singing "is a New Way, an unknown Tongue" (14), the Minister enlists the authority of the Protestant German encyclopedist Johann Heinrich Alsted to prove its long history and scientific basis: "Musick is one of the Liberal Sciences, (or, (as Alsted terms it) 'a Mathematical Science subalternate to Arithmetick,' and may be call'd a special Arithmetick,) which has been so accounted in all Ages, and amongst all learned Nations; and was doubtless Coeval to, if not more ancient than Instrumental Musick" (14). The source of this quotation is the English composer John Birchensha's translation of Alsted's *Templum Musicum*. In the preface to this 1664 work, addressed to "all ingenious Lovers of Musick," Birchensha explains that he has undertaken the translation "that you might thereby understand the Rudiments and Principles both of the Mathematical and Practical Parts of this Science" of music, "the Author having more fully discovered the Precepts, Rules, and Axioms of this Science, then any other whose Works I have seen" ([1]). To this venerable authority, Symmes counterpoises "the miserable Hottentots": the argument that singing by rote is better than Regular Singing because of its familiarity to the masses, the Minister claims, correlates with the way these Africans, "who think to adorn themselves with the Guts of Beasts, with all the Garbage in them; prefer these Guts to a Chain of Gold, because it's what they'r used to, and it pleases their Fancies. But surely if they'd exercise their Reason, the Ornaments us'd by other People, are more beautiful and becoming; or else all the Civiliz'd & Polite part of the World are deceiv'd and those Dregs of Mankind are in the Right of it" (18). In

marked contrast to John's counsel to the Penitent sachem in John Eliot's *Indian Dialogues*, the Minister resorts to name dropping and broad cultural stereotypes as a way of shaming the resistance to Regular Singing into a recognition of its own savagery.

The Minister takes special offense from the Neighbor's claim that the names of the notes, the solmization syllables *sol*, *la*, *mi*, and *fa*, "are Baudy, yea Blasphemous": "No Mortal that can spell," he replies, "would ever have had such a Tho't, and it's a shame to mention it. And I'm sure, I'd never have done it, but to let the world see, what Treatment we have from you, who have a Zeal without Knowledge, as I must bear you Record" (36). With the reference to spelling, Symmes implies that the Neighbor's grave uneasiness with "this New Way of Singing" is the wages of an illiterate, and therefore manifestly irrational, fancy. It is questionable, however, whether a singer's objection to these syllables was either. Popular in England and across Europe, solmization, also known as "solfege"—a system that assigns a particular syllable to each tone of the major scale, providing a way to express the relations among the notes of a melody without tying its user to a particular key—must have seemed indispensable to the reformation of music pedagogy in a culture that required singing in settings where musical instruments were not welcome.¹³³ It also accorded well with the poetics of placelessness embraced in both the Bay Psalm Book and the pro-Regular Singing movement, to the extent that it could be transferred to any key. Both Tufts and Walter base their music pedagogy on it, and the 1698 edition of the *New England Psalm Book* inscribes the first letter of the solfege syllables directly beneath the notes of the tunes in its appendix. But if charging solmization with bauldness or blasphemy seems spurious and naive, it is easy to imagine

¹³³ Symmes expresses some dissatisfaction with the ban on musical instruments, but he stops short of an outright endorsement of them (*Utile*, 35).

fully literate parishioners objecting to it on the grounds that it was confusing. Like psalmody itself and the text it was based on, solmization had a long and complicated history of mediation that predated the colonization of the lands that later became New England.

Curiously, from the late sixteenth century through the 1720s, mainstream English solmization made do with three fewer syllables than its continental counterparts did: rather than assigning seven distinct syllables to the seven distinct tones of the modern octave, popular English music primers used only four. According to the musicologist Rebecca Herissone, this property was a unique byproduct of England's late-sixteenth-century shift from the hexachordal, or six-note, scale prevalent in medieval music, to the seven-note scale that had come to replace it throughout Europe in the Renaissance. Herissone traces the four-syllable system, which "seems to have been almost entirely confined to England," to William Bathe's *A Briefe Introduction to the Skill of Song* (London, c. 1592), though she notes that no English music theorist ever articulated the rationale underlying it. Her reconstruction of Bathes's method can be summarized as follows: he began with a hexachordal G scale, which was solmized, according to medieval convention, ut-re-mi-fa-sol-la. In order to determine the syllable of the seventh tone of the G scale as a modern octave, Bathe mutated to a C scale (which, in the hexachordal system, shares all of its notes with the G scale), rather than inventing a new syllable. Since a C scale begins on the fourth tone of a G scale (G-A-B-C), the fourth tone of the mutated scale is equivalent to the seventh tone of the original, and is therefore assigned the fourth solmization syllable, fa. The final step was the replacement of the first two syllables, ut and re, with sol and la, respectively; as Herissone explains, "Removing

ut and re from the lowest octave meant that each seven-note grouping would always be solmized as sol-la-mi-fa-sol-la-fa and the need to be aware of mutation was removed” (84-7).

The supporters of England’s modified system claimed that a smaller number of syllables made solmization more manageable for beginners: John Playford, for example, the author of a seventeenth-century English music primer that went through twenty-three issues, explained that four were “sufficient for the expressing of the severall sounds, and lesse burthensome to the memory.”¹³⁴ But as Herissone points out, “Four-syllable solmization...had a number of serious faults—not least the fact that the potential for confusion caused by the use of three syllables representing more than one different scale degree was considerable” (88). In New England, the problem was compounded by the coexistence of two radically different approaches to four-syllable solmization, Tufts’s *Introduction* and Walter’s *Grounds and Rules*. Although the solfege systems they teach are actually identical in structure, because Tufts introduces the sequence for the first time with *mi* as the principal tone, while Water begins his with *fa*, it is not difficult to imagine that a dilligent but uninitiated colonist familiar with both works might have believed that two mutually exclusive schemes were in use.

It is clear that at least some colonists were baffled by these systems. The anonymously authored *Singing of Psalms by Seven Constituted Sounds*, which offered an alternative to four-syllable solmization but appears not to have caught on anywhere in the colonies, explicitly linked the Singing Controversy’s social unrest to the confusion that, its author claimed, was caused by the traditional English scheme. According to its prefatory epistle, the method outlined in the body of the work, which simply replaces the

¹³⁴ John Playford, *A Breefe Introduction to the Skill of Musick*. London, 1654, 1-2; cited in Herissone, 87.

solfege syllables with the numbers one through eight, brings “peace, being such a familiar easy Way to learn; so that they that have the Books by them, can in two or three Weeks, spending a little Time in the Evening, learn all the Tunes in the Psalm Books compleatly by heart, without a Singing Master, so that they can all sing compleatly together, begin and End in an Instant, without any Jars or discords.” The pamphlet harbors, and encourages, a deep suspicion of the foreign sounds of the Latin syllables already in use, associating them with frivolous, secular music and curiously misattributing their origin to France.¹³⁵ More important, it suggests that solmization syllables actually affect the tone:

there ought to be a difference made to know Psalm-Tunes from Song-Tunes of light Aires, Madrigals, Jigg-Tunes, and the like, which were brought in by French Foreigners, who name their Notes only by four Syllables, Fa, Sol, La, Mi, which is a very imperfect Number to name the seven constituted Sounds withal; and besides that, do naturally give a shrill, squeaking, French Tone, not becoming the grave and solemn worship of God in the Temple; but so serve to amuse young People into a Fondness of that unbecoming Tone, which is so very offensive to most People, and therefore ought to be laid aside, and return into our English Tone, to name our Notes by Eight Syllables, One, Two, Three, Four, Five, Six, Seven, Eight; which do better agree with our English Voices, and is a perfect number, to give every Note its true Name, wherever it stands, which makes the learning of them very easy, as you will find in the following Directions; and may be learned without a Singing-Master, in one Quarter of the Time that the other can with a Singing-Master, and Twenty Shillings for learning them. (2)

In providing a “true name” for each note, the *Seven Sounds* notation is designed to counter what it regards as the literal duplicity at the heart of the traditional English scheme. On the one hand, the system prescribed has structural flaws: it makes no distinction between whole-step and half-step progressions, and its author is dismissive of sharps and flats. The distance from notes “one” to “two” in the major scale, for example, is a whole step, while notes “three” and “four” are separated by a half step. But in spite of

¹³⁵ The names of the hexachordal solmization syllables derive from the words of a medieval Latin hymn to St. John, *Ut queant laxis* (Herrisone, 74).

these unacknowledged issues, and in spite of its attack on professional music pedagogy, which had the backing of the ministers, this scheme can be read as an attempt to conform with the fundamentals of pro-Regular Singing doctrine: the conversion of notes to numbers answers Symmes' and his colleagues' emphasis on the arithmetic basis of music, and its promotion of a do-it-yourself approach expresses the elevation of rational principle over imitation.

The pamphlet's straightforward method, the anonymous author claims, "had been kept in Latin from the vulgar Readers three hundred Years and more, for a benefit for Master-Singers to get Money by, for learning People long Curiosities" (3). Regardless of whether one reads this claim as a marketing ploy itself, the conspiracy theory outlined here suggests that New England's music pedagogy was formulated and executed in a general atmosphere of distrust. The authors of the pamphlet seem to have banked on readers' acceptance of the autodidacticism it preaches, impractical as this might have been: consistently, it prescribes a retreat into private study as the solution to the problems it describes, promising musical proficiency at a cost of no more than the price of the book in hand, and freeing its customers from subordination to "masters" and their extortionist scheme. Walter's, Tufts's, and Symmes's concerted efforts to eliminate audible discord from the liturgy seem to have produced a degree of social discord as an unintended side effect.

The system that so vexed the authors of *Seaven Sounds*, however, was already in its twilight by the time it was published.¹³⁶ Not long after, in the 1730s and 1740s, when Regular Singing had gained acceptance in most New England congregations, the

¹³⁶ According to Herissone, seven-note solomization had been promoted in England as early as 1636. Hexachordal solmization declined in popularity was in decline by the early eighteenth century but "was still being used in the mid-1720s" (88-9; 87).

prohibition on hymns of human composure was also in decline. During his 1739-1741 tour of the colonies, George Whitefield popularized hymns by Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley (Foote, 146), and Jonathan Edwards did not object when his Northampton congregation began singing Watts's hymns in 1742 (though he insisted, at first, on retaining psalms in every service as well) (Foote, 148-9; Music, 2004). In setting a precedent for the healthy reevaluation of devotional aesthetics in light of cosmopolitan ideas that could be reconciled to piety, the main legacy of the Singing Controversy seems to have been the comparative ease of the transition out of psalmody and into hymnody.

Kevin Cattrell

Fall, 2011

Colonial New England Psalmody and the Poetics of Discord in Translation

Chapter 4: Edward Taylor's Poetics of Discord

This chapter explores Edward Taylor's lifelong commitment to devotional music as a poet, translator, and minister, and it argues that discord—in multiple senses of this term—was a central motif in his writing. The theme of discord surfaces in Taylor's love letters, his early attempts at metrical psalm translation, and the generically hybrid verse dialogue *Gods Determinations Touching His Elect*. It matures into something approaching a full-blown poetics, however, in the *Preparatory Meditations*, the series of devotional poems Taylor composed at roughly six-week intervals from 1682 to 1725. Recovering this poetics of discord can help us appreciate Taylor's poetry as both an engagement with, and a redirection of, the discourse of congregational psalmody I have investigated in Chapters 1-3.

Taylor was born in Sketchley, Leicestershire in the early 1640s and emigrated to Boston in the summer of 1668, matriculating at Harvard soon after his arrival.¹³⁷ In November of 1671, not long after graduating, he accepted a call to the ministry of a distant, recently founded settlement at Westfield on the Connecticut River. In 1679, the Church at Westfield was formally gathered and Taylor was ordained as its minister—a

¹³⁷ No record of Taylor's birth is extant. An obituary in the August 7-14 Boston *News-Letter* reports that he died on July 23, 1729, "in the 85th Year of his Age." According to his Westfield tombstone, Taylor "fell asleep June 24th, 1729 in the 87th Year of his Age" (Johnson 1937, 294, n. 10).

post he held until 1726, three years before his death (Patterson, 1-9). We know from scattered fair copies in his own hand that Taylor wrote poetry in England and at Harvard, much of it oriented toward public events and prepared, it seems, with public audiences in mind. Over the course of his nearly sixty years in Westfield, however, Taylor composed some 40,000 lines of poetry, including the work he is best known for: *Gods Determinations*, the *Preparatory Meditations*, and a handful of free-standing lyrics apparently written in the 1670s and 1680s. Two stanzas from “Upon Wedlock, & Death of Children,” which belongs to the last category, along with an elegy to a Westfield deacon, David Dewey, represent the only verse by Taylor that was printed before the twentieth century.¹³⁸

In spite of Taylor’s reluctance to seek print publication for his work, poetry was a part of virtually every aspect of his life, from the personal to the clerical. The verse Taylor wrote in England and transcribed into a single manuscript (now held at the Redwood Library and Athenaeum at Newport, Rhode Island) includes a platonic love poem for a schoolfellow, an ornate compound acrostic for his brother and sister-in-law, and three dialogs addressing contemporary English religious controversies. Of the six poems Taylor wrote as a Harvard student that survive in *Poetical Works*, a massive manuscript of his verse now housed in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University, five are conventional elegies and the sixth is a prolix “Declamation” in praise of English delivered “in the Colledge Hall May 5, 1671” (*Minor Poetry*, 3-35).

Taylor’s poetic sensibility is reflected, even if only obliquely, in his preaching. In the early eighteenth century, he bound a collection of fair copies of fourteen sermons on

¹³⁸ Cotton Mather’s sermon *Right Thoughts in Sad Hours*, published in London in 1689, closes with an excerpt from a letter from Taylor that includes the fifth and seventh stanzas from “Upon Wedlock.”

the nature of Christ, preached on Sacrament days from August 31, 1701 to October 10, 1703 and titled *Christographia*.¹³⁹ Comparisons between the Meditations composed on the “Doctrin preached” in these sermons and the sermons themselves has led Norman S. Grabo, the literary scholar responsible for an indispensable 1962 edition of this collection, to bifurcate Taylor’s meditational practice according to genre: “The difference between the sermons and the poems is the difference between the two main stages of the traditional meditation, between the means and the end, between the understanding head and the knowing heart, between the reason and the love” (xxxv). At times, reading a Taylor sermon alongside its corresponding Meditation perfectly illustrates this generic split. The fourth “Use” in Sermon XI in *Christographia*, for example, sketches out a fluid transition from intellection to emotional response:

Is it thus indeed that all the right and Authority in Heaven and Earth to
treate God on Sinners account is Given to Christ? Then hence be stird up
to

1. Bee deeply affected with that unspeakable Grace of God in Christ towards
poore fallen man. For you may See it here shining forth, upon them not onely in
the provision of a means of Reconciliation, (which indeed is wonderfull grace)
but also hath Authorized this Lord Jesus, and given him all Right, and Authority
in Heaven, and Earth to effect the Worke.

Meditation 2.52¹⁴⁰, which was composed on Sermon XI’s doctrine, appears to reply directly to this passage, echoing not only its words, but its movement from question to

¹³⁹ It is unclear when, exactly, Taylor made the transcriptions, but as Grabo notes, it was sometime after the dates of composition but before his handwriting began to deteriorate in 1725 (*Christographia*, xlvi).

¹⁴⁰ For unknown reasons, Taylor grouped these poems into two separate series, the first comprising 51 Meditations, and the Second, 168. The First Series (July 23, 1682-February 26, 1692/3) includes Meditations numbered 1-49. 1.14 and 1.15 are a single poem, dated November 14 and January 10, 1685/6. Between Meditations 1.3 and 1.4 are two undated, unnumbered poems in the same form as the Meditations, titled “The Experience” and “The Return,” respectively. Another undated, unnumbered poem, “The Reflexion,” appears between 1.4 and 1.5. The First Series is preceded by a poem—also undated and in the same form as the Meditations—titled “Prologue.” In the Second Series (from an unknown date in 1693-October, 1725), which comprises Meditations 2.1-2.165, there are no poems numbered 55, 57, 88, or 124, but there are two of each of the following: 60, 67, 68, 123, 157, 161, and 162. All of these omissions and duplications in the Second Series appear to have been accidental.

exhortation, in its opening lines:

What Power is this? What all Authoritie
In Earth, and Heaven too? What Lord is here? (1-2)

In the fifth stanza of the poem, the speaker rebukes himself for “sloath,” “dulness,” and the “sluggish growth” of his affections, as if in answer to the sermon’s call for a “deep” affective response.

The line dividing Taylor’s richly imaginative verse from what Grabo calls “the rational strictures” (xli) of the sermons, however, is not always so sharply drawn: lyricism as well as systematically developed theological precept inhabit both. The texts Taylor composed for the Sacrament of February 14, 1702/3, for example, both evince his taste for wordplay and poetic rhythm, as well as his predilection for riffing on the language and the themes of a biblical verse. The scripture for Sermon X and Meditation 2.51 is Ephesians 1.23, “Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.” Taylor’s opening sentence compares the first chapter of Ephesians to an outburst of divinely inspired psalmody:

The Holy Apostle Paule, personating the Body of the Elect of God, under the Sweete enravishments given his Heaven born Soule, in Such influences, as were poured out upon it, from the Electing, Redeeming, and Regenerating Grace of God in Christ, soars up into Heaven with holy Praise, and adoration on this account, which when he had done he having heard how the Same Grace, had gloriously broken forth upon the poore Gentiles at Ephesus, Greatly affected therewith breakes forth into a transcendent Strain of Tryumphant Praise to God, on this account, accompanied with ardent Prayers, that God would give them the Spirit of Wisdom, and Revelation... (299)

Although Taylor distinguishes carefully between rapture and sober reflection here, the rhetorical power of this passage derives from the way it blends the two together.

Elucidating the sermon’s doctrine a little further on, Taylor’s prose echoes the polyptoton, word repetition, alliteration, and rhythmic variation in the Authorized translation of

Paul's "transcendent Strain," as well as the chiasmus in the Greek¹⁴¹: "The Church is his Body, the Fulness of him that fills all things. Christ fills her top full. Seing he alone fills all things [*and*] She fills Christ top full, because She is his Fulness, and indeed he fills her out of his all filling Fulness, that she might be his Fulness filling him again. He makes her Compleate that she might Compleate him" (300).¹⁴² This patterning of sounds is, in turn, reflected in the closing stanza of Meditation 2.51¹⁴³:

Am I a bit, Lord, of thy Body? oh!
 Then I do claim thy Head to be mine own.
 Thy Heads sweet Influence let to mee flow.
 That I may be thy fullness, full up grown.
 Then in thy Churches fullness thou shalt be
 Completed in a Sense, and sung by mee. (43-8)

To be sure, the imagery in Taylor's poem is bolder and more tangential to scripture, its musical references are more developed, and it manifests a greater degree of self-consciousness about its language. The verb "flow" (45) in the passage just quoted, for example, ties in not only with the sea imagery that figures God's electing grace in the Meditation and sermon alike, but with the apiary imagery in the third stanza: on the heels of a lament about the shortcomings of language as a medium for praise, the speaker acknowledges,

Then what doe I, but as the Lady Bee
 Doth tune her Musick in her mudd wall Cell:
 My Humming so, no musick makes to thee:
 Nor can my bagpipes play thy glory well.
 Amaizd I stand to see thee all Compleate:
 Completed by a body, thou makst neate. (13-18)

With rich comic self-deprecation, the speaker borrows from the imagery of Canticles,

¹⁴¹ The Greek, a part of which Taylor cites in a later portion of the sermon (304), neatly encloses two forms of the word *pas* (all) within two forms of the word *pleroo* (to fill): *hetis estin to soma autou, to pleroma tou ta panta en pasin pleroumenou*.

¹⁴² I have not seen the manuscript of this sermon. The "[*and*]" appears to be Grabo's editorial conjecture.

¹⁴³ It is unknown whether Taylor composed the sermons or the poems first; he gives them identical dates.

which genders the church as female, and implies that crude human forms absorb sound, rather than amplifying it. He is equally incapable of intoning appropriate praise when his breath is magnified by a loud and blustery instrument as well: there is no music without Christ's melliflence. Reformed sermons, on the other hand— as attentive as they are to the philological nuances of scripture—rarely critique their own formal or linguistic properties, and Taylor's are not exceptions. Nevertheless, it seems clear that his finely tuned poetic ear enlivened his preaching.

This cross-generic influence works both ways. In Meditation 2.90, dated August 14, 1709, a sermon in miniature provides the framework for the speaker's informed petition for inclusion among the saints. The text for this Meditation is a clause from John 10.28, "I give unto them eternall life." Its last two words are echoed in the opening phrase of the poem, which poses a metaphysical riddle: "Eternall Life! What Life is this, I pray?" In answering his own query, the speaker first acknowledges that no definitive rational or scientific explanation is possible:

Eternity snicksnarls my Brains thought on:
It's the Arithimiticians Wrack each way.
It hath beginning, yet it end hath none. (2-3)

Mixing formal logical method and poetic wit, the speaker carefully deduces a provisional, heuristic definition of eternal life. His first strategy is relational: "Eternity indeed is Adjunct to / The Life of Man: Of all men, Good, and Bad" (7-8). Through its link to something finite, eternity can be conceptually delimited: since it is inalienable from any manifestation of life, all lives can be "dicotomizd / Into a Life of Joy or miseries" (11-12). In the third stanza, keeping close to the poem's biblical text—Jesus's rebuke to the doubting Jews who have gathered to interrogate and undermine his authority as Christ—

Taylor then shows that “Everlasting Punishment,” as “Life all shent / Of Good and filld with Deaths Edition” is properly “Living Death” and not eternal life as Jesus here intends it. This qualified, abstract reduction of eternal life through dichotomy is the closest to arithmetic precision that Taylor’s speaker can approach.

In the first paean to eternal life in the “right sense” that follows, he adds a third term—“Spirituell Life”—to the two adjunct modes of living already covered:

Life Naturall, and Spirituell Life’s in bliss
Eternizde in Eternall Joyes that throng. (21-2)

Praising God for this gift of eternity, the poem transitions into a series of metaphors that clarify the intimate, organic relation among these three forms of life, but without pretending to have superseded the epistemological boundaries conceded in the poem’s third and fourth lines:

Life Naturall (although Essentiall to
All Living things) and spirituell Life indeed,
Peculiar to Rationalls also
Containd are in Christs Gift as in a seed,
Are both Adjuncted with Eternity
In that he gives them them Eternally. (37-42)

(I read the third line in this stanza as a kind of parenthetical aside, and understand “Rationalls” to mean people who attempt to cipher out the relation between natural and eternal life rationally.) Here, Taylor attempts to contain earthly life and the promise of salvation within the same metaphor. Eternity, he goes on to suggest, is the ripening of this seed into full bloom:

Ripe Grace in all its Orient Blossoms bright,
Ripe Glory in its flower of brightest shine:
Ripe Joy upon the highest branch full ripe
Adorn this Life Eternall made most fine... (43-5)

Up to this point in the arc of the poem, poetry has served as a technology for unpacking

and understanding a critical concept—a “rational stricture”—in Christian soteriology. From here, however, what Grabo calls “the knowing heart” assumes control. In the same way that Christ’s gift organically unites the temporal and the eternal, poetry and heavenly music are encased within the same kernel—in the speaker’s case, the seed has simply not yet ripened. In the poem’s penultimate stanza, Taylor figures the conjunction of the distinct modes of life his poem has covered as a kind of three-part harmony:

Hence, Lord, I kiss thy Feet, and humbly Cry
 Give mee this Gift, Eternall Life I pray.
 ’T will gild my Harp O’re very gloriously,
 And spiritualize my strings thy tunes to play.
 Life Naturall’s the Base. The Spirituall is
 The Meane: the Tenour is Eternall Bliss. (55-60)

In a single stroke Taylor puns on the musical meaning of “natural” (that is, a note that is neither sharp nor flat) and overlays the three kinds of living his poem covers: eternal life, in this configuration, is not just adjunct to or contiguous with, but parallel to temporal and spiritual life on the musical staff.

As these examples of the interplay between Taylor’s poetry and preaching suggest, music is one of the most enduring themes of his writing. Often, he exploits the multiple senses of the term “harmony,” much as John Cotton had done in the 1640s. In a 1674 letter to Elizabeth Fitch, whom Taylor would marry in November of that same year, the new minister at Westfield defines conjugal love in terms of a musical union: marriage is

a mutuall Giving Each other to Each other; & a mutuall Succouring each other in all States, Ailes, Grievances. And truly, if persons in this State, have no[t] love each for others exceeding all other Love, it’s with them for the most part as with the Strin[gs] of an Instrument not tuned together, which when struck upon, make but a jarring, harsh Sound. But when the golden Wire[s] of an Instrument equally drawn up, & rightly Struck up[on sou]nd together, make a sweet musick whose harmony doth enravish the Eare, so when the golden strings of true Affection are screwed up into right Conj[ug]all Love, thus Sweetly doth this State then harmonize to the co[m]fort of each other, & to the glory of God, when Sanctified.

(*Minor Poetry*, 38)

In Taylor's devotional poetry, on the other hand, the "mutuall Giving" that characterizes an ideal marriage requires an altogether different representational strategy, since the union in question in this later work is between vastly unequal entities. The closing stanza of Meditation 2.48, for example, echoes the love letter's combination of musical imagery and its theme of conjugal union, but with a twist that reflects this fundamental difference:

If thy Almightyness, and all my Mite
 United be in sacred Marriage knot,
 My Mite is thine: Mine thine Almighty Might.
 Then thine Almightyness my Mite hath got.
 My Quill makes thine Almightyness a string
 Of Pearls, to grace the tune, my Mite doth sing. (37-42)

Whereas in the realm of marital relations, it is desirable—and, more to the point, possible—to ensure that the strings are "equally drawn up," the mystical union of Christ and Church requires a kind of music that can only be visualized in Taylor's poetic imagination. Before investigating the refinement of this imagination in the *Preparatory Meditations*, however, it is crucial to trace out its early development in two distinct poetic projects, both written in the early years of Taylor's Westfield ministry.

Taylor employed music as a figure for fellowship and the bliss of sanctification in *Gods Determinations*, a poem of over two thousand lines that is part comic drama, part homily, and part hymnal. Apparently written within a few years of his ordination as minister of the newly gathered church at Westfield in 1679¹⁴⁴, *Gods Determinations touching his Elect* is divided into thirty-five sections composed in a wide array of poetic

¹⁴⁴ Patterson, 12. The exact date of the poem's composition is unknown. Thomas M. Davis proposes that Taylor wrote a fair copy "by the early 1680s, perhaps even earlier" (UW, 3:xvi; cited in Gatta, 101n).

forms¹⁴⁵ and reflecting a variety of perspectives—an omniscient narrator, Justice, Mercy, Christ, Satan, Saint, and a representative Soul unsure of its worthiness of grace (the last of these is occasionally split into two ranks of justified sinners). The poem’s mild, reassuring tone invites comparison with the severity of Michael Wigglesworth’s bestselling *Day of Doom*: it seems to have been designed as a kind of a supplement to Taylor’s ministry, though it was never published during his lifetime and there is no conclusive evidence that he circulated it.¹⁴⁶

While still in England, Taylor had written a 208-line response to the Great Ejection (the expulsion from the Church of England of some 2,000 ministers who failed to conform to the Book of Common Prayer by St Bartholomew’s Day, 1662). “The Laymans Lamentation upon the Civill Death of the late Labour[ers] in the Lords vinyard, by way of Dialogue between a proud prelate, and a Poor professour Silenced on Bartholomew day 1662” (*Minor Poetry*, 13-18) is a chimera of poetic genres—elegy, epitaph, lament, paean, satire, and invective. It offers a reflection on the political-ecclesiastical events that led to Taylor’s emigration and a foretaste of his lifelong comic sensibility and his affection for the Psalms and Canticles, as well as an early glimpse at his pastoral values: “Divines are made dry vines,” the Professour laments: “Wee found our publicke places once a Bed / Of fragrant Spices to pefume our head: / Since, we have

¹⁴⁵ These include heroic couplets, a quatrain comprising lines of varying lengths, and sestets of varying rhyme schemes and line lengths. The heroic couplet and the stanza Taylor used throughout the *Preparatory Meditations*—sestets of iambic pentameter rhyming ababcc—are the most common, accounting for nineteen and five of the sections, respectively. For a reflection on the relation between the forms in George Herbert’s *The Temple* and *Gods Determinations*, see Johnson, 318 n. 42.

¹⁴⁶ Michael Colacurcio has made a compelling case that “the implied audience of the poem is precisely the half-way member of the Puritan congregation; the theme is the desirability of a more complete and active participation in a ‘particular church’ than that provided for by the Half-Way Covenant of 1662” (299). The Halfway Covenant authorized the baptism of the children of church members (a privilege that had previously been limited to full church members—those who had given acceptable public accounts of their conversion).

gone, & walk'd the old bed round / But for a David, have an image found" (18; 35-8).

The speaker celebrates nonconformist preachers' abilities to pierce the hearts of atheists, but he especially admires their powers of spiritual healing:

...when they found the arrows of th' Almighty[e]
Sticking in many Breast. How moov'd with pitty
Would these Chirurgions out the arrows pull?
Applying Giliads Balme to make it whole. (75-8)

Gods Determinations can be read as Taylor's attempt at such surgery and soothing.

One of Taylor's primary healing strategies in this work is to temper doctrinal abstraction with images drawn from the sensory world. In a dialogue in which Justice and Mercy negotiate the terms of the new covenant between God and humanity, the agents of divine will compare strategies for holding the elect accountable. "If any after Satans Pipes do Caper," Justice promises,

Red burning Coales from hell in Wrath I gripe,
And make them in his face with Vengeance vaper,
Untill he dance after the Gospell Pipe... (263-6)

Later, in the prose introduction to a verse rejoinder to a composition (now, sadly, lost) by Elizabeth, Taylor figured marital harmony as call and response: "I had thought that my Muse should have added a Quaver or two unto your Musick but that Stage being so thick Crowded already, there is Scarce any room for it. All therefore that Shee shall doe, shall be onely to take the tune, where you left it & answer, as it were an Eccho, back again unto your Song, in this following Ditty" (42). The central motif of the sixty-four-line poem that follows is the spinning of a fabric, but its middle section cautions,

If Duty, Faith, & Love be ragged worn
Then Honours, Pleasures, Priviledges torne,
Ly gasping, & the Lising Musick Deare
The Pretty Harps play, jars, & wounds the Eare. (37-40)

Taylor would later probe more deeply into the causes and consequences of “capering” to such disingenuous euphony in the second “use” of his fourth *Christographia* sermon, delivered in February of 1701/2: “Such as neglect Christ play the Foole,” he preaches: they “place their chief Wisdom, Epicurean like, in Sensuall pleasures: in Eating, in Drinking, in Chambering, and Wantoness, in Chaunting to the Sound of the Viol: and Stretching themselves out as on beds of ivory, etc.; these make Wisdom, but brutishness, breaking the jaws of reason with the Snaffle of the Senses, and make wisdom as ferine as the Forest Offspring” (131-2). Fittingly, Taylor figures reason as a horse and the senses as a bridle, not (as in the version of the metaphor in Plato and Renaissance painting) the other way around.¹⁴⁷ In doing so, he acknowledges the appeal to common sense implicit in such deleteriously self-defeating “Wisdom”: Satan relies, both in *Gods Determinations* and elsewhere in Taylor’s writing, on his power to mimic rational subtlety. Only in poetry that labors in good faith to express and consolidate a penitent sinner’s sense of wonder at divinity is this banquet of the senses palatable.

In Justice’s account of satanic music in *Gods Determinations*, however, the combination of euphemism and feminine rhyme imparts an almost playful quality to these lines, which reduce human will to a reflex—there is no scrupling over degrees of self-awareness and contrition. Though Mercy’s rendition of the same scene goes into slightly greater detail about the conditions for her intervention, she also implies that sanctification is a simple matter of triggering an impulse:

When any Such are Startled from ill,
 And Cry, help, help, with tears, I will advance
 The Musick of the Gospell Minsterill,
 Whose Strokes they Strike, and tunes exactly dance.
 Who mourn when Justice frowns, when Mercie playes

¹⁴⁷ See *Phaedrus*, 246a–254e, and Hans Holbein the Younger’s *Allegory of Passion* (1532-6).

Will to her Sounding Viall Chant out Praise. (269-74)

Appropriately, given their perspective outside human history, Mercy and Justice are unconcerned with the tuning of the ear, the mechanics of music, or the art of the dance: all that matters is the inclination of the heart and the behavior it sets in motion, and all of this, besides, is preordained. Music serves a purely symbolic purpose here.

Satan, by contrast, is willing to split hairs: his chief rhetorical strengths are versatility, equivocation, and a penetrating insight into human insecurity, all of which he parries into a seeming willingness to meet the Christian on his or her own terms. Alone of all the speaking characters in *Gods Determinations* that appear in more than one section, Satan is the only figure whose poetic form—the heroic couplet—never varies. This suggests a shrewd formal complement to his posturing: heroic couplets are not, in themselves, Satanic in *Gods Determinations*—the poem’s opening paean to divine cosmogenesis is written in them, too—but casting each of the Devil’s pleas, slights, and tendentious arguments in this form gives the appearance of watertight logical consistency and balance.

Satan’s project throughout the poem is to harness the penitent sinner’s Reformed analytic scrupulousness and train as much of it as possible on his or her own depravity, as these lines from his “Accusation of the Inward Man” make plain:

Come, Come with mee. I’le Shew your Outs, and Inns,
Your Inside, and your out: your Holy things.
For these I will anatomize; then see,
Believe your very Eyes, believe not mee. (647-50)

As Jean L. Thomas points out, Taylor’s Satan “has usurped the office of God’s minister with obvious subversive intent” (460). In keeping with this strategy, Satan effectively turns the final of the three epigraphs on the cover of the New England Psalm Book—

James 5.13, “Is any merry, let him sing psalms”—into a cruel hoax. In a section titled “The Soul Accused in its Serving God,” he leverages a human tendency to evaluate—and question—the quality and spiritual substance of song. Non-verbal music serves him as a potent metaphor for the soul’s vain attempts to communicate with God and fellow Christians alike: “thy Pray’res are Sapless most, / Or like the Whistling of Some Dead mans Ghost: / Thy Holy Conference is onely like / An Empty Voice that tooteth through a pipe” (755-8). These figures of spiritually empty sound help set up the monologue’s parting blow:

When did thine Eyes run down for Sin as Sin,
That thus thy heart runs up with joy to Sing?
Thy Sins do Sculk under a flowrisht paint.
Hence thou a Sinner art, or I a Saint. (765-8)

Satan masterfully exploits the affective and epistemological problems of repentance in these couplets—how can a sinner be sure she understands sin for what it is, and responds appropriately? His command of English is impeccable as well: to say “Sin” is to say “Sing” with the tip, instead of the middle, of the tongue touching the roof of the mouth. The closing rhyme in this speech suggests that saintliness is—or might as well be—satanic, thanks to the thin, wet layer of artificial color that anyone with knowledge of the Word can learn to self-apply. Meanwhile, Satan’s “thus” illuminates the gross imbalance between the soul’s inadequate penitence and its raptures of joy, substituting an economy of just desserts for the Covenant of Redemption (which is, as Taylor’s poetry asserts in figure after startling figure, predicated on a comically, inscrutably uneven exchange).¹⁴⁸

Music is an apt figure in this context since it is governed (in theory, if not always in late

¹⁴⁸ Gatta provides the fullest account of comedy in Taylor’s poetics, arguing that his “peculiar blend of verbal wit, meditative earnestness, and comic exuberance” make him unique among Puritan New England artists (xiii); Amy Morris goes a step further and describes Taylor’s poetry as reverentially “highlighting the grotesque absurdity of God’s grace” (513).

seventeenth-century Reformed practice) by fixed proportions. Critically, however, as Satan knows well, it is more than a set of abstract relations among fixed quantities—in the form of the liturgy, humble as it may have been in colonial New England, music is grounded in the week-to-week lives of every Reformed Christian. Scheming to undermine the soul’s comfort in the single ordinance designated for public, communal expressions of joy and praise, Satan implies that psalmody manufactures artificial mirth, papering over insufficiently acknowledged sins. Through the figure of Satan, *Gods Determinations* trains the reader to distinguish between two kinds of music: on the one hand, the sincere, and on the other, that which jars the discerning ear in spite of its “deare”-ness and “Pretty” melody.

Taylor contrasts Satan’s approach to the scrutiny of rhetoric and behavior with that of his representative Saint, who counsels Soul to “Make known thy griefe” and “anatomize thy Sin” (1362), though only so it can be submerged in “Grace’s fountain” (1364) and washed away in “Mercies main” (1372). Saint turns the figure of music back against Satan in a later section, noting how “quickly” he “turns his tune” in his attacks on souls for (depending on the psychological context) their presumption in seeking grace or their negligence of Christ’s call, (1626-30), but no objection can be made to Satan’s core claim that the human joy expressed in song is incommensurate to the singer’s goodness. Instead, *Gods Determinations* goes on to demonstrate that those drawn in by “The Musick of the Gospell Minsterill” learn to petition God to make them instruments of the divine song they are incapable of performing on their own. In “An Extasy of Joy” framed in response to Christ’s affectionate reassurance of his devotion, Soul pleads,

Screw up, Deare Lord, upon the highest pin:
My Soul thy ample Praise to Sound.

O tune it right, that every String
May make thy praise rebound. (1001-4)

The first step, these lines suggest, is to surrender agency to God. Although the desired transformation is unlikely to occur during the singer's lifespan, in the meantime, Soul understands that to desist from singing is sloth:

But oh! how Slack, Slow, dull? with what delay,
Do I this Musick to, repare;
While tabernacled in Clay
My Organs Cottag'de are?
Yet Lord accept this Pittance of thy praise
Which as a Traveller I bring,
While travelling along thy wayes
In broken notes I Sing. (1005-12)

Michael Colacurcio notes that "conversion is an experience in time; one comes to an awareness or experience of grace, and it is the experience and not the dogma that concerns Taylor" in this poem (302). To sing psalms properly, these lines suggest, is also to alter one's perspective on time—to learn to overlay present and future. All in the same action, divine song is attempted, acknowledged as insufficient, and deferred until the penitent sinner's full reconciliation with God.

The three sections that close the poem suggest that a greater assurance of salvation comes from a progressively wider scope that holds in check the intense self-scrutiny so central to the Reformed faith. Ultimately, Taylor highlights congregational psalmody as the most efficient means of achieving this balance. Throughout "The Glory of; and Grace in the Church Set Out," Taylor employs a two-foot refrain, "Yet that's not all," at the end of the last line of each stanza but the last, formally amplifying the copiousness of the blessings of church membership. The penultimate stanza takes up two of the poem's central pastoral concerns, the staggered, unpredictable pacing of

conversion (reflected in the stanzaic pattern of varying line lengths) and the nurturing that those better assured of grace are equipped to provide for their spiritual brethren:

Yet Still behold!
All flourish not at once. We See
While Some Unfold
Their blushing Leaves, Some buds there bee.
Here's Faith, Hope, Charity in flower, which call
On yonders in the Bud. Yet that's not all. (2019-24)

The long view of salvation in this stanza helps dilute the soul's self-castigation and guard it from the satanic excess that eventuates in despair. Offsetting the imbalance it describes, the section builds to a completion in perfect music that echoes Soul's ecstatic promise in lines 1013-16:

But as they stand
Like Beauties reeching in perfume
A Divine Hand
Doth hand them up to Glories room:
Where Each in Sweet'ned Songs all Praises Shall
Sing all ore Heaven for aye. And that's but all. (2025-30)

In a move that Taylor will parallel in many of his *Preparatory Meditations*, the church's heavenly singing is projected into an unlimited future, a fellowship of the saints in which all music is perfected in solidarity.

The poem does not strand music in a synaesthetic floral metaphor for eternal glory, however. In the section that follows, "The Souls Admiration Hereupon," the penitent but still tentative elect soul compares its own musical illiteracy with the rapturous performance that has just been described:

What, Can I ever tune those Melodies
Who have no tune at all?
Not knowing where to stop nor Rise,
Nor when to Fall.
To Sing thy Praise I am unfit.
I have not learn'd my Gam-Ut yet. (2037-42)

Two stanzas later, the soul imagines itself attempting to sound God's Praises on a "Kit" ("a small fiddle," according to Patterson's glossary [520]), and laments, "I cannot play: / But for an F Should Strike an A" (2053-4). Having neither a gift for euphony ("no tune at all") nor a knowledge of the fundamentals of music theory (figured in the gamut, a chart that helped musicians determine the tones of the scale in every key¹⁴⁹), Soul disparages itself for not knowing which notes to play, or how long to sustain them. Taken by itself, the resolution that closes the section, "Yet if thou wilt thou Can'st me raise / With Angels bright to sing thy Praise" (2021-2) may be underwhelming as conviction and as poetry, but the solution to Soul's dilemma proposed in the poem's final movement, "The Joy of Church Fellowship Rightly Attended," recovers music from abstraction. This poem celebrates the "Sweet Melody" of the saints in a kind of collective, suspended transit from earth to heaven, not so much harmonizing this music's earthly and transcendent qualities as suggesting that the second of these is facilitated—not hindered—by the first. "Encoacht" and already in motion "to Glory" (2076, 2078), the singers have not yet purged imperfection from their song, but they manage to make a virtue of this impurity:

...if a String do slip, by Chance, they soon,
Do screw it up again: whereby
They Set it in a more melodious Tune
And a diviner Harmony. (2085-88)

In one sense, the music represented here is metaphorical: as a fully orthodox New England Congregationalist, Taylor is unlikely to have sanctioned instrumental accompaniment to psalm singing in his church. And yet musical imperfection and self-correction are a natural part of the everyday experience of a liturgy performed by largely

¹⁴⁹ Cf Preparatory Meditations 1.29, where the speaker responds to the idea that God has grafted him onto his holy family tree, "How Should I blush? how Tremble at this thing. / Not having yet my Gam-Ut, learnd to sing" (35-6).

untrained singers. As Hammond has pointed out, *Gods Determinations* closes with an invitation to its readers “to join the song of the redeemed despite their failings, not in a remote eschatological future but in their experiential present” (*Sinful Self*, 161). To lapse into despair over one’s current musical deficiencies, as Soul comes close to doing in the poem’s penultimate section, is to misapprehend the purposes of Christian singing: earnest praise and a sense of continuous motion toward heaven in spite of one’s sin.

Over the course of his *Preparatory Meditations*, Taylor develops the concept of the musical “slip” as a generative experience of faith. First, however, he appears to have disciplined his poetic faculties and honed his understanding of divine music in a series of translations he apparently never meant posterity to see. Two distinct manuscripts of Taylor’s metrical psalm paraphrases have been recovered: the first version, which the twentieth-century editors of Taylor’s “Minor Poetry,” Thomas and Virginia Davis, date to 1674-5, comprises Psalms 1-9 and 18; the second version, transcribed in the 1680s, comprises complete translations of Psalms 12-38 and 49, and parts of Psalms 11, 39, and 48. As the editors note, Taylor’s psalms hold to the Sternhold-Hopkins’ metrical patterns (45), not to those of the Bay Psalm Book: Taylor used Common Meter only for every psalm except Psalm 25: as in the Sternhold-Hopkins, this translation is in Short Meter (unlike its sixteenth-century counterpart, however, Taylor’s is an acrostic based on phonetic approximations of the Hebrew alphabet).¹⁵⁰ On the other hand, Taylor made no attempt to match the Sternhold-Hopkins psalter’s fluid phrasing. Their translation of Psalm 2.4-6¹⁵¹ does not scruple to extend and reconfigure ideas from scripture, or to

¹⁵⁰ Taylor’s translations of Psalms 34 and 37 are acrostics as well.

¹⁵¹ “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion” (Authorized).

supply conjunctions to clarify apparent meanings:

But he that in the heav'n doth dwell,
 their doings will deride;
 And make them all as mocking-stocks
 throughout the world do wide.
 For in his wrath he shall reprove
 their pride and scornful way,
 And in his fury trouble them,
 and unto them shall say,
 I have anointed him my King
 upon my holy hill...

Taylor's rendition of the same passage echoes the Bay Psalm Book's awkward elisions and its tendency to convert the elegant parallelism of the Hebrew versets into anticlimax:

He that doth in the heavens sit
 Shall laugh deridingly;
 The Lord himself shall have them in
 Derision mightily.
 T[h]en shall he speake in's wra[th]
 I[n] fury vex them will.
 [Ye]t have I set my King un[to]
 Zion my Holy hill.

Although Taylor's metrical psalms are often linked to the *Preparatory Meditations*, it is difficult to define the relationship between these two projects with clarity or precision. As Patterson suggests, the psalm experiment "seems to have shown [Taylor] a dimension of the poetic life that he had not explored before in his own work: the dimension within which poetry takes on the sustained momentum of a lifelong process rather than being conceived within the focused activity that produces an individual poem" (28). According to Thomas Davis, on the other hand, the influence of this project on his later work was more dramatic and direct: in the psalm translations, he claims, Taylor "began to sound the authentic note of his own voice." This authenticity and originality derive, Davis argues, from Taylor's emulation of first-generation models: "patterned as they are on the

Sternhold-Hopkins psalter,” his psalms “look back to the English experience, and in their newness reflect the first authentic note of native poetry in the ‘Bay Psalm Book’” (xiv). Taylor’s own judgment of this body of work was, however, at best ambiguous: the manuscripts containing them were found by twentieth-century scholars stuffed into the leather binding of *Christographia* (*Minor Poetry*, 45).

I would argue that Taylor’s efforts at psalm translation matter most for the ways they fail. His imperfect negotiation of the strict and conflicting demands of form and stewardship to the Word frequently result in a cracked vessel for the godly praise he seems to intend. A poetics of discord emerges in these fissures, which are marked in the manuscript by parentheses that set off the words that are, strictly speaking, extratextual. Prior to Psalm 18, the last in the manuscript of Version 1, parentheses appear twice, but only in the second instance (in Psalm 7.15) do they designate words of supply.¹⁵² Beginning with this psalm, however, the frequency of Taylor’s supplements accelerates: they appear in fourteen of the psalm’s fifty verses.¹⁵³ The practice continues at a slightly lower rate throughout Version 2, where every psalm but one (Psalm 15) has at least one parenthetical insertion. In most instances, the supplied material corresponds to Cotton Mather’s functional but redundant black-letter disyllables in the bi-metrical sections of *Psalterium Americanum* (1718) discussed in Chapter 3 (Mather, however, expands and contracts for the sake of the meter; Taylor expands, almost exclusively, for the sake of the rhyme). Occasionally, however, they stimulate poetic effects that alter the character of the composition in subtle but significant ways.

¹⁵² In Taylor’s translation of Psalm 7.4, both the parentheses and the material they contain correspond to the Authorized version’s prose. Psalm 7.15, in Taylor’s translation, explains that the pit the enemy has dug and subsequently fallen into was designed to “way Lay” others.

¹⁵³ Verses 16, 18, 21, 26, 29, 32, 33, 36, 39, 41, 42, 44, and 45.

In his first of two attempts at Psalm 18¹⁵⁴, for example, Taylor responds to the strict economy of meter, rhyme and fidelity with a metaphor at verse 5: “The sorrows sharp of hell have me / Encompassed about. / The Snares of death prevented me / (To do my Candle out).”¹⁵⁵ Although he borrows the figure of the candle from verse 28 of the same psalm,¹⁵⁶ preserving a unity of content in transposition, the parentheses set off this line as technically superfluous. The effect occurs again in the sixth and final part of the same translation, but this time, Taylor supplies a chiasmus as well as a refrain:

The strangers soon shall fade away,
And they shall be afraid
Out of their places very close,
(They soon away shall fade) (45)¹⁵⁷

When Taylor translated this psalm a second time, instead of expanding, he compressed the verses into fourteen syllables each, discarding the poetic qualities his first, more prolix version had introduced: “Hells sorrows did about mee scud / Deaths Snares did me prevent” (5); “Strangers shall fade away, dismay / From their close places (still)” (45). All the same, however, his second rendition of Psalm 18 is peppered with twenty-five parenthetical additions, almost double the number in the first version: scouring away the extratextual material in his first attempt, to borrow Anne Bradstreet’s metaphor, Taylor “still made a flaw.”¹⁵⁸ At times, Taylor permits form and fidelity to warp the translation into a more creative, dialogic engagement of scripture. The single parenthetical syllable in the first verse of Taylor’s Psalm 14 in Version 2 is one of the most intriguing examples,

¹⁵⁴ Psalm 18 is the only psalm for which two of Taylor’s translations are extant.

¹⁵⁵ “The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me” (Authorized).

¹⁵⁶ “For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness” (Authorized).

¹⁵⁷ “The strangers shall fade away, and be afraid out of their close places” (Authorized).

¹⁵⁸ “The Author to Her Book,” line 14.

recalling a sound system DJ's embellishment over a dancehall record¹⁵⁹:

The foole doth say in's heart there is
 No God: Corrupt they bode
 Abominable works do (yes)
 Theres none doth any good.

Rather than restructuring the line (by expanding the contraction, or changing "in" to "within," for example) to alter the rhyme syllable, and rather than discarding the odd-numbered-line rhyme altogether (something Taylor is willing to do elsewhere in this psalm), he adds a supporting perspective on the abominations of atheists.

This strategy of polyvocal affirmation reaches a crescendo, however, in a passage that unites the themes of combat and harmony, supplying a version of the musical instrument motif that will reverberate across the *Preparatory Meditations*:

Thou therefore shall them make turn ba[ck]
 Where thou shall ready place
 (Thy arrows) on thy Strings (not Slack)
 Against their very face.
 Be thou, Lord, in thy Strength, on high
 Exalted (evry hour)
 We will tune out (melodiously)
 And Psalms Sing of thy power. (21.12-13)

The first set of parentheses is immaterial: as the italics in the Authorized version of this passage attest, and as Alter's translation confirms, there is no direct reference to arrows in the Hebrew.¹⁶⁰ What makes this psalm translation unique is the resonance between the "Strings (not Slack)" in verse 12 with what I read as the melodious tuning out of musical accompaniment in verse 13. The conjunction in the last line of this passage implies that

¹⁵⁹ A classic example of this technique can be heard in the Jamaican DJ Scotty's "Draw Your Breaks," a version of Keith & Tex's "Stop That Train."

¹⁶⁰ "Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back, when thou shalt make ready *thine arrows* upon thy strings against the face of them. Be thou exalted, LORD, in thine own strength: so will we sing and praise thy power" (Authorized); "For you will make them turn back, / with your bowstring you aim at their face. Loom high, O Lord, in Your strength, / Let us sing, let us hymn Your might" (Alter, 70).

two separate musical activities are promised: because singing is the second of these, the first would have to involve some kind of musical instrument. Considering Taylor's tendency, throughout his life, to represent praise and thanksgiving as the screwing or tightening up of musical strings, and since the harp is David's preferred instrument, it seems likely that Taylor intends one here.¹⁶¹ In *A Thankfull Remembrance* (1676), discussed in Chapter 2, Peter Bulkley defines psalmody in terms of an echo: "When we praise the Lord, we do but sing over what he hath done, He acts it, and we acknowledge it....An Eccho is little else but a Reflecting Repetition of the first sound; so our praises are Repetitions, reflecting the work on God" (10). The slight adjustments Taylor makes to the last two lines of Psalm 21, apparently in concession to the rhyme scheme and meter, reflect the same principle: the "we" invoked in these lines not only commends divine power, but does so in a way that formally echoes God's turning back of the enemy.

Literary critics have long associated Taylor's poetry with the Book of Psalms.

Rosemary Fithian provides the most comprehensive account of the parallels between his

¹⁶¹ The opening stanza of Meditation 2.152, for example, turns on the image of a neglected lute, viol, or harp:

My Deare Deare Lord! my Soul is damp Untun'd.
My strings are fallen and their screw pins slipt,
When I should play thy praise with grace perfum'd
My strings made fit with graces wax most slick.
My notes that tune thy praise should pleasantly
Will onely make an harish sympheny. (1-6)

Curiously, though he embraces the tension of a well-tuned instrument, Taylor never seems concerned that the strings will snap. In the "Prologue" to *Tenth Muse* (1650), by contrast, Anne Bradstreet compares her own poetic powers to a damaged instrument:

From School-boy's tongue no Rhet'ric we expect,
Nor yet a sweet Consort from broken strings,
Nor perfect beauty where's a main defect.
My foolish, broken, blemished Muse so sings,
And this to mend, alas, no Art is able,
'Cause Nature made it so irreparable. (13-18)

For Taylor, the harps, viols, virginals, and lutes that figures his facility for praise are always tunable, but rarely in tune; in Bradstreet's case, the "irreparable" instrument becomes a figure for down-to-earth humility.

Preparatory Meditations and the psalter, concluding, “in short, Taylor wrote his own Book of Psalms” (“Words of My Mouth,” 110). Although Jeffrey Hammond notes a shift away from “the Psalmic voice,” toward “an identification with the Canticles Bride” in the later *Meditations* (*Sinful Self*, 225), he agrees: “the Psalmist’s spiritual and artistic aims match Taylor’s perfectly” (224). Curiously, although the scholarship on Taylor’s work has not ignored his frequent references to singing, tuning, musical instruments, and transliterations of Hebrew terms associated with music, it almost universally subordinates these elements to their poetic counterparts. In his monograph on Taylor, for example, Norman S. Grabo outlines “five general classes of images” that “recur with notable frequency in Taylor’s poetry,” but none of these include music.¹⁶² In a book-length study of Taylor’s typological poetics, Karen Rowe argues persuasively that Taylor “inhabits a linguistic universe” where “speech remains secondary to spirit—and spirit expressed will only take its proper form in heaven,” specifically in hymns and psalms. She, too, however, concludes that Taylor uses “music to symbolize poetry written in God’s service” (272).

Most recently, Wilson Brissett has shed light on the themes of congregational psalmody and fellowship in the *Preparatory Meditations*, exploring the ways Taylor reached “beyond private poetry in order to merge his individual expression with the communal expression of the congregation gathered in worship” (475). Unique among Taylor’s critics, Brissett engages the orthodox New England discourse on psalmody in order to elucidate the place of devotional music in the *Meditations*. Unfortunately,

¹⁶² The five categories are “writing images, including remarks on rhetoric, metaphor, and duty”; “warfare”; “metallurgy, mining, trying ore or distilling, and minting”; “gardens”; and “feasts” (93-4). The only mention of music in this passage comes in a brief aside: discussing the first category, Grabo remarks, “Although such images commonly open *Meditations*—just as the gamut of musical instruments closes them—they often function as central images around which Taylor structures the argument of a whole poem” (93). Even as Grabo puns on “gamut” in what must be a deliberate allusion to Taylor’s own use of this word, he resists identifying musical imagery as a key category.

however, he condenses this discourse into a set of misleading generalizations about beliefs and practices, merging Taylor's understanding and treatment of psalm singing into that of John Cotton, who died fifteen years before Taylor arrived in Massachusetts in 1668. Without citing any sources, or specifying a range of dates, Brissett claims that some New England Congregationalists

wanted to drop the practice of lining out and permit the accompaniment of musical instruments in worship. Cotton and Taylor resisted this sort of reform for strict theological reasons—the beauty they saw expressed in congregational psalm singing was a spiritual harmony of Christian minds and souls joining in consent to the redemptive truth embodied in the poetic text of the psalm. Any drift toward enhanced musical regularity risked a drift toward idolatry (an Old Testament sin that Cotton diagnosed in the musical and instrumental notations of the Hebrew psalms). (477)

If Cotton says little about singing technique and musical aesthetics in his 1640s writings on psalmody, he never dissociates vocal from social and spiritual accord, and he never sublimates the act of singing into spirit, mind, and soul. (This kind of elision would more accurately characterize the writing on the psalm meditation by Sir Anthony Cope and Thomas Becon discussed in Chapter 1.) More important, Taylor's incorporation of Hebrew psalm headings into his *Preparatory Meditations* as specifically musical terms does not square with the belief Brissett indirectly ascribes to him here—that is, that they reflect a quasi-idolatry abrogated by the New Testament.¹⁶³

¹⁶³ The probate inventory of Taylor's library includes Benjamin Colman's *The Government & Improvement of Mirth According to the Laws of Christianity*, published in Boston in 1707. Although there is much that Colman, a progressive by the standards of early eighteenth-century New England, and Taylor are likely to have disagreed on in terms of doctrine, Colman's treatise offers an alternative to the caricatures of congregational psalm singing that enliven the Singing Controversy literature—and one that, though still relatively late, was published early enough that it may have impacted Taylor's own thinking about psalmody before his health began to deteriorate. Colman remarks that "A Musical Ear and Voice" and "Art and Skill in Singing"—in addition to "a Genius to relish the Lofty Airs & Strains of Poetry"—represents a "considerable Ornament and Beauty in any Person" (12-13). He later explores the ways in which the sensual ear is allied—not subordinated—to the spirit. He claims as one of psalmody's advantages, for example, "the Deliberateness & Leisure of this Mode of Praise or Prayer. The Mind has time allow'd it to Pause on the Sacred Passages: Every Syllable is distinctly utter'd, and drawn out in its proper Note, that the Mind may fix and fasten and dwell on the holy Tho't" (148). It is impossible to deduce practice from this

To a large certain extent, the tendency to read Taylor's references to music as figurative is warranted by his own practice: he was, as John Gatta notes, "drawn naturally to exploit the ambiguous connotations of musical references" (175), and his poetry revels in the bleeding together of disparate modes and media of expression. Over the course of the *Preparatory Meditations*, to take one example, Taylor exploits the versatility of the quill in impressively diverse ways: it is a writing implement, a feather from an angel's wing (Prologue, 7), a conductor of liquids (that is, aside from ink), a musical instrument, and an accessory to more than one.¹⁶⁴ Alluding to the practice of using goose quills as plectra in the early modern virginals (Brumm, 115), Taylor mixes two of these senses vividly in the opening stanza of Meditation 2.6:

I fain would praise thee, Lord, but finde black sin,
To stain my Tunes my Virginalls to spoile.
.
My Theme is rich: my skill is poore, untill
Thy Spirit makes my hand its holy quill. (1-2, 5-6)

The speaker's vow in the closing couplet of Meditation 2.29, "I'll make thy Curled flames my Citterns Wire / To toss my Songs of Praise rung on them, higher" (47-8), alludes to the quill's use as a plectrum for this lyre-like instrument as well and figures writing as a kind of strumming. Finally, the pen's hollow shaft allows Taylor to

short, idealized description, but it does seem to preclude an improvisational element. Colman also recognizes that singing "strikes so strongly on Sense & Imagination, and by them has the more forcible Access to our Affections" (149).

¹⁶⁴ Taylor's attraction to the quill's multiple uses can be dated to one of his earliest poems. In " * * * this in a Letter I sent to my schoolfellow. W. M.," the quill is a writing implement, part of a loom, and perhaps even (here again) a means of strumming ("thrum"-ing) a musical instrument:

What though my Muse be not addorn'd so rare
As Ovids golden verses to declare
My love: yet it is in the loome tyed
Where golden quills of love weave on the web
Which web I take out of my loome and send
It, as a present unto you my friend
But though I send the web I keepe the thrum
To draw an other web up in my loome. (*Minor Poetry*, 4)

metaphorize it as a musical pipe. In the closing couplet of Meditation 2.52, the speaker imagines his dull affections cured by a live coal from God's heavenly altar, a change that, he imagines, will turn him into "a Golden Trumpet... / Till when let this unskilfull ditty still / Tunes in thine Eares, pipd through my sorry quill" (31-6). To cut through this fluidity and reduce Taylor's treatment of music to a set of symbols for poetic production, however is to overvalue a single aspect of his faith, and along with it, a single aesthetic strategy, among many of both. Limited and poorly understood as it may have been, music was a real sensory experience for New England Congregationalist Christians, and its power and versatility as one of Taylor's leading poetic tropes derives from this grounding.¹⁶⁵

As Brissett (462), Mignon (1425) and others have argued, Taylor's Meditations thematize the human lack of adequate verbal resources and facility for praise and thanksgiving as a spiritual, as well as a poetic, problem. Just as often, however, these poems leave aside the question of fit language and take musical deficiency, instead, as their subject. In these instances, Occasionally, the words, but not the music, seem within the speaker's reach, as in this fantasy of angelic translation from the First Series:

May my Rough Voice, and my blunt Tongue but Spell
My Tale (for tune they can't) perhaps there may
Some Angell catch an end of't up, and tell
In Heaven, when he doth return that way... (1.23, 13-16)

To "Spell" is not to fail to fail to articulate, but to lack the composure and tempo of decorous speech. Significantly, the angel (from the Greek *aggelos*, "messenger") is not

¹⁶⁵ In an unfinished poem on the giant bones discovered at Clavarack, New York, in 1705 and believed to be the remains of a giant human being, for instance, Taylor acknowledges the "Spirits" of nature that make "Sweet musicke for our Eares," the "Bagpipes, Virginalls, & Harps" of the forest, and the "harsh notes from rugged Organs... / Displaying to us also natures Store" (26-30). These lines are difficult to follow. For a fuller reading of this poem, along with a brief account of Taylor's sustained interest in natural history, see Lan.

expected to convert, or set, Taylor's painstakingly cobbled-together utterance to music in this stanza, but simply to pronounce it.

In an account of Christ's ascending chariot in Meditation 1.20, Taylor represents music and language as parallel media for the expression of grace. Uncharacteristically, the passage opens with a disclaiming gesture that marks the speaker's vision as a work of the imagination:

Methinks I see Heavens Sparkling Courtiers fly,
In flakes of Glory down him to attend:
And heare Heart Cramping notes of Melody,
Surround his Charriot as it did ascend
Mixing their Music making e'ry String
More to inravish as they this tune Sing. (19-24)

These lines are animated by a powerful tension between sensations of close confinement ("Heart Cramping") and euphoric dislocation (the song "inravish[es]" its auditors), implying that the experience of pure melody in an unglorified state is as painful as it is exhilarating. The word "inravish" itself suggests these tensions, locating a kind of rapture within. At the same time, "string" can refer either to strains of music or to the ropes and reins that bind horse and chariot. In the poem's closing sequence, as the form of the poet's writing instrument is invested with faith, its organic function is restored and improved:

Lend mee thy Wings, my Lord, I'st fly apace.
My Soules Arms stud with thy strong Quills, true Faith,
My Quills then Feather with thy saving Grace,
My Wings will take the Winde thy Word displai'th.
Then I shall fly up to thy glorious Throne
With my strong Wings whose Feathers are thine own. (38-42)

These lines request a piecemeal transfer of God's property ("thy Wings," "thy Quills") to the petitioner ("my Quills," "my Wings"), but only so that it can be gloriously restored to

its original owner. As the references to quills and the Word suggest, Meditation 1.20 can be read as a fantasy about divinely inspired writing. Curiously, however, Taylor leaves open the question of the relationship between redeemed language and divine music in this poem, even in the stanza that paraphrases the text of the angelic song:

God is Gone up with a triumphant shout
 The Lord with Sounding Trumpets melodies.
 Sing Praise, Sing Praise, Sing Praise, Sing Praises out,
 Unto our King Sing praise Seraphickwise.
 Lift up your Heads ye lasting Doore they sing
 And let the King of Glory Enter in. (25-30)

The words of the imagined song—however anticlimactic they might appear—are a settled matter: the poem betrays no anxiety about the inadequacy of the paraphrase, the flatness of the vision, or the feebleness of the mind. The speaker’s painful sense of having witnessed, and then lost all sensory contact with, heavenly beauty is only ambiguously linked to his ability to translate or record. As Fithian points out, much of the material of this song (regardless of whether it begins at line 25 or line 27) is lifted from Psalms 24 and 47 (107). In her reading, the poet “declares his...envy” of the angelic song he paraphrases: “Fittingly enough, as Taylor covets the power of psalmic praise, he desires to emulate what the psalmist pictures; he wants the psalmic divine wings. While on earth, however, he has to be content with only the ‘wings’ his words can provide. And his poetic diction often indicates his belief that Christ might be more pleased if he would adapt these words from the psalter” (107). But what is striking in Meditation 1.20, I would argue, is that the speaker has made just such an adaptation: here, he has the words but lacks adequate music.

In fact, there are moments in the *Preparatory Meditations* where Taylor’s emulation of the psalmist seems more playful than imitative. The last four lines of

Meditation 2.7, for example, riff on one of the psalter's best-known images:

Lord, lay thy brightsome Colours on me thine.
 Scoure thou my pipes then play thy tunes therein.
 I will not hang my Harp on Willows by.
 While thy Sweet praise, my Tunes doth glorify. (39-42)

“Scoure” punningly conflates the composition of music for an instrument’s part (“score”) with an abrasive scrubbing (“scour,” in latter-day orthography). More than a pious allusion to the celebrated psalm of exile, this passage, in a sense, rewrites its source (Psalm 137.2): rather than wavering over the propriety of singing the Lord’s song in desertion and captivity, Taylor’s speaker welcomes God’s loving oppression, which results, he imagines, not in revenge, but in a music in which “thy tunes” (that is, the Lord’s) and “my Tunes” are indistinguishable. Taylor’s poetic self-consciousness produced far more than an exposure and abasement of himself as a wielder of fallen words and a singer of broken melodies. Just as the parenthetically enclosed terms in his metrical psalm paraphrases occasionally converted those etudes into vehicles for humble poetic innovation, the theme of musical imperfection in the *Preparatory Meditations* provided Taylor with a means to a more dynamic engagement of scripture in his verse. To help trace out the development of this technique, I would first like to return briefly to the work of Thomas Walter, one of the most vocal and best musically trained proponents of the Regular Singing movement in the 1720s.

In the opening words of the Preface to the Bay Psalm Book (1640), John Cotton opposes discord to psalmody: “The singing of Psalmes, though it breath forth nothing but holy harmony, and melody; yet such is the subtilty of the enemie, and the enmity of our nature against the Lord, & his ways, that our hearts can finde matter of discord in this harmony, and crotchets of division in this holy melody” (1). These straightforward

alignments—of psalm singing with harmony and melody, and of discord with hostility to God—appear to have gone unchallenged in New England until the publication of Walter’s *The Grounds and Rules of Musick Explained* over eighty years later in the early phases of the Singing Controversy. Toward the end of this popular primer and tunebook, Walter turns briefly to consider—and even to endorse—alternatives to perfect harmony:

Finally, Observe, that Discords are sometimes made use of in Musick, to prepare the Ear by their Harshness, to relish better the Sweetness and Melody of a following Concord. Thus oftentimes, there will be an imperfect Concord, then a Discord, which is still more grating; this serves to keep the Auditor in a longing Suspence, ’till all the Parts fall into a perfect Set of Chords, which finishes and compleats the Harmony, and strangely charms the Hearer. (24)

Because Walter articulates an aesthetic principle in this passage that is central to Taylor’s poetics, it is worth parsing out and delineating this concept of felicitous discord. In important ways, Walter’s definition differs from the “musical confusion / Of hounds and echo in conjunction” that Theseus boasts of, and the “musical...discord” of the Spartan dogs baying the Cretan bear that Hippolyta recalls, with relish, in Act IV, Scene 1 of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (first published in 1600). There, discord emerges from an encounter between the chaos of nature and a human attempt to control it, whose multiple uncertainties make the experience thrilling to its witnesses. The insight Walter provides, on the other hand, has more to do with the exploitation of the fixed relation between performed music and time. The temporality of discord, he suggests, is unique: whereas unison and harmony (in the modern sense of this term¹⁶⁶) involve coincident pitches, and whereas a listener’s appreciation for harmonically regular melody depends on the concordant relation of a tone sounded in the present to those that have come just before, discord jars the listener forward along the timeline of a piece of music, stimulating

¹⁶⁶ In the early modern sense of this word, harmony could mean pitches played consecutively or in unison (Hollander, 26-7).

expectation and desire, encouraging him or her to hold in tension the interval of the present with its unvoiced resolution.

In the Introduction to *The Oxford Book of American Verse* (1950), F.O. Matthiessen remarks, “it was not until the discovery of [Taylor’s] manuscripts in the Yale library in the late nineteen-thirties that we could begin to realize that we had had in America a metaphysical poet in the same sense that George Herbert was a metaphysical. This gives a deeper American tap-root to the revival by Eliot and others of that strain of poetry in our day” (xv).¹⁶⁷ Because of these deep-rooted associations, to mention the discord in Taylor’s verse almost inevitably recalls Samuel Johnson’s famous remark that the “wit” of the metaphysical poets “may be more rigorously and philosophically considered a kind of discordia concors, a combination of dissimilar images” involving elaborate conceits in which “the most heterogenous ideas are yoked by violence together” (13).¹⁶⁸ Appropriate as this definition might seem to the clash of disparate images and registers that animate Taylor’s verse, however, it would undersell his manipulation of discord’s rich aesthetic potential, which goes well beyond such heterogeneity. In the final pages of this chapter, I will explore the multiple forms and registers of discord in Taylor’s poetics: the dissonance between the Word and Taylor’s multiple strategies of

¹⁶⁷ Following up on a reference to an unpublished manuscript of “Poetical Works” by a rural seventeenth-century minister in John L. Sibley’s *Biographical Sketches of Graduates of Harvard University* (1873-85), Thomas H. Johnson discovered the bulk of Taylor’s extant poetry in the Yale University Library in the 1930s (Johnson, 290). Taylor bequeathed most of his library, including the *Poetical Works* manuscript, to his son-in-law, Isaac Stiles, who passed it on to his son, Ezra Stiles. Stiles’s nephew, Henry Wyllys Taylor, donated the manuscript (and other materials written by Taylor) to the Yale University Library in 1883 (Johnson, 290, n. 5).

¹⁶⁸ As T. S. Eliot remarks in the watershed essay, “The Metaphysical Poets” (1921), “the force of this impeachment lies in the failure of the conjunction, that fact that often the ideas are yoked but not united.” Eliot maintains that there is, very often, a unity in so-called metaphysical poetry, but that its value had been obscured (to Johnson and others) by “a dissociation of sensibility” that took hold in the seventeenth century: in the shadow of Milton’s and Dryden’s singular achievements, poetic language “became more refined” but its “feeling became more crude” (*Selected Prose*, 60). See Hammond, *Fifty Years*, 3, for a discussion of the relation between the revival of critical interest in the metaphysical poets Eliot’s essay sparked and the first publication of Taylor’s verse, sixteen years later in 1937.

translating it, the playing of untuned instruments, the interval of consecutive tones, and the overlap of the present and future tenses of praise.

The first form of discord I will consider is the most technical. Along with the majority of other contemporary music theorists, Walter held that the most discordant intervals “among the Seven Notes” of the Western scale are the “Second, and Seventh” (23), dyads of consecutive scale degrees comprising the tonic and the tone just before or after.¹⁶⁹ Pure discord, as Walter defines it, can thus be understood as the sounding together of two pitches nearly, but not exactly, equal to one another. In all likelihood, Taylor never saw Walter’s primer, which does not appear in the probate inventory of his library. If he had, it would have been during the last years of his life, with his longer poetic works and all, or all but a handful, of his *Meditations* already written. Nevertheless, I would argue, Taylor grasped the core principles in Walter’s formulation intuitively and incorporated them into his poetics.

Meditation 1.7, one of the shortest in either series and the first composed under a heading from a verse from the Psalms (45.2, “Grace in thy lips is poured out”)¹⁷⁰, displays a pattern of metaphor that correlates closely with Walter’s definition of pure discord. The core imagery in this poem involves the distillation of spirits and the production of liquid gold. It opens, however, with an abrupt switch between the literal and figurative registers, as Christ’s body flashes across the visual field and then abruptly

¹⁶⁹ Walter adds (and Henrissonne confirms) that “a Fourth is by some accounted a Chord, by others a Discord; but I am inclined to think the former” (23). Probably because he intends his primer to cover only the rudiments of music theory, Walter says nothing about minor seconds, intervals between tones a half-step apart.

¹⁷⁰ The wording in Taylor’s heading differs substantially from that of the Authorized and Geneva Bibles and the Bay, New England, and Sternhold-Hopkins Psalm Books. The Ainsworth Psalter’s metrical paraphrase of this verse is the closest—and the only contemporary published translation I have discovered that features the preposition “out”: “grace powred out is in thy lippes” (119). Like Ainsworth’s, Taylor’s line—which has the same words, in a slightly different order—scans as perfect tetrameter if “poured” is read as two syllables (the musical notation in the Ainsworth psalter makes it clear that this should be).

reemerges in the second line in the form of a still:

Thy Humane Frame, my Glorious Lord, I spy,
 A Golden Still with Heavenly Choice drugs filld,
 Thy Holy Love, the Glowing heate whereby,
 The spirit of Grace is graciously distilld.
 Thy Mouth the Neck through which these Spirits Still
 My soul thy Violl make, and therewith fill. (5-6)

An arresting snag in the poem's imagery turns up in the verbless subordinate clause wedged between one of Taylor's signature polyptotons ("Grace is graciously") and a pun on "Violl" ("vial," a container, and "viol," a bowed, stringed instrument). By "neck" (5), Taylor appears to mean the tapered output channel at the top of a distillation kettle where the vapor from a boiling mixture condenses. The reference to the sighting of Christ's "Humane frame" in the opening line, however, draws in the primary, corporeal sense of this word as well, making the apposition of body parts in this line a strange, disjointed pairing: "mouth" and "neck" are so close together in human anatomy—and are yet structurally so dissimilar—that to metaphorize one as the other is much like striking consecutive tones together.

According to Aristotle's definitions in the *Poetics* and *Rhetoric*, effective metaphors and similes combine the ingenious discerning of similarities with a careful observance of due proportion (*Poetics*, 1459a7; *Rhetoric*, 1405a9). At times, Taylor, who may not have known these definitions firsthand, can seem to have made an art out of violating their terms: he claims in the first Meditation in the Second Series, for example, that Christ's glory outshines the glory of the Old Testament types "More than the Sun excells in its bright glee / A nat, an Earewig, Weevill, snaile, or shell" (21-2). Across the enjambment, where one might reasonably expect to find a lantern, a match, or perhaps a lightning bug, Taylor presents a cast of insects whose lack of any apparent connection to

the sun, shatters all sense of Aristotelian propriety, suggesting instead a difference of kind as well as degree.¹⁷¹

Taylor's mouth-as-neck figure achieves an equally striking, but structurally different, discordant effect. Its curious anatomical descent from opening to passageway is underwritten by Hebrew etymology, as the heading to Meditation 2.126, which Taylor would write in 1715, almost thirty-two years later, demonstrates. Next to the Biblical verse for the later work ("Cant. 5.16. His Mouth is most sweet"), Taylor provides the Hebrew word rendered in the Authorized Version as "mouth," as well as a gloss: "Palate or Windpipe, latine Guther."¹⁷² Playing on the rich polysemy of the original, Taylor incorporates all four terms in Meditation 2.126. Its first stanza concludes, "Thy mouth's most sweet, the Windepipe of thy Lungs / Conveighs all sweetness from thy Heart that throngs" (5-6). A little further on, the lungs are figured as a "golden gutter" (29) and the speaker bids God to remodel his "Palates Constitution" on his own, so that their senses of taste correspond exactly (37) and the speaker's "Winde Pipe" can sing God's praise (54). The discord in the dyad in Meditation 1.7, in other words, expresses a problem of correspondence between Hebrew and English, a problem of translation that morphs—just as it had in Taylor's metrical psalms—into a poetic opportunity. Rather than bemoaning this semantic overdetermination as another sign of the limits of fallen language, Taylor absorbs it into his praise.

The middle of the poem's three stanzas specifies that the product of the distillation process sketched out in the first stanza is a kind of portable, godly language:

¹⁷¹ Many of Taylor's readers have been put off by this feature of his work: Alan B. Howard characterizes Taylor's poetic persona as a "suppliant who cries out for some violent physical union with Christ in metaphors that tumble forth on the page in a glittering rapturous fabric of irrationality" (360).

¹⁷² According to Chana and Ariel Bloch, the Hebrew expression literally means "'his palate is sweet wine,' an allusion to his kisses...or also sweet words, with the palate, *hek*, as the organ of speech" (188).

Thy Speech the Liquour in thy Vessell Stands,
 Well ting'd with Grace a blessed Tincture, Loe,
 Thy Words distilld, Grace in thy Lips pourd, and,
 Give Graces Tinctur in them where they go. (7-10)

Compressed as they are, the last two lines in this quatrain are critical to the poem's message about the translatability of divine words: if Christ's speech is the liquor—the distillate—of grace, as lines 4 and 7 suggest, grace is, in turn, the distillation of Christ's language. This theme of mutual reciprocity—one of Taylor's favorites—carries over into the couplet that follows, where it is carefully qualified:

Thy words in graces tincture stilld, Lord, may
 The Tincture of thy Grace in me Convey. (11-12)

The sense of these lines is also far from transparent (what, exactly, did Taylor mean by “in me”?), but it seems clear that Christ's words (that is, the Word, scripture, the text of Psalm 45) are capable of either transferring his grace to the speaker, or of conveying (to unspecified others) the part of Christ's grace that the speaker has already internalized. The word “may” clarifies that this transfer of grace is potential, however, not guaranteed. The closing stanza, which refigures Christ's mouth and returns to the theme of his image, specifies the obstacles to this transfer:

That Golden Mint of Words thy Mouth Divine
 Doth tip these Words, which by my Fall were spoild;
 And Dub with Gold dug out of Graces mine
 That they thine Image might have in them foild.
 Grace in thy Lips poured out's as Liquid Gold.
 Thy Bottle make my Soule, Lord, it to hold. (13-18)

When read in light of the suggestive final clause of Psalm 45.1, the biblical verse that precedes the meditation's text (“my tongue is the pen of a ready writer”), the “Bottle” in line 18 reconciles the poem's two sets of images. The speaker imagines his soul becoming the ink well into which Christ pours his liquid-gold, gracious language,

distilled from grace.¹⁷³

The poem ultimately turns, however, on a gemological figure that redirects the imagery of distillation.¹⁷⁴ In the glossary of his edition of the *Meditations*, Patterson points out that to be “foild” is “to be placed in a foil, as a gem, for contrast” (518).

Reading line 16 with this meaning in mind not only brings the poem’s message about translation into clearer focus, but it helps elucidate a crucial element of Taylor’s approach to the psalms in the *Preparatory Meditations*. Through the figure of Christ’s foiled image, Taylor shows that divine language cannot be appropriated wholesale by fallen humankind: at best, it suffuses human speech and writing (the figure of the tongue as pen combines these media)¹⁷⁵, whose own words wrap around Christ’s, forming a humbled and edified

¹⁷³ Heavenly writing is either inkless or golden in the *Preparatory Meditations*; ink generally figures fallen language. In one memorable image, Taylor imagines “Hell’s Inkfac’de Elf” spitting “black Venom” on the flower of human life (1.33, 24), and he laments in Meditation 2.4, “O Glorious One, the gloriou’st thought I thincke / Of thee falls black as Inck upon thy Glory” (7-8).

¹⁷⁴ William Scheick reads Meditation 1.7 as “a dramatic monologue sung by a bride-narrator who anticipates being kissed and inseminated by her gorgeous husband and lord.” As he points out, Psalm 45 has traditionally been read as a love-song allegory for the relation between Christ and his church, and Taylor “never shied away from describing bodily experiences.” Scheick glosses the persona’s “I spy” from the first line as an admission “to a little breech of decorum. She has taken a quick peek at her spouse’s ‘Humane Frame,’ which she describes as inflamed by ‘Love.’” The references to Christ’s mouth and neck, he maintains, are “thinly veiled allusions to the kissing or conjunction of female and male sex organs” (70). The third stanza makes it clear that “the bride...would like to see herself spiritually impregnated so that the original Adamic image of God would be renewed in her. Then her mouth could birth unspoiled words of thanksgiving that would, like children, ‘have in them foild’ Christ’s ‘Image.’” The broader context of the *Preparatory Meditations* would seem to bear this method of reading out. In many of his poems, Taylor casts his persona as the bride or spouse of Christ, drawing on a rich Christian tradition grounded in allegorical readings of Canticles that flourished in seventeenth-century New England. Ivy Schweitzer provides a thorough and lucid treatment of this interpretive practice, especially as it shaped Taylor’s poetics, in *The Work of Self-Representation*. There, she argues that the figure of a desiring but fully obedient female spouse was the most efficient means for the Puritan male “to bring about his own passivity and receptivity, his own defacement and deauthorization” (88) as a penitent supplicant. Thus humbled, he could aspire to “soteriological inclusion in the holy dyad” (119) with Christ, without risking his social and biological masculinity, since the figure of the Spouse “is a woman divorced from women” (111). But it is misleading, I would argue, to render Meditation 1.8’s suggestive imagery in biologically specific sexual terms, as Scheick does: the conflation of mouth and neck itself seems to caution against taking the poem’s anatomy literally. Taylor rarely limited his poetic imagination to a single field of associations. The reference to foiling in the poem’s final stanza is, I believe, not an image of reproduction along the lines of Shakespeare’s “Make me another self” sonnets, but a figure for translation.

¹⁷⁵ Taylor regularly conflates the two in the *Meditations*, calling his tongue “blunt” (1.21, 12; 1.23, 13), for example, and his pen tongue-tied (2.43, 3).

backdrop. The tipping and dubbing lines 14 and 15 describe take place in the present, suggesting that they are linked to the mode of expression in which the speaker is engaged. As I hope to make clear in the following readings, foiling has a concrete referent in Taylor's transliteration of Hebrew words from psalm headings.

The practice I have in mind occurs for the first time in Meditation 1.18. The speaker of this poem traces out a wide range of expressions of piety, culminating in an extended (and mechanically precise) metaphor whose vehicle is a Virginal—a musical instrument in the harpsichord family, one of Taylor's favorite devices—paired with a reference to a Hebrew expression of uncertain meaning. As the poem begins, he exhorts his soul, heart, and breast to respond appropriately to the image of Christ's "Marr'd" face¹⁷⁶:

Astonisht Stand, my soule; why dost not start
At this surprizing sight shewn here below?
Oh! let the twitch made by my bouncing Heart
Gust from my breast this Enterjection, Oh! (3-4)

Associating himself with "Wills wed to Wickedness, Hearts stonifide / Flinty Affections, Conscience Chalybdine / Flooding the World with Horrid Crimes" (8-9) that are incapable of pious admiration, the speaker asks comparatively little of his fallen faculties—a vocal, but not verbal, monosyllable. By the end of the poem, however, with love "beam[ing] out its rayes" to thaw the speaker's Heart and "animate th' Affections till they blaze" (37-8), the speaker magnifies his ambition:

My Breast, be thou the ringing Virginalls:
Ye mine Affections, their sweet Golden strings,
My Panting Heart, be thou for Stops, and Falls:
Lord, let thy quick'ning Beams dance o're the Pins.
Then let thy spirit this Sweet note resume,

¹⁷⁶ In keeping with Reformed convention, Taylor read the verse for this Meditation, "Isai. 52.14. His Vissage was marr'd more than any man," as a prophecy about Christ.

ALTASCHATH MICHTAM, in Seraphick Tune. (43-8)

The third line of this stanza compares the quickened pulse of the heart with the vertical motion of a jack in an early modern harpsichord. It is worth pausing to flesh this elegant figure out, which exemplifies Taylor's tight control over his musical metaphors. The keys of the virginals are balanced on pivots. When pressed down, they send jacks, thin wooden strips bearing mounted horizontal plectra upward, so that they pluck the instrument's strings. The jacks collide with a felt-lined rail at the top of their ascent and then ricochet back into position, as swivelling devices called tongues keep the plectra from touching the strings on their way down.¹⁷⁷ In this figure, Taylor construes the virginals as a means of amplifying the cardiac "twitch" in the poem's first stanza. The ingenuity of the device is in contrast with the humility of the gesture it underwrites: the speaker is not asking for more skill or greater powers of articulation, but for a metamorphosis into the passive instrument of a lost Hebrew melody.

"Altaschath" transliterates a Hebrew word found in the headings to Psalms 57-9 and 75. According to Robert Alter, it is a "musical term, the meaning of which has been lost"; he adds that the influential medieval Hebrew commentator David Kimchi "ingeniously links it with David's rebuke to his men when they came upon Saul sleeping in their cave: *al-tashhiheitu*, 'do him no violence.'" (Alter is skeptical of this "tie-in of the superscription with an episode in David's life," suggesting that it is merely "an after-the-fact editorial maneuver" [57, n. 1], but early modern commentators seem to have accepted it.) "Michtam," a term of equally uncertain meaning, appears in the heading to Psalms 16 and 56-60 (on three occasions, in conjunction with "Altaschath"); the

¹⁷⁷ For a helpful diagram of this process, see the Wikipedia article on harpsichords (my source for this technical information, accessed January 26, 2011).

Septuagint translators speculated that it means “an inscription incised in stone” (Alter, 45). On a thematic level, both terms are connected to the Meditation’s imagery—Taylor seems to have had in mind the engraving of the Word in “Hearts stonifide,” and the injunction not to destroy echoes Christ’s intervention in the advance of “Vengeance...with her fierce Troops in Bluff” in stanzas 3-6.¹⁷⁸

Apart from their apparent and hypothesized meanings, however, the gesture of incorporating the Hebrew words untranslated is itself equally significant. The Bay Psalm translators and the supporters of the Regular Singing movement strove for the greatest possible fidelity to the scriptural and primitive-church origins of psalmody, but both regarded David’s and Asaph’s melodies as irrecoverable. Unrestricted, in his poetry, by practical concerns about what tunes should be sung, and how, and aware of the inevitable imperfection of his singing, Taylor imagined a way around the crux: Meditation 1.18 is not so much an imitation of a psalm as a medium through which he asks God to recreate Hebrew psalmody and, in the same stroke, to recast him as a passive agent of its performance. In the meantime, his poetry offers a foil in which to present God’s perfect but—as yet—only partially transmitted grace.¹⁷⁹

The incompleteness of this transfer is intimately related to the “longing suspense” generated in the dyad of almost identical, but recognizably distinct, tones: Walter’s definition of discord provides a framework in which to understand a curious pattern of

¹⁷⁸ “Seraphick,” which derives from “seraphim” (in Christian theology, the highest order of angels), is a Hebrew word that means, literally, “the burning ones”; it recalls the blazing affections of line 38. “Panting hart” is a punning allusion to Psalm 42.1, “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.”

¹⁷⁹ Taylor’s poetic representations of psalmody also endorse a certain kind of novelty: in the closing couplets of consecutive poems in the Second Series, he promises to “sing / New Psalms on David’s Harpe” as well as to construct a chapel where God’s “Praise / Shall be the Psalms sung forth in gracious layes” (2.2, 41-2; 2.3, 35-6). Taylor playfully draws the two strands—old and new psalms—together when he asks, in Meditation 2.54, “What then’s my jews trump meet to tune thy Story?” (6)

temporal layering that draws Taylor's *Meditations* even closer to the Book of Psalms. In the English translations familiar to Taylor, many of the psalms build toward promises to sing, as if their composers wished, temporarily, to call the psalm's status as song into question: "Be exalted, O Lord, in your strength; we will sing and praise your might" (21.13); "I will also praise thee with the psaltery, even thy truth, O my God: unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel. My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee; and my soul, which thou hast redeemed" (71.21-23); "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise" (57.9). A psalm's self-projection into the future can be read many ways: as a merging of the present and future tenses of praise, a celebration of faith as an ever-renewing dynamic of gratitude and joy, a fixation of sense and spirit on the perfection in song that accompanies the saint's ascent to heaven, or, less optimistically, a rejection or disavowal of the song of the present on the grounds that it somehow falls short of the requisite harmony, rhythm, and grace—a reminder that the earthbound actions of praise, rejoicing, and even, in some critical sense, singing itself are, by reason of human frailty, perpetually deferred. Because the melodies of the psalms are strictly irrecoverable, this quality of deferral intensifies in its translation into English. Through his frequent promises to sing, play, or otherwise channel music in his *Preparatory Meditations*, Taylor projects the crudeness of natural human music into the eternal singing Soul glimpses in the lyric hymns that close *Gods Determinations*.

Taylor incorporates transliterated Hebrew psalm headings of ambiguous meaning in figures of not-yet-tunable music across both series of the *Meditations*. In the closing couplet of Meditation 2.28, the speaker proposes, "Be thou my Refuge City; take me in. /

And I thy Praise will on Muth Labben sing” (35-6).¹⁸⁰ The speaker of Meditation 2.30 looks forward to the day when, with God’s support, “In Angells Quires I’le then my Michtams Sing: / Upon my Jonah Elem Rechokim” (77-8).¹⁸¹ Meditation 1.46 closes, “Make me thy shalm, thy praise my songs, whereby / My mean shoshannim may thy Michtams raise” (51-2). A shalm (not a Hebrew word) is an oboe; shoshannim (lily), is a word from the heading to Psalms 45 and 69 that provides Taylor with a joint metaphor of song and smell (“when my Clay ball’s in thy White robes dress[t],” the same poem promises, “My tune perfume thy praise shall with the best” [53-4]). Crucially, the shoshannim from the Psalm headings resonates with Canticles 2.1, “The Lillie [*shoshannah*] of the Vallies”¹⁸²: through these layered allusions to biblical poetry, Taylor blends music and scent, breath and song:

Lord make me th’Vally where this Lilly grows.
Then I am thine, and thou art mine indeed.
Propriety is mutuall: Glorious shows
And Odorif’rous breath shall in me breed
Which twisted in my Tunes, thy praise shall ring
On my shoshannims sweetest Well tun’d string. (2.69, 37-42)

The Hebrew word provides a synaesthetic parallel to God’s theanthropy as consummated in the union between Christ and the church, which early modern Protestants believed were typed by the bridegroom and the bride, respectively, in Canticles.¹⁸³ Building on Taylor’s dual sense of his poems as devotional song and, at the same time, something that

¹⁸⁰ According to Patterson’s glossary, “muth labben” are “cue words appearing in the headnote of Psalm 9, variously translated as ‘To die for the son,’ ‘Upon Maiden,’ and ‘To the son’” (521). According to Alter, the second term, “laben,” “may be a reversal of letters, *n-b-l*, for *nevel*, a kind of lyre” (25). Fithian notes that the Geneva psalter identified Muth Labben as “a kinde of instrument or tune” (101; she cites *The Booke of Psalmes*...[The Geneva Psalter]. London, 1576; p. 15).

¹⁸¹ This comes from the heading to Psalm 56; Alter translates it “the mute dove of distant places”; Patterson, “opening words of a popular song...it translates as ‘Dove on far-off Terebinths.’”

¹⁸² For a brief discussion of the Hebrew term as used in Canticles, see Bloch and Bloch, 148.

¹⁸³ In a synaesthetic musical pun, the closing stanza of Meditation 2.84 reminds Christ that he can cure the speaker’s “mallody” (that is, his malodorous melody) with his myrrh (43).

falls short of becoming adequate music, in each of these instances, the promise to make music projects the speaker into the future along an axis of what Walter called, in his account of discord, “longing Suspence.”

This projection is a central theme of Meditation 2.110, based on Matthew 26.30, “When they had sung an Hymn” (the passage Cotton cited in support of his claim that congregations should only sing psalms in unison in *Singing of Psalmes*). As it opens, the speaker recalls that Christ’s life was framed by song: “The Angells sung a Carole at thy Birth: / My Lord, and thou thyselfe didst sweetly sing / An Epinicioum at thy Death, on Earth” (2.110, 1-3).¹⁸⁴ At the end of the poem, the speaker requests to be converted into an “Organ” fit to sing “Hallilujuhs in sweet musicks dress” (33-4) at Christ’s banquet—that is, to echo these gospel hymns in a slightly different form. The temporality of this transformation, however, curiously folds in on itself. First having asked to be made God’s wind instrument, the speaker pleads, “Then play on mee thy pipe that is almost / Worn out with piping tunes of Vanity” (37, 39-40). The closing stanza riffs on the same theme of being transformed, paradoxically, into something one has already become—something that has already fallen into disrepair:

Make too my Soul thy Cittern, and its wyers
 Make my affections: and rub off their rust
 With thy bright Grace. And screw my strings up higher
 And tune the same, to tune thy praise most Just. (49-52)

The speaker’s heart is a pipe, and his soul a Cittern, already: God’s task is somehow both to effect the conversion of disobedient flesh to musical instrument, and to renovate and assume control of this medium as if the change has been carried out long before. As the closing couplet of the *Preparatory Meditations* suggests, true melody is deferred to the

¹⁸⁴ For the carol, see Luke 2.13-14; for the epinicioum (victory song), see Luke 23.46 (which quotes Psalm 31.5).

saint's ascension to heaven, and can only be expressed subjunctively: "If thou accepts my sick Loves gift I bring / Thy it accepting makes my sick Love sing" (25-30).

In a letter to his former Harvard classmate Samuel Sewall in the 1690s, Taylor famously remarked, "I am far off from the Muses Copses: and the Foggy damp assulting my Lodgen in these remotest Swamps from the Heliconian quarters, where little Save Clonian Rusticity is Al-A-Mode, will plead my apology" (Patterson, 4). This readily quotable line—in our secular age, a more palatable and charming instance of self-deprecation than any in Taylor's verse—seems only to engrave more deeply the image of Taylor as a provincial poet, crafting, copying out, and hand-binding his Leicestershire-accented verse for a narrowly limited audience in relative isolation on the colonial frontier. Ivy Schweitzer has even gone so far as to claim that "the cultural work that Edward Taylor accomplished in his celebrated verse is a cultural dead end":

He is the product of fifty years of ideological consolidation. At a time of liberalization in Puritan doctrine and practice, he harks back to the first decades after the Great Migration, resisting the progressive innovations of Stoddardeanism and devising a poetics within the iconophobic discourse of Puritan theology that worked, practically unchanged, for over forty years. Despite critical speculations on his crypto-Catholicism, his sensual language and imagery, and his reluctance to publish his poetry, Taylor is the poet whom the founding Puritan fathers would have most eagerly embraced as one of their own. (39)

To the extent that Taylor's work was (with the minor exception I have noted) uncirculated until the early twentieth century, it was, undeniably, something of a dead end. Regardless of his hard-line orthodoxy, however, and regardless of whether first-generation New England settlers might have seen themselves reflected in his devotional verse, Taylor's treatment of divine music in translation and his appreciation for the poetic potential in discord evince a progressive—even a prescient—aesthetics.

Kevin Cattrell

Fall, 2011

Colonial New England Psalmody and the Poetics of Discord in Translation

Conclusion: Wonderful Hindrance, Beautiful Disconnect

In parsing out the role of discord in the poetics of colonial New England psalmody, this dissertation has explored a range of early modern Christian perspectives on the mutability of texts and traditions. The singers, translators, and preachers it covers struggled to express the relationship between what John Cotton called the “ever old” with the “ever new” aspects of the psalms, to forge new forms of praise from inviolable but only partially recoverable models and traditions, and to make sense of the inevitable imperfections that attend the collective ritual of psalmody: slipped strings in figurative instruments of praise, lexical deficiencies, ruptures in the social fabric of covenanted communities, lapses in the observance and comprehension of the ordinance, and strife over the proper balance between uniformity of worship and pure, self-initiated, inward spiritual commitment.

This project has many limitations. Regrettably, I have no Hebrew, Massachusett, or Wopanaak. Cribs, online vocabularies, and secondary sources are no substitutes for a familiarity with a foreign language’s rhythms, idioms, morphology, syntax, and temporal modes. Although it is possible to get a rough sense of the literal meaning of the Hebrew Psalms from interlinear translations, I have no efficient way of gauging the quality, accuracy, and character of the prose in the *Massachusetts Psalter* and the prose and verse in *Mamusse Wunnutupanatamwe Up-Biblum*, or of comparing any of the three. One of

the ironies of indigenous American literacy in the colonial period is that most of the surviving texts—and by far the longest of them—are themselves translations from well-known and readily available sources, which effectively prohibits their retranslation. Anglophone readers can point to any sentence in the Algonquian Bible and find out, easily, the gist of it, since it uses the same editorial apparatus as English Bibles. What we miss, of course, are the nuances, and it is excruciating not to know—not to begin to know—what these are. Monolingual as it is, my sense of the poetics of colonial New England psalmody can only be partial and provisional.

Furthermore, the claims I make in this dissertation would be greatly strengthened, and almost certainly modified (at least in terms of their emphases), if I had a better sense of the psalms' actual patterns of use. As I argue in Chapter 1 and in the closing section of Chapter 2, the ordinariness of a colonial New England community's psalm singing was often the best indicator of its health and success. In large part because of this, references to psalmody are common in the print archive, but references to the performance of specific psalms are rare. Samuel Sewall's journal (1674-1729) and Experience Mather's *Indian Converts* (1727) both note that certain psalms were sung on certain occasions, but subsequent work on early New England church music would benefit from a fuller set of such data, collected perhaps from manuscript church records and ministers' journals and correspondence.

In spite of these and other shortcomings, I hope that my dissertation raises questions about music, poetry, adaptation, and fellowship that transcend the region, period and cultural forms it covers. Over the course of my research and writing, I have become gradually aware of curious resonances between colonial New England psalm

singing and twenty-first-century deep house culture. By way of conclusion, and in order to place my findings in a transhistorical context, I would like to draw some of these resonances out.

A form of mid-tempo dance music developed by DJs and producers in Detroit, Chicago, and New York in the 1980s and popularized in pockets around the globe, deep house has in common with colonial New England psalm singing a perpetual concern for the complicated and often discordant relationships between individuals and collectives in their composition, mediation, performance, and experience of music. The Dennis Ferrer edit of the Henrik Schwarz remix of the Norwegian folk-rock singer Ane Brun's "Headphone Silence" (2008), for instance, is one of the best examples of a deep house production that engages these themes.¹⁸⁵ As the following passage indicates, the lyrics to this track are about a kind of public solitude mediated by a private listening experience:

I am travelling the wonderful loneliness of the headphone silence
 Feels like no one can see me, they see right through me
 Cuts me off from the rest of the world
 The useless strangers, sharing my time and space
 They might hear my humming, my tapping of fingers, anyway
 At least I have my thoughts all to myself
 My contentness and the view outside

In the original release of the song on the album *Spending Time with Morgan* (2005), Brun's filtered vocals are accompanied by acoustic guitar, double bass, and light percussion (there is no bass drum), as well as a short soprano saxophone solo. The Schwarz / Ferrer rework, on the other hand, retains the vocal (with a few exceptions and

¹⁸⁵ An edit rearranges, lengthens, shortens, or removes different parts of a track, but makes only minimal adjustments to the raw material itself. A remix generally involves more original production.

adjustments¹⁸⁶) but nothing of the original instrumentation, replacing it with a full complement of synthetic sounds (drums, bass, keys, and strings). Like most house productions, it emphasizes the low end and the beat.

House and techno are characterized, almost exclusively, by a down-beat-driven 4/4 time signature and a mechanically fixed tempo of around 110-130 beats per minute,¹⁸⁷ and tracks in these genres tend to begin and end with four or more bars of little else but bass and percussion. The Detroit DJ and electronic music composer Jeff Mills once remarked that this formulaic structure is “a wonderful hindrance” for producers¹⁸⁸—an asset, not (or not necessarily) a liability for rote colorlessness. Behind this comment is a veteran DJ’s understanding that the automated forms in question matter as much for the mutual compatibility they confer as for any of their intrinsic properties. Similar to the way that common, long, and short meter make metrical psalm translations adaptable to a potentially unlimited range of standardized musical settings, the regular structure of house and techno is functional, leaving tracks open for creative inclusion in DJ sets—larger, collaborative contexts that fall beyond the composers’ control. At their best, both house-music composition and metrical psalm translation tap into the aesthetic potential unlocked by set forms that invite collaboration and evoke collective experience.

¹⁸⁶ The original modulates to a different key mid-verse on two occasions; the remixes maintain a uniform harmonic structure throughout. The remixes also omit the last word of the first verse, “outside,” and the last two words of the second verse (“my head”).

¹⁸⁷ House and techno share large swaths of generic territory, as the names of the subgenres “tech house,” “techno house,” and “deep tech house” indicate. House tends to have more features in common with funk and disco. Deep house is generally warmer, more uplifting, and more likely to have soul-style vocals. Techno, on the other hand, which was heavily influenced by electro and German synth-pop tends to be darker, more raw, and more obviously machine-generated. Confusingly, outside the industry, “techno” is often used as a catch-all term for electronic dance music.

¹⁸⁸ Richard Brophy, review of Sandwell District, *Feed-Forward*. February 8, 2011. Accessed June 5, 2011 (<http://www.littlewhiteearbuds.com/review/sandwell-district-feed-forward/>).

Hearing the edited remix of “Headphone Silence” as I was walking past a gazebo party on a boardwalk in Coney Island the year it was released, I registered for the first time what one reviewer has called the “beautiful disconnect” between its lyrics and its club appeal.¹⁸⁹ The crowd gathered around the DJ booth was unified, in its mostly unstructured bobbing and shuffling, by a single rhythm, and the smiles, whistles, and hand waving of various dancers expressed—to borrow from John Cotton’s language—their “mutual consent” to the track and the occasion. Brun’s lyrics, however, as my transcription of the first verse makes clear, are about a public experience that is much the opposite of the one I was witnessing on the boardwalk: the persona it projects savors her invisibility from others, her indifference to the strangers around her, and her willful momentary withdrawal from all forms of social exchange. Even the music she hears is hermetically confined to her own ears: the song reveals nothing about this music to its listeners, as if to keep them, too, at arm’s length from her privacy. But what particularly struck me that summer evening was that, in spite of this contrast, I could sense no trace of irony in the translation of these lyrics into a form oriented toward the close communion of the dance floor.

What keeps the edited remix of “Headphone Silence” from being a contradiction in terms, I would argue, is the keen insight it provides into a dissonance at the heart of the culture of house music. This dissonance is amplified by the genre’s early twenty-first-century media shift, which I will address first. As with all sectors of the music industry,

¹⁸⁹ This review is by Todd L. Burns and was published on Resident Advisor’s website on June 10, 2008. As of July, 2011, it can be accessed at <http://www.residentadvisor.net/review-view.aspx?id=5300>. Burns, writing in a smaller space for a different audience, points out that “a disconnection between form and content is often how great art is formed,” but goes on to suggest that the Schwarz and Ferrer rework is an example of the way that “remixers...rarely tend to care about what the singers are babbling on about. The voice is simply another instrument in the mix.” I argue that the relationship between text and music is critical to the track’s message.

most present-day enthusiasts of house, techno, and related genres experience the majority of their music in digital formats and in private, rather than in analog and over the pulsing sound systems this music conjures (or, as purists might argue, requires). DJs, even those who still play vinyl, tend to hear many, if not most, tracks for the first time the same way—on record store websites or digital downloading portals, in podcasts by other djs and producers, in raw-edit or rough-mix format on feedback-oriented sites such as soundcloud.

In one sense, this is nothing out of the ordinary. The walkman, developed by Sony in the late 1970s, is (by most reckonings of the origins of the genre) at least as old as house: electronics consumers have been outfitted to move through public spaces listening privately to a handpicked soundtrack ever since. Whatever the digital media revolution has meant for the sound quality of music, the remuneration of its creators, and the sustainability of independent record stores, however, it has equalized access to underground genres, establishing a new parity among DJs, collectors, and practitioners on the one hand, and the more casual lovers of these styles on the other.¹⁹⁰ One need not attend clubs and shows, live within the broadcast range of an independent radio station, or visit record stores, pull 12”s from the shelves, and wait one’s turn for a listening station to explore the more obscure regions of contemporary music.

But in spite of these shifts toward private, personal encounters—which apply, in some form, to all genres outside of the mainstream—the house-music imaginary is still uniquely saturated with allusions to the shared physical space of the club: high-energy tracks with catchy melodies and alluring rhythms are often called “floor fillers,” “big

¹⁹⁰ Jordan Rothlein’s December, 2009 Little White Earbuds article on the vinyl vs. digital debate in electronic dance music offers the most thoughtful summary of these issues I have read (<http://www.littlewhiteearbuds.com/feature/the-year-in-records/>).

room,” or “peak time,” all three of which terms invoke crowds, regardless of whether they are ever experienced in these settings by the people who use them. Equipped with internet search engines, audio streaming, and earbuds, house lovers have become adept at negotiating between private listening experiences and imaginary, packed, strobe-lit spaces. Meanwhile, the classics of the deep house genre—especially those that talk, chant, or sing about house, just as many of the psalms sing about psalms¹⁹¹—have inscribed an ethic of unity and liberation on its clubscape. Marshall Jefferson’s “Move Your Body” (1986), for example, promises of “house music,” many times over, “it’s gonna set you free.” The main thrust of the Chuck Roberts vocal in the 1988 bootleg version of Mr. Fingers’ “Can You Feel It”¹⁹² is a much-sampled, sermonesque monologue by Jack, the imaginary “creator” of the genre: he preaches, “Once you enter my house, it then becomes ‘our house,’ and ‘our house music,’ and you see, no one man owns house, because house music is a universal language spoken, understood by all....Jack is the one that can bring nations and nations of all Jackers together under one house. You may be black, you may be white, you may be Jew, or Gentile, it don’t make a difference in *our* house, and *this* is fresh!” These tracks remain anthems and touchstones in the 2010s—in large part, perhaps, because a quick web search can flesh out the name-dropping of almost any track and artist. The common lexicon of the “classic”—as prone to deconstruction as this term might be—has become somewhat more fixed, and popularity can be quantified in terms of play and hit counts.¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ See, in addition to the “metapsalms” cited in Chapter 4, Psalm 81.2 (“Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery”).

¹⁹² The original version of the track, first released on Trax in 1986, is instrumental. The bootleg mix samples the a cappella version of Rhythm Control’s “My House,” performed by Chuck Roberts and released in 1987.

¹⁹³ The repressing of Chez Damier’s deep house 12” *Time Visions 2* on Mojuba records makes the connection between the unity of faith and the unity of deep house implicit in Roberts’ Pauline monolog

Dissenting voices can be heard, however, from within the genre's pantheon of founding figures. The transgender DJ and producer Terre Thaemlitz, for example, offers a radically different take on the deep house rhetoric of unity. As the powerful spoken-word intro to her 2008 full-length album *Midtown 120 Blues* points out, "the house nation likes to pretend clubs are an oasis from suffering, but suffering is in here, with us." Thaemlitz's work (under her own name and the "DJ Sprinkles" moniker) incorporates the grim underside of club culture—HIV, racism, gender and sexual identity discrimination, drug addiction—reminding listeners of the critical difference between applying a light dusting of mottos and abstract optimism to these problems, and addressing them in all of their unsettling specificity. In a 2009 Little White Earbuds interview, she reflected, "Why do so few house projects ask us to struggle along with them, as opposed to always positioning themselves as doorways of escape from our struggles?"¹⁹⁴

The edited remix of "Headphone Silence" never achieves so clear a social consciousness. Nevertheless, the tension between its lyrics and its evocation, through deep-house form, of shared music and unity represents another way of coming to terms with the culture's core inconsistencies: it invites us, I would argue, to struggle with them. Without rejecting outright the spirit of critical mass and uplift linked to its rolling, four-on-the-floor beat, the rework of Brun's song complicates it by suggesting that solitude and separation are in fact a sound basis for unity. In doing so, it models the way that discord, in opposition to a bare rehearsal of the ideal accord, can foster a more conscientious whole.

even more overt. Its center sticker is emblazoned with a verse from Colossians: "And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity" (3.14).

¹⁹⁴ This interview was with John Dale and published on Little White Earbuds on October 30, 2009 (<http://www.littlewhiteearbuds.com/feature/lwe-interviews-terre-thaemlitz/>).

In radically different contexts and for radically different stakes, the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century authors and translators in this dissertation were locked in similar struggles. In Chapter 1, I argue that the social accord central to John Cotton's theology of singing was counterbalanced by the psalms' direct engagement of the themes of alienation, discord, and the periodic futility of human conversation among the pious. Rather than simply and straightforwardly reflecting back Cotton's ideal of fellowship and mutual consent, the Bay translation of psalms such as 38, 69, and 88 enlivened it by challenging it, jarring against it, and reminding Reformed singers that these painful and unsettling experiences can be—in combination with a shared dependence on, and affection for, God and an opposition to common enemies—a means to a more nuanced solidarity: one grounded more in human experience than in rhetoric. A little less than a century later, in 1727, Experience Mayhew cited well-meaning divergences from devotional norms in communities of singing Wampanoags as evidence of a deep, localized spiritual commitment to Christian ideals. These deficiencies served (to apply the language of Mayhew's mainland colleague Thomas Walter) as a means of preparing the converts and those who read about them "to relish better the Sweetness and Melody of a following Concord" (*Grounds and Rules*, 24). Meanwhile, I argue in Chapter 4, Edward Taylor's meditational poetics was designed to give poetic expression to just this sort of relishing. The staggered collaboration of Brun, Schwarz, and Ferrer has in common with these figures a willingness to register discord's presence, to accept its formal, rhetorical, and aesthetic challenges, and to appreciate its reflection of the occasionally beautiful, barely contained chaos of human collectivity.

Acknowledgment of Previous Publication

Portions of Chapter 1 were published as the Foreword to Ian Christie-Miller, ed.,
The Digital Bay Psalm Book. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2010.

Bibliography

- Ainsworth, Roger. *The Book of Psalmes: Englished both in Prose and Metre*. Amsterdam, 1612.
- Allen, James. *Man's Self-Reflection Is the Special Means to Further his Recovery from his Apostasy from God*. Boston, 1699.
- Alsted, Johann Heinrich. *Templum musicum, or, The musical synopsis of the learned and famous Johannes-Henricus-Alstedius*, transl. John Birchensha. London, 1664.
- Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Poetry*. New York: Basic Books, 1985.
- Alter, Robert. *The David Story: A Translation and Commentary of 1 and 2 Samuel*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999.
- Alter, Robert. *The Book of Psalms: A Translation with Commentary*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007.
- Amory, Hugh, "'Gods Altar Needs Not Our Pollishings': Revisiting the Bay Psalm Book." Originally published in *Printing History* 12 (1990): 2-14. Reprinted in Amory, *Bibliography and the Book Trades*, ed. David D. Hall, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005.
- Bauer, Ralph. *The Cultural Geography of Colonial American Literatures: Empire, Travel, Modernity*. Cambridge; New York : Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- The Bay Psalm Book*. New York: Cosimo, 2007.
- Becker, Laura L., "Ministers vs. Laymen: The Singing Controversy in Puritan New England, 1720-1740." *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 55, No. 1 (Mar., 1982), pp. 79-96.
- Becon, Thomas. *Jewel of Joy*. London, 1550.
- Bercovitch, Sacvan. "Cotton Mather Against Rhyme: Milton and the Psalterium Americanum." *American Literature: A Journal of Literary History, Criticism, and Bibliography* 39.(1967): 191-193.
- Beveridge, William. *Thesaurus theologicus: or, a Complete System of divinity: summ'd up in brief notes upon select places of the Old and New Testament*. 4 vols. London, 1711.
- Bloch, Chana and Bloch, Ariel, ed. and transl., *The Song of Songs*. New York: Modern Library, 2006 (originally published 1995).
- Boyd, Morrison Comegys. *Elizabethan Music and Musical Criticism*, 2nd ed. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1962.

Bradstreet, Anne. *The complete works of Anne Bradstreet*, ed. Joseph R. McElrath, Jr. and Allan P. Robb. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1981.

The Bible and Holy Scriptvres Conteyned in the Olde and Newe Testament [the Geneva Bible]. Geneva, 1560.

A Brief discourse concerning regular singing, shewing from the Scriptures, the necessity and incumbency thereof in the worship of God. Boston, 1725.

Breitwieser, Mitchell Robert. *Cotton Mather and Benjamin Franklin: the Price of Representative Personality*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

Brissett, Wilson. "Edward Taylor's Public Devotions." *Early American Literature* 44.3 (2009): 457-487.

Brophy, Richard. Review of Sandwell District, "Feed-Forward." Little White Earbuds, February 8, 2011 (<http://www.littlewhiteearbuds.com/review/sandwell-district-feed-forward/>); accessed June 5, 2011.

Bross, Kristina. *Dry Bones and Indian Sermons: Praying Indians in Colonial America*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004.

Brumm, Ursula. "'Tuning' the Song of Praise: Observations on the Use of Numbers in Edward Taylor's Preparatory Meditations." *Early American Literature* 17.2 (1982): 103-118.

Brun, Ane. "Headphone Silence." *Spending Time with Morgan*. 2005.

Buechner, Alan C. "Thomas Walter and the Society for Promoting Regular Singing in the Worship of God: Boston 1720-1723." *New England Music: The Public Sphere, 1600-1900*. 48-60. Boston, MA: Boston UP, 1998.

Bumas, E. Shaskan. "The Cannibal Butcher Shop: Protestant Uses of Las Casas' Brevisima relación and the Case of the Apostle Eliot." *Early American Literature* 35.2 (2000): 107-136.

Burns, Todd L. Review of "Headphone Silence" (Ane Brun; remix by Henrik Schwarz, edit by Dennis Ferrer). Resident Advisor, June 10, 2008 (<http://www.residentadvisor.net/review-view.aspx?id=5300>); accessed on July, 11, 2011.

Calvin, John. *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, transl. James Anderson. Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 1845 [<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom08.txt>, accessed June 19, 2011].

Cesarini, J. Patrick. "The Ambivalent Uses of Roger Williams's A Key into the Language of America." *Early American Literature* 38.3 (2003): 469-494.

Cesarini, J. Patrick. "“What Has Become of Your Praying to God?”: Daniel Gookin’s Troubled History of King Philip’s War.” *Early American Literature* 44.3 (2009): 489-515.

Chauncy, Nathaniel. *Regular Singing Defended, and Proved to be the Only True Way of Singing the Songs of the Lord*. New London, 1728.

Cheyfitz, Eric. *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from The Tempest to Tarzan*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997.

Clark, Michael P., ed., *The Eliot Tracts with Letters from John Eliot to Thomas Thorowgood and Richard Baxter*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003.

Cogley, Richard. *John Eliot’s mission to the Indians before King Philip’s War*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Colacurcio, Michael J. “Gods Determinations Touching Half-Way Membership: Occasion and Audience in Edward Taylor.” *American Literature: A Journal of Literary History, Criticism, and Bibliography* 39.3 (1967): 298-314.

Colman, Benjamin. *The Government & Improvement of Mirth According to the Laws of Christianity*. Boston, 1707.

Cope, Anthony. *A godly meditacion upon .xx. select and chosen Psalmes of the Prophet David*. London, 1547.

Cotton, John. *Gods Promise to His Plantation*. London, 1630.

Cotton, John. *Singing of Psalmes a Gospel Ordinance*. London, 1647.

Coverdale, Myles. *Goostly psalmes and spirituall songes*. London, c.1535.

Craig, Raymond A. “Polishing God’s Altar: Puritan Poetics in Cotton’s Singing of Psalms.” In *Early Protestantism and American Culture*, 1-33. Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1995.

Daly, Robert. *God’s Altar: The World and the Flesh in Puritan Poetry*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1978.

Danforth, John; Samuel Danforth; and Peter Thacher. *An essay, by several ministers of the Gospel: for the satisfaction of their pious and consciencious brethren, as to sundry questions and cases of conscience, concerning the singing of psalms*. Boston, 1723.

Davis, Thomas M., and Virginia L. Davis. *Edward Taylor’s Minor Poetry*. Boston: Twayne, 1981.

Dorani, Beth M. "'Then Have I ... Said With David': Anne Bradstreet's Andover Manuscript Poems and the Influences of the Psalm Tradition." *Early American Literature* 24, no. 1 (1989): 52-69.

Eliot, John. *The Indian Grammar Begun*. Cambridge, MA, 1666.

Eliot, John, *Indian Dialogues: A Study in Cultural Interaction*, ed. Henry W. Bowden and James P. Ronda. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980.

Eliot, T. S. *Selected prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode. New York : Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975.

Fithian, Rosemary. "'Words of My Mouth, Meditations of My Heart': Edward Taylor's Preparatory Meditations and the Book of Psalms." *Early American Literature* 20, no. 2 (Fall 1985): 89-119.

Foot, Henry Wilder. *Three Centuries of American Hymnody*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1940.

Freer, Coburn. *Music for a King: George Herbert's Style and the Metrical Psalms*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U.P, 1972.

Frere, W. H. and Kennedy, W. M., eds., *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Period of the Reformation* (3 vols.; Alcuin Club Collections, 14-16; London, 1910).

Friberg, Timothy; Barbara Friberg; and Barbara F. Miller. *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*. Victoria, BC, Canada: Trafford Publishing, 2005.

Gatta, John. *Gracious Laughter: The Meditative Wit of Edward Taylor*. Columbia, MO: U of Missouri P, 1989.

Gilby, Anthony. Preface to Theodore Beza, *The Psalmes of Dauid, Trvly Opened and explained by Paraphrasis, according to the right sense of euerie Psalme*, transl. Gilby. London, 1581.

Gillingham, S. E. *The Poems and Psalms of the Hebrew Bible*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Gillingham, S. E. *Psalms through the Centuries*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2008.

Gookin, Daniel. *An Historical Account of the Doings and Sufferings of the Christian Indians in New England, in the Years 1675, 1676, 1677*. New York, Arno Press, 1972.

Grabo, Norman S. "How Bad is the Bay Psalm Book?" *Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters*, vol. 46, 1961, pp. 605-15.

Grabo, Norman S. *Edward Taylor*, rev. ed. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1988.

Grabo, Norman S. *Edward Taylor's Christographia*. New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1962.

Gunkel, Hermann, *Introduction to Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel*, completed by Joachim Begrich, transl. James D. Nogalski. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998 (orig. published 1933).

Guruswamy, Rosemary Fithian. "A Farewell to David: Edward Taylor's Valediction and Psalm 19." In *The Tayloring Shop: Essays on the Poetry of Edward Taylor in Honor of Thomas M. and Virginia L. Davis*, 193-216. Newark, DE: U of Delaware P, 1997.

Hall, David, ed., *The Antinomian Controversy 1636-1638: A Documentary History*, Second Edition. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990.

Hall, David. *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990 (first published in 1989).

Hamlin, Hannibal. *Psalms Culture and Early Modern English Literature*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge UP, 2004.

Hammond, Jeffrey A. *Edward Taylor: Fifty Years of Scholarship and Criticism*. Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1993.

Hammond, Jeffrey. *Sinful Self, Saintly Self: The Puritan Experience of Poetry*. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1993.

Haraszti, Zoltán. *The Enigma of the Bay Psalm Book*. Chicago, IL: U of Chicago P, 1956.

Henwood, Dawn. "Mary Rowlandson and the Psalms: The Textuality of Survival." *Early American Literature* 32.2 (1997): 169-186.

Herissone, Rebecca. *Music theory in seventeenth-century England*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Holifield, Brooks E., *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003.

Holladay, William L., *The Psalms through Three Thousand Years: Prayerbook of a Cloud of Witnesses*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993.

Hollander, John. *The Untuning of the Sky: Ideas of Music in English Poetry, 1500-1700*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961.

Holmes, Nathaniel. *Gospel Musick. Or, the Singing of Davids Psalms, &c. In the publick Congregations, or private Families asserted, and vindicated...* London, 1644.

Höltgen, Karl Josef. "New Verse by Francis Quarles: The Portland Manuscripts, Metrical Psalms, and the Bay Psalm Book." *English Literary Renaissance* 28.1 (1998): 118-141.

Howard, Alan B. "The World as Emblem: Language and Vision in the Poetry of Edward Taylor." *American Literature: A Journal of Literary History, Criticism, and Bibliography* 44.3 (1972): 359-384.

Innes, Stephen, *Creating the Commonwealth: The Economic Culture of Puritan New England*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1995.

Johnson, Thomas H. "Edward Taylor: A Puritan 'Sacred Poet'." *New England Quarterly: A Historical Review of New England Life and Letters* 10.2 (1937): 290-322.

Kateb, George. "Walt Whitman and the Culture of Democracy." *Political Theory*. Vol. 18, No. 4, November, 1990: 540-571.

Kellaway, William. *The New England Company, 1649-1776: Missionary Society to the American Indians*. London: Longmans, 1961.

Kelleter, Frank. "Puritan Missionaries and the Colonization of the New World: A Reading of John Eliot's Indian Dialogues (1671)." In *Early America Re-Explored: New Readings in Colonial, Early National, and Antebellum Culture*, 71-106. New York: Peter Lang, 2000.

Kennedy, Rick. "Thomas Brattle and the Scientific Provincialism of New England, 1680-1713." *The New England Quarterly*, vol. 63, no. 4 (December, 1990), 584-600.

King, Henry. *The Psalmes of David, from the New Translation of the Bible Turned into Meter: To be Sung after the Old Tunes used in the Churches*. London, 1651.

King, John N., ed., *Voices of the English Reformation: A Sourcebook*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.

Kneidel, Gregory. "Samuel Daniel and Edification." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 44, no. 1 (Winter 2004): 59-76.

Kouwenhoven, John Atlee. "Some Unfamiliar Aspects of Singing in New England 1620-1810." *New England Quarterly: A Historical Review of New England Life and Letters* 6.3 (1933): 567-588.

Kuczynski, Michael P. *Prophetic Song: The Psalms as Moral Discourse in Late Medieval England*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995.

Kugel, James. *The Great Poems of the Bible: A Reader's Companion with New Translations*. New York: The Free Press, 1999.

Lan, Lawrence. "God in the Background: Edward Taylor as Naturalist," *Early American Literature*, 7:3 (1973:Winter), 265-71.

Le Huray, Peter, *Music and the Reformation in England: 1549-1660*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978 (first published 1967, Herbert Jenkins Ltd).

Leaver, Robin, *'Goostly and spirituall songes': English and Dutch Metrical Psalms from Coverdale to Utenhove, 1535-1566*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Lechford, Thomas. *Plain dealing, or, Newes from New-England*. London, 1642.

Lepore, Jill. *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity*. New York: Vintage, 1999 (first published 1998).

Lewalski, Barbara Kiefer. *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1979.

Ligon, Richard, *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados*. London, 1657.

Mamusse Wunnutupanatamwe Up-Biblum [the Massachusetts Bible]. Cambridge, MA, 1633.

Mather, Cotton. *Right Thoughts in Sad Hours*. London, 1689.

Mather, Cotton. *Family Religion Urged*. Boston, 1709.

Mather, Cotton. *Bonifacius. An essay upon the good, that is to be devised and designed, by those who desire to answer the great end of life, and to do good while they live*. Boston, 1710.

Mather, Cotton. *Diary of Cotton Mather*, 2 vols. New York: F. Ungar Pub. Co., 1957.

Mather, Cotton. *Psalterium Americanum. The Book of Psalms, in a translation exactly conformed unto the original; but all in blank verse*. Boston, 1718.

Mather, Cotton. *The accomplished singer*. Boston, 1721.

Mather, Cotton. *The Christian Philosopher*, ed. Winton U. Solberg. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994.

Matthiessen, F.O., ed., *The Oxford Book of American Verse*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1950.

Mayhew, Experience. *A Discourse Shewing that God Dealeth with Men as Reasonable Creatures*. Boston, 1720.

Mayhew, Experience. *All Mankind, by Nature, Equally under Sin*. Boston, 1725.

Mayhew, Experience. *Experience Mayhew's Indian Converts: A Cultural Edition*, ed. Laura Arnold Leibman. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008.

McCarthy, Michael C. "'We Are Your Books': Augustine, the Bible, and the Practice of Authority." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 75, no. 2 (June 2007): 324-352.

- McCarthy, Michael C., "An Ecclesiology of Groaning: Augustine, the Psalms, and the Making of [the] Church." *Theological Studies* 66: 2005, pp. 23-48.
- Meeks, Wayne A., et al., ed., *The HarperCollins Study Bible*. New York: HarperCollins, 1993.
- Meschonnic, Henre, "Translating Biblical Rhythm." *Biblical Patterns in Modern Literature*, ed. David H. Hirsch and Nehama Aschkensay. Brown Judaic Studies 77. Chic, CA: Scholar Press, 1984: 227-240.
- Meserole, Harrison T., ed., *American Poetry of the Seventeenth Century*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State Press, 1985.
- Mignon, Charles W. "Edward Taylor's Preparatory Meditations: A Decorum of Imperfection." *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 83.5 (1968): 1423-1428.
- Miller, Leta, and Cohen, Albert. *Music in the Royal Society of London 1660-1806*. Detroit Studies in Music Bibliography, no. 56. Detroit: Information Coordinators, 1987.
- Miller, Perry. *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1961 (first published 1953).
- Morris, Amy M. E. "Plainness and Paradox: Colonial Tensions in the Early New England Religious Lyric." In *A Companion to the Literatures of Colonial America*, 500-516. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005.
- Morris, Amy M. E. *Popular Measures: Poetry and Church Order in Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts*. Newark, DE: U of Delaware P, 2005.
- Morris, Amy M. E. "The Art of Purifying: The Bay Psalm Book and Colonial Puritanism." *Early American Literature* 42, no. 1 (2007): 107-130.
- Morris, Amy. "Bay Psalm Book," *The Literary Encyclopedia* (<http://www.litencyc.com/php/sworks.php?rec=true&UID=6408>, accessed on June 10, 2009).
- Mulford, Carla. "Pox and 'Hell-Fire': Boston's Smallpox Controversy, the New Science, and Early Modern Liberalism." *Periodical Literature in Eighteenth-Century America*. 7-27. Knoxville, TN: U of Tennessee P, 2005.
- Murrell, Nathaniel Samuel. "Tuning Hebrew Psalms to Reggae Rhythms: Rastas' Revolutionary Lamentations for Social Change." *Cross Currents: The Journal of the Association for Religion and Intellectual Life* 50, no. 4 (2000-2001 Winter 2000): 525-540.
- Music, David W. "Cotton Mather and Congregational Singing in Puritan New England." *Studies in Puritan American Spirituality* 2.(1991): 1-30.

Music, David W. "Jonathan Edwards and the Theology and Practice of Congregational Song in Puritan New England." *From Anne Bradstreet to Abraham Lincoln: Puritanism in America*. 103-146. Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 2004. *MLA International Bibliography*.

New Englands First Fruits. London, 1643.

Norton, David. *A History of the English Bible as Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

A Pacificatory letter about psalmody, or singing of psalms. Boston, 1724.

Parrish, Susan Scott. *American Curiosity: Cultures of Natural History in the Colonial British Atlantic World*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.

Patterson, Daniel. *Edward Taylor's Gods Determinations and Preparatory Meditations: A Critical Edition*. Kent, OH: Kent State UP, 2002.

Proposals for Printing by Subscription Psalterium Americanum. Boston, 1718.

The psalms hymns and spiritual songs of the Old and New Testament, faithfully translated into English metre, for the use, edification, and comfort, of the saints, in publick, & private [the New England Psalm Book]. Cambridge, MA, 1651.

Rath, Richard Cullen. *How early America sounded*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993.

Ravenscroft, Thomas, et al. *Whole Booke of Psalmes, Composed into 4. parts by sundry Authors*. London, 1621.

Rivett, Sarah. "Tokenography: Narration and the Science of Dying in Puritan Deathbed Testimonies." *Early American Literature* 42.3 (2007): 471-494.

Robinson, Douglas, ed., *Western Translation Theory from Herodotus to Nietzsche*. Manchester, England: St. Jerome Publishing, 1997.

Rous, Francis, *The Booke of Psalmes, in English Meeter*. Rotterdam, 1638.

Rowe, Karen E. *Saint and Singer: Edward Taylor's Typology and the Poetics of Meditation*. Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Rowlandson, Mary, *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*. Reprinted in Baym, Nina, et al., *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, 6th edition, vol. A, Literature to 1820. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2003.

Salisbury, Neal. *Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans, and the Making of New England, 1500-1643*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.

- Salisbury, Neal. "Red Puritans: The 'Praying Indian' of Massachusetts Bay and John Eliot." *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., Vol. 31, No. 1. (Jan., 1974), pp. 27-54.
- Scheick, William J. "Taylor's 'Meditation 1.7'." *Explicator* 63.2 (2005): 68-71.
- Schwarz, Henrik, and Dennis Ferrer. Remix and edit of Ane Brun, "Headphone Silence," 2008.
- Schweitzer, Ivy. *The Work of Self-Representation: Lyric Poetry in Colonial New England*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina, 1991.
- Sewall, Samuel. *The Diary of Samuel Sewall, 1674-1729*, ed. M. Halsey Thomas, 2 vols. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1973.
- Shakespeare, William. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. London, 1600.
- Silverman, Kenneth. "Cotton Mather and the Reform of Puritan Psalmody." *Seventeenth-Century News*, 34 (1976): 53-57.
- Singing of Psalms by Seven Constituted Sounds*. Boston, 1722.
- Slatyer, William. *Psalmes or Songs of Sion: Turned into the language, and set to the tunes of a strange Land*. London, 1631.
- Slotkin, Richard, and Folsom, Jakes K., eds., *So Dreadfull a Judgment: Puritan Responses to King Philip's War, 1676-1677*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1978.
- Smith, Miles, "The Translators to the Reader." *The Holy Bible, Conteyning the Old Testament, and the New*. London, 1611.
- Stearns, Raymond Phineas. "Colonial Fellows of the Royal Society of London, 1661-1788." *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (April, 1951), pp. 178-246.
- Stenhold, Thomas, and Hopkins, John, et al. *The Whole Booke of Psalmes: Collected into English Meeter by Thomas Sternhold, Iohn Hopkins*. London, 1562.
- Symmes, Thomas. *The Reasonableness of Regular Singing*. Boston, 1720.
- Symmes, Thomas. *Utile Dulci: Or, a Joco-Serious Dialogue Concerning Regular Singing*. Boston, 1723.
- Targoff, Ramie. *Common Prayer: The Language of Public Devotion in Early Modern England*. Chicago, IL: U of Chicago P, 2001.
- Tufts, John. *An Introduction to the Singing of Psalm-Tunes*. Boston, 1721.
- Wadsworth, Benjamin. *Psalms should be Sung, With Grace in the Heart*. Boston, 1706.

- Walter, Thomas. *The Grounds and Rules of Musick Explained*. Boston, 1721.
- Watts, Isaac. *Hymns and Spiritual Songs. In Three Books*. London, 1707.
- Watts, Isaac. *The Psalms of David Imitated*. London, 1719.
- Wells, John. *A Supplement to the Morning-Exercise at Cripple-gate: Or, Several More Cases of Conscience Practically Resolved by sundry Ministers*, 2nd edition. London, 1686.
- Wheeler, Thomas, and Bulkley, Edward, *A Thankfull Remembrance of Gods Mercy To Several Persons at Quabaug or Brookfield*. Cambridge, MA, 1676.
- Whitman, *Leaves of Grass and Other Writings*, ed. Michael Moon, et al. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2002.
- The Whole Booke of Psalmes Faithfully Translated into English Metre* [The Bay Psalm Book]. Cambridge, MA: 1640. Williams, Roger. *A Key Into the Language of America*. London, 1643.
- Williams, Roger. *Christening Make Not Christians*. London, 1645.
- Winslow, Ola Elizabeth. *Meetinghouse Hill, 1630-1783*. New York: Macmillan, 1952.
- Winthrop, John, "A Modell of Christian Charity." *American Sermons: the Pilgrims to Martin Luther King Jr.*, ed. Michael Warner. New York: Library of America, 1999, pp. 28-43.
- Winthrop, John. *The Journal of John Winthrop*, ed. Richard S. Dunn and Laetitia Yeandle. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996.
- Wood, James, "Desert Storm: Understanding the Capricious God of the Psalms." *The New Yorker*, October 1, 2007. Accessed at <http://www.newyorker.com> in July, 2011.
- Wyss, Hilary E., *Writing Indians: Literacy, Christianity, and Native Community in Early America*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000.
- Wyther, George. *A Preparation to the Psalter*. London, 1619.