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A Deconstruction of Puritan Ideology Through the Works of John Winthrop, Anne Bradstreet, and Mary Rowlandson

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A DECONSTRUCTION OF PURITAN IDEOLOGY THROUGH THE WORKS OF JOHN WINTHROP, ANNE BRADSTREET, AND MARY ROWLANDSON

By

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Abstract

Originated by Jacques Derrida, deconstruction analyzes the relationship between text and meaning. This thesis applies Derrida's theory of deconstruction to three early American Puritan figures: John Winthrop, Mary Rowlandson, and Anne Bradstreet. By questioning the conceptual distinctions known as oppositions in Puritan ideology through the works of these aforementioned individuals, this thesis questions and corrupts the binaries within each text used. The emergence of new meaning through a deconstruction of Puritan ideology establishes a valid site from which to explore radical, repressed, historical, cultural, and theological narratives of religious prosperity. By enforcing narratives from Derrida's *Of Grammatology*, post-structuralist ideology will presume no absolute truths within a text; therefore, ambiguity is pertinent in a deconstructive critical examination. The argument in this thesis is then—through a deconstructive critical examination of Puritan ideology, are similarities present though different mediums of linguistic discourse, and can this thesis formally decenter the transcendental signifiers present. The critical approach to deconstructing each medium of discourse analytically breaks down the systematic organization of language as a whole and overturns structuralist oppositions—as to displace the authority, and formally find new importance in a text.

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I want to thank my brother, Antonio Fazzalari, for always being a profound impact on me.

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Section i: Thesis Introduction

Deconstruction as a literary theory aims at breaking apart the binaries present within literary and non-literary texts, as well as within the actualization of events such as reformations, and periods of change. Coined by Jacques Derrida during the early 1960s, deconstructionist theory challenges the fundamental concepts of modernity in western philosophical thought; therefore, establishing itself as a skeptical form of discourse, in that it studies the frameworks and ideologies behind binary oppositions to decenter cultural signifiers and to bring forward new analytical interpretations; often, abstract or repressed, to drive new narratives within the understanding of certain binaries—as to not strictly construe them. This thesis will therefore open up an in-depth discussion on the concept of deconstructing Puritan ideology. It is through the selected texts: *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* by Mary Rowlandson, *A Model of Christian Charity* by John Winthrop, and selected poems from the early American poet, Anne Bradstreet, that this thesis will center its extended discourse therein.

To legitimately assert this thesis as a scholastic endeavor that will ask *why*— this thesis will expand upon the field of literary theories pertaining to deconstruction and the ideologies of colonial American values. To emphasize a *why,* why this research, in all its validity, will build upon or add to the academic field to which these aforementioned topics belong, is to further accentuate the abstract or repressed ideologies within the structuralist binaries that would otherwise remain "perpetual" in nature. This perpetuation of Puritan binaries is what this thesis aims to break apart, and by finding new established meanings, i.e., reading between the lines of a given text, this thesis' intention is therefore to establish new notions through skepticism.

As pointed out by Ning Kang in his article "Puritanism and Its Impact upon American Values," American Puritanism derives its fundamental values from a quantity of morals that purpose to establish certain notions identifiable to a devout Puritan. Through these morals, we will begin to see a modest authority as to how certain values were interpreted, what values show authority over others, and how this interplay of a hierarchical system of binaries can be effectively overturned—and compared against universally established notions or norms, to displace ideologies, and to show a difference in the arbitrary nature of authority. An outline of the structure of my thesis will display how this work will manage to use the literary texts aforementioned, and how research related to this topic will help push certain narratives of interpretation. Subsequently this thesis will provide a summary of the literary works being used.

Section ii: Structure of Thesis

The thesis intends to open up or further analyze the works of three early American writers in order to critically infer, through the literary theory of deconstruction, how Puritan values have been perpetuated throughout their works. The first section of this thesis will outline important terminology pertinent to literary deconstruction and then discuss the importance of ambiguity. The second section will cover the literary theory of deconstruction in depth and show how through the interrogation of a simulated binary, how an adherence to ambiguity will present itself; often, in the form of decentered signifiers, repressed ideas, a difference in diachronic linguistic form, opposing this idea of a transcendental signified, and what that would mean for an established set of ideologies. The third section of this thesis will then begin its critical approach by analyzing John Winthrop's *A Model of Christian Charity* through the lens of this endeavor. The fourth section of this thesis will continue with Ms. Mary Rowlandson, by questioning the

fundamental ideas of faith, savagery, and death. The fifth section will conclude with the literary analysis with the works of Anne Bradstreet in which a selection of poems will be used to deconstruct and work into the overall understanding of Puritan ideology, its influences, and its repressed meanings through opposition. To conclude this portion of the thesis, a brief understanding of American Puritanism ideology and Derrida's literary theory of deconstruction will be given.

American Puritan ideology will be a prevailing theme throughout this thesis. American Puritanism valued God above all other signifiers—establishing God as this transcendental presence that governed the mindsets of Puritan followers. Significant tenets of this religious affiliation involved the understanding that God is the authority of Divine Will, man is naturally depraved, original sin existed through a broken covenant with God—that only a few individuals could be "elected," God bound those whom were "elected[1]" with the divine grace of God's supreme will, and predestination of an individual's perpetuity is predetermined by God's supreme will. It is through the aforementioned tenets that American Puritans live their religious lives; often, with an expectation to live according to the Scriptures of God, and to set an example of religious prosperity and hard work.

Throughout this thesis the idea of binaries will be prevalent. Binaries are the structuring of opposite or opposing forms of thought, linguistic interpretations, or idealistic forms for structuring a literary work. An example would be the binary of *speech*/*writing*, a pervasive

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[1] The term *elected,* as used in the sentence—designates an individual's concurrence with God's divine providence. It is through this idea of "original sin," that the election of individuals to escape damnation would be fairly narrow.

opposition that gives preferential weight to speech over writing for its unique attribute of "utterance" or being instantly present to its listeners whereas writing could be seen as absent, lacking in nature when it comes to linguistic interpretation. As J.J. Rousseau is quoted in *Of Grammatology*: "Writing is nothing but the representation of speech; it is bizarre that one gives more care to the determining of the image than to the object" (Derrida 113), it is obvious that the structuring of this pervasive binary is met with a lot of argumentative positions from several academics, including Ferdinand de Saussure, who poses his own critique of the relationship between speech and writing. So, the question then—is how would Derrida view such a binary though deconstruction? As stated in *Of Grammatology*: "It is clear that the concepts of stability, permanence, and duration, which here assist thinking the relationships between speech and writing, are too lax and open to every uncritical investiture. They would require more attentive and minute analyses. The same is applicable to an explanation according to which "most people pay more attention to visual impressions simply because these are sharper and more lasting than aural impressions"" (Derrida 107).

In *Of Grammatology*, Derrida argues against Saussure's critique of writing, not for Saussure's reasons, but because he feels Saussure's binary critique is as mentioned: "is not elaborated, what he denounces as the blind prejudice of classical linguists or of common experience indeed remains a blind prejudice, on the basis of a general presupposition which is no doubt common to the accused and the prosecutor" (104). By applying limits to linguistic critiques, self-evident presuppositions remain valid, and the binary oppositions will always give preferential weight to a particular side. It is through a deconstruction of the *general* system of language that this thesis can therefore adhere to ambiguity, as to not remain in a blind prejudice

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when declaring signifiers valid or invalid. All that being said on the structure of this thesis, the works of several academics will also be used to interpret the wandering and self-defining phenomenon that is Derrida's literary theory of deconstruction.

Section iii: Summary of each work

Within this thesis there are three main writers being used: John Winthrop, Mary Rowlandson, and Anne Bradstreet. All three of these individuals will be compared to each other in respect to the values and ideologies in play within their works. The first work *A model of Christian Charity* is a sermon written by John Winthrop, who was the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and a preeminent figure amongst the Puritans. On his travel from England to the colonies, Winthrop composed a sermon to analyze the ways that the individuals within this new colony should treat one another, and how to survive in the eyes of God. God is seen as a transcendental signified in Puritan ideology. However, Winthrop, in establishing a new Puritan society in the American Colonies after breaking a covenant with God, must; therefore, find a way to maintain and instill order within a new community—" a city upon a hill[2]," where "the eies of all people are uupon Us." The third section of this thesis will analyze the importance, or lack thereof—of a transcendental signified in Puritan ideology as profoundly emanated by Winthrop, demonstrating Derrida's investiture towards Saussure that relationships of critical inquiry are apt to require a more profound understanding of general linguistics as to not presuppose blind prejudice in a hierarchical interpretation.

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[2] *"For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us. So that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause Him to withdraw His present help from us, we shall be made a story and a by-word through the world"* (Winthrop 6). A city upon a Hill, is a dire proclamation Winthrop echoed through his Sermon to instill the realization that their colony is being watched by their enemies, for they now must find God's providence enough to lead lives of prosperity and worship though God.

The second work *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* is a captivity narrative. The entirety of Rowlandson's story takes place in twenty "removes," each one representing a physical change in atmosphere and the potential for new ideological perspectives from the inconsistencies of savagery, Puritan salvation, and her own subjectivity pertaining to the world around her. In February of 1676, Native Americans attacked the English colony of Lancaster and took several individuals captive including Rowlandson. Rowlandson details a brutal account of her traveling with her captors, and how through the acts of salvation and the words of the scripture, she therefore was saved from her sins and breaks away. The fourth section of this thesis will clarify the subjectivity of certain binary oppositions to Puritan ideology that Rowlandson faced and present an adherence to inconclusiveness, both in linguistic interpretation, and in ideological worldviews.

The third writer Anne Bradstreet was a poet and the works this thesis will be looking at are: "By Night when Others Soundly Slept," "To her Father with Some Verses," and "The Author to Her Book." Several themes that are present throughout the aforementioned poems are as followed: loss, sorrow, and privileging in the providence of God's glory. The fifth section of this thesis will elucidate upon the Puritan binaries present within Bradstreet's poetry—deconstructing the signifiers, and critically observing the difference in ideological narrative between that of Bradstreet, and Winthrop, and Rowlandson.

Section iv: Conclusion

This thesis will continue its discourse therein regarding the deconstruction of these structuralist binaries by using the literary works themselves, and a wide-ranging usage of academic essays, articles, and books. Not only will this thesis attempt to explore the binaries and

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how through opposition they work to signify [non]silenced renditions of theological, and

idealistic sentiment, but it will also use Derrida's theory of deconstruction to further add a level

of subjectivity and idiosyncratic unpredictability to the many renditions of thought that could

come from *breaking a binary*. Derrida's *Of Grammatology* will serve as a keystone text

throughout this venture to assist in dichotomizing the differences in linguistic form, and how a

diachronic or a synchronic approach can be applied to decenter formal linguistics within the

metaphysics of presence regarding the colonial American Puritan identity.

Section I: Terminology and the Importance of ambiguity

Section I of this thesis highlights important terminology pertinent to understanding the conceptual connections being made throughout the discourse of this analysis. Several terms are outlined to provide a brief summary and definition and their relevance to this research. The terms that will be discussed are *langue*, *parole*, *signifier*, *signified*, *Semiology*, *phonocentrism*, *logocentrism*, *phenomenology*, *metaphysics of presence*, *Différance*, and *trace*. To conclude section I, an essay on ambiguity will be presented that enforces the importance of uncertainty in a skeptical form of discourse—as to create meaning, and not accidently reiterate the formalities of an already established notion.

In his posthumous publication, *Course in General Linguistics*, Ferdinand de Saussure, in distinguishing between the systematic organization of language as a whole, outlined two very important concepts: langue and parole. Langue is the whole system of language from an external perspective—allowing for the creation of meaning, rather than an individual instance where the meaning is used. Parole is therefore the "utterance" of langue, an individual's usage of an already established meaning. This thesis will focus its discourse on extending the langue surrounding the deconstruction of certain binaries, therefore, it is important to inform the reader on certain utterances of terminology that will be used within.

"Signifier" and "signified" will play a large role throughout this thesis, in that they are the establishing elements within Saussure's theory of Semiology (the study of signs and what they are used for). The signifier is the word, the image, the *thing* that is being pointed at. The signified is then the concept of the word, the image, or the *thing* that is being pointed at (metaphorically, or even physically). The arbitrary nature of signifier/signified is what allows

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for such distinct interpretations to arise when assessing the connectivity between meaning, and context. It goes without saying then that a signified without a signifier is impossible because of the need for a thing, to then attach meaning to. Derrida criticizes the simplicity of Saussure's Semiology and diverts to a more abstract notion of meaning by remarking that meaning becomes delayed, or distorted when one term is incapable of referring beyond itself. Derrida's criticism towards Semiology is discussed in more depth within section II of this thesis as it relates to the antiquity of Deconstruction as a literary theory.

As defined in the *Oxford English dictionary*, phonocentrism is the tendency to value speech above writing in linguistic analysis. The view, arising from the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, that the spoken language is the immediate realization of meaning. Phonocentric thought will play a large part in the analysis of different linguistic forms presented throughout this thesis by adhering to the "centre of meaning." The root analysis is then to establish, through a breaking of the binary, is speech more relevant in examination, or is the logocentric (preference of the written word) interpretation more relevant. Through this applicable terminology, Derrida argues that everyone has a different interpretation or mental concept of a meaning depending on cultural differences, or ambiguities.

Phenomenology, as defined by David Woodruff in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* is "the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view." The historical movement of phenomenology is the philosophical tradition launched in the first half of the 20th century by Edmund Husserl (1859 – 1938), Martin Heidegger (1889 – 1976), Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908 – 1961), and Jean-Paul Sartre (1905

– 1980). Phenomenology's objective is to be able to structure the different experiences of individuals regardless of form, often, extending to "perception, thought, memory, imagination, emotion, desire, and volition to bodily awareness, embodied action, and social activity, including linguistic activity" (Woodruff). Edmund Husserl concludes, as mentioned in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* that the structuring of these experiences towards directing them at *things,* is this concept known as "intentionality" (Woodruff). So, how does phenomenology relate to deconstruction? Woodruff states that "Jacques Derrida has long practiced a kind of phenomenology of language, seeking social meaning in the "deconstruction" of wide-ranging texts." Derrida, by structuring his individual experiences of linguistics, formed an intentionality to "deconstruct" the language of texts in order to find ambiguities in social contexts that would have otherwise remained perpetual in nature. Derrida's phenomenological discourse, his linguistic intentionality put forth within his transcendental philosophy projects itself as a model of fundamental questions about the mundanity of consciousness, dialectic structures, and nonmetaphoric language as to assess the uncertainty prevalent behind the deconstruction of linguistic forms within texts.

The "metaphysics of presence" is the philosophical component of Derrida's theory of deconstruction. Starting from a Heideggerian point of view, Derrida essentially argues that this concept of metaphysics creates binary oppositions, dualistic differentiations that unfortunately privilege one portion of each created dichotomy. Using Derrida's deconstructive strategy to corrupt the dichotomies, creating conditional possibilities that are both authentic, and significant, the perpetuation of Puritan binaries is what this thesis aims to break apart. The term metaphysics of presence, also called 'metaphysics', in constructing these dualistic observations, automatically

advantages one side over the other; however, in an attempt to apply deconstruction, the opposition of metaphysical concepts shouldn't be neutralized, but rather displaced—in that the linguistic oppositions can reverse already existing oppositions.

In understanding the pertinent terminology within the literary theory of deconstruction, it is important to see evidence of theoretical implications as well. *Différance* is Derrida's attempt to define the distinction between the audible word and the written word. Derrida states in *Of Grammatology*: "We could thus take up all the coupled oppositions on which philosophy is constructed, and from which our language lives, not in order to see opposition vanish but to see the emergence of a necessity such that one of the terms appears as the differance of the other, the other as "differed" within the systematic ordering [l'économie] of the same" (25). The passage builds on this idea of a universal constant, in that differentiating terms, when one appears to be different of the other in a systematic ordering, the term can be effectively disguised in its difference. Ironically, *Différance* questions the notion of difference. When presented in an audible manner, *Différance* and *difference* sound the same, but to see the difference, the words must be written. Derrida argues that this kind of ambiguity in the spoken word demands an orientation to the written word, and if the spoken word warrants having a written component just to provide clarity—the term then, linguistically, has effectively distanced itself from functioning properly. Derrida argues that *difference* is "neither a word, nor a concept," so defining it for academic perusal brings with it an array of challenges, but the idea is not entirely to define Derrida's concepts which may have ambiguous meanings, it is to use the concepts such as *difference* or "arche-writing" to show theoretical connections between this thesis' ability to

create new meaning, or linguistic interpretations and that of Derrida's attempt to present the differentiation of meaning as a "ubiquitous term" that is representative of a distinction.

Différance is important for a linguistic analysis of Puritan ideology because it presents, as a term rooted in alteration, how terminology pertinent to an individual's consciousness can very well mean something else to someone else, or even the individual who uttered the audible term. When analyzing texts such as Winthrop's sermon, Derrida's theory of deconstruction would attempt to corrupt the oppositions present, however, if this analysis was to take the decentering of formal linguistics a step further, the spoken word and the written word should be contrasted to distinguish between the ambiguity of the spoken word, and the clarity of the written word. A binary that will be used in section III is *To love one another/ To not love one another*, and the word that will be placed under the most prominent *linguistic rigor* is "love." "In "La différance," Derrida relates the thought of differance to Nietzsche, Freud, and Heidegger. But he seems most moved by the Freudian breakthrough. The disjunction between perception and the permanent *trace* seems to make thought itself a differance of perception" (37). By interpreting Winthrop's audible expression, *love*, under a linguistic examination—the historical contextualization of Derrida's theory must be applied as well, showing his argumentative positions towards Nietzsche, Freud, Heidegger, Lévi-Strauss, Edmund Husserl, Ferdinand de Saussure, and other philosophers and psychologists which have grounded themselves as forerunners in establishing theoretical or metaphysical understandings of philosophy and the intersubjective analysis' of thought and presence.

Deconstruction, in its attempt to challenge metaphysical oppositions, is not purely content with the reversal of signifying frameworks, it must go the step further and strategically

corrupt the opposition itself—contaminating the presuppositions (as to not neutralize them). In examining the binary oppositions, deconstruction therefore exposes a *trace*. "This is not a trace of the oppositions that have since been deconstructed—on the contrary, the trace is a rupture within metaphysics, a pattern of incongruities where the metaphysical rubs up against the non-metaphysical, that it is deconstruction's job to juxtapose as best as it can. The trace does not appear as such" (65). Derrida explains that the trace is a rupture of metaphysical ambiguities—that work to juxtapose the dichotomies of binary oppositions. With respect to the logic prevalent within a text, the trace, in its ordinary nature, must situate a simple moment of the discourse of any given binary and apply a phenomenological reduction to the transcendental "metaphysics" that reside within the binary. Trace as Arche-writing, therefore establishes itself as a product of pure substance, in that the *trace can no more break with a transcendental phenomenology than be reduced to it* (123). The problem then is to oblige to a certain answer, to believe in a certain outcome, or to conceive certain notions of ideology as being presented with a choice, however, in the deconstruction of an (the) arche, "one does not make a choice" (123). Derrida, in presupposing an ultimatum, highlights that dualisms are innately displaced or disrupted in nature, negating the possibility of choice. Trace is then the examination of a binary regarding the rupture in metaphysics.

The second portion of this section focuses on the importance of ambiguity in Derrida's theory of deconstruction. When examining the linguistics of systems, dualistic interpretations, and philosophical and religious connotations, what then is correctly skeptical? The meaning of the above question is one raised in uncertainty, and is meant to test the literary critic in their

attempt to apply deconstruction to a set of primary sources in an effort to reveal new notions of

meaning. So, why then is ambiguity praised as being such an important concept?

Ambiguity is one of the outcomes for "breaking the binary," when decentering formal

linguistics within the metaphysics of presence regarding the colonial American Puritan identity,

it would do no good to neutralize the oppositions, and negate an adherence to suppressed or

subjective meaning. As mentioned in the introduction, an adherence to ambiguity allows for the

interpreter to not remain in a blind prejudice when declaring signifiers valid or invalid, and

therefore, allowing for nonbiased perceptions of binary oppositions, opposed to a strict approach

that would negligibly privilege one side of an already established binary over the other—as seen

in the prominent binary of *Speech/Writing*. Derrida states in *Of Grammatology*, "language must

naturally fragment and articulate its instituted signs, thus exercising its *arbitrariness*, this

explanation excludes all possibility of some natural relationship between speech and writing at

the very moment that it affirms it. Instead of deliberately dismissing the notions of nature and

institution that it constantly uses, which ought to be done first, it thus confuses the two" (131).

Derrida, in articulating the relationship between speech and writing, expresses the arbitrariness

present within such a binary. In communicating ambiguity—we ought to not explicitly dismiss

certain notions of identification such as: nature, signification, privilege, institution, and presence.

However, if it is possible to affirm the possibility of there being no significant relationship

between a binary, even through subjective or non-subjective opposition, then, as Derrida states,

there will be confusion. Through the confusion that is offset by *arbitrariness* in a given binary,

certain distinctive ambiguities will then arise—is it then a rational task for the literary critic of

deconstruction to question the dualisms and further "break" the binaries by abstracting their meanings.

The previous paragraph introduced ambiguity as it relates to this endeavor, as an uncertain conclusion provided to us by critiquing Saussure's theory of structuralism regarding dualisms and their signifying nature. By applying context from Derrida's *Of Grammatology* that expresses the 'normality' of language as to show what it should do, it is key to note that dismissing the possibility of natural relationships by affirming a manifestation of arbitrariness within the *Speech/Writing* binary is of vital significance when showcasing a possibility for interpreting potential instances of ambiguity when applying deconstruction. The presupposition that this thesis will use to emphasize how certain dualisms are created comes from the section of *Of Grammatology* titled: *The Violence of the Letter: From Lévi-Strauss to Rousseau.* "Let us suppose then that everything universal in man relates to the natural order, and is characterized by spontaneity, and that everything subject to a norm is cultural and is both relative and particular (Derrida 155). The clear distinction in this supposition questions the relativity of human-kind, regarding the spontaneity of natural order, and cultural subjectivity that is present, to phrase it plainly *the state of nature/ the state of society or of "culture."* Presented to us is a clear and logical opposition (a binary) that questions the concepts of nature and the concepts of culture, like speech and writing, that work to provide a fundamental certainty of practical signification. For this binary, we could ask questions such as: how is language signified in a cultural sense, and how have societies amassed and dealt with linguistic differences, can human nature be of its own—unaffected by the temperament of cultural ideology? The questions pose inquiry into the overall depth of the provided binary to expand or clarify the opposition, but to "break the

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binary", and observe this binary from a deconstructive point of view, the manifestation of arbitrariness regarding the relationship of the binary is stressed. The dualism of *the state of nature/ the state of society or of "culture"* is then approached by using notions of identification such as: nature, signification, privilege, institution, and presence—to then further add a level of subjectivity and individual unpredictability to the many renditions of thought that could come from *breaking a binary*.

Ambiguity as a perception of analysis and as a byproduct of individual subjectivity will therefore establish itself as a central intention when attempting to apply the literary theory of deconstruction to the texts used therein. The texts used in this thesis are all primary sources from a time when the United States didn't quite exist—being it was the late sixteen-hundreds. John Winthrop's sermon "A model of Christian Charity" was delivered on March twenty-first, 1630 aboard the Arabella on its trip to New England while sailing amongst the Atlantic Ocean. Anne Bradstreet, the first American woman poet, wrote during the sixteen-hundreds. Mary Rowlandson's captivity narrative was originally published in 1682. It is important to contextualize the historical conditions of each of these individuals when establishing binaries prevalent within their texts, and then *breaking the established binaries*. This section provided important and necessary terminology pertinent to understanding Derrida's theory of deconstruction, and provided a brief contextualization of ambiguity emphasizing the importance of its presence when decentering formalities within an ordered system of dualistic interpretations.

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Section II: Literary Deconstruction in depth

Aldous Huxley describes human-kind's nature to involve themselves in the unknown within his novel *Texts and Pretexts*: "man is so intelligent that he feels impelled to invent theories to account for what happens in the world. Unfortunately, he is not quite intelligent enough, in most cases, to find correct explanations. So that when he acts on his theories, he behaves very often like a lunatic" (270). As explained in the previous section on ambiguity, the idea of uncertainty is for the most part a personal subjectivity, arisen in a situational understanding for attempting to explain the unexplainable. The literary theory of Deconstruction is then a testament to Derrida's ability to be able to explain, or question the language of a text. Deconstruction does more than *break the binaries* prevalent within a text, it reveals logical or rhetorical incompatibilities between the differentiating planes of discourse within any given text that the theory is applied to. To presuppose any authority in a text, and then subvert that authority through literary skepticism would be a proper deconstructive examination; however, the goal is not to neutralize the binaries or to give the text any fictitious meaning. Chaos is the best representation of Derrida's theory because Derrida has a rough time trying to harmonize certain aspects of a discourse, and instead de-harmonizes the meaning, or present unity in a system, and hierarchically structures the oppositions as to show, on a more complicated level than structuralism, how those hierarchies are overturned. To use an example, this thesis will linguistically deconstruct a common binary within society—which is also prevalent in understanding religious ideology *Life/Death*.

To involve Derridean structure, binaries must be created or realized to then examine. Life can be explained as a quest for meaning, often by involving oneself with the many ideological mindsets prevalent within a society. Often involvement with these ideologies are partly due to them being easy, or because of how an individual was brought up in a society, so then, life is subjective. Life is subjective enough that experiences become oddly peculiar, as Huxley stated, one acting on his/her own theories is often seen as a lunatic. What signs are prevalent within this understanding of life against the lingering unknown that is death? Certain binaries that come to mind are *subjective/non-subjective*, *theism/atheism*, *light/dark*, *good/evil*, *pain/pleasure*, and *living/dying*. As mentioned in section I of this thesis, Ferdinand de Saussure's theoretical application of sign as being the signifier/signified is the first step in perceiving a linguistic concept. In understanding a binary such as *pain/pleasure* through an overall hierarchically present binary such as *life/death*, it is apparent that the signifier are the words *pain* or *pleasure*, and the signified is the linguistic understanding of those mental concepts. Pain being an infliction on oneself: anger, physical injury, mental depravity, etc. Pleasure being a feeling of satisfaction, contentment, gratification, etc. Now that a rudimentary understanding has been implemented regarding the signifier/signified, the sign is understood. Derrida, in establishing an opposition to the binary—refutes Ferdinand de Saussure's approach that langue is more important than parole, effectively stating that parole is more important because the individual's specific utterance of a concept is then subjectively implicit. To further the understanding of sign in Derrida's theory of deconstruction regarding the binary of *pain/pleasure*, it is necessary to complicate Saussure's approach and move towards a deconstructive approach that brings "chaos" to the binary.

Parole as being an individual's usage of an already established meaning, adds a level of ambiguity to the overall linguistic interpretation of an ideological concept. Pain and pleasure as signs can then be reversed—revealing different interpretations. To add elements of personal investigation towards a conception of sign (in the parole), a personal narrative will be given. As a citizen in a First world country, a student of a Four-year university, a son of middle class parents, and a human of decent endeavors, my individual subjectivity towards pain and pleasure differentiates from someone who is either not as fortunate as myself, or as someone who is gifted enough to live a life of luxury and riches. An ideological deconstruction can then be emphasized towards the narrative of my personal subjectivity and that of the mental concept, or sign of *pleasure/pain*. To question what is absent in the binary is a great first step when starting a deconstructive examination, and within the binary of *pain/pleasure*, an absence of emotional awareness is present. Emotional awareness, meaning the presentation of subjective thoughts when realizing (for oneself) what *pain* or *pleasure* mean—when signified. To someone, pain might very well mean pleasure, as that may apply in masochism, or reversely sadism. To observe other narratives of reversal, pain could be from pleasure—being that pleasure is the contentment, or satisfaction of being wholly unified within an endeavor. To connect this to religion, pain, sacrifice, and the giving of one's self wholly to God, could very well bring pleasure, or linguistically interpreted through an individual's parole as a gracious enlightenment from God. Is it then possible to assume that a reversal of *pain/pleasure* is *giving/receiving*, or *[the] sacrificing of certain human natural instincts/ aligning with the scriptures of God to find contentment in life, and an assurance of holy providence in the afterlife*. As large as the reversed binary is, it is a supposition towards the linguistic conception of sign that has been defined

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herein. Starting from *Life/Death*, to developing binaries prevalent within such a system of

hierarchically structured thought as to conclude with *pain/pleasure*, end the structuralist

approach. Deconstruction then began where structuralism ended, by reversing the binary and

establishing new notions of linguistic interpretation for *pain* and *pleasure* that did not have to do

with the ordinary meaning as pronounced by the langue in a system of societal order. The parole,

through a subjective analysis narrowed the reversal and questioned the absences present and by

doing so, formulated a mental inversion that brought light to new meaning. The result is *the*

sacrificing of certain human natural instincts/ aligning with the scriptures of God to find

contentment in life, and an assurance of holy providence in the afterlife.

Section III: Decentering the logocentric idea of a city upon a hill

Section III a:

According to Thomas Taylor's article on John Winthrop, "Descriptions of A Model of Christian Charity all too often reduce that sermon to its closing passages warning of God's judgment should the settlers fail, thus robbing the sermon of much of its argument and richness." It is this idea that an ideological apparatus can obtain superiority of presence through a plethora of binaries—a hierarchical representation of different voices, truths, and authorities. Through deconstruction, a transcendental signified is not guaranteed; therefore, authority of presence is absent. So, what does it mean to decenter the logocentric idea of a city upon a hill?

Logocentrism for Derrida represents this theoretical idea of western ideology's desire for a language whose authority is guaranteed by a transcendental signified, a meaning that transcends all signifiers and signs. Decentering the *logic* centered ideology of logocentric thought in a guaranteed hierarchy of signifiers creates an ambivalence of meaning, gesture, tone, presence, or authority in the interpretation of oppositions—opening up a historical repression of difference that takes the form of repressed, abstract, unique, or even uncertain conclusions. For Winthrop, his aim was to establish a "City upon a hill," who God, in all his mighty and wise providence would "show forth the glory of his wisdom in the variety and difference of the creatures, and the glory of his power in ordering all these differences for the preservation and good of the whole" (Winthrop 1). A theme that is representative throughout Winthrop's sermon is that of loving one another, to actualize a city of God's glory on the notion of love, and brotherly affection, despite the aforementioned differences of human-kind that may claim peril in a community of sin.

A structuralist binary is apparent in the section *To love one another/ To not love one another*, and this binary adheres to the ideology of human-kind that would either follow Winthrop in his quest for holy providence or go against his considerations and follow the scriptures of God in their own respect. Winthrop bases his sermon off the scriptures of God, and by the wholly mutual circumstances of survival in the Massachusetts Bay colony. Love within this binary is reflective of 1 John 4:8[3] and Eph. 4:16[4], where Winthrop construes the scriptures of God as to enact, by consideration of all parts of human-kind, and through the Holy bond, as covenant with God to show *how love is the bond of perfection*. But with every binary, there is an opposition, and Winthrop does not fail to outline how this love comes to be wrought.

> Now the onely way to avoyde this shipwracke, and to provide for our posterity, is to followe the counsell of Micah, *to doe justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with our God*. For this end, wee must be knitt together, in this worke, as one man. Wee must entertaine each other in brotherly affection. Wee must be willing to abridge ourselves of our superfluities, for the supply of other's necessities. Wee must uphold a familiar commerce together in all meekeness, gentlenes, patience and liberality. Wee must delight in eache other; make other's conditions our oune; rejoice together, mourne together, labour and suffer together, allwayes haueving before our eyes our commission and community in the worke, as members of the same body. (Winthrop 7)

Winthrop's sermon outlines the unique and familiar aspects the Massachusetts Bay Colony must uphold in order to *keepe the unitie of the spirit in the bond of peace*, and effectively exhibits

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[3] 1 John 4:8: "Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love."
[4] Ephesians 4:16: "From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."

objectives in a narrative that subjects the "act" of opposing love as a sin. From a structuralist

approach, the binary of *To love one another/ To not love one another* within this "city upon a

hill" is then modest, for it purposes to create an order within Winthrop's society, allowing the

modest men of God's providence to subjugate themselves from the non-modest individuals who

would regard "loving one another, even thy enemies" as foolish. However, by establishing new,

or repressed notions of thought through deconstructive skepticism, this thesis might be able to

entertain the ambiguity of reasons that Winthrop might have subsided—besides order.

"Whatever one might think under that heading," says Derrida, "the problem of *language*

[*langage*] has undoubtedly never been one problem among others" (6).

So then—decentering the logocentric idea of a "city upon a hill" would start with the

interpretation of oppositions, not as a structuralist metaphor for *order*, but as a deconstructive

question that proposes an inquiry into the depth of language, and the ideological truths that

follow.

Section III b: Deconstructive Critical approach to Winthrop

In order for Winthrop's idealized community in New England to *keepe the unitie of the*

spirit in the bond of peace, an individual consideration must be made throughout the society. The

people who follow Winthrop in his sermon must be conscientious of 'love,' and the importance it

plays in foregrounding itself as a dominant feature, by showing support for one another,

providing for one another given there is an abundancy, always laying up posterity (as a father)

for their own children, lending as a means of commerce (and not as mercy) unless his means of

repaying be only probable. The object of Winthrop's sermon is to show how love is the bond of

perfection; therefore, Winthrop exclaims how Christ is love, and by a mutual unity—this love

can bring everyone together as one. The following passage from Winthrop's sermon supports

this claim: "*If one member suffers, all suffer with it, if one be in honor, all rejoyce with it*"

(Winthrop 7).

When interrogating *love* in terms of Derrida's theory of deconstruction, it is important to

show the abundant forms that love takes on—ultimately resulting in one outcome, to show

sensibility and sympathy towards each other's conditions to fulfill, by projection of individual

willingness and piety, a loving devoutness to lay down for Christ as to not harbor grudges, acts

of sin, ill-morality, or wickedness. Winthrop outlines within his sermon how this idea of love

should be exhibited though and from Christ, how this love should be exercised, and how this

love can come to be wrought. It is hard to tell if one aspect of this opposition suppresses the

other, but it wouldn't be unreasonable to assume that the idea of loving one another is privileged

over the other. By privileging this side of the opposition, Winthrop attempts to establish unity, as

to not develop an absent characterization for how an individual should be portrayed. In unfolding

the established binary of *To love one another/ To not love one another*, as to corrupt its means of

creating a structural unity, an ambiguity in reversal should be highlighted. In other words,

Derrida's deconstruction will now start where structuralism has ended its discourse. In

establishing *love* as the signifier, the word, the *thing* that is being pointed at, a linguistic

contamination of meaning should be provided, by not only reversing the opposition, but by

introducing radical, or suppressed identifications for *love*. By supplementing the presence, a new

metaphysical adherence will challenge central notions prevalent.

In his essay titled "New Puritans," Eileen Razzari Elrod states: "God's people must act

"like the inhabitants of heaven," as if they understand the essential feature of that heaven to

which they are bound: "By living a life of love, you will be in the way to heaven. As heaven is a world of love, so the way to heaven is the way of love" (138). As love being defined as a determinate of heaven, a juxtaposition can be established between the English Oxford rendition of love, and that of the Puritan outlook—both sentimentalized by Winthrop.

Love, as defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* is an intense feeling of deep affection; however, is this affection a ubiquitous affirmation of love, or is affection only emotionalized in certain instances? The question is then posed, as to our current binary, what new various meanings can emerge? Is affection (as linguistically interpreted in the Oxford sense) the same, or different in a binary opposition that expresses the predisposition of *love* as a precursor for being with Christ? Winthrop expresses how this love is "divine, spirituall, nature; free, active, strong, couragious, permanent; undervaluing all things beneathe its propper object and of all the graces, this makes us nearer to resemble the virtues of our heavenly father" (Winthrop 10). But if love was seen simply as an aggregate of emotional affection—could then the opposition (being as it was rooted in piety) be corrupted? By establishing the individual of Winthrop's Massachusetts Bay colony as a respondent to Winthrop's linguistic interpretation of *love*, could a declaration of disobedience (the ones who have wrought this love) have been rooted in affection, and not of someone who has failed to exemplify Adam's[5] perfect model for human-kind? In terms of this piety, to be wrought in the eyes of Winthrop's interpretation would be to *not* "become againe a living soule," to forego the infusing of principles rooted in John 4.7.[6] and Ezekiel .39.[7], and to

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[5] A reference to Adam and Eve.
[6] *loue cometh of God and every one that loueth is borne of God.*

[7] *bone came to bone.*

look to thy enemies with disdain, to not offer prosperity to thine own children, and to remain

self-centered in a community of compassion.

Section IV: Deconstructive Critical approach to Mary Rowlandson

As stated in the introduction to this thesis, the entirety of Rowlandson's story takes place in twenty "removes," each one representing a physical change in atmosphere and the potential for new ideological perspectives from the inconsistencies of savagery, Puritan salvation, and her own subjectivity pertaining to the world around her. Throughout the captivity narrative, Rowlandson is being moved from one geographical location to the next depending on where the Native Americans strategically chose to move within the wilderness. In applying deconstruction to the context of such a text, certain binaries must first be outlined in an effort to create oppositions. God, for Rowlandson is definitively the transcendental signified; often, providing Rowlandson with scriptural reprieves from the egregious conditions she is faced with. Shortly after receiving a bible from a Native American in 'Remove three,' Rowlandson makes obvious the apparent expression of faith that the bible brings her, "I opened my Bible to read, and the Lord brought that precious Scripture to me" (Rowlandson 238). A common theme throughout the captivity narrative is the scriptural endurance that Rowlandson builds on, allowing her to witness situations such as the death of her child, the slaughtering of her townsfolk, the near-starvation she faced while traveling, and the threats from the Native Americans who bid her listen to them or else they would kill her, and still find solace miraculously in the scriptures of God. It is also important to note that this solace as defined is one rooted in affliction, for Rowlandson, the affliction that has wrought her poor soul has therefore introduced her to the vanity of a troubling existence.

A peculiar theme of savagery is apparent within the captivity narrative. Within the first remove, Rowlandson describes the Native American's who attacked the town of Lancaster as 'barbarous creatures' because to her, they presented attributes of showcasing atrocity through their doleful and miserable escapade which resulted in the wounding, killing, and capturing of several residents of the English town. As stated by Rowlandson: "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 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; yet the Lord by His almighty power preserved a number of us from death, for there were twenty-four of us taken alive and carried captive" (Rowlandson 233). A structuralist binary that is presented here is the binary of *good/evil* regarding the apparent *savagery* of the Native Americans. Another binary that would allow for an inclusive approach at detaining specific oppositions within this linguistic connotation of savagery would be the binary of *barbarous creatures/ Native Americans*—presenting this linguistic differential into the root meaning of each word's definitive connotation.

Within the opposition, the prevailing, or privileged ideological conception (as it relates to Mary Rowlandson's Puritan perspective within Lancaster) is that *barbarous creatures* as a signifier, signifies this idea of barbarism, outrage, terror, and specifically savagery. Linguistically speaking, to map this terminology retrospectively, the connotation of *barbarous creatures* through Rowlandson's interpretation is effectively signified as a negative dialectal sign. In opposing *barbarous creatures* to the oppositional term—*Native Americans*, different connotations can be conceived. Within the captivity narrative, Rowlandson is subjected to a lot of physical interpersonal situations with that of certain Native Americans, and an important one

to further asses would be Weetamoo, a Native American that Rowlandson lived with and served for quite a while during her captivity. The following passage from the nineteenth remove paints a different picture of Native American barbarism as previously expressed by Rowlandson during her capture. "The squaw laid a mat under me, and a good rug over me; the first time I had any such kindness showed me. I understood that Weetamoo thought that if she should let me go and serve with the old squaw, she would be in danger to lose not only my service, but the redemption pay also" (Rowlandson 252). It is also important to note that while in captivity, Rowlandson provided tailoring services for the Native Americans. An inquiry into the linguistic understanding of how cultural differences could have played a role in the 'giving of the bible' due to the possibility of the Native American not understanding the importance of God's scripture to Rowlandson, but the 'giving' of food (even through a scarcity) and certain boons in Rowlandson's grave time of need purposes to help further this narrative of altering Rowlandson's linguistic connotation of *barbarous creatures*.

To deconstruct this constructed signifier of *barbarous creatures/ Native Americans*, it is necessary to break this perpetuation of privileging one side of the opposition over the other—in this instance, drastically unweighing the notion that the Native Americans are barbarous creatures for reason of savagery. However, in deconstructing this binary, questions of Rowlandson's Puritan faith will be attuned in an attempt to reverse the binary and reveal an honest and non-fictitious rupture within the metaphysics of presence that supported to the create this dualistic differentiation in the first place.

In deconstructing the binary, it is important to establish a linguistic reversal as to break the perpetuating nature of privileging one side over the other. Another connotation that could be

expressed through a reversal of the opposition could be the binary of *supportive humans/ neighbors*. In establishing this reversal, the linguistic connotation of *barbarous creatures* has been absconded, and directed at an implication suggesting that the egregious acts of the Native American's could actually be seen as supportive acts. As cynical as this sounds, the murder, pillaging, capturing and other cruel actions the Native American's presented towards the English, is not being pushed aside, but rather viewed from a native perspective—one that has helped keep Rowlandson alive for the entirety of her captivity before being sold back to the English. The following passage from the twentieth remove of Rowlandson's captivity narrative helps support this deconstructive binary reversal—in that the Native American's show support for one another, and even through indignation for the English, Rowlandson was spared.

> Another thing that I would observe is the strange providence of God, in turning things about when the Indians was at the highest, and the English at the lowest. I was with the enemy eleven weeks and five days, and not one week passed without the fury of the enemy, and some desolation by fire and sword upon one place or other. They mourned (with their black faces) for their own losses, yet triumphed and rejoiced in their inhumane, and many times devilish cruelty to the English. (Rowlandson 258)

The structuralist binary of *barbarous creatures/ Native Americans* has now been reversed to *supportive humans/ neighbors* in an attempt to break this perpetuating nature of privileging one side of an opposition over the other. In doing so, the linguistic interpretation of what it means to be *Native American* from Rowlandson's perspective is parsed against the hypothetical interpretation that the Native Americans might have viewed themselves. By construing the two viewpoints as different, but similar—a distortion of the transcendental signified can be assessed,

not to say that it was repressed, but it was lost in linguistic translation. For Rowlandson, her devout piousness was rooted in her Puritan faith—in accepting God's providence as her holy salvation and using the scriptures of God to combat suicidal thoughts, and the rigors of her captivity. For the Native American's, Rowlandson's *barbarous creatures*, the precipice of their notability is rooted in their endeavors, in vanquishing their 'enemies,' the English, and making sure that they do not suffer from starvation. Yet it is so interesting to note that the Native Americans also cared about providing their captives with sustenance enough to keep them alive too. This reversal of a presupposed English norm presents the reader with a corrupted ideology— deconstructing the notion that the Native Americans are purely *barbarous creatures*, and instead showing significant signs of humility throughout their apparent savagery.

In examining the reversal of our previously established binary, repressed, or abstract notions of thought can be revealed. Derrida's theory of deconstruction does not ask us to neutralize the oppositions, but instead formulate non-fictitious ambiguities that effectively overturn the ideological conceptions found within the present structuralist binaries. In reversing the presupposed binary of *barbarous creatures/ Native Americans*, and corrupting this idea of non-humility within the Native Americans, the contextual standpoint asks why we would be able to see the Native Americans in a new light—suggesting that they were not all that savage, as articulated by Rowlandson, and further tackles this idea of humanity and human decency. The subject of our analysis is then the 'Native Americans,' and the perspective is through Rowlandson and that of her Puritan values. One repressed meaning for our subject could be through the linguistic interpretation of imitation, meaning that Rowlandson's perspective of the Native American's only changed because she imitated her presupposed ideological conceptions

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of her English society against the brutish unknown that is the Native American-human nature. As cited within *Of Grammatology*, "Man imitates, as do the beasts. The love of imitating comes from well-regulated nature; in society, it becomes a vice. The monkey imitates man, whom he fears, and not the other beasts, which he scorns; he thinks what is done by his betters must be good" (Derrida 244). This idea of imitation within human nature transcends the ideologies of faith—for Rowlandson showcased a very unique transition from English woman, to a captive slave, who exhibited habits typical of a Native American. These habits included eating their food, speaking with the matriarchs, and becoming (without choice) a part of their traveling group. Through a deconstructive approach, we can therefore understand that through imitation, the Native American's are exhibiting like-minded behavior, even for someone like Rowlandson, who watched them barbarously attack Lancaster. To examine a previous statement, "This idea of imitation within human nature transcends the ideologies of faith," it is important to understand the affliction that Rowlandson endured. Rowlandson very well might have chosen to die with her kin and neighbors in Lancaster, and even wrote that she would; however, right as she was finally confronted with the eyes of death—her faith, her linguistic and spiritual ideology regarding her choices, left her. Rowlandson instead chose to go as a captive with the Native Americans instead of dying. The following passage shows the spiritual juxtaposition that Rowlandson faced while confronted with death: "I had often before this said that if the Indians should come, I should choose rather to be killed by them than taken alive, but when it came to the trial my mind changed; their glittering weapons so daunted my spirit, that I chose rather to go along with those (as I may say) ravenous beasts" (Rowlandson 233).

Section V: Deconstructive Critical approach to Anne Bradstreet

In Rowlandson, a deconstruction of her presupposed attitude towards the Native Americans has revealed a unique meaning—suggesting that the Native Americans, although savage, do show traits of humility and human decency through subjective imitation, and through a reversal of Rowlandson's transcendental signified. In John Winthrop's sermon, the logocentric ideology of a city upon a hill was decentered in a critical attempt to examine the dialectic difference that arises when perceiving *love* from a non-religious (Puritan) perspective. The question that was asked—is then *love* ubiquitous, or are the enemies of providence that are declaring disobedience (the ones who have wrought this love) rooted in affection that showcases this *love* otherwise. The argument is a linguistic breakdown of the opposition that suggests through a diachronic examination, a suppressed alter-meaning that does not neutralize the overall original Puritan meaning, but alters the ideological norm present within Winthrop's sermon.

The themes of loss, sorrow, and privileging oneself in the providence of God's almighty glory are prevalent within the three poems selected for this discussion. A deconstruction of Bradstreet's Puritan theology will show her adherence to her traditional Puritan values within her poetry, along with the integral connectivity she established between her religious doctrine and her own personal emotions.

Section V a: Critical examination of "By Night when Others Soundly Slept"

The first poem that is being analyzed is "By Night when Others Soundly Slept." To quote the translators preface in *Of Grammatology*: "This determination of absolute subjectivity would

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have to be crossed out as soon as we conceive the present on the basis of *Différance*, and not the reverse" (49). In determining if there is a true difference between the linguistic forms of discourse presented in this thesis, and that of the subjective take-away when a deconstructive analysis is performed, the poems in this section will be broken down by their stanzas, and themes. The previous quotation concedes that absolute subjectivity within this examination is impossible because of the particular differences present within the systematic organization of language. As explained within section I of the thesis, *Différance* is important for a linguistic analysis of Puritan ideology because it presents, as a term rooted in alteration, how terminology pertinent to an individual's consciousness can very well mean something else to someone else, or even the individual who uttered the audible term—so then, in comparing the ideologies within Bradstreet's poetry to a captivity narrative, or a Puritan sermon, the *Différance,* on the basis of subjectivity, cannot be absolute. Ambiguity and the stride for new meaning cannot be based on the neutralized conception of a critical examination.

"By Night when Others Soundly Slept" exhibits themes of expressive love for God, a reminder that God will cleanse her of her sorrow, and that He is ultimately her guardian. The theme of cleansing sorrow carries over into her other poems as well. The first section of Bradstreet's poem communicates to the reader how she cannot sleep, "and so to lie I found it best" (Bradstreet, line 4). To lie in bed, presumptuously, and in a state of unrest, it is apparent that Bradstreet is dealing with unease and contemplations of sorrow as we see in the second section with "With tears I sought him earnestly" (Bradstreet, line 6). This poem projects itself as a plea to faith, to assume as a devout follower of God, that in earnest strife, God will cleanse the sorrows away and deliver that "hungry soul" to a final deliverance of true providence. Puritans

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often lived a very clean life, attempting to dismay their own "original sin," so it is no surprise that for her savior, she shall give and give. The structuralist binary of *God as a protector/ worldly protections* becomes apparent—defining then how through this poem, God is seen as a protector. A natural, and linguistic opposition to this conception is then that protection from sorrow can come from other things wholly instead of God.

Realistically the conception that protection from sorrow can come from other things wholly instead of God is not very abstract, or represses as an idea; however, in this thesis' breakdown of structuralist binaries, it works to exclusively separate the differences between two dissimilar points of view. Bradstreet who was born to a Puritan family, and practiced wholeness with God, places starkly on our hypothetical opposition as being fully dependent on God's providence to save her from her derelict sorrow and human depravity. If Bradstreet was parsed against a hypothetical Puritan who does not depend on God wholly for retribution, or in the sense that "original sin" did not entirely provoke them to devote their life to a Puritan life style—will the contrast draw out egregious presumptions about the competency of a person's faith? From a Puritan, most likely. But this thesis isn't also purely a Saussurean breakdown of the semiotic organization of signs, like that of God and its construed meaning. It is a deconstruction of these Saussurean assumptions. Deconstruction does more than *break the binaries* prevalent within a text, it reveals logical or rhetorical incompatibilities between the differentiating planes of discourse within any given text that the theory is applied to. So then— what would a linguistic deconstructive breakdown of *God as a protector/ worldly protections* naturally conceive without neutralizing the opposition or assuming absolute subjectivity?

"What to my Saviour shall I give/ who freely hath done this for me?" (Bradstreet, lines 13-14) In projecting the idea that Bradstreet is in debt to God for his ability to cleanse her of her sorrow, she commends God, in a tone that singles relief, praise, celebration, and good fortune. In breaking the above binary, it is important to understand all these projection of poetic tone, so then logically, an understanding for a more repressed meaning can be revealed. A hypothetical Puritan who does not wholly depend on God for salvation would create augmentation within a sect of individuals who believed that God had formed a unique covenant with them. The signifier is then God, and the signified meaning of God for this hypothetical Puritan would be as something who does not guarantee protection, or act as a guardian. This linguistic interpretation draws from a narrative that clashes the piousness of two semi-hypothetical Puritans. By designating a signified meaning to the signifier [God], a linguistic rendition is then formed, but with language, and differentiating ideologies, perspective works much like Derrida's *Différance*, an attempt to define the difference between an audible word and a written word. If God is projected as something that someone of faith can ignore—is their faith truly conventional? A deconstruction of the binary flips the signified renditions of God, and introduces a mimetic dissonance from faith, rather than a devout obsessiveness. "To Her Father with some verses" proposes a different binary opposition—the same with "The Author to Her Book."

Section V b: Critical examination of "To Her Father with Some Verses"

This poem is another testament to Anne Bradstreet devoutness as a Puritan as it exhibited an attitude of humility towards her father, and an expression of her inner and outer world. In this poem, Bradstreet projects herself as a financial investment— "her existence," as being beholden to her father. "Who can of right better demand the same / Than may your worthy self from whom it came?" (Bradstreet, lines 3-4) The above quote highlights Bradstreet's internalization of how she viewed her father as this transcendental being in her life, and as a Puritan, simple language yielded assumptions about faith and purity. The whole of this poem is a constant dichotomy against the appraisal that she gives her father and the self-depreciatory nature in which she writes about herself. Given this inherent dualism, the binary of *appraising/depreciating* as a structuralist opposition leads the way for certain assumptions to be made. Questions that arise are: was Bradstreet's self-depreciatory nature towards only her father, or was this a generalization of her being? As a complimentary gesture towards her father, was Bradstreet ever complementary towards herself? What has Bradstreet's father done to earn this respect—or was this the "simple language" in that Puritans perpetuate their kindness?

The questions being asked not only attempt to reveal incompatibles within the dualism, but they aim to abstract the linguistic understanding of the semiotics involved within the binary. Bradstreet's entire poem is, in an essence, an extended representation of her self-worth. The binary of *appraising/depreciating* attempts to discover this root meaning. Linguistically, appraising means to hold someone up for the great deeds they have accomplished, to show gratitude and humility, and depreciating the inverse. Self-depreciatory tone signifies depravity in a mind full of prosperity. "Yet handled ill, amounts but to this crumb / My stock's so small I

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know not how to pay" (Bradstreet, lines 6-7), the above passage from the poem emphasizes this self-depreciatory tone and builds upon this idea that Bradstreet earnestly believes that she is amounting to "a small stock," and does not know how to pay—or better, cannot give any of herself that would ever be enough to repay the wonderful sacrifice her father performed, presumably.

In deconstructing the opposition, it would be fair to assume that *appraising/depreciating* can be seen as *giving one's self wholly/losing one's self*. When deconstructing, it is important to not assume any absolute truths, adhere to an already established notion, or to create fictitious meaning, so then, the "utterance" of langue denotes that this decentered binary vocalizes an internal plea from which divinity cannot protect against. The poem as a "giving one's self" to her father, but nullifying the possibility of self-actualization, destroys the projection of Bradstreet's agency as a literary figure. Derrida argued about the ambiguity of mental interpretation depending on differentiating cultures, and signs, so when we parse Bradstreet's theological relevancy against that of her mental depravity, the binary assumes she is losing herself. As despondent as this deconstruction is, her voice is silenced effectively and harbored behind the supposition that God, her father, or better yet, the symbolic guardians in her life will assume an authoritarian presence in directing her conscious understanding of mental reprieve.

Section V c: Critical examination of "The Author to Her Book"

In the poem "The Author to Her Book," Bradstreet internalizes the themes of acceptance and rejection. This is an interesting poem because it encompasses Bradstreet's above mentioned self-deprecatory attitude indirectly at herself. Bradstreet is basically shaming her own writing for

not being good enough, and that no revisions ever made to her work will clean them of the blemishes that exist. "Thou ill-formed offspring of my feeble brain / Who after birth did'st by my side remain" (Bradstreet, lines 1-2), the above passage is from "The Author to Her Book" and it explicates upon this idea that her poem, or work of poems, *The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America,* is a collection of failure, that was taken unbeknownst to her, and published overseas. Bradstreet earnestly believes that her work is garbage and even with an attempt to fix it up—she still cannot sway her perceptions. "I cast thee by as one unfit for light, / The visage was so irksome in my sight*"* (Bradstreet, lines 9-10), the above quote emphasizes the self-depreciating analogue that is inherent within this poem. Unfit for light, or the visage of the eyes of critics, is Bradstreet attempting to conceal her self-proclaimed disappointment. In analyzing a binary, a quick misconception seems to be apparent, in that Bradstreet's stubbornness to accept her work as good is shaded by the worlds idealization—effectively creating this internalized mirage within her consciousness. "If for thy father askt, say, thou hadst none; / And for thy mother, she alas is poor, / Which caused her thus to send thee out of door" (Bradstreet, lines 22-24). In a poem filled with desperation, frustration, self-depreciation, and irritation—it is ironic then that she chooses to conclude on a note that parallels the idea of acceptance, even if it is seen as *depraved* acceptance. In determining the signifiers within this poem, pseudo-mothership personifies her poem to that of a small child with defects, her self-depreciating tone signifies a derelict attitude towards the mass of work she has created, the poem signifies to us that this is Bradstreet's conscious understanding of her work from an empathetic perspective, and for the most part, her tone suggest intimidation from those "critics." In constructing a structuralist dualism, the opposition of *Love/Hate* surfaces, and it works to show how Bradstreet both loved this ill-formed

offspring, and hated the idea of what it could become to the eyes of many critics who would tear her apart. This opposition, albeit simplistic comparatively to some of the other ones in this thesis, elucidates on the immediate realization that there does exist such a stark contrast within this poem.

"This deconstruction of presence accomplishes itself through the deconstruction of consciousness, and therefore through the irreducible notion of the trace (Spur), as it appears in both Nietzschean and Freudian discourse" (Derrida 156). The above quote is taken from the section *Writing before the Letter*, and suggests through a contextual deconstruction of presence, that trace is ultimately the denotive concept which is being deconstructed. Trace is the examination of a binary regarding the rupture in metaphysics. In being reduced, *not broken*, to a transcendental phenomenology, what ideological answer can we then perceive in decentering an opposition, and negating the possibility of choice in a hierarchal system of language? As this thesis has suggested time after time, ambiguity and the conscious understanding of de-perpetuated ambivalence is what this endeavor will use to explain the reversed dualisms—and not presuppose any universal norms. *Love/Hate* as it relates to Bradstreet's poem can then be seen as *internalized guardianship/ worldly delusions*. In reducing the semiotics in question, love can be seen as excessive guardianship, excessive love—like we see in Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved*, when Sethe kills her daughter Beloved to save her from being captured from the white men. Hate then becomes "worldly delusions" because Bradstreet's internalized hatred, and distaste for her work is only a projection of the world around her and what she earnestly believes they will think of her work. This deconstruction is based on the fact that she is a Puritan woman during a time when puritans, nor women were really considered apt to writing and publishing for

their inherent ideological stereotype to be domestic house wives, nurtures and not intellectual vocalizers/ writers.

In applying deconstruction to the writings of Bradstreet and Rowlandson, this thesis argues that linguistic differentiation becomes null in an atmosphere of ambiguity, so as an experimental effort, the medium did not suggest a different methodology. Winthrop's "A model of Christian Charity," although originally vocal, was analyzed textually. The intertextuality of mediums manifested themselves into one subjective bracket, and that was the idea that through a dialectal deconstruction of signs and their meanings, identifiable reversals were evident regardless of their genre. This notion plays into Derrida's idea of deconstruction pleasantly, as chaos abstracts itself, and as Derrida states in an interview with Stanford University press: "what cannot be said above all must not be silenced but written."

Thesis Conclusion

This intent of this thesis was to open up a wide-ranging discussion on the deconstruction of Puritan ideology by analyzing the works of John Winthrop, Anne Bradstreet, and Mary Rowlandson—and by doing so, expressed through a series of binary oppositions, new meaning. The deconstructive analysis of a "city upon a hill" decentered the notion of a transcendental signified in thought and created this set of ideological apparatuses that did not guarantee a transcendental signified to govern an ideological mindset. The binary that was deconstructed was rooted in this desire for brotherly love, as it relates to the Puritan understanding of love as the bond of perfection. As Derrida would have it, finding foundational understanding in a text would begin where structuralism ends—so as the methodology follows, the semiotic method of perceiving signifier/ signified is then a first step to de-perpetuate the theological binaries present within all the works used herein. The following quote supports this Derridean appeal de-perpetuation: "The desire of deconstruction has also the opposite allure. Deconstruction seems to offer a way out of the closure of knowledge. By inaugurating the open-ended indefiniteness of textuality-by thus "placing in the abyss" (mettre en ablme), as the French expression would literally have it, it shows us the lure of the abyss as freedom. The fall into the abyss of deconstruction inspires us with as much pleasure as fear. 'We are intoxicated with the prospect of never hitting bottom" (Derrida 75).

The deconstruction of Mary Rowlandson as it relates to the innate humanity present within the savages/ Native Americans that captured her from Lancaster was an ontological explication into the nature of being. By the precipice of defining, through imitative human nature, were the 'so-called" savages, really savage? The results of this explication yielded that

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Rowlandson dealt with a spiritual juxtaposition that prefaced her attitude towards the natives. Her present idea of faith—her presupposed ideological conceptions were distorted and through this distortion, Derridean deconstruction reversed the oppositions and introduced a brief inquiry into the potential humility of these "barbarous creatures."

       This thesis is an experimental examination—and it attempted to discover new, repressed, historical, theological, or radical notions of thought about the puritan ideology. The concession of personal subjectivity parsed against the Derridean methodology that is being used herein, established unique explanations for the otherwise unexplainable. The intertextuality of literary texts and their differentiating forms of discourse used within this Thesis also leads this conclusion to believe that deconstruction can be seen as easily applicable throughout the dissimilar mediums, or genres of linguistic discourse. To quote Derrida, on the transformation of language as it relates to a Heideggerian consideration of Deconstruction: "From one language to another, or within one and the same language." Translation is a version of the intertextuality that comes to bear also within the "same" language" (Derrida 85). The nature of ambiguity opened the hypothetical doors for inexactness, obscurity, and ambivalence—but throughout the thesis, ambiguity never neutralized the perpetual structuralist binaries that are inherently present within the Puritan primary sources.

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