

Reviews of Books

Editor's Note: The following Forum reflects a joint effort (and joint publication) with *Early American Literature*.

History, Literature, and the Atlantic World

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DURING the past decade, literary scholars have produced an impressive list of books and articles in the emerging field of Atlantic literary history. Atlantic historians, however, rarely acknowledge this work and have moved away from the issues of identity and expression that made literary scholarship attractive and central to Atlantic historiography ten or twenty years ago. This phenomenon is a local manifestation of a wider problem affecting the market for literary scholarship in the wake of the linguistic and cultural turns within history and the resurgence of historicism within literary studies; call it a "correction" of sorts. While literary studies once served as a major exporter of ideas and methods to the human sciences, especially history, literary scholars now import more from historians than they export to them. To put the point in figurative terms that do not disguise the economic stakes involved, a trade deficit now exists on the side of literary studies. Even as literary scholarship has become markedly more "historical," it has apparently become less marketable to historians.

This essay charts the changing status of literature in recent historiography by focusing on historians as much as on literary scholars. It is designed to be descriptive and prescriptive, to diagnose what I see as a

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William and Mary Quarterly, 3d Series, Volume LV, Number 1, January 2008

problem for historians and literary historians alike, and to offer some suggestions for better field integration and dialogue. Atlantic studies offers a compelling case study because literary scholars are clearly producing more scholarship in this area while historians seem to be consuming less of it. Yet my evidence base will turn at times to the fields represented by the primary readers of the journals in which this essay appears, early American history and early American literature, and my remarks will occasionally refer to disciplinary shifts within the larger enterprises of history and literary studies. Attending more to practice than theory and focusing on scholarship published in English about colonial and early national North America, the essay invites readers to reflect on what historians and scholars of literature do when they encounter each other, when they interpret literature, and when they use literature to interpret something else. Though early Americanists seem more divided now than ever before, the real division may not be between history and literary studies so much as it is between competing concepts within history and within literary studies about what texts are and do.

The three sections of this essay address different ways of conceiving of disciplinary relations. The first section briefly examines the growth of Atlantic literary history and the declining citations to literary scholarship by historians. The second section uses a decade of cross-disciplinary book reviews (that is, reviews in which historians evaluate new books by literary scholars and vice versa) to see what historians and literary scholars actually have to say about each other and how individual readers have constructed disciplinary commitments by confronting work in another discipline. The third section examines the use of literature as evidence in recent documentary collections edited by historians who have been interested in the recoverability of the voices, epistemologies, or subjectivities of Native American peoples described in and by European-authored texts. I conclude by suggesting a few ways of overcoming the growing trade gap in Atlantic scholarship, directing my remarks to both historians and literary scholars.

In the past few years, historians have produced histories of the Atlantic world, histories of histories of the Atlantic world, and arguments about the utility of the concept of an Atlantic world, but they have done so largely without reference to current or past literary scholarship. The rise of the Atlantic world as an object of analysis and a site of scholarly contestation is surely one of the most significant developments in the historiography of the last decade. Though the phrase "Atlantic world" appeared in a handful of books and articles in the 1970s and early 1980s,

it began to take hold of the historical profession as a phrase repeated annually in the titles of books, articles, and dissertations in the late 1980s, following the publication of Nicholas Canny and Anthony Pagden's edited collection of essays, *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World*. But the real acceleration began only in 1999, when seven books adopted the phrase, as many as had appeared during the preceding decade. From 2000 to 2006, forty-five books, fifty-two articles (excluding book reviews), and twenty-one dissertations invoked the phrase. Use of the phrase peaked in 2005 (fourteen books, eleven articles, and four dissertations) and then fell in 2006 (six books, seven articles, four dissertations).¹ Though the annual numbers are so small as to make statistical predictions meaningless, the many assaults on the phrase (and the concept behind it) may be working; though Atlantic history is clearly on the rise, the Atlantic world may be on the wane, even as literary scholars have started to contribute to the study of that historiographical fiction.

To judge from conference and seminar rosters, bibliographies, and citation statistics, historians might be forgiven for thinking of the Atlantic world as their own disciplinary domain. By 2005, when the International Seminar on the History of the Atlantic World celebrated its tenth anniversary at Harvard University, literary scholars had contributed only 4 of more than 250 working papers to its annual meetings; since that year, the overall number of literary scholars can now be counted on two hands, but scholarship by literary historians still represents only around 2 percent of the total number of papers, a regrettable imbalance given the International Seminar's concern with topics such as "Cultural Encounters" and "The Circulation of Ideas." Whereas by September 2007 the combined online bibliographies of America: History and Life and Historical Abstracts supplied a list of 344 publications

¹ Nicholas Canny and Anthony Pagden, eds., *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World, 1500-1800* (Princeton, N.J., 1987). For recent debates about the Atlantic world, see "AHR Forum: Oceans of History," *American Historical Review* 111, no. 3 (June 2006): 717-80, esp. Alison Games, "Atlantic History: Definitions, Challenges, and Opportunities," *ibid.*, 741-57; "Forum: Beyond the Atlantic," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 63, no. 4 (October 2006): 675-742. For a history of Atlantic history, see Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (Cambridge, Mass., 2005). The publication statistics in this paragraph and the following one were gathered on Sept. 1, 2007, from WorldCat, Dissertation Abstracts International, the Modern Language Association, and the combined online bibliographies of America: History and Life and Historical Abstracts. I have excluded publications that focus on the period after 1850. Some publications from 2006 may not yet be listed in these online bibliographies, which may account for the apparent decline in use of the phrase. And titles, of course, offer only a hint of the wider use of the phrase within publications. For example, from 2000 to 2006, seventy-two dissertation abstracts mentioned the Atlantic world, more than three times as many uses as in dissertation titles.

concerned specifically with the Atlantic world, including reviews of books with the phrase in their titles, the online bibliography for the Modern Language Association listed only 17 publications employing the phrase in their titles. Seven of those 17 publications, including most recently Jon F. Sensbach's *Rebecca's Revival*, from 2005, were written by historians. We are not all Atlanticists now—or so it would seem from the available bibliographies.

In fact scholarship on circum-, cis-, and transatlantic literary history during the last decade constitutes a strong and growing field within early modern literary studies, even if some of that work has yet to find its way into the proper disciplinary bibliographies. The MLA bibliography, for instance, does not yet list Philip Gould's *Barbaric Traffic* (2003) or Susan Scott Parrish's *American Curiosity* (2006), two books written by literary scholars that are indexed on the historical bibliographies. The subtitles of Gould's and Parrish's books indicate the desire of literary scholars and the presses that publish them to join in conversations with historians and to participate in the historiography of the Atlantic world. Literary bibliographies may soon balloon with more entries specifically addressing that concept. A new journal devoted to Atlantic studies publishes literary scholarship alongside cultural and historical scholarship, and two British presses have recently launched book series focusing on transatlantic literatures and transatlantic perspectives on American literature. More work is in the pipeline: from 1995 to 2005, almost fifty separate announcements for conferences and essay collections solicited papers specifically on literature and the Atlantic world. The best materialization of the Atlantic turn in literary studies may be found in two collections of essays published in 2005. In *Envisioning an English Empire*, edited by literary scholar Robert Appelbaum and historian John Wood Sweet, and in *Writing Race across the Atlantic World*, edited by literary scholars Philip Beidler and Gary Taylor, contributors from literary studies actually outnumber contributors from history.² To

² For a partial list of books in Atlantic literary history from the last decade, focused especially on North America and limited to publications in English, see my *Historiographical Note*, 162–66. On circum-, trans-, and cis-Atlanticism, see David Armitage, "Three Concepts of Atlantic History," in *The British Atlantic World, 1500–1800*, ed. Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (New York, 2002), 11–27. The journal *Atlantic Studies: Literary, Cultural and Historical Perspectives* has published seven issues since its founding in 2004, each with commentary on literary texts and contributions from literary scholars. Routledge *Transatlantic Perspectives on American Literature* (2004–), a series edited by Susan Castillo, has issued six volumes, including one concerned with the period before 1800: Gesa Mackenthun, *Fictions of the Black Atlantic in American Foundational Literature* (London, 2004). Five books, including Susan Manning and Andrew Taylor, eds., *Transatlantic Literary Studies: A Reader* (Edinburgh, U.K., 2007), have been published in Edinburgh University Press's new *Studies in Transatlantic Literatures* series, announced in 2004 and edited by Manning and Taylor. For recent solicitations of papers on literature and

judge from collections like these, disciplinary integration in the study of the Atlantic world is better than it has ever been. But this new Atlantic literary history remains largely unheralded by and perhaps unknown to many Atlantic historians.

Even as literary scholarship has increasingly taken an Atlantic and historicist turn in the last ten years, it has apparently not found readers among Atlantic historians. One field's influence on another is hard to measure, since citations alone are not always a reliable guide. But the imbalance, the trade gap between literary scholars' citations of historians and historians' citations of literary scholars, is at least noteworthy. Literary scholars now generally frame their arguments by reference to the work of historians, a fact that can be easily traced in book and article citations.³ But this development, which looks like greater integration

the Atlantic world, see the Calls for Papers in English and American Literature Web archive (1995–, with some interruptions), maintained by the Department of English at the University of Pennsylvania (<http://www.english.upenn.edu/CFP>). Nine of the fourteen contributors to Robert Appelbaum and John Wood Sweet, eds., *Envisioning an English Empire: Jamestown and the Making of the North Atlantic World* (Philadelphia, 2005), are literary scholars; eight of the ten contributors to Philip Beidler and Gary Taylor, eds., *Writing Race across the Atlantic World: Medieval to Modern* (New York, 2005), are literary scholars. Historian Karen Ordahl Kupperman, who brought some of the contributors to *Envisioning an English Empire* together at the Folger Library for a 2000 NEH summer seminar titled "Texts of Imagination and Power: The Founding of Jamestown in Its Atlantic Context," is the only scholar to appear in both volumes.

³ Statements about historians' apparent disinterest in recent Atlantic literary scholarship are based on my reading of a wide swath of scholarship in literary studies and history, but the trade gap can be glimpsed on a small scale in the journals in which this essay appears. The lead articles in the first issues of *Early American Literature* and the *William and Mary Quarterly* in 2007 supply one index. Literary scholar Joshua David Bellin cites thirty sources from the decade preceding publication of the article (1997–2006), including eight publications by historians, in Bellin, "John Eliot's Playing Indian," *Early American Literature* 42, no. 1 (2007): 1–30; historian William A. Pettigrew cites fourteen recent publications, only one of which is by a literary scholar, in Pettigrew, "Free to Enslave: Politics and the Escalation of Britain's Transatlantic Slave Trade, 1688–1714," *WMQ* 64, no. 1 (January 2007): 3–38. Overall for these two issues, citations to publications by literary scholars account for 12 percent (20 of 154) of the total recent citations in the *William and Mary Quarterly*, and citations to publications by historians account for 22 percent (17 of 78) of the recent citations in *Early American Literature*. But the January 2007 issue of the *William and Mary Quarterly*, which includes eight essays in a Forum on "Black Founders" in addition to two regular articles, is probably atypical. Five of the ten publications by literary scholars cited in the issue are cited more than once, and multiple publications by one literary scholar, Joanna Brooks, account for half of all citations to literary scholarship. Meanwhile the two main articles combined cite fifty recent publications, only one of which is by a literary scholar; this ratio (about 2 percent) is almost certainly a better indication of typical articles by historians published in the *William and Mary Quarterly*. A more accurate picture of the citational trade gap would obviously require an analysis of every issue of both journals and

from the perspective of literary studies, might not register as integration from historians' points of view. Literary scholars are directing readers to recent work by historians but with little hope of reciprocation. In doing so early American literary scholars in particular may feel a sense of double exclusion: their historicist commitments often render them marginal from the larger (that is, later) enterprise of American literary history, but the same commitments do not necessarily result in crossover appeal to their early modern colleagues in history departments.

It is important not to mistake the problem or to underestimate institutional desires to overcome it. Some areas of study, particularly early American history and culture, are seemingly more integrated than ever before. *Early American Literature* is publishing and reviewing more work by historians, just as the *William and Mary Quarterly* has moved toward a steadier publication of essays by literary scholars and continued its commitment to reviewing new books in early American literary studies. Forums such as this one and joint conferences such as the one organized by the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture and the Society of Early Americanists in June 2007 symbolize greater interaction. Literary scholars now increasingly find fellowship opportunities at places such as the McNeil Center for Early American Studies and the Omohundro Institute, helping to make these places potentially powerful incubators of multidisciplinary. The book- and journal-publishing projects of these institutions also display a genuine commitment to new work by literary scholars.⁴ Nevertheless the fields are not as integrated as such indicators suggest.

would need to take into account all citations, not just the citations to work from the preceding decade. Such an analysis would be useful, since it might substantiate a perceptible disciplinary lag: the extent to which literary scholars or historians work within older frameworks from each others' fields, perhaps unaware of newer developments. The rise in citations to historians' work in *Early American Literature* was most dramatic from 1987 to 1997. The journal's first issue in 1987, for instance, included five citations to recent publications by historians, or about 16 percent of the total recent citations; the first issue for 1997 included twenty-four citations to recent publications by historians, or about 51 percent of the total recent citations. Again the sample size is small but nevertheless suggestive of the larger trend.

⁴ During the last decade, the McNeil Center for Early American Studies at the University of Pennsylvania has awarded sixteen of seventy-five dissertation fellowships to literary scholars, whereas in the prior two decades only three fellows had come from literature departments. In addition, since 1999, four of nineteen McNeil Center postdoctoral fellowships have gone to literary scholars (slightly more than 20 percent). Only three of the thirty-seven books published since 1996 through the Early American Studies series, coordinated by the McNeil Center, were authored by literary scholars, but over time I hope the number will grow to match the percentage of the fellowships they held. In the past few years, three literary scholars have earned fellowships at the Omohundro Institute, and two of the seven monographs published by the Institute in 2006 were written by literary scholars.

Another index of Atlantic literary history's lack of impact on Atlantic history overall can be found in three essay collections published at the height of the use of the phrase Atlantic world, in 2005. *The Creation of the British Atlantic World*, edited by Elizabeth Mancke and Carole Shammas; *Empire and Nation*, edited by Eliga H. Gould and Peter S. Onuf; and *The Atlantic World*, edited by Wim Klooster and Alfred Padula, are all made up exclusively of essays by historians who (if citations are a reliable guide) find little interest in contemporary literary scholarship or even in the analysis of written texts.⁵ To be sure, written texts constitute the major evidentiary base in the sections of recent essay collections on the Atlantic world treating "imagination" (as in part 4 of Klooster and Padula's volume) or "identities" (as in part 3 of *The British Atlantic World*, a volume of essays edited by David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick). But the authors of essays included under those rubrics are in a minority, and few make sustained reference to work by contemporary literary scholars.⁶

⁵ Eliga H. Gould and Peter S. Onuf, eds., *Empire and Nation: The American Revolution in the Atlantic World* (Baltimore, 2005); Wim Klooster and Alfred Padula, eds., *The Atlantic World: Essays on Slavery, Migration, and Imagination* (Upper Saddle River, N.J., 2005); Elizabeth Mancke and Carole Shammas, eds., *The Creation of the British Atlantic World* (Baltimore, 2005). Along with Robert Olwell and Alan Tully, eds., *Cultures and Identities in Colonial British America* (Baltimore, 2006), the collections edited by Gould and Onuf and by Mancke and Shammas pay tribute to the work of historian Jack P. Greene; many of the essays were written by his former students. This may be one reason for the absence of citations to literary scholars in these collections, though it is worth noting that the first citation in Greene's contribution to Nicholas Canny and Anthony Pagden's 1987 volume was a favorable nod to literary scholar Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Puritan Origins of the American Self* (New Haven, Conn., 1975). See Greene, "Changing Identity in the British Caribbean: Barbados as a Case Study," in Canny and Pagden, *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World*, 213 n. 1. It is especially unfortunate that the essays in Olwell and Tully's volume on cultures and identities do not generally acknowledge the work of literary scholars on those topics. Though S. Max Edelson's contribution to that volume ("The Nature of Slavery: Environmental Disorder and Slave Agency in Colonial South Carolina") refers to David S. Shields, *Oracles of Empire: Poetry, Politics, and Commerce in British America, 1690-1750* (Chicago, 1990), and Daniel C. Littlefield's essay ("Almost an Englishman": Eighteenth-Century Anglo-African Identities") relies on the work of several scholars of Anglo-African identity, such as Vincent Carretta, Michal Jan Rozbicki's essay ("Between Public and Private Spheres: Liberty as Cultural Property in Eighteenth-Century British America") does not cite any of the contributions on publicity that constituted some of the most important work in literary studies in the 1990s, beginning with Michael Warner, *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990).

⁶ Klooster and Padula, *Atlantic World*; Armitage and Braddick, *British Atlantic World*. As far as I can tell, Stephen Greenblatt's *Marvelous Possessions* is the only text on the colonial period by a literary scholar that Alan Taylor mentions in the twenty-four-page bibliography of his *American Colonies* (Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*:

This was not always the case, as collections of essays on the Atlantic world produced during the 1980s and early 1990s attest. For instance, though often remembered as an important and agenda-setting volume for comparative colonial and imperial studies, Canny and Pagden's *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World* also stands as a significant example of the literary and cultural turn taken by historians in the early 1980s. The book, which bears traces of the influence of anthropology and literary studies, had its origins in a three-year seminar on "self-perception, mutual perception, and historical development," held at the Institute of Advanced Study in Princeton from 1979 to 1982, and a subsequent 1982 seminar specifically on colonial identity. The essays focus on colonial self-representation; the essayists closely interpret texts from the period and, though the references are by no means as extensive as they might have been, historians acknowledge recent studies by literary scholars and, in some cases, by anthropologists and political scientists influenced by literary studies.⁷

Similarly, the essays collected in *America in European Consciousness*, edited by Karen Ordahl Kupperman, document the continuing significance of literary analysis for field formation in Atlantic history. The essays were originally presented at a conference at the John Carter Brown Library that examined the influence of America on European imaginations. As then-Library Director Norman Fiering explained in a preface to the volume, the conference planners and funders wished to focus on "conscious expression, on intellectual life and articulated forms of culture, not on such matters as silent economic and demographic

The Wonder of the New World [Chicago, 1991]; Taylor, *American Colonies: The Settling of North America* [New York, 2001]). In fact the sensibility shift in consulting literary scholarship for the practice of early American history can be measured by considering *American Colonies* in light of Taylor, *William Cooper's Town: Power and Persuasion on the Frontier of the Early American Republic* (New York, 1995), a book that hybridized "three usually distinct genres: biography, social history, and literary analysis," that took "narrative making" as a central object of study, and that cited many literary scholars (quotations, *ibid.*, 8). Taylor's rich scholarship serves as a barometer of sorts. His first book, *Liberty Men and Great Proprietors: The Revolutionary Settlement on the Maine Frontier, 1760-1820* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1990), included only two footnotes acknowledging literary scholarship (on Nathaniel Hawthorne). His most recent book, *The Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution* (New York, 2006), cites Laura J. Murray, ed., *To Do Good to My Indian Brethren: The Writings of Joseph Johnson, 1751-1776* (Amherst, Mass., 1998), and Bernd C. Peyer, *The Tutor'd Mind: Indian Missionary-Writers in Antebellum America* (Amherst, Mass., 1997), but no other works in the very rich field of Native American literary studies. Citations alone are not necessarily a reliable guide, but Taylor's practice suggests a linguistic cul-de-sac rather than a linguistic turn.

⁷ Canny and Pagden, *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World*, ix.

change that . . . were not overtly integrated into written discussion, debates, and commentary at the time." Kupperman's volume includes two contributions by literary scholars, whereas the essays edited by Canny and Pagden were all written by historians. But with or without the participation of literary scholars, the topics of both books—self-perception and the consciousness of others—dictated attention to literary sources and drew on the work of literary scholars for inspiration. It would be hard to think of similar essay collections that more fully embody the 1980s and early 1990s or that exerted a greater impact during that period on the formation of the current field of Atlantic history.⁸ But things have changed since then, and historians have moved away from questions of identity or expression.

A switch in topics and sources offers one explanation for historians' general lack of interest in recent literary studies. Atlantic literary history is emerging as a recognizable field against a larger backdrop in which Atlantic history as a whole is apparently moving away from a focus on text-centered evidence. In his survey of the formation of the field of Atlantic history, Bernard Bailyn has charted the movement during the past fifty years from interpretations made "on the basis of literary documents" or "on the basis of linguistic evidence" to interpretations grounded in less obviously textual disciplines such as demography or economics. Bailyn describes well the general pattern for topics such as the Atlantic slave trade. But any linear narrative of the progression from textual to nontextual sources misses the literary detours and cross-fertilizations, the linguistic and cultural turns that reenergized Atlantic history and historiography in the 1980s and early 1990s. Such a narrative also underestimates the extent to which recent Atlantic history, even in studies of migration and economics, has remained committed to traditional textual sources. To cite just one indicator, the eight books that

⁸ Norman Fiering, foreword to *America in European Consciousness, 1493–1750*, ed. Karen Ordahl Kupperman (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1995), x (quotation). The period and theme of the June 1991 conference at the John Carter Brown Library reflected the library's holdings. Other collections have achieved better disciplinary integration than the two volumes discussed in the text. See, for instance, Fredi Chiappelli, Michael J. B. Allen, and Robert L. Benson, eds., *First Images of America: The Impact of the Old World on the New*, 2 vols. (Berkeley, Calif., 1976), a collection of papers on "arts and letters, politics, economics, demography, [and] science and technology" presented at an international conference at the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1975 (*ibid.*, 1: xix); Stuart B. Schwartz, ed., *Implicit Understandings: Observing, Reporting, and Reflecting on the Encounters between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era* (Cambridge, 1994), based on a 1990 conference at the University of Minnesota; Robert Blair St. George, ed., *Possible Pasts: Becoming Colonial in Early America* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2000), which gathered papers from a 1994 conference at the University of Pennsylvania on "the effects of recent critical theory on the practice of early American historical scholarship" (*ibid.*, xi).

have received the American Historical Association's James A. Rawley Prize in Atlantic History since it was first offered in 1999 represent a cross section of current interests—legal history; the history of science; the history of slavery, abolition, and emancipation; and the history of cultural encounters between Europeans and Native Americans—but they all employ the literary and linguistic sources that historians and literary scholars share.⁹ The general lack of interest in Atlantic literary history among historians may have more to do with perceptions of the field of literary studies than with a movement away from a common textual source base.

How, then, do historians perceive contemporary literary scholarship? Book reviews offer one indication. In 2005 *Early American Literature* and the *William and Mary Quarterly* published side-by-side reviews by literary scholar Vincent Carretta and historian Philip D. Morgan of James G. Basker's anthology of early modern English-language poems about slavery. The simultaneous reviews supply readers with different ways of appreciating and critiquing one new work. But instances of cross-disciplinary reviewing in the *William and Mary Quarterly* extend well beyond moments when two disciplinary orientations confront a single book. A survey of a decade's worth of book reviews demonstrates the journal's ongoing commitment to historians' reviews of the work of literary scholars and vice versa. From July 1995 to April 2005, the *William and Mary Quarterly* published thirty-four reviews of literary scholars by historians and thirty reviews of historians by literary scholars. The authors of the reviews range from Ph.D. students to senior professors. The books reviewed include monographs and syntheses, collections of essays, scholarly editions, and anthologies. Some of the books reviewed by historians have won prizes from the Modern Language Association; some of the books reviewed by literary scholars have won prizes from the American Historical Association. In addition to these specifically

⁹ Bailyn, *Atlantic History*, 17 ("literary documents"), 41 ("linguistic evidence"). The recipients of the James A. Rawley Prize are Jeremy Adelman, *Republic of Capital: Buenos Aires and the Legal Transformation of the Atlantic World* (Stanford, Calif., 1999); Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Indians and English: Facing Off in Early America* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2000); Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World: Histories, Epistemologies, and Identities in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Stanford, Calif., 2001); Patricia Seed, *American Pentimento: The Invention of Indians and the Pursuit of Riches* (Minneapolis, Minn., 2001); John Ruston Pagan, *Anne Orthwood's Bastard: Sex and Law in Early Virginia* (New York, 2003); Laurent Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution and Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787–1804* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2004); Londa Schiebinger, *Plants and Empire: Colonial Bioprospecting in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge, Mass., 2004); Christopher Leslie Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2006).

cross-disciplinary reviews, the *William and Mary Quarterly* published thirty-five reviews of literary scholars by other literary scholars and twelve reviews in which literary scholars were either the author of a book under review or the reviewer.¹⁰ These 111 reviews probably constitute about 20 percent of the total number of reviews during the last decade. This number may not be significant overall, but it suggests that early American literature and its scholars are well represented in the journal's book reviews and furnishes a substantial corpus from which to generalize.

Reviewing the reviewers of books allows us to see what historians and literary scholars actually have to say about each other. It should be remembered that review editors presumably assign books to individuals with special knowledge about a topic, not merely to representatives of a discipline or to those who share the same methodological proclivities as the authors of books under review. The peculiar way I treat these reviews, abstracting a general criticism from remarks about particular books, is also likely to strike some readers as crude. I do not indicate the names of the reviewers or the books reviewed here.¹¹ The point of reviewing the reviewers is not to reify the disciplines further but to acknowledge the ways in which they are already reified.

A number of points that might not emerge when historians and literary scholars think generally about the disciplines of literature and

¹⁰ A list of the sixty-four cross-disciplinary reviews that appeared in the *William and Mary Quarterly* from July 1995 to April 2005 is available on <http://oieahc.wm.edu/wmq/Jan08/slaughter.pdf>. The 2005 collaboration between Vincent Carretta and Philip D. Morgan in publishing side-by-side reviews in the *William and Mary Quarterly* institutionalized a practice found in the journal at least one other time in the recent past. In 2001 historian Roger Chartier and literary scholar Michael Warner composed separate reviews of the first volume of *A History of the Book in America*. See Chartier and Warner, "The Book in America: Transatlantic Perspectives," review of Hugh Amory and David D. Hall, eds., *The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*, *WMQ* 58, no. 3 (July 2001): 693–99. This survey of cross-disciplinary reviews is obviously an imprecise exercise. I classify a review of a collection with contributions by both historians and literary scholars as "by literary scholars" if a historian reviews it and "by historians" if a literary scholar reviews it. From July 1995 to April 2005, literary scholars reviewed books by art historians and political scientists and wrote or contributed to books reviewed by anthropologists, art historians, professors of Women's Studies, and bibliographers. Historians reviewed three historical novels, two of which I excluded from the survey; the one that I included was written by a professor of English and fell into the category of reviews "of literary scholars by historians."

¹¹ For names of reviewers and books reviewed, see the list of cross-disciplinary reviews on <http://oieahc.wm.edu/wmq/Jan08/slaughter.pdf>. I make no attempt to distinguish the commissioning practices of the three book review editors for the *William and Mary Quarterly* during the last decade: John E. Selby (until October 1999), Robert A. Gross (January 2000–July 2002), and Karin Wulf (since October 2002). If this practice of general criticism offends, please consider it a methodological provocation rather than an abnegation of scholarly responsibility.

history do emerge when they review each other's books. With a few exceptions, reviewers do not blame authors for failing to be what they have not been trained to be. And, again with a few exceptions, reviewers do not reject books out of hand but seek to discover what is compelling about them. Whatever they might think about each other's practices in general, at least in the *William and Mary Quarterly* reviews historians do not routinely tell literary scholars to be more "historical" and literary scholars do not regularly tell historians to be more "literary" (whatever they might mean by those terms). They do, however, explore what being a better textualist or contextualist might have meant for producing a more satisfying and successful interpretation. Reviewers sometimes hide behind screens ("some readers may be disappointed") that barely mask their real criticisms; other reviewers occasionally reveal their own hobby-horses, those proprietary pockets of expertise that would have made the book under review better. Yet more often than one might imagine, reviewers enter sympathetically into dialogue with the authors they review—they try on different identities, reflect on how a different perspective might look, and tease out the payoff for themselves and their colleagues. My impression (it may be merely my perspective) is that historians are more critical of literary scholars than vice versa, but it is not clear that historians are more critical of literary scholars than they are of other historians. Scholars are often more critical of work in their own disciplines than work by practitioners in other disciplines. The book review is a genre of its own, of course, in which appreciation is supposed to be balanced with criticism. My quick survey overemphasizes criticism, but it does so with an acknowledgment (made implicitly and explicitly by the reviewers) that the study of early America is a vibrant multidisciplinary, if not interdisciplinary, endeavor and that different competencies, textual and extratextual, have a role to play.

What have historians in the *William and Mary Quarterly* generally said about recent books by literary scholars? To begin, historians have made a number of critiques that might be applied to almost any book in that field:

The book under review is too dependent on the work of other scholars.

The book operates in ignorance of the work of others.

The book's orientation is too secular, failing to appreciate the centrality of religion in the early modern period; or its orientation is too denominationally specific, missing religious pluralism in the early

modern period; or its orientation is too religious, granting a regulatory power to religion that it did not possess even in the early modern period.

The book is too geographically bounded or unbounded; it fails to account for regional variations or substitutes regional analysis for national analysis; it does not take a transatlantic perspective or misses regional or national variation when it does.

The author does not define period terms or historicize key analytic terms such as race; the analysis of gender is reserved for topics specifically involving women; class is not even considered.

The book imports anachronistic identities to the period when it should really trace the origin of those identities.

The author historicizes one changing variable but incorrectly imagines that another is static.

The author employs unhelpful analytic or theoretical vocabulary in a way that obscures the meaning of the argument.

The author asks the right questions but does not answer them, identifies an important story but does not tell it, or proposes a provocative thesis but does not support it.

The book is well documented but boring and merely supplies new evidence for an old thesis.

Sensitive readers will notice little that is specific to the discipline of literary studies, even if individual literary scholars have been guilty of all these things.¹² In reality readers are likely to find any of these charges leveled at any book in history or literary studies under review in the *William and Mary Quarterly*. These critical observations (or, depending on your view, banalities) are the ingredients in almost any review and, with differing emphases (historians are more likely to treat literary scholars as pathbreaking but ungrounded; literary scholars are more likely to treat historians as well grounded but not pathbreaking), can also be

¹² Historians made the charge of theoretical jargon less frequently than one might imagine; only five of the thirty-four reviews of literary scholars mentioned that the critical vocabulary obscured the argument or delighted in claiming that professors of English literature cannot seem to write clearly in English. At least one of these reviewers felt that the idea behind a certain critical neologism ("monarcho-anarchism") was so important that the term could be forgiven. See Brendan McConville, review of Paul Downes, *Democracy, Revolution, and Monarchism in Early America*, *WMQ* 60, no. 4 (October 2003): 917-20. Downes adopted the term from Myra Jehlen, "J. Hector St. John Crèvecoeur: A Monarcho-Anarchist in Revolutionary America," in *Readings at the Edge of Literature* (Chicago, 2002), 32-49. McConville went on to cite Jehlen and Downes in McConville, *The King's Three Faces: The Rise and Fall of Royal America, 1688-1776* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2006), 182 n. 25.

found in reviews of historians by literary scholars, reviews of literary scholars by other literary scholars, and reviews of historians by historians. Chances are that everyone reading this essay has written or will write a book that has generated or will generate a response along these lines.

But if these charges are not specific to textual scholars, which ones are? Before turning to the list, it should be acknowledged that historians have evidenced a great deal of appreciation for the contributions of literary scholars. Reviewers praised books that helped historians to expand their understanding of the relation of print culture to identity formation; to enlarge their ideas about writing and communication; to clarify their thinking about ways to recover the subjectivities (if not the "voices") of American Indians, Africans, and African Americans who engaged in collaborative authorship of texts with white transcribers and editors; and to remember that larger cultural categories such as gender are incomprehensible unless one attends to individual cases, lives, and texts. Appreciations aside, a rough and unranked catalog of criticism includes the following charges, some of which may appear to cancel each other out but simply reflect different understandings of a historical approach:

- The book relies on too few texts, does not elaborate criteria for their inclusion, or does not make the case for why close analysis of texts is the best way to understand the phenomenon under investigation. In other words the reviewer asks, why close reading? Why a small number of texts? Why literary texts? And why these particular literary texts?
- The book understands literature as an index of something else, but the author does not know much about the actuality of that something else.
- The book's interpretative presumptions about literature are not proven and should not be taken for granted. For instance the claim that literature shapes nations is unclear and far from self-evident.
- The author is insightful about texts but not about larger contexts (and contexts are always larger, never smaller).
- The book's innovative readings of individual texts do not upset traditional historiography; the author of the book may not even know what that historiography is.
- The book derives its sense of context from the texts it examines rather than from origins outside the texts (or, in some cases, outside these particular texts).
- The research relies on modern editions of literary texts, not unedited publications from the period.

- The book assigns ahistorical value to a text that is based on a retrospective or modern notion of literary significance rather than its importance to contemporaries (for instance, an anthology fails to reprint what a historian considers the most historically significant candidate for inclusion).
- A book that relies on reader-response theory is too theoretical and often derives its sense of what a reader might have made of a text from what a modern critic makes of a text. The author needs to consider the practices of real readers, not implied readers, and needs to realize that people have read differently over time; that is, the author needs to see his or her own reading practice as discontinuous with the practices of even the imaginary readers he or she writes about.
- A literary scholar who studies real readers is sadly more interested in what was read than in who read it or how: this scholar needs to focus on individuals rather than on homogenizing categories (such as women as readers) that fail to differentiate between economic and social classes.
- History is a mess, literary texts are messy things, and a literary scholar's accounts of both are too tidy.
- Fussing over genre distinction can be as unhelpful as it is illuminating: it is not clear that the critical distinctions between, for example, memoir and autobiography mattered to writers or readers on the ground.
- Close reading can be too close, and it is usually only necessary to point to the larger textual context (the sentence, the paragraph, or the chapter) of a closely read textual snippet to refute conclusions that seem counterintuitive.
- The author attributes a radicalizing power to literacy or to writing itself that might have resulted from other causes for which reading or writing were epiphenomenal (for instance, Protestantism).
- The author imagines that a collective mind can be pieced together from diverse sources, but in reality there are only "minds." Conversely, in an attempt to distinguish the views of an individual, the author misses the ways in which that individual exemplified larger mentalities.
- The book falsely treats a fragmented period as coherent and cohesive because it seems so from the perspective of literary history; stability in genre or form should not be mistaken for other kinds of stability, and the really interesting question is why literary practices stabilized in the midst of flux.
- The author should think more about the relationship between ideality and material reality.

A literary scholar can help readers see ways in which material reality is metaphorized (for example, the relation between the body and the body politic) but frequently treats simile or metaphor as reality and is mistaken in believing that analyzing metaphor is the same as saying something significant about reality.

The author believes that there is no difference between behavior and discourse; the book collapses a distinction between language and belief. The author mistakes an analysis of a cultural text for an analysis of a culture.

For their part, in reviewing historians, literary scholars have appreciated clearly written accounts that bring order to what seems like chaos; have acknowledged that historians do a better job at recognizing cultural plurality in the early modern period, where literary scholars generally see binaries; have benefited from historians who help them account for the motives behind representational practices; and have noted that unlike their fellow literature specialists, who have fixated on emphasizing positive moments of cultural exchange, historians usefully acknowledge conquest as well as exchange, reminding readers that clear communication between natives and settlers was often a prelude to violence rather than an antidote. That said, literary scholars made the following claims (again, in no particular order) about books written by historians:

The book does not attend to basic details about the texts it cites, such as date and place of publication, or to more complex matters of publication, dissemination, or reception; a particular text is incomprehensible without knowledge of the social settings of literary production and reception and even manuscript sources must be read with an understanding of how manuscripts circulated.

The book falters at the level of "interpretation," by which the reviewer means the analysis of individual texts, not larger themes.

The book relies on a small textual sample for a large generalization and sometimes relies on the wrong texts.

The book gathers sources together without attending to generic difference or treats texts outside of literary conventions; knowledge of literary conventions and generic difference is crucial for understanding texts.

The book's understanding of how life is transmuted into literature, especially fiction, is reductively biographical and economic.

The book pays insufficient attention to the language of the period; even those who study the history of political thought now favor modern analytic terminology in place of more careful attention to period terminology.

- The author should attend to the discourses that move and mobilize people, especially religious discourse, and is too apt to discount religious language or to see spiritual language as motivated by material concerns.
- The author neglects the power of texts to persuade people to action (for example, the effect of promotional literature on immigration).
- The author should return to classic works of intellectual history for advice about reading (or reading through) texts and about studying the relation of language to power.
- The book limits its geographic boundaries to the present-day United States or overemphasizes continuities between colonial Anglo-America and the United States, seeing the colonial period as protonational.
- Different topics have different periodizations. Literary and cultural histories may have internal dynamics, and recognizing them can help readers see continuities across periods that seem disconnected.
- Descriptions of an interpretive divide between those who think that texts only reveal information about their producers and those who think that texts can be mined for clues about the peoples described caricature the positions of literary scholars and historians, but especially literary scholars.
- The book misunderstands the relationship between culture and law. Changes in legal practice do not necessarily cause changes in cultural practice.
- A historian thinking about the reception of ideas or texts should not take the printed book as the default standard unit of measurement.
- A historian whose primary focus is on durable institutions may be blind to the enduring significance of ephemeral literary practices.
- The book mistakes changes in language for changes in belief or vice versa; beliefs sometimes remain static when expression changes and sometimes change even when language remains static.
- The author naively imagines that a change in critical terminology will alter the way scholars behave.
- The book is not nuanced in its understanding of ideology or the psychology of empire, failing to note doubt and ambivalence about empire in the period under consideration.
- A historian should take postcolonial thought seriously and should recognize the ways in which certain ideas now considered postcolonial actually began during colonialism but should also be aware that concepts such as "cultural brokering," which might be associated with postcolonial theory, inadvertently reinforce the binaries between the cultures being brokered.

Descriptions of how discourses changed in substance or style are not explanations of why they changed.

Historians regularly chide new historicist literary scholars for abandoning the commitment to causality without which historical explanation seems like no explanation at all. But what does it mean when literary scholars, as in the last item on the list of indictments, accuse historians of being insufficiently attentive to causality in dealing with discourse? If these lists do nothing else, they serve as a reminder that literary history and history are both historicist enterprises: they are simply committed to historicizing different things.¹³ I hope that enumerating the charges points to the strengths and weaknesses of each discipline, at least as reviewers defined them in reference to individual scholarly works. And it is worth emphasizing that some of the claims and counterclaims reflect divides within rather than between the disciplines. The real divisions in early American studies are probably between individuals whose methodological expertise inclines them toward or away from the close analysis of written texts, as opposed to the contextualization of those texts. Any binary opposition between historians and literary scholars threatens to redraw disciplinary lines in a field that, more than many others, has seen real collaboration and exchange. Paying attention to the criticisms on both sides could mean better books in literary studies and history.

The indictments offered by the sixty-four cross-disciplinary reviews can be explored in greater detail by examining Carretta's and Morgan's individual reviews of Basker's edited collection *Amazing Grace*. Taken together, these reviews raise two big sets of questions. First, what is the relationship between literature and empire, or (for want of a better phrase) the imperial project? And could an anthology of poems about slavery serve as evidence that literature in English was not complicit with British imperialism? Because the vast majority of writers (male, female, black, and white) included in Basker's anthology "portray slavery as ugly and evil," Carretta joins Basker in seeing the anthology as "a formidable challenge" to the argument "in some academic circles that English literature was 'complicitous in Empire,' that the majority of writers supported and condoned the goals and practices of the 'imperial project,' including its worst features such as the slave trade and plantation slavery." In his introduction to the anthology, Basker does not identify the source of the charge of complicity (perhaps the charge is ubiquitous enough not to need a note), but he does find solace in the words of David Armitage, who has suggested, as Basker summarizes, that writers "'may have hampered' rather than helped in building an

¹³ I owe this formulation about literary history and history to Jay Fliegelman.

'overseas empire for Britain.'" Against Carretta's celebration, Morgan was struck by the fact that even "putatively sensitive antislavery poets, often more attuned to white sin than to black suffering, found it difficult to imagine slaves as human beings" and that this "myopia was the most dispiriting yet illuminating feature of reading this volume." There are different senses of complicity with the imperial project, Morgan suggests; being antislavery was not the same as being antiracist, and empire depended on both slavery and racism.¹⁴

That Morgan and Carretta see such different things in the poems raises a second set of questions: What can literature actually tell us about the subject it addresses rather than the person who writes it? In what sense is literature a historical indicator? Carretta writes, "Poetry is a barometer by which scholars can measure the history of slavery and the rise of so-called scientific racism during the long eighteenth century. Consequently, many, if not most, of the poems are more significant as historical documents than as literary texts. Readers can easily trace the development of tropes, concepts, and issues during the period. For example, one can watch as the concept of blackness, which was initially used to refer to both American aborigines and Africans, became almost exclusively associated with people of African descent by the end of the eighteenth century." But Morgan notes that the first century covered in the volume, 1660–1760, "saw the publication of less than a fifth of the poems included in this anthology, whereas the half century from 1760 to 1810 witnessed a mounting surge of publications, with the last two decades accounting for 45 percent of the total." What this disparity tells Morgan is that "a lag existed between the sentiments of most poets and the reality of an expansive and vibrant institution": the "cultural and economic significance of slavery was evident by the turn of the eighteenth century. By then most British colonial trade was dependent on the labor of enslaved people. Yet the upsurge in poetic interest in slavery took largely an antislavery position." But beyond the disconnects between chattel slavery and poetry, Morgan finds it "telling how little the antislavery advocates knew (or wanted to know) concerning the experiences of African slaves." The point is not that the poems are

¹⁴ Vincent Carretta, review of James G. Basker, ed., *Amazing Grace: An Anthology of Poems about Slavery, 1660–1810*, *WMQ* 62, no. 2 (April 2005): 305 ("portray slavery"); Basker, ed., *Amazing Grace: An Anthology of Poems about Slavery, 1660–1810* (New Haven, Conn., 2002), xlvii–xlviii ("in some academic circles"); Philip D. Morgan, review of Basker, *Amazing Grace*, *WMQ* 62, no. 2 (April 2005): 303 ("putatively sensitive antislavery poets"). For the source of Basker's quotations, see David Armitage, "Literature and Empire," in *The Origins of Empire: British Overseas Enterprise to the Close of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Nicholas Canny, vol. 1 of *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, ed. Wm. Roger Louis (Oxford, Eng., 1998), 122.

unworthy of examination—the “fantasies, fictions, distortions, tropes, and exaggerations of many of these poems are important in their own right, and certainly deserve reclamation and study.” Instead Morgan disputes Carretta’s claim that these are texts in which one “can measure the history of slavery.” They are barometers, in Carretta’s term, but ones that measure only white racism; one would hardly look to them to understand slavery as a lived experience. It would be difficult to cast the exchange between Morgan and Carretta purely in disciplinary terms.¹⁵ What their reviews suggest are different conceptions about the status of literature as evidence.

The strategies employed in the presentation and interpretation of texts in the Bedford Series in History and Culture, documentary anthologies prepared by leading historians and aimed at undergraduate readers, are revealing about the depths of these conceptual differences over the evidence of and in literature. In the foreword included in all Bedford Series books, the general editors tell students that the way a story is constructed can be as important and informative as what the story says. Nevertheless the individual introductions and the pedagogical apparatuses of most books in the Bedford Series offer little support for students who wish to focus, as the general editors imagine, on the differences between what the author of a text says and how he or she says it. Though most books in the Bedford Series include “Questions for Consideration” designed to spur class discussions or course papers, these questions rarely consider the importance of generic or literary convention, the significance of writing as a practice, or the relationship between textual form and meaning. In three different Bedford Series anthologies, however, historians Allan Greer, Stuart Schwartz, and Neal Salisbury do confront questions about how much European-authored texts can tell us about native peoples. Their answers suggest the very different textual archives of colonial French, Spanish, and English America yet also point to different notions of how European texts can be interpreted.

¹⁵ Carretta, *WMQ* 62: 306; Morgan, *WMQ* 62: 299–300, 302. Indeed the exchange between Vincent Carretta and historian Paul E. Lovejoy over the claims about Olaudah Equiano’s birthplace in Carretta’s *Equiano the African* cannot be reduced to a simple standoff between a textualist and a contextualist; it is a contest between two forms of contextualism, in which a historian and a literary scholar debate the veracity of claims made within historical documents. See Carretta, *Equiano the African: Biography of a Self-Made Man* (Athens, Ga., 2005); Carretta, “Response to Paul Lovejoy’s ‘Autobiography and Memory: Gustavus Vassa, alias Olaudah Equiano, the African,’” *Slavery and Abolition* 28, no. 1 (April 2007): 115–19; Lovejoy, “Issues of Motivation—Vassa/Equiano and Carretta’s Critique of the Evidence,” *ibid.*, 121–25.

In the introduction to *The Jesuit Relations*, a documentary collection published in 2000, Greer asks a provocative series of questions: "Were Indians merely a literary creation representing the opposite of the missionaries' own culture? Or did the Jesuits manage to overcome the limitations of their intellectual equipment and begin to see the world, at least to some degree, as a Huron or a Mohawk?" Greer's question stems from long-standing suspicions among historians, anthropologists, and literary scholars about what European texts can tell us about the indigenous cultures they purport to describe, suspicions that intensified in the decade or so preceding the publication of this volume. The question presents a softer version of a seemingly unbridgeable divide between reading European colonial texts entirely for what they say about Europeans and reading them for evidence of native intellectual history. But as the phrasing suggests (the absolute "merely" against the qualified "at least to some degree"), Greer's anthology largely rests on a rejection of the notion that the native peoples who inhabit Jesuit texts are only literary creations. None of Greer's thirteen "Questions for Consideration" invokes literary representation or implies any doubt that students could use *The Jesuit Relations* alone to answer factual questions about native worldviews. These questions include: "What was the meaning and purpose of war in Iroquoian societies of the seventeenth century?"; "What are the main differences in the way the French and the natives viewed the environment and the natural world?"; and even "What did conversion mean to the Indians of this period?"¹⁶ Could questions about the meaning of conversion or the natural world for native peoples be answered if one truly believed that the native peoples described by the Jesuits were merely literary creations? Presumably, they could not. Greer's excellent and necessary volume helps modern students overcome the limitations of their own intellectual equipment and begin to see the world, at least to some degree, as the Jesuit authors saw it. But his anthology also offers few guidelines to encourage students to consider how European textual practices and genres may have guided not just what Jesuit writers said about native peoples but what they saw as well.

Schwartz's *Victors and Vanquished*, also published in 2000, offers a similar double perspective on colonialism but escapes the largest questions of European representation by anthologizing written texts produced by both Europeans and native peoples in sixteenth-century Mexico, an option not available to Greer for seventeenth-century New

¹⁶ Allan Greer, ed., *The Jesuit Relations: Natives and Missionaries in Seventeenth-Century North America* (Boston, 2000), 19, 214. To be fair, Greer's bibliography points students to Gordon M. Sayre, *Les Sauvages Américains: Representations of Native Americans in French and English Colonial Literature* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1997).

France. The Bedford Series editors observe that "different views of an event may be as important as a single verdict," and perhaps no volume in the series illustrates this perspective as well as Schwartz's. For Schwartz "Nahuas and Spaniards differed not only in what they chose to record and remember about these events, but also in the form of how they recorded them." Relieved of the problem Greer's texts present, that of deriving native viewpoints exclusively from European texts, Schwartz is free to focus on cultural differences within the textual accounts. "How can we read and understand such divergent styles of representation?" Schwartz asks about contending accounts of the conquest of Mexico. What motivated "European authors [to include] the indigenous stories of omens in their accounts?" What led men such as Cortés to "[present] the new land" in the way he did? How did "European preconceptions and beliefs" influence descriptions of indigenous culture? "How do the Spanish and Nahua descriptions and understandings of the first meetings differ?"¹⁷ Like many of the questions posed in the Bedford Series, these would be difficult to answer based simply on a close reading of the primary texts included in the volume; for answers, students look to interpretations found in the introduction and editorial headnotes. But even if an answer requires interpretive assistance, the questions themselves help students to place literary analysis at the center of historical inquiry.

If Schwartz's volume on colonial Mexico courts attention to literary questions and Greer's on New France largely avoids them, Salisbury's indispensable edition of Mary Rowlandson's *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* makes the case that literary contexts should be subordinated to cultural contexts when dealing with New England. Though it was long considered a marginal and noncanonical text for seventeenth-century Anglo-American literary critics, there are now few texts more central than Rowlandson's 1682 account of her captivity among Native Americans in New England during Metacom's War (1675–76). Nevertheless none of the fifteen "Questions for Consideration" in Salisbury's edition of Rowlandson's narrative specifically addresses the literary dimensions of her text. Salisbury does ask students to consider authorial intention ("What were Rowlandson's reasons for writing a narrative of her captivity?") and potential readership and reception ("For what audience was Rowlandson writing? How do you think her narrative affected their religious beliefs" and "attitudes toward Native Americans?").

¹⁷ Natalie Zemon Davis and Ernest R. May, foreword to *Victors and Vanquished: Spanish and Nahua Views of the Conquest of Mexico*, by Stuart Schwartz (Boston, 2000), iii ("different views"); Schwartz, *Victors and Vanquished*, ix ("Nahuas and Spaniards"), 28 ("How can we read"), 247–48 ("European authors").

But for Salisbury, most studies of Rowlandson are culturally one sided. "Scholars studying Rowlandson's text have been limited by having read it either in relation to other Puritan writings, to later captivity narratives, or to other writers who were women," but Salisbury supplements the text with documents that allow readers to situate Rowlandson's text in its immediate moment and to see her captivity in ways that illuminate the lives and experiences of native peoples. Though much of the edition frames the narrative with additional information designed to offer students a native perspective on her captivity and Salisbury largely resists the temptation to use Rowlandson's narrative itself to retrieve the voices or views of native peoples, he asks: "Although it was not Rowlandson's intention to present them, can you uncover any Indian viewpoints on the English and on Metacom's War from her narrative?"¹⁸ Less interested than Schwartz in the question of representation, less sanguine than Greer about what can be learned from European texts, Salisbury avoids the celebrations of Rowlandson's subjectivity, agency, and ethnographic acumen that seem to accompany most of the recent critical literature.

The volumes edited by Greer, Schwartz, and Salisbury reflect the very different colonial archives of the French, Spanish, and English Atlantic worlds, but they might also be said to reflect different approaches to treating literature as evidence. Greer has great confidence in the ability of his Jesuit writers to reveal something about the world-views of the native peoples they described; indeed, without romanticizing, he implicitly suggests that the Jesuits were able in some ways to shed European cognitive paradigms. On the other hand, Schwartz's questions about the motivations for representational practices make it impossible for students simply to sift Spanish texts for information about Nahuas or Nahua texts for information about Spaniards. What he finds are "views," in the keyword of the book's subtitle, and "descriptions," as the "Questions for Consideration" repeatedly suggest. The volume represents Schwartz's engagements with colleagues in anthropology and literary studies; it is partly a legacy of the multidisciplinary discussions surrounding the 1992 Columbian Quincentenary. Salisbury offers something different than either Greer's single source or Schwartz's multiple perspectives. Similar to what Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney have recently accomplished with their study of the 1704 Deerfield raid, Salisbury aids students in glimpsing the other side of the captivity narrative. Moreover, in describing the fate of some of Rowlandson's

¹⁸ Neal Salisbury, ed., *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God, Together with the Faithfulness of His Promises Displayed: Being a Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson and Related Documents* (Boston, 1997), 172 ("Rowlandson's reasons," "not Rowlandson's intention"), vii-viii ("Scholars studying").

captors who were "sold . . . to slave traders who took them to the West Indies, Bermuda, Virginia, the Iberian peninsula, and, in at least one instance, North Africa," Salisbury offers students, if hesitantly, a chance to reflect on what Joyce E. Chaplin has recently termed "captivity without the narrative." Though aimed at undergraduates, these documentary collections point to one bright spot where history and literary studies have remained in something of a dialogue: the effort to recover the voices, epistemologies, or subjectivities of Native American peoples described in and by European-authored texts.¹⁹ Literary scholars and historians may have different ideas about literature as evidence, but they share many areas of concern, and they each have much to add to such projects. Attempting to reconstruct the perspectives of people described within texts, people who have left few other traces of their intellectual history, is an enterprise too important to be left to a single discipline.

¹⁹ Schwartz, *Victors and Vanquished*, 247–48; Salisbury, *Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, 37; Joyce E. Chaplin, "Enslavement of Indians in Early America: Captivity without the Narrative," in Mancke and Shammas, *Creation of the British Atlantic World*, 45–70. Chaplin's essay offers an exemplary correction to the current literary scholarship of captivity. For other results of the 1992 Columbian Quincentenary, see the essays in Schwartz, *Implicit Understandings*. For the Deerfield raid, see Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney, *Captors and Captives: The 1704 French and Indian Raid on Deerfield* (Amherst, Mass., 2003). In very different ways during the last decade, historians such as Chaplin, Karen Ordahl Kupperman, Jill Lepore, and Daniel K. Richter have all assessed the utility of various strands of literary analysis for accessing native perspectives on colonization. See Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York, 1998); Kupperman, *Indians and English: Subject Matter: Technology, the Body, and Science on the Anglo-American Frontier* (Cambridge, Mass., 2001); Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge, Mass., 2001). Recent literary studies have moved from a focus on transcultural representation to a focus on Native American authorship. See Hilary E. Wyss, *Writing Indians: Literacy, Christianity, and Native Community in Early America* (Amherst, Mass., 2000); Joanna Brooks, *American Lazarus: Religion and the Rise of African-American and Native American Literatures* (New York, 2003); Kristina Bross, *Dry Bones and Indian Sermons: Praying Indians in Colonial America* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2004); Maureen Konkle, *Writing Indian Nations: Native Intellectuals and the Politics of Historiography, 1827–1863* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2004); Laura M. Stevens, *The Poor Indians: British Missionaries, Native Americans, and Colonial Sensibility* (Philadelphia, 2004); Sarah Rivett, "Evidence of Grace: The Science of the Soul in Colonial New England" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2005); Phillip H. Round, "The Return of the Native: Recent Scholarship in the Literature of Christianization and Contact," *Early American Literature* 40, no. 2 (June 2005): 375–85; Gordon M. Sayre, *The Indian Chief as Tragic Hero: Native Resistance and the Literatures of America, from Moctezuma to Tecumseh* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2005); Robert Warrior, "Review Essay: The Role of Native American Voices in Rethinking Early American Literary Studies," *Early American Literature* 42, no. 2 (2007): 369–75; Matt Cohen, *Native Audiences: Communicating in Early New England* (forthcoming).

A citational imbalance exists between the disciplines of history and literary studies. Literary scholarship has become more conversant with historiography at the same time that historians have seemingly become less interested in literary scholarship and literary evidence, a phenomenon that, in the case of Atlantic studies, can be measured and explained in a variety of ways. The increasing historicism in literary scholarship is more dramatic than the modestly declining citation of literary scholarship by historians, but the failure of a rising wave of literary historical work to find an audience among historians is nevertheless lamentable. What can and should be done?²⁰ At a bare minimum, historians who continue to work with texts should apprise themselves of the contributions of their colleagues in literary studies and should commit themselves to reading reviews of new work in literary journals. But the problem is not one sided, and literary scholars will need to reassess their own practices if they hope to play a less marginal role in the study of the Atlantic world. By way of closing, I offer a few prescriptions, directed to both audiences.

First, literary scholars and historians should reassess what has made literary analysis attractive to historians in the past. Literary scholars who believe they are doing historical work and yet are being ignored by historians are often out of touch with what counts as advanced work in history. For historians to recognize literary scholarship as valuable, that scholarship will need to supply a real contribution to historical knowledge, advance a powerful theoretical claim to be further developed and historicized, or showcase a methodological tool that can be of use beyond local examples. The best new Atlantic literary history does all of these things. But the general way in which literary scholarship has become, by virtue of its citational imports, more historical may be one reason it has become less interesting to historians. In the past a few historians discovered utility in literary scholars' methods and concepts, though many historians may have steered clear of literary scholarship because they found it too hermetic or too little grounded in historical reality. Today historians may be suspicious of what they perceive as an essentially derivative historicist enterprise in which this or that literary text is unsurprisingly shown to have emerged from an established context already familiar to historians. Putting a text in a historical context can matter a great deal for literary analysis, but it can have only a minimal appeal to historians, especially when the context is stitched together from existing historiography. Literary scholars who practice this kind of historical contextualization cannot truly have cause for complaint about their lack of appeal to or citation by historians. Suggestive if ungrounded literary theory

²⁰ I am grateful to Bradin Cormack for helping me refine my sense of the problem and the possible solutions.

supplies a more compelling program for further research by historians. In other words literary scholars need not trade theory for history to make a contribution; in turn, historians might read the new Atlantic literary studies opportunistically to locate theoretical insights they might further historicize.

Second, a unified field is probably neither possible nor desirable, but at the very least historians and literary historians who work in Atlantic history should make better attempts to be familiar with each other's most recent work. Historians who deal primarily with verbal objects should know how literary scholars have read those objects, but even historians who are working on putatively nontextual sources of demography and economics can profit from the literary scholarship of the past two or three years. In turn literary scholars need to engage the new nontextual Atlantic history, even the histories of demography and economics, not as secondary sources to be mined for historical context but as opportunities for real dialogue. To invoke just one example, David Eltis's magnificent and much-cited *Rise of African Slavery in the Americas* has not been mentioned in any literary journals until now. Though an economic historian, Eltis's explanation for the rise of African slavery is cultural, and he cautions against economic interpretations of history that do not attend to "the cultural parameters within which economic decisions are made."²¹ It is these parameters—the realm of habits, thoughts, and behaviors evidenced in verbal texts—that current literary scholars excel at interpreting. They are in a particularly good position to help historians account for precisely the kinds of causality that elude other forms of analysis.

Finally, literary scholars and historians should retire antiquated binaries that cast the former primarily as textualists and the latter as contextualists. My account of book-reviewing practices and of pedagogy and research has sometimes stressed a disciplinary divide between literary and historical studies, but it has also marked some of the fault lines within historical studies. Literary evidence has an incontestable role to play in helping historians to see and hear new things about the Atlantic world. The real contest will come in choosing among competing concepts—between history and literary studies, as well as within history and within literary studies—about what texts are and do. Literary schol-

²¹ David Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas* (Cambridge, 2000), 284. For evidence of literary scholarship's value to historians working with nontextual sources, see Jennifer J. Baker, *Securing the Commonwealth: Debt, Speculation, and Writing in the Making of Early America* (Baltimore, 2005); Eric Wertheimer, *Underwriting: The Poetics of Insurance in America, 1722–1872* (Stanford, Calif., 2006); Michelle Burnham, *Folded Selves: Colonial New England Writing in the World System* (Hanover, N.H., 2007).

ars should abandon false claims that they are better at all forms of reading or textual interpretation than historians, and historians should shed the idea that they are always better at putting things in context. After all literary history is a context-generating enterprise similar to legal, social, and economic history. Rather than assuming a subordinate role and reading texts in a previously generated context, literary scholars can help historians see current historiographical questions in new ways and in new contexts. And historians, as they read the new Atlantic literary history, should try to imagine what it would mean to adopt the context generated by literary history for their own purposes.

Part of the excitement of Atlantic history comes from its inherent multidisciplinary, from the dizzying shifts that come from viewing familiar phenomena from different angles, different geographies, and different disciplinary perspectives. Strictly speaking, of course, it makes little sense to treat Atlantic history as a unified field or Atlantic historians as a monolithic disciplinary group. Atlantic history is practiced by economic historians, social historians, legal historians, historians of science, political historians, historians of religion, intellectual and cultural historians, and many others; historians within these separate historiographies do not necessarily interact with each other as much as they could.²² It has become routine for social historians to situate their findings within the contexts generated by legal history or for historians of science to frame their analysis in political or economic terms. Each of these subdisciplines depends to some extent on textual analysis, and there is no reason why literary history cannot serve nonliterary historians in much the same way. After all, to a remarkable degree, what counts as a larger or smaller context remains up for grabs in the study of Atlantic history. When historians and literary scholars move beyond collegiality and mere citation into genuine intellectual collaboration and conceptualization, the study of the Atlantic world will become an even more exciting enterprise. But for that to happen, historians and literary scholars will need to work to narrow the disciplinary trade gap.

²² For an analysis of the problem of integrating historiographies, see Games, *American Historical Review* III: 741-57.

Historiographical Note

Scholars have not yet attempted to write an encyclopedic Atlantic literary history, but interested readers should consult the multivolume national and transnational literary histories of parts of the Atlantic world published in the last decade and a half, most of which engage with the European colonization of the Americas. These works include: Denis Hollier et al., eds., *A New History of French Literature* (Cambridge, Mass., 1989); Sacvan Bercovitch, ed., *The Cambridge History of American Literature* (Cambridge, 1994), vol. 1; David William Foster, ed., *Mexican Literature: A History* (Austin, Tex., 1994); Roberto González Echevarría and Enrique Pupo-Walker, eds., *The Cambridge History of Latin American Literature* (Cambridge, 1996), vol. 1; Hanna Stouten, Jaap Goedegebuure, and Frits van Oostrom, eds., *Histoire de la littérature néerlandaise: Pays-Bas et Flandre* (Paris, France, 1999); Miguel Tamen and Helena C. Buescu, eds., *A Revisionary History of Portuguese Literature* (New York, 1999); David Loewenstein and Janel Mueller, eds., *The Cambridge History of Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge, 2002); David T. Gies, ed., *The Cambridge History of Spanish Literature* (Cambridge, 2004); F. Abiola Irele and Simon Gikandi, eds., *The Cambridge History of African and Caribbean Literature*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 2004); Mario J. Valdés and Djelal Kadir, eds., *Literary Cultures of Latin America: A Comparative History*, 3 vols. (New York, 2004); David Wellbery et al., eds., *A New History of German Literature* (Cambridge, Mass., 2004); John Richetti, ed., *The Cambridge History of English Literature, 1660–1780* (Cambridge, 2005); Margaret Kelleher and Philip O’Leary, eds., *The Cambridge History of Irish Literature*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 2006); Ian Brown, ed., *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh, U.K., 2007).

Readers interested in the literature of the Atlantic world should also examine the few available multivolume histories of the book for the early modern period, though not all touch on Atlantic circulations of texts. For France, see Henri-Jean Martin, Roger Chartier, and Jean-Pierre Vivet, eds., *Histoire de l’édition française* (Paris, France, 1982–86), vols. 1–2. For England, see Lotte Hellinga et al., eds., *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain* (Cambridge, 1999–2002), vols. 3–4. For colonial British America, see Hugh Amory and David D. Hall, eds., *The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge, 2000). For Canada, see Patricia Lockhart Fleming, Gilles Gallichan, and Yvan Lamonde, eds., *History of the Book in Canada* (Toronto, Ontario, 2004), vol. 1.

Recent literary anthologies of early American literature and newly edited primary texts also offer excellent introductions to an Atlantic-

sensitive literary history. For general anthologies covering the early modern period, see Myra Jehlen and Michael Warner, eds., *The English Literatures of America, 1500–1800* (New York, 1997); Susan Castillo and Ivy Schweitzer, eds., *The Literatures of Colonial America: An Anthology* (Oxford, Eng., 2001); Carla Mulford, ed., *Early American Writings* (New York, 2002). For recent anthologies and editions focused on shorter periods, on the literatures of particular peoples, or on individuals, see Adam Potkay and Sandra Burr, eds., *Black Atlantic Writers of the Eighteenth Century: Living the New Exodus in England and the Americas* (New York, 1995); Vincent Carretta, ed., *Unchained Voices: An Anthology of Black Authors in the English-Speaking World of the Eighteenth Century* (Lexington, Ky., 1996); Henry Louis Gates Jr. and William L. Andrews, eds., *Pioneers of the Black Atlantic: Five Slave Narratives from the Enlightenment, 1772–1815* (Washington, D.C., 1998); Murray, *To Do Good to My Indian Brethren*; Rolena Adorno and Patrick Charles Pautz, *Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca: His Account, His Life, and the Expedition of Pánfilo de Narváez*, 3 vols. (Lincoln, Neb., 1999); Paul Baepler, ed., *White Slaves, African Masters: An Anthology of American Barbary Captivity Narratives* (Chicago, 1999); Thomas W. Krise, ed., *Caribbeana: An Anthology of English Literature of the West Indies, 1657–1777* (Chicago, 1999); Andrew Hadfield, ed., *Amazons, Savages, and Machiavels: Travel and Colonial Writing in English, 1550–1630: An Anthology* (New York, 2001); Basker, *Amazing Grace*; Joanna Brooks and John Saillant, eds., *"Face Zion Forward": First Writers of the Black Atlantic, 1785–1798* (Boston, 2002); Michael P. Clark, ed., *The Eliot Tracts: With Letters from John Eliot to Thomas Thorowgood and Richard Baxter* (Westport, Conn., 2003); Marcus Wood, ed., *The Poetry of Slavery: An Anglo-American Anthology, 1764–1866* (New York, 2003); Brooks, ed., *The Collected Writings of Samson Occom, Mobegan: Leadership and Literature in Eighteenth-Century Native America* (Oxford, Eng., 2006).

For monographs and essay collections in Atlantic or Atlantic-sensitive literary history published in English since 1990 and focused on North America from 1500 to 1825, see Shields, *Oracles of Empire*; Warner, *Letters of the Republic*; Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*; J. A. Leo Lemay, *The American Dream of Captain John Smith* (Charlottesville, Va., 1991); Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse, *The Imaginary Puritan: Literature, Intellectual Labor, and the Origins of Personal Life* (Berkeley, Calif., 1992); Stephen Fender, *Sea Changes: British Emigration and American Literature* (Cambridge, 1992); Dana D. Nelson, *The Word in Black and White: Reading "Race" in American Literature, 1638–1867* (New York, 1992); Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London, 1992); Greenblatt, ed., *New World Encounters*

(Berkeley, Calif., 1993); Frank Shuffelton, ed., *A Mixed Race: Ethnicity in Early America* (New York, 1993); Janice Knight, *Orthodoxies in Massachusetts: Rereading American Puritanism* (Cambridge, Mass., 1994); William C. Spengemann, *A New World of Words: Redefining Early American Literature* (New Haven, Conn., 1994); Joan Dayan, *Haiti, History, and the Gods* (Berkeley, Calif., 1995); Walter D. Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, and Colonization* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1995); Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York, 1996); Peyer, *Tutor'd Mind*; Sayre, *Sauvages Américains*; David S. Shields, *Civil Tongues and Polite Letters in British America* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1997); Francis Barker, Peter Hulme, and Margaret Iversen, eds., *Cannibalism and the Colonial World* (Cambridge, 1998); Hadfield, *Literature, Travel, and Colonial Writing in the English Renaissance, 1545-1625* (New York, 1998); Shannon Miller, *Invested with Meaning: The Raleigh Circle in the New World* (Philadelphia, 1998); Eric Wertheimer, *Imagined Empires: Incas, Aztecs, and the New World of American Literature, 1771-1876* (Cambridge, 1998); Srinivas Aravamudan, *Tropicopolitans: Colonialism and Agency, 1688-1804* (Durham, N.C., 1999); Jim Egan, *Authorizing Experience: Reconfigurations of the Body Politic in Seventeenth-Century New England Writing* (Princeton, N.J., 1999); Julie Ellison, *Cato's Tears and the Making of Anglo-American Emotion* (Chicago, 1999); Roland Greene, *Unrequited Conquests: Love and Empire in the Colonial Americas* (Chicago, 1999); James D. Hartman, *Providence Tales and the Birth of American Literature* (Baltimore, 1999); Stephanie Merrim, *Early Modern Women's Writing and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz* (Nashville, Tenn., 1999); Phillip H. Round, *By Nature and by Custom Cursed: Transatlantic Civil Discourse and New England Cultural Production, 1620-1660* (Hanover, N.H., 1999); Thomas J. Scanlan, *Colonial Writing and the New World, 1583-1671: Allegories of Desire* (Cambridge, 1999); Doris Sommer, *Proceed with Caution When Engaged by Minority Writing in the Americas* (Cambridge, Mass., 1999); Rebecca Ann Bach, *Colonial Transformations: The Cultural Production of the New Atlantic World, 1580-1640* (New York, 2000); Sandra M. Gustafson, *Eloquence Is Power: Oratory and Performance in Early America* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2000); Hulme and William H. Sherman, eds., *"The Tempest" and Its Travels* (Philadelphia, 2000); Suvir Kaul, *Poems of Nation, Anthems of Empire: English Verse in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Charlottesville, Va., 2000); José Rabasa, *Writing Violence on the Northern Frontier: The Historiography of Sixteenth-Century New Mexico and Florida and the Legacy of Conquest* (Durham, N.C., 2000); John Carlos Rowe, ed., *Post-Nationalist American Studies* (Berkeley, Calif., 2000); Roxann Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century*

British Culture (Philadelphia, 2000); Marcus Wood, *Blind Memory: Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America, 1780–1865* (New York, 2000); Wyss, *Writing Indians*; Vincent Carretta and Philip Gould, eds., *Genius in Bondage: Literature of the Early Black Atlantic* (Lexington, Ky., 2001); Paul Giles, *Transatlantic Insurrections: British Culture and the Formation of American Literature, 1730–1860* (Philadelphia, 2001); Carla Mulford and Shields, eds., *Finding Colonial Americas: Essays Honoring J. A. Leo Lemay* (Newark, Del., 2001); William Donoghue, *Enlightenment Fiction in England, France, and America* (Gainesville, Fla., 2002); Kirsten Silva Gruesz, *Ambassadors of Culture: The Transamerican Origins of Latino Writing* (Princeton, N.J., 2002); W. M. Verhoeven, ed., *Revolutionary Histories: Transatlantic Cultural Nationalism, 1775–1815* (New York, 2002); Douglas Anderson, *William Bradford's Books: Of Plimmoth Plantation and the Printed Word* (Baltimore, 2003); Ralph Bauer, *The Cultural Geography of Colonial American Literatures: Empire, Travel, Modernity* (Cambridge, 2003); Brooks, *American Lazarus*; Gould, *Barbaric Traffic: Commerce and Antislavery in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Cambridge, Mass., 2003); David Kazanjian, *The Colonizing Trick: National Culture and Imperial Citizenship in Early America* (Minneapolis, Minn., 2003); Malini Johar Schueller and Edward Watts, eds., *Messy Beginnings: Postcoloniality and Early American Studies* (New Brunswick, N.J., 2003); Jenny Sharpe, *Ghosts of Slavery: A Literary Archaeology of Black Women's Lives* (Minneapolis, Minn., 2003); Anna Brickhouse, *Transamerican Literary Relations and the Nineteenth-Century Public Sphere* (Cambridge, 2004); Bross, *Dry Bones and Indian Sermons*; Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, *The Gender of Freedom: Fictions of Liberalism and the Literary Public Sphere* (Stanford, Calif., 2004); Isabel Hofmeyer, *The Portable Bunyan: A Transnational History of The Pilgrim's Progress* (Princeton, N.J., 2004); Philip Schwyzer and Simon Meador, eds., *Archipelagic Identities: Literature and Identity in the Atlantic Archipelago, 1550–1800* (Aldershot, Eng., 2004); Stevens, *Poor Indians*; Appelbaum and Sweet, *Envisioning an English Empire*; Baker, *Securing the Commonwealth*; Eve Tavor Bannet, *Empire of Letters: Letter Manuals and Transatlantic Correspondence, 1680–1820* (Cambridge, 2005); Ian Baucom, *Specters of the Atlantic: Finance Capital, Slavery, and the Philosophy of History* (Durham, N.C., 2005); Kate Davies, *Catharine Macaulay and Mercy Otis Warren: The Revolutionary Atlantic and the Politics of Gender* (Oxford, Eng., 2005); Andy Doolen, *Fugitive Empire: Locating Early American Imperialism* (Minneapolis, Minn., 2005); David Read, *New World, Known World: Shaping Knowledge in Early Anglo-American Writing* (Columbia, Mo., 2005); Juan E. Tazón Salces and Isabel Carrera Suárez, eds., *Post/Imperial Encounters: Anglo-Hispanic Cultural Relations*

(Amsterdam, Netherlands, 2005); Sayre, *Indian Chief as Tragic Hero*; Jonathan D. Steigman, *La Florida del Inca and the Struggle for Social Equality in Colonial Spanish America* (Tuscaloosa, Ala., 2005); Ed White, *The Backcountry and the City: Colonization and Conflict in Early America* (Minneapolis, Minn., 2005); Martin Brückner, *The Geographic Revolution in Early America: Maps, Literacy, and National Identity* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2006); Michael J. Colacurcio, *Godly Letters: The Literature of the American Puritans* (Notre Dame, Ind., 2006); Sean X. Goudie, *Creole America: The West Indies and the Formation of Literature and Culture in the New Republic* (Philadelphia, 2006); Susan Scott Parrish, *American Curiosity: Cultures of Natural History in the Colonial British Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2006); Watts, *In This Remote Country: French Colonial Culture in the Anglo-American Imagination, 1780-1860* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2006); Wertheimer, *Underwriting*; Burnham, *Folded Selves*; Christopher D'Addario, *Exile and Journey in Seventeenth-Century Literature* (Cambridge, 2007); Heidi Brayman Hackel and Catherine E. Kelly, eds., *Reading Women: Literacy, Authorship, and Culture in the Atlantic World, 1500-1800* (Philadelphia, 2007); Manning and Taylor, *Transatlantic Literary Studies*; Tennenhouse, *The Importance of Feeling English: American Literature and the British Diaspora, 1750-1850* (Princeton, N.J., 2007).

Atlantic History and Interdisciplinary Approaches

Alison Games

ERIC Slauter has taken an inventive approach to two difficult and important questions: how do historians and literary scholars make sense of each other's work, and how can we spark more satisfactory conversations among ourselves? I am grateful to him for the thoughtful analysis he has provided and for encouraging me to consider what interdisciplinary work may contribute to the study of the Atlantic world.

Carrying on a long tradition of early American scholarship, Slauter has constructed a declension thesis, one in which a field formerly reliant on literary approaches has fallen off. He asserts, for example, that "Atlantic history as a whole is apparently moving away from a focus on text-centered evidence." Yet was the field ever so text centered as he suggests? Slauter identifies Nicholas Canny and Anthony Pagden's *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World* as a crucial, "agenda-setting" text for comparative studies and points to this collection's literary and cultural approach. I am a big fan of these essays, but we should acknowledge that the volume's strengths lie in its examination of colonial elites in the western Atlantic. It does not have much to say about Africa or early modern Europe (apart from Ireland), nor does it take us deep into the structure of colonial societies. And though it is certainly true that in the 1980s many historians, inspired largely by the scholarship of cultural anthropologists such as Clifford Geertz, turned to cultural approaches, it was also still an era of social history, as Atlantic studies that preceded Canny and Pagden's collection indicate. Atlantic history's origins reflect the period's multiple strands of inquiry. When I consider the field's beginnings, I think of works such as Philip D. Curtin's heroic effort to calculate the scope of the Atlantic slave trade in *The Atlantic Slave Trade* or his powerful synthesis *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex*. Another crucial text came from the field of historical geography: D. W. Meinig's *The Shaping of America*.¹ These books mapped out—in

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¹ Eric Slauter, "History, Literature, and the Atlantic World," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 65, no. 1 (January 2008): 135–66 (quotations, 143, 142); Nicholas Canny and Anthony Pagden, eds., *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World, 1500–1800*

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different ways, from different perspectives, and with different methodologies—what a panoptic or integrated history of the people and the places of the Atlantic world might look like.

Atlantic history requires, first and foremost, a geographic reorientation by practitioners. I had trouble connecting this Atlantic with the evidence Slauter presented in his essay. As their readers know, the two journals Slauter has analyzed specialize in the history or literature of early North America, with occasional forays into places further removed from this geographic home base. Scholars who work on North American history may produce work that is Atlantic in scope, but it is just as likely that they will not. The *William and Mary Quarterly* no more reflects trends in Atlantic history than any other journal that looks at one region on a continent around the Atlantic, whether *French Historical Studies* or the *Journal of Southern African Studies* or the *Colonial Latin American Historical Review*.

Just as important as the different questions that historians or literary scholars might pose of the primary sources Slauter sampled are questions about what these primary sources might look like if examined in an Atlantic context. Take, for example, the *Jesuit Relations*. They are wonderful sources but, if we are thinking about the Atlantic world, why not look at Jesuit writings more broadly and consider missionary accounts from Africa and the Americas, as well as the abundant activities of Jesuits in Europe, in tandem? There are ample opportunities for such comparisons, especially since so many missionaries (Anglican, Dutch Reformed, Jesuit, Moravian, and Quaker) moved around the Atlantic and wrote about their experiences in different locations among different indigenous populations. Likewise, why not put Mary Rowlandson's canonical narrative (if we cannot finally dispense with it altogether in favor of less familiar texts) alongside other captivity narratives, including accounts of redemption written by European captives in the Mediterranean, tales of Africans carried into captivity in all directions, or any number of others, that would take Rowlandson's text out of its place within early American history and set it instead in a different narrative tradition. In other words, the literary questions Slauter hopes

(Princeton, N.J., 1987). That social history was prominent in the 1980s is indicated by Atlantic studies that preceded Canny and Pagden's collection, including Peggy K. Liss, *Atlantic Empires: The Network of Trade and Revolution, 1713-1826* (Baltimore, 1983); John Robert McNeill, *Atlantic Empires of France and Spain: Louisbourg and Havana, 1700-1763* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1985). For pioneering works in Atlantic history, see Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison, Wis., 1969); D. W. Meinig, *The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History* (New Haven, Conn., 1986); Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex: Essays in Atlantic History* (Cambridge, 1990).

scholars will ask of these teaching materials may indeed *deepen* our understanding, but casting these sources in a new geographic framework might *transform* our understanding by putting together texts that have previously been considered separately and seeing what new issues and problems might then come into play.

Slauter's essay evoked two different possibilities as I considered the relationship between interdisciplinary work and Atlantic history. First, are specialists in other subfields of Atlantic history more inclined than scholars of North America to employ interdisciplinary methods? I suspect that had Slauter examined reviews in the *Journal of African History* or the *Colonial Latin American Historical Review*, he might have noticed that different fields of history have their own conventions regarding their competence in other disciplines and the centrality of those disciplines to their field. Glottochronology in African history and the long-standing interest in anthropology among historians of colonial Latin America are two obvious examples.

Second, if the Atlantic is indeed best approached through interdisciplinary methods, are some disciplines more useful than others? I wonder whether literary studies might ultimately be one of the least satisfactory methodologies for approaching the Atlantic. Focused as they are on the written word, literary approaches might distract historians from the experiences of the vast majority of those who inhabited the region, even if scholars deploy all of their skills to read these texts sensitively and imaginatively in search of the experiences of the powerless and illiterate. Moreover, given the linguistic limitations that many scholars, especially Americanists, labor under, privileging literary sources risks limiting us to the experiences of a tiny fraction of people. In terms of making sense of the Atlantic as a whole, of its varied collisions and contestations, of its asymmetrical power relations and its violent labor regimes, of the forced migrations that created and sustained it, any number of other approaches look equally if not more fruitful: anthropology, archaeology, art history, demography, economic history, environmental history, material culture. Slauter's essay brought to mind some of the works from other disciplines that have been helpful to me, especially in my teaching: the art historian Barbara E. Mundy's *The Mapping of New Spain*, for example, or the anthropologist Laura A. Lewis's *Hall of Mirrors*.²

Scholars who are interested in the Atlantic must pair a geographic perspective that requires them to gain some familiarity with multiple fields of history with a willingness to sample varied disciplinary

² Barbara E. Mundy, *The Mapping of New Spain: Indigenous Cartography and the Maps of the Relaciones Geográficas* (Chicago, 1996); Laura A. Lewis, *Hall of Mirrors: Power, Witchcraft, and Caste in Colonial Mexico* (Durham, N.C., 2003).

approaches. Fortunate to work within one of academe's most integrative disciplines, historians would be foolish to limit themselves to a single methodology instead of trying whatever works best to make sense of the problem under study. That might well be literary studies, and it might well be something else. Slauter has done a great service in reminding all of us how essential it is to reach out to other disciplines, to take all sorts of books off our libraries' new-book shelves, to dip into new journals, to sample unfamiliar disciplines, to talk to colleagues in other departments, and to enjoy the pleasure of discovering what we can see more clearly or entirely differently as a result.

From Text/Context to "Situatedness" in Atlantic History and Literature

Bryan Waterman

TWO anecdotes from the recent Society of Early Americanists—Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture joint conference in Williamsburg frame my response to Eric Slauter's provocative survey of the Atlantic studies disciplinary trade gap. First, my experience as a panel co-organizer for that conference: Christopher Looby and I proposed a session called "Representations, Sexualities, and the Politics of Seduction." We received ten paper proposals, five each from historians and literary scholars. Two proposals in each discipline came from graduate students. In selecting our final panel, we aimed to preserve this symmetry. The final lineup included two historians and two literary critics; two were recent Ph.D.'s and two were associate professors. We wanted the panel to aim for the same cross-disciplinary dialogue that the conference hoped to foster, and I think our expectations were borne out. I, for one, found the audience participation following the papers to be stimulating, and my own historical thinking was refined by listening to historians talk about texts (courtroom narratives and diaries) that bore key similarities to texts I had been writing about (poems, newspaper notices, and novels). In turn, though the historians on the panel employed a broader range of methodologies than a typical literary historian (this observation was especially true of the paper on women's self-defensive use of seduction narratives in legal situations), they could also be said to engage in some form of close reading of the texts they examined. The second anecdote involves a former graduate student from New York University's doctoral program in Atlantic history, a brilliant member of the first graduate seminar I taught some six years ago. It had been some time since I had seen her, and she looked genuinely surprised when we passed in the hall. "What are *you* doing here?" she said, then caught herself and added, "Oh, I forgot this was a joint conference with SEA."

If the first anecdote stands as an interdisciplinary success story, the second anecdote stings for two reasons. It suggests that some conference participants were apparently able to spend four days in the company of their counterparts from another discipline without realizing we shared the same

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program. (A casual yet self-conscious survey of audiences throughout the conference confirmed that many sessions were segregated by discipline.) Moreover, though I am employed in a literature department and think of myself as a literary historian or perhaps a cultural historian of writing, my graduate training, in a fairly traditional American Studies program, was interdisciplinary from the ground up, so I have always felt at home among members of history departments, sometimes more so than among literary critics. Indeed my former student may have been surprised to learn that this was not the first Omohundro Institute conference I had attended as a presenter.

My gut reaction to Slauter's piece is that he correctly diagnoses the disciplinary divide between historians and literary scholars of early America and the Atlantic world; this gap, I believe, parallels the blindness of some scholars of early modern British literature to the Atlantic world and to Europe's colonial periphery, as if even internationally published writers such as Anne Bradstreet or Benjamin Franklin deserve no place on a syllabus alongside John Milton, Daniel Defoe, and Alexander Pope. The implication of these gaps is that the material studied by early Americanist literary scholars simply is not as important as the material studied by historians of the period and that neither American history nor American literature (not to mention broader literatures of the Atlantic) seems to be as important to our British literature colleagues as the canonical works in their field, which, one assumes, has real bearing on a thorough understanding of the British Atlantic world. Early Americanists in English departments, in order to understand the writing we study, often make ourselves familiar with works in history and British literature, not to mention the new imperative to be conversant with texts from Spanish, French, and Dutch colonial enterprises. If knowing these materials better informs our study of early American writing, surely understanding the cultures of early American writing—including but not limited to "literary" writing—would enhance scholars' knowledge of other dimensions of early American and early modern Atlantic cultures, even those that depend on nontextual evidence?

To the extent that this rhetorical question echoes Slauter's conclusion, I think we concur in our hope that such interdisciplinary developments may continue. I worry, though, that the call for "genuine intellectual collaboration" across disciplines (though I know it already exists in many places and profit from it myself) may be a little irenic.¹ Slauter's essay minimizes the primary difficulty facing cross-disciplinary dialogue by numbering it alongside other, more minor, complaints lobbed back and forth between literature and history departments. That difficulty, as I see it, is a problem of method rooted in the status of close reading as a legitimate form of historical evidence. Certainly, many reading practices take the

¹ Eric Slauter, "History, Literature, and the Atlantic World," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 65, no. 1 (January 2008): 135–66 (quotation, 161).

name close reading, and some are more historically grounded and grounding than others. But historians' complaints about literary close reading combine two very legitimate concerns about practices that continue to enjoy pride of place in literary scholars' methodological toolbox. One concerns a (rightful) suspicion that the number of texts some literary historians assemble to make broad claims about a culture is insufficient; the other, that what we most often call close reading reveals much more about common preoccupations among modern literary critics than it does about past readers and writers or the cultures we take them to represent. (A third important objection, which I will not address directly, regards stylistic differences between the disciplines: I have heard literary critics refer to historians' prose as deadening, made up of simple declarative sentences, as often as I have heard historians complain about critics' impenetrable, jargonistic writing. I tend to side with the historians on this one.)

To some extent I share historians' skepticism about much of what travels under the name close reading, as do many of my literature department colleagues. (For example Mary Poovey, an eminent scholar of Victorian literature, tackles this methodological question head-on in *Genres of the Credit Economy*.) I do not believe, however, that all literary close reading should be abandoned or regarded as flawed. Even a historical masterpiece such as Alan Taylor's *William Cooper's Town* could have benefited from considering James Fenimore Cooper's *The Pioneers* as a novel on its own terms—apart from what it may or may not reveal about the author's father—just as literary historians could learn from Taylor's painstaking observations on the makeup of William Cooper's library.² In the face of skepticism about close reading's efficacy in relation to historical inquiry, I do maintain that the rhetorical and stylistic analysis of texts, based on questions about genre, audience, and specific tropes or patterns in vocabulary, can direct scholars into lines of inquiry that may not have been possible otherwise. At the same time, I think that many literary historians need to not only familiarize themselves with current work produced by historians of the period they study but also make better use of a broader range of evidence to support their interpretive arguments, including aspects of print culture that fall outside the standard parameters of literary studies and even biographical inquiry, anathema since the New Criticism. It avails us to learn what we can about the people who produced the texts we study as well as about common readers, reading practices, and modes of literary circulation.

Of course calling for increased attention to these aspects of literary culture and history (as book historians in history and English departments have long done) does not simply boil down to asking literary scholars to

² Alan Taylor, *William Cooper's Town: Power and Persuasion on the Frontier of the Early American Republic* (New York, 1995); Mary Poovey, *Genres of the Credit Economy: Mediating Value in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago, forthcoming).

abandon one discipline for another. These are questions, after all, on which historians divide among themselves. To what extent should written sources in general be deemed suspect or insufficient records of the past? What relevance does inquiry into the lives of individuals (let alone individual texts) have to the larger cultural histories we hope to assemble? To what extent should the textual histories of the material we study affect the ways we read them now?

At the same time, it should be obvious that not all literary scholarship falls subject to the critiques Slauter summarizes. Consider a book such as Samuel Otter's magnificent *Melville's Anatomies*, a book that on first glance may seem to be a monograph focused solely on a writer who was not particularly significant in his own day.³ Just as the significance of Herman Melville's work goes beyond what it can or cannot reveal about popular tastes in antebellum America, Otter's book reaches widely and deeply into Melville's culture, addressing dozens of additional writers, artists, intellectuals, and common people. As a result Otter's historical claims deserve to be taken seriously even by historians who are less preoccupied with literary culture than he is. If Otter is not at once contextual and textual in his approach, no one is.

At a workshop sponsored by the *William and Mary Quarterly* and the USC-Huntington Early Modern Studies Institute at the Huntington Library in early 2007, historian David Waldstreicher observed that "ideology historians"—the assemblers of the republican synthesis, for instance—tend to privilege contextless sound-bite quotations over a careful consideration of what he called the "situatedness" of a text. In this habit, I think, these historians bear some similarities to the new historicist critics they have often inspired, who tend to read for broad ideological resonance among texts rather than for the detailed circumstances of each one. Such habits, unfortunately, too often allow literary history to be bad history, as when critics make claims about the partisan politics of a literary text or make other (if unacknowledged) biographical assumptions based on perceived resonances between a literary text and a particular movement, though no evidence other than close reading may exist to support such an interpretation. "Situation" seems a more fluid concept than the old text/context dyad that is too often mapped onto a division between literary scholars and historians. Taking seriously Waldstreicher's implication that a text's situation matters to how we interpret it would improve all avenues of historical inquiry that depend on written texts as evidence. Such awareness, after all, would call on traditional tools of literary analysis as well as on new rubrics such as book history; it might push historians to think more like textual scholars and literary critics to think more like historians. A focus on a text's situatedness will call other texts—and other methodological imperatives—into view and allow for stronger interpretive claims. Most significantly, a single disciplinary approach may be insufficient for such a process, necessitating the cross-disciplinary dialogue Slauter's essay so earnestly desires.

³ Samuel Otter, *Melville's Anatomies* (Berkeley, Calif., 1999).

Atlantic History and the Literary Turn

Eliga H. Gould

ATLANTIC history is a notoriously fluid construct. There is no static historical unit for Atlantic historians to analyze, no one religion, culture, or political tradition shared by what Bernard Bailyn calls the basin's "multitudinous . . . people and circumstances," and, despite the subject's continued growth and popularity, no dominant historiography that can begin to explain the innumerable histories within its sprawling parameters.¹ If this statement is true of Atlantic history generally, it is only slightly less so of Atlantic history's English-speaking component. Should we be surprised, therefore, if historians within this vast and protean expanse are currently consuming less work by literary scholars, whose field often, if somewhat inaccurately, associated with the analysis of a relatively small coterie of metropolitan writers? As Atlantic historians seek to transcend the confines of metropole and nation, should we not expect their attention to move in other directions?

As ought to be clear to any reader of Eric Slauter's thoughtful essay, these are in many ways unfair questions—so much so, in fact, that I wonder whether the trade gap between Atlantic history and Atlantic literary studies is quite as wide as he suggests. Although Atlantic history in its present form grew out of several decades of scholarship on historical topics such as the demography of the African slave trade, the structure of the Atlantic economy, and the transmission of European ideas to America, the work of literary scholars played an important role in conceptualizing the early modern Atlantic as a sort of "imagined community," one sufficiently coherent to merit analysis in its own right. Indeed the field of Atlantic history almost certainly would not have achieved its current prominence without the cultural turn of the 1980s and early 1990s. Not only did cultural history suggest new methodologies for analyzing literary and textual sources that circulated freely throughout the Atlantic world, but historians' increased receptivity to cultural and literary theory raised a host of new questions, many having to do with national and imperial identity, that could only be answered by adopting broader geographic perspectives. Although this debt was perhaps more apparent ten years ago than it is

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¹ Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (Cambridge, Mass., 2005), 61.

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today, historians have continued to draw on the work of literary scholars, a good example being Joseph Roach's idea of a "circum-Atlantic" world, which David Armitage subsequently used as one of his "Three Concepts of Atlantic History." As befits this interdisciplinary genealogy, Stephen Greenblatt, Paul Gilroy, and Edward Said remain familiar presences on Atlantic history syllabi to the present day. And for some topics—notably the history of race and racial consciousness—the influence of literary studies has yet to subside.²

If matters are not quite as dire as Slauter suggests, however, it is true that historians tend to use literary sources and methods on their own terms. In fact the pervasiveness and success of history's cultural turn has practically ensured such an outcome. As Slauter notes, a number of early invocations of the phrase Atlantic history occurred at the hands of historians interested in questions of identity and consciousness. Obviously, these questions were also of tremendous importance to literary studies, yet for most cultural historians textual analysis was never the whole story, nor did the methodological insights that informed cultural history come exclusively from literature. As exemplified by books such as *Telling the Truth about History* by Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob,

² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 3d rev. ed. (New York, 2006); Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York, 1996); David Armitage, "Three Concepts of Atlantic History," in *The British Atlantic World, 1500–1800*, ed. Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (New York, 2002), 16. For the Atlantic as a kind of imagined community, see John Gillis, *Islands of the Mind: How the Human Imagination Created the Atlantic World* (New York, 2004). See also Jack P. Greene, "Beyond Power: Paradigm Subversion and Reformulation and the Re-Creation of the Early Modern Atlantic World," in *Interpreting Early America: Historiographical Essays* (Charlottesville, Va., 1996), 17–42. The most important early center of historical inquiry was the Program in Atlantic History and Culture, which started at Johns Hopkins University in 1971; the first Atlantic Seminar, also convened at Johns Hopkins, was in 1967. Although the evidence for the claim that literary scholars maintain their place on Atlantic history syllabi is necessarily impressionistic, a keyword search of the fifty-six syllabi for courses in Atlantic history posted on the Web site for Harvard University's International Seminar on the History of the Atlantic World produced the following: five syllabi and one bibliography with titles by Stephen Greenblatt, three syllabi with titles by Paul Gilroy, and two syllabi with titles by Edward Said. By comparison, searches of the same data set yielded six syllabi and one bibliography containing titles by Nicholas Canny, five syllabi with titles by Jack P. Greene, four syllabi with titles by Karen Ordahl Kupperman, and two syllabi with titles by Ian K. Steele. Most of the syllabi were posted from 1998 to 2004, so it is not clear whether this pattern, such as it is, still exists. For the persistence of literary studies' influence on the history of race see, for example the deep engagement with literary sources and scholarship in James Sidbury, "Early Slave Narratives and the Culture of the Atlantic Market," in *Empire and Nation: The American Revolution in the Atlantic World*, ed. Eliga H. Gould and Peter S. Onuf (Baltimore, 2005), 260–74; Sidbury, *Becoming African in America: Race and Nation in the Early Black Atlantic* (New York, 2007). Although some of the works cited in Sidbury's early essay are now dated, the notes mention works by Vincent Carretta, Philip Gould, and Roxann Wheeler, all published within the last decade.

many historians—including many cultural historians—remained suspicious of research that relied exclusively on printed and literary sources, and there was a widespread sense that cultural history ought to be grounded to some extent in manuscript and archival research. Although cultural historians today freely acknowledge the benefits of applying textual analysis to a full range of historical documents and artifacts, no matter where the documents and artifacts originated, they often look to other historians for their theoretical models and methods. In the case of the American Historical Association's book prize in Atlantic history, the three most recent winners (as of 2007) all fit within the general rubric of cultural history, as Slauter notes, but without incurring noticeable debts to literary studies.³

Among Atlantic historians this selective embrace of literary evidence and scholarship intersects with and has almost certainly been compounded by a second, more pronounced, determination to move beyond the limits of metrocentric and national frameworks. As is clear from the cognate field of British imperial history, historians continue to make extensive use of literary theory and sources to investigate questions of imperial culture and identity. In a recent volume on the "new" imperial history edited by Kathleen Wilson, nearly one-third of the contributors teach in departments of English or literature, and the ten-page bibliography brims with references to literary scholars such as Srinivas Aravamudan, Eitan Bar-Yosef, and Laura Brown (who appear among the first six references on the bibliography's first page). From Slauter's brief discussion of Mary Rowlandson's often-taught captivity narrative—the Neal Salisbury edition that he mentions is one of twenty-eight currently in print, most produced for classroom use—there is no question that literature (broadly conceived) is capable of performing the same duty for early Americanists, allowing historians and literary scholars to explore porous, often-fragile boundaries of religion, race, gender, class, and nationality in the colonies.⁴ Nor have such interdisciplinary borrowings been confined to the North Atlantic or to literary works by European writers, as

³ Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob, *Telling the Truth about History* (New York, 1994). The three most recent winners of the James A. Rawley Prize in Atlantic History are Laurent Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution and Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787–1804* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2004); Londa Schiebinger, *Plants and Empire: Colonial Bioprospecting in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge, Mass., 2004); Christopher Leslie Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2006).

⁴ Kathleen Wilson, ed., *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity, and Modernity in Britain and the Empire, 1660–1840* (Cambridge, 2004), 363. The literary scholars who contributed to the volume are Eitan Bar-Yosef, Harriet Guest, Felicity A. Nussbaum, Gillian Russell, Kate Teltscher, and Hans Turley. My figure of twenty-eight editions of Mary Rowlandson's narrative currently in print is based on a Sept. 23, 2007, search for books written by Mary Rowlandson on <http://www.booksinprint.com>.

is evident from the continued popularity of Olaudah Equiano's *Interesting Narrative* among scholars and teachers.

If literary evidence and methods are an important part of complicating familiar narratives, however, their use can also be problematic. Texts by European and European creole writers inevitably foreground the historical perspectives of their authors, but even when historians and literary scholars are sensitive to the resulting biases, relying too heavily on literary sources runs the risk of privileging the history of literate centers over the histories of inarticulate peripheries. Despite its strengths as a classroom text, Rowlandson's narrative is very much the work of a Puritan from hyperliterate New England and may not be representative of captivity in Virginia or the West Indies. Because most firsthand accounts of Africa by Africans were in fact written by people living in Britain and North America, the same caveat holds for autobiographies such as Equiano's. "The first recorded discussions of 'African' identity," observes James Sidbury of late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century black writers who sought to make connections with their ancestral homeland, "arose in tension with, and in partial opposition to, memories and experiences of the indigenous cultures of Africa, rather than directly out of them." It is probably no accident that in Wilson's volume on the new imperial history, all six contributions by literary scholars deal with the manifold ways in which "the empire penetrated Britain" (in the words of Felicity A. Nussbaum), whether through racial imaginings on the London stage, the metropolitan response to the English travels of the Polynesian Omai, or the East Indian letters of George Bogle to his family in Scotland.⁵

This is not to suggest that literary-based histories must always give priority to the history of literary metropolises in Britain and America. Although early New England produced a disproportionate number of captivity narratives (and literary sources in general), Linda Colley's *Captives* is a reminder that the Indian captivity narrative was a transatlantic genre produced by writers throughout Britain's Atlantic empire; nor should we forget that Indian captivity in North America was closely tied in many authors' minds to captivity elsewhere in the Atlantic,

⁵ Sidbury, *Becoming African in America*, 14–15 ("first recorded discussions"); Felicity A. Nussbaum, "The Theatre of Empire: Racial Counterfeit, Racial Realism," in Wilson, *New Imperial History*, 71 ("empire penetrated Britain"). On the difficulties of recovering "the subaltern as a subject outside the elite discourse," see esp. Gyan Prakash, "Subaltern Studies as Postcolonial Criticism," *American Historical Review* 99, no. 5 (December 1994): 1475–90 (quotation, 1480). For the development of African identity, see Vincent Carretta, *Equiano the African: Biography of a Self-Made Man* (Athens, Ga., 2005). For examples of literary scholarship on the new imperial history, see Harriet Guest, "Ornament and Use: Mai and Cook in London," in Wilson, *New Imperial History*, 317–44; Kate Teltscher, "Writing Home and Crossing Cultures: George Bogle in Bengal and Tibet, 1770–1775," *ibid.*, 281–96.

including the taking of European sailors by Barbary corsairs on the high seas and the shipment of African slaves to America. Still literary and textual sources are bound to have played different roles in literary centers such as London and Boston than in places where, as David D. Hall has written of the seventeenth-century Chesapeake, "the history of printing, publishing, writing, and reading . . . is a history of absences." Significantly, the cultural history of the Chesapeake drew much of its early inspiration not from literary scholarship but from ethnographic studies such as Rhys Isaac's *The Transformation of Virginia* and Mechal Sobel's *The World They Made Together*. Although Isaac's recent book on Landon Carter's diary shows the rich possibilities to be found in mining the literature of the Chesapeake, it is hard to imagine a historian or literary scholar doing for the Old Dominion what Hall achieved in his work on religion and print culture in early New England.⁶

Given these disciplinary realities, the trends that Slauter illuminates do not strike me as altogether surprising, yet I do not think that they should cause Atlantic literary scholars or literary-minded Atlantic historians to despair. Historians are a notoriously omnivorous bunch. In its short lifespan, Atlantic history has borrowed from adjacent disciplines as varied as anthropology, cultural geography, demography, environmental science, and international relations. Surely there is no reason to doubt that literary studies will again play a central role in shaping the field. Indeed that moment may already be at hand. In a *William and Mary Quarterly* Forum on the implications of postcolonial theory for the history of early America, the principal essay by Jack P. Greene includes multiple references to work by literary scholars, with a particular debt to chapters that Peter Hulme and Michael Warner wrote for Robert Blair St. George's edited volume *Possible Pasts*. According to one of the Forum's respondents, Greene's use of postcolonial theory is insufficiently attentive to its subtleties (especially, one suspects, its subtleties as understood by literary theorists); another wonders whether the move from colonial to postcolonial history represents a "turn too far." Time alone will tell which—if any—of these positions finds favor within the broader field of Atlantic history. But the mere fact that they are being debated is a reminder that literary scholarship is still making "a real contribution to

⁶ David D. Hall, *Cultures of Print: Essays in the History of the Book* (Amherst, Mass., 1996), 98 (quotation); Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1982); Mechal Sobel, *The World They Made Together: Black and White Values in Eighteenth-Century Virginia* (Princeton, N.J., 1987); Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (New York, 1989); Linda Colley, *Captives* (New York, 2002); Isaac, *Landon Carter's Uneasy Kingdom: Revolution and Rebellion on a Virginia Plantation* (New York, 2004).

historical knowledge" and seems likely to continue to do so.⁷ In a history graduate colloquium that I am currently teaching on the world of the American Revolution, the same Hulme and Warner essays are required reading. I would be willing to bet that I am not alone.

⁷ David Armitage, "From Colonial History to Postcolonial History: A Turn Too Far?" *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 64, no. 2 (April 2007): 251-54; Eric Slauter, "History, Literature, and the Atlantic World," *WMQ* 65, no. 1 (January 2008): 135-66 ("real contribution," 159). For the *William and Mary Quarterly* Forum on postcolonial theory and history, see Jack P. Greene, "Colonial History and National History: Reflections on a Continuing Problem," *WMQ* 64, no. 2 (April 2007): 235-50; Michael Zuckerman, "Exceptionalism after All; Or, The Perils of Postcolonialism," *ibid.*, 258-62. See also Peter Hulme, "Postcolonial Theory and Early America: An Approach from the Caribbean," in *Possible Pasts: Becoming Colonial in Early America*, ed. Robert Blair St. George (Ithaca, N.Y., 2000), 33-48; Michael Warner, "What's Colonial about Colonial America?" *ibid.*, 49-70.

Atlantic Practices: Minding the Gap between Literature and History

Elizabeth Maddock Dillon

TO the ear of the literary scholar, a plaintive note rings with particular clarity throughout Eric Slauter's analysis of the trade gap between literary and historical scholarship on the Atlantic world. Literary scholarship, Slauter demonstrates, exhibits an unrequited interest in the work of historians of the Atlantic. Poetically put, literary scholars seem to occupy the melancholic signifying position described by Emily Dickinson: "This is my letter to the World / That never wrote to Me."¹ Slauter's diagnostic apparatus—in the form of numbers, notes, charts, and bullets—is impressive and wholly persuasive as to the lack of reciprocity between scholarship in literature and history, but the enterprise of the essay as a whole and the affective subtext that threads through it raise for me questions about value and desire that seem to underpin the issues of evidence that receive primary attention in Slauter's probing essay.

Slauter begins by holding up a mirror of abjection to literary scholars. Like wallflowers at a dance, literary scholars hover in the margins of the field of Atlantic studies, watching the polished moves of historians, harboring hopes that someday they too will be asked to step into the spotlight. Compounding the misery is literary scholars' late arrival to the dance: whereas historians turned their attention to Atlantic studies with full force beginning in the late 1980s, most literary scholars are only beginning to recognize the significance of the field. This picture suggests that the primary difference between work in Atlantic history and in Atlantic literary studies is that literary scholars were slow to arrive in the field and have not made much of an impression since their ill-timed entrance. A look at the differing disciplinary trajectories that led historians and literary scholars of early America to the field of Atlantic studies, however, indicates that distinct and separate concerns animated the move toward an Atlantic paradigm. These different concerns have generated and continue to generate divergent scholarly values and aims

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¹ Emily Dickinson, Poem 519, in R.W. Franklin, ed., *The Poems of Emily Dickinson: Variorum Edition* (Cambridge, Mass., 1998), 1: 527.

William and Mary Quarterly, 3d Series, Volume LV, Number 1, January 2008

that, despite a common Atlanticist framework of study, are worth careful delineation and consideration.

Bernard Bailyn's account of the development of Atlantic studies traces the origins of historical engagement in the field to political strategies of Atlantic alliance among Western nations following World War II, evident in such multinational organizations as NATO or in what journalist Walter Lippman called the "profound web of interest which joins together the western world." This approach was bolstered and cemented, according to Bailyn, by economic studies of early America that increasingly focused on the network of financial relations that structured the eighteenth-century Atlantic world. Yet post-World War II politics had a different effect on the field of American literary studies; the study of American literature, instead of broadening its focus to include connections with European nations, arguably found its *raison d'être* as a discipline in the cultural nationalism attendant on the United States' emergence as a world power. Rather than joining the logic of an Atlantic alliance as a result of the war, American literary studies stepped out from the shadow of the study of European literatures to become a field of its own for the first time. The nationalistic impetus intensified and accelerated the role of exceptionalism in the study of American literature and culture, a thesis that emphasized the particularity of U.S. culture over its embeddedness within the larger historical frame of the Atlantic world or world systems in general. Amy Kaplan's memorable critique of exceptionalism in American literary studies takes as emblematic Perry Miller's autobiographical account of his revelation, while laboring in Africa in the 1920s, that America and America alone was the chosen object of his scholarly calling.² Standing in a location that was part of a key economic (and cultural) vector of Atlantic trade, Miller discovered an interest in

² Walter Lippman in Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (Cambridge, Mass., 2005), 54. For the postwar emergence of American literary studies as an independent field, see Elizabeth Renker, "Resistance and Change: The Rise of American Literature Studies," *American Literature* 64, no. 2 (June 1992): 347-65. Renker demonstrates that, after years of struggle against a perception that American literature was not worthy of serious academic study, following the Second World War "American literature scholars increasingly argued that the literature of one of the most powerful nations in the modern world was certainly worth studying. World War II reinforced . . . tendencies toward cultural nationalism and finally consolidated the 'size and virility' of American literature studies" (*ibid.*, 358). For a brief account of the Cold War origins of American Studies as a field (including the "Myth and Symbol" school, which reserved a central role for literature), see Janice Radway, "What's in a Name? Presidential Address to the American Studies Association, 20 November, 1998," *American Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (March 1999): 1-32. For Amy Kaplan's critique of exceptionalism, see Kaplan, "'Left Alone With America': The Absence of Empire in the Study of American Culture," in *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, ed. Kaplan and Donald E. Pease (Durham, N.C., 1993), 3-4.

America alone instead of in an Atlantic geography that linked early America to Africa. During the Cold War development of American Studies as a discipline, Miller's work and vision was foundational within the field of American literary studies

Lest Miller be construed as exceptionally exceptional, it is worth noting that literary studies as a discipline has historically been related to a pedagogy of cultural nationalism. As Bill Readings argues, from the nineteenth century forward literature served "as the major discipline entrusted by the nation-state with the task of reflecting on cultural identity."³ Though history, as a discipline, certainly bears the weight of forming nationalized citizens as well, the object of history (the archival fact, the historical trace) does not have the same status as a bearer of meaning that the literary text does. The literary text is taken to embody a meaning that is cultural, national, and aesthetic. If more recent developments in the field of literary studies have added "historical" to the kinds of meaning derived from the literary text, they have done so, at least initially, as an adjunct to the baseline logic of cultural nationalism that informs the trajectory of the field as a whole.

The shift among literary scholars to an interest in the field of Atlantic studies may, on this account, seem inexplicable, but two factors have contributed to a fairly recent change in the status of transatlantic work in literary studies. The decline in the authority of the nation-state itself in the era of globalization has required a rejiggering of the logic of literary study: as Grantland S. Rice and others have suggested, the shift in power from nation-states to global corporations has caused universities to adapt "by transforming [the] early modern mission of producing a nation's citizenry into that of providing marketable and transferable skills to a global workforce."⁴ And the weakening link between nation and culture has enabled the exploration of alternative containers or frameworks of culture and literature to emerge in recent decades. The postnational era of globalization thus generated an interest in the pre-national (and particularly pre-United States) era of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Atlantic world.

The Atlantic framework for literary studies first received significant attention with the appearance of Paul Gilroy's paradigm-shifting study, *The Black Atlantic*. Gilroy's work had a profound effect on the field of literary studies because it proposed an alternative framework for the study of literature and culture, diasporic and African but, equally as

³ Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins* (Cambridge, Mass., 1996), 70.

⁴ Grantland S. Rice, "New Origins of American Literature," *American Literary History* 13, no. 4 (Winter 2001): 816.

important for much of the work that followed, capitalist and imperialist in its definitional boundaries as well. Gilroy's work was followed by Joseph Roach's similarly influential *Cities of the Dead*, a scholarly work that built on Gilroy's framework but emphasized that the networks of exchange that constituted the culture of the Atlantic world were richly "Eurocolonial," African-diasporic, and Native American in their makeup. Importantly, Gilroy and Roach may be said to have shifted definitions not only of the container of culture but also of the nature of culture contained. Both works turn away from—or at least propose radically new definitions and understandings of—canonical literary texts and nonetheless retain an interest in the formal and aesthetic dimensions of cultural meaning. Gilroy explores a diasporic "counterculture" of modernity that includes music and memory characterized by an aesthetic of indirection; Roach focuses on performance broadly defined as a circulatory culture of substitution and "surrogation."⁵

To be sure, there are versions of Atlantic literary scholarship that owe little to Gilroy or Roach; however, the innovation and influence of their work in the larger field of literary studies have been instrumental in enabling a shift in the mode of analysis of New World literary texts from the proto-U.S. teleology of a previous generation to the new possibilities opened by an Atlantic model of circulation. Further, what has animated the "field imaginary" of transatlantic studies within the realm of English departments is distinct from the moving forces behind the development of an Atlantic paradigm within history departments. Accordingly, where Slauter argues that "literary history and history are both historicist enterprises: they are simply committed to historicizing different things," I would point instead to a large area of noncoincidence between the aims and desires of literary studies and historical studies, a noncoincidence apparent in the disciplinary trajectories I have briefly sketched out here.⁶

⁵ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass., 1993), 1; Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York, 1996), 2. For a useful discussion of Paul Gilroy's impact on early American literary studies, see Jonathan Elmer, "The Black Atlantic Archive," *American Literary History* 17, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 160–69. Elmer reviews four books that rely on Gilroy's reframing of the field: Vincent Carretta and Philip Gould, eds., *Genius in Bondage: Literature of the Early Black Atlantic* (Lexington, Ky., 2001); Joanna Brooks and John Saillant, eds., *"Face Zion Forward": First Writers of the Black Atlantic, 1785–1798* (Boston, 2002); Gould, *Barbaric Traffic: Commerce and Antislavery in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Cambridge, Mass., 2003); Alan J. Rice, *Radical Narratives of the Black Atlantic* (London, 2003). None of these books frames the field of Atlantic studies in the terms outlined by Bernard Bailyn.

⁶ Eric Slauter, "History, Literature, and the Atlantic World," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 65, no. 1 (January 2008): 135–66 (quotation, 152). The rich vein of

At the June 2007 joint meeting of the Society of Early Americanists and the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, in response to a question concerning how literary scholars could best respond to the trade gap between literature and history, Slauter recommended (with some irony) "trade protectionism" as a remedy. His essay eschews the overt disciplinary territorialism of trade protectionism in favor of a more moderate course of action: Slauter suggests that the trade gap can be narrowed by means of collaborative work across the divide. But I confess a strong predilection for the less conciliatory approach of trade protectionism.⁷ Literary scholars of Atlantic studies should not feel the need to become (belated, secondhand) historians but should pursue the analysis of culture (texts, broadly defined) and signifying practices in the Atlantic world. Literary formalism has been particularly devalued as lacking in historical purchase, yet it is precisely in the analysis of form and genre—whether the captivity narrative, New World journal, shipwreck account, treaty, bill of sale, runaway advertisement, parade, novel, dance, or dramatic performance—that signifying practices and their meanings within the Atlantic world and within modernity as a whole emerge.

Jacques Rancière, in a discussion of the relation between politics and aesthetics, argues that "man is a political animal because he is a literary animal who lets himself be diverted from his 'natural' purpose by the power of words."⁸ Literary scholars of the Atlantic world should allow themselves to be diverted by the power of words and led astray from the demographic centers of gravity that characterize the work of many (though not all) Atlantic historians. To be led astray in this manner is to find an essential aspect of the community generated by the advent of an Atlantic world: namely, a set of signifying practices (and erasures) that shaped the world we inhabit today. I fully agree that historians and literary scholars should read one another's work and that they

work in the field of Atlantic print culture is largely distinct from the transatlantic literary models of Paul Gilroy and Joseph Roach; however, much of this work is more invested in tracking the history of the circulation and production of texts than in interpreting those texts, though it also forcibly demonstrates that interpreting what is within a text requires an understanding of its production, circulation, and reception to make its cultural significance clear.

⁷ I take this to be the force of Eric Slauter's specific comments about the importance of attending to genre and form in relation to historical texts: for instance, he is particularly clear about the need to "consider the importance of generic or literary convention, the significance of writing as a practice, or the relationship between textual form and meaning." See Slauter, *WMQ* 65: 154.

⁸ Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*, trans. Gabriel Rockhill (London, 2004), 39.

have much to learn from one another, but the gap between the two does not need to be bridged so much as attended to: we need to mind (or mine) the gap, not to erase the different methodologies and aims that generate divergent scholarship in the field of Atlantic studies.