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Captivity narratives were among the first frontier writings, which described the Puritans' ordeals and adventures in the wilderness. The term refers to the settlers of North America (white men, women and children too) who were captured by the Native Americans as a consequence of the violent Anglo or Euro-American expansion threatening the life and culture of Indians. Some of the captives spent a few weeks, even years with the Indians and then were ransomed or escaped; some had remained almost all their life among them and then returned into the civilization or were lost forever. The stories of the captives embrace more centuries; especially those of women, who fell into the Native American confinement within the period of 1620-1840. This era practically implies two crucial stages within the history of the United States: the colonial one and the conquest of the West. Furthermore, from a cultural historical point of view, this epoch overlaps with the emergence of the independent American culture. Moreover, the Indian captivity narrative is one of the most important expressions of American autobiography; John Barbour considers these narratives of confinement and the slave narrative as the two most crucial examples of the genre in itself a widely researched field in the international arena.

The monograph of András Tarnóc, entitled *Erőszak és megváltás: az indián fogságnapló mint az amerikai eredetmitosz sarokköve* (*Violence and Redemption: The Indian captivity narrative as a cornerstone of the American myth of origination*) aims at filling a gap within American Studies in Hungary. Although the captivity narrative is not exclusively characteristic of the American frontier, the first such narratives perpetuated the sufferings of the early Spanish explorers taken by Native Americans. Slave narratives, such as the famous work of Frederick Douglass, and North African slave narratives of white Europeans and Americans in the 18th and early 19th centuries also dealt with similar themes. Barbary Coast pirate captivity stories became popular in the nineteenth century, but British captives were taken in India and East Asia as well during exploration and settlement. Accounts of prisoners of wars, or captured by UFO narratives can also be included into confinement narratives, as this concept embraces quite a large and continuously

expanding genre. The task the author sets for himself is not the analysis of the concrete texts and their unique characteristics rather exploring the intertextual correlations based on myth theories (Frye, Slotkin, Wheelwright, and Virágos). Moreover, the interdisciplinary study examines the cultural significance of the captivity narratives via introducing many documents that earlier had never been accessible in Hungarian. Through a cultural history-based approach, the study explores the narratives' important role in creating an independent and unique American literature and culture. While doing so, the author examines the biblical references and typological constructs within the texts.

Tarnóc places the concept of myth into the center of his inquiry, as the captivity experience was a fundamental component in creating the national myth. Since the American exceptionalism, the sense of mission, or the idea behind the often-cited line from John Winthrop's sermon, "city upon hill" are all included in the narratives, the author argues that captivity narratives helped to create and form the current ideology of national culture in the United States. Furthermore, captivity narratives take place at the frontier; therefore, they embody the frontier myth. As Frederick Jackson Turner, the noted analyst of the 'Frontier' argues in his most influential piece of writing "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (1893) the key to understand the uniqueness of America lies in studying the pioneers and their continuous expansion to the West. He calls the process the "perennial rebirth" (Turner, 2) during which the settlers had to step back on their social evolution to a more primitive state every time the frontier line was moved. Nevertheless, the same way the settlers got used to the harsher circumstances at the frontier, the captives managed to accommodate to their situation quite well in the wilderness.

The author primarily builds his analysis on the three-part myth model of Zsolt Virágos, while incorporating other examination criteria.

Placing the narratives in the myth concept of Virágos provides the possibility of looking at them from three different aspects. The first type, Myth 1, denoted as M1, or the classical, the ancient myth is the religious line in the captivity narrative, demonstrated by the frequent quotations from the Bible along with turning to typology all the way through like in case of Mrs. Rowlandson.

Myth 2, (M2) which the author explores more in detail, is supremely ideological, a self-justifying intellectual construct that is capable of neutralizing epistemological contradictions, thus of claiming truth (Tarnóc 75).

Building up a story from the segments of experiences helps the captive to cope with the feeling of being torn away from her home and relieve depression. Writing the stories brings a psychological relief; the captive is in control of herself. The self-healing process of the narratives goes together with preaching the

WASP worldview and gives an opportunity to meet with the concept of the Other. Encountering or facing the racially and culturally different Other is one of the basic experiences of the settlers during colonial American history. Native Americans were forced into the position of the Other by white Anglo-Saxons in order to strengthen and justify their own pure Puritan ideology, therefore they became a dangerous enemy to combat. Nevertheless, being a woman meant the same kind of alterity. Women were forced into the private sphere within the family, and into a secondary position in a male dominated patriarchal cultural environment. The actuality of the theme is just one of the many reasons why captivity narratives written by women increased their popularity lately.

Myth 2 embraces the description of the Other through stereotypes. The captives' way of looking at the image of Native Americans changes after spending time among them in the wilderness. As the captive is gradually integrated into the Indian community, like in the case of Mary Jemison, she finds herself in a potential conflict with the American society. After being adopted into the Seneca tribe, even by marriage, she considers herself as a complete member of her new community. So during the tribe's fights with the colonial Americans she describes herself as a victim and justifies the necessity of their attacks. By doing so, she trespasses into the identity of the Other. The highlighted function of Myth 2 is self-justification and legitimization, which gives rise to the mechanism of myth generation. Confrontation of stereotypes, search for identity and the political, ideological function of literature are crucial elements in creating a myth, according to the author.

Myth 3 (M3) is the gradual incorporation of M1 into contemporary culture. Tarnóc highlights some representative examples in literature such as Jonathan Edwards's sermons, the elements in James Fennimore Cooper's *Leatherstocking* novels, or in Edgar Rice Burroughs' and Charlotte Perkins Gilman's very popular works.

In my review I would like to focus on three points of the respective inquiry treating captivity narratives as ethnographic texts, examples of life writing, and pieces of travel literature.

The book invites the readers to look at captivity stories as ethnographic texts, as they involve a rich study of Native Americans and their culture. The value of the narratives from such an angle is outstanding; Rebecca Blevins Faery considers Rowlandson's account as one of the first ethnographic works written in English. The captive is not just a trespasser, she shares her captors' fate; in consequence, she lives together with her object of observation and for this reason, she becomes an ethnographer. Gordon Sayre distinguishes between two types of narratives, the exploratory one focuses on the description of the surrounding environment, while

the ethnographic description deals with the people living in that area. Naturally, the two categories cannot be sharply separated in case of captivity narratives. The description of the environment and the related assumption of control over space and time is a technique to rebuild destroyed identities. The ethnographic description is confined to the depiction of the ferocity of the Native Americans, along with providing information about the given tribe's political and social system.

While the captivity narrative is part of autobiographical literature, the length of the accounts and the narrated experiences vary. According to James Seaver, the biographer of Mary Jemison who remained all her life among the Native Americans, the narratives give an opportunity to learn how to treat helpless people with compassion. He was convinced that with the pages of these accounts the future generation would understand how forgotten people coped with their misery. The author asserts that among the functions of the autobiographical writings are consolation and confession, as the captive does not consider herself pious enough in her everyday life.

At the same time, writing is considered to be a tool of healing. The captive loses her internal balance and suffering from tension turns to writing to find relief. During the constant physical and psychic ordeal, the narrative urges to keep the Puritan faith and exercise continuous soul searching. The emphasis is on the motif of redemptive suffering, which presupposes a strong relation between strengthening a religious conviction and the propagation of Puritan beliefs. The function of setting an example is revealed at the end of the narratives when general consequences are drawn. Mary Rowlandson calls attention to the importance of leading a Christian life as the only way of living in peace with oneself: "It is good for me that I have been afflicted" (90).

If we look at the captivity narrative as a piece of travel literature, we can follow the captive's path through her "removes" as Mrs. Rowlandson calls her forced trip among the heathens. Penetrating deeper and deeper in the wilderness, the captive becomes a nomad, like her captors, in other words, an outcast from her own society. The direction of her constrained trip starts from the civilization, and then goes into the Native American society and finally leads back to her original community. Nature offers unfriendly, harsh and hardly bearable circumstances for the captives physically. Moreover, on a metaphysical level, the captive's movement in the wilderness testifies to the progression of her orientation capability and personal character.

As I wrap up this review let me refer to the final conclusion of the book. As Tarnóc points out the captivity narrative provides lessons for all ages as it commemorates the encounter with the Other. Nowadays, perhaps more than ever, we have to contend with the fluidity and interchangeability of this concept. The book in

question mostly utilizing the achievements of Hungarian researchers including Nóra Séllei and Gabriella Varró not only attempts to provide tools for dealing with such controversies, but by opening up a new field and inspiring further research contributes to the continuous development of American Studies at home.

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