

## 行政院國家科學委員會專題研究計畫成果報告

## 族群，性別，宗教倫理：美國早期文學之研究

Ethnicity, Gender, Religious Ethics: A Study of Early American Literatures

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## 一 中英文摘要

本研究以美國十七世紀白人女性 Mrs. Rowlandson 的俘擄敘事及十九世紀初期印第安教士 William Apess 的自傳，傳道敘述及其改信基督教之心理歷程故事為代表，援引後殖民觀念，族裔理論，性別，宗教倫理概念，探討殖民時期以降歐洲移民與美國原住民間互動關係因宗教，性別，族裔差異所滋演之問題。首先，Mrs. Rowlandson 的俘擄敘事一向為歷史學者，民俗誌及人類學者參照，微觀美國早期著名印第安人菲立普王與白人戰役(King Philips's War)時期白人與印第安原住民之間互動關係，且為一窺原住民生活習俗之重要文本，而 Mrs. Rowlandson 敘事中所傳遞的基督宗教信念，更成為當時代讀者重要的教義腳本，引領讀者認知基督宗教對信徒試煉之意義，然而其以被異族俘虜為素材，著墨於個人在異族環境中經歷之精神與肉體折磨，無形中強化了異族之「異」，野蠻與邪惡。幸而 Mrs. Rowlandson 以女性謙柔敏銳，善感且堅毅的態度，及女性特殊技藝及氣質，助其溶入印第安社群中，持平觀照印第安人感知生活，人性化的面貌；同時 Mrs. Rowlandson 能於困厄之際，援引基督教義，賦予其失去親蜜家庭連結及個人行動自由等經驗新一層的宗教意義。其個人記實是以有了多面向的意義。

宗教在美國早期族裔的互動中無疑扮演了舉足輕重的角色。白人學者及諸多美國原住民宗教及文化學者皆不諱言的指出，美國種族的歧視現象與侵入美洲大陸的歐洲殖民者對基督教執著於歐洲中心的詮釋方式有著密不可分的關係，認為聖經是歐洲殖民者賴

以合理化其壓迫征服行為，擴張其殖民版圖，滋養天命說，及白人優越論的源頭文本。是以，原住民宗教文化學者皆主張，原住民應以迦南人之眼閱讀聖經，以在聖經詮釋中找到其位置與視野(Weaver 7; 19)。唯有如此，在跨越文化及宗教的視野中，原住民學者維護其部族自主的本質立場才得以進一步得到強化與宣揚。十九世紀美國原住民傳教士威廉 阿培士(William Apess)自傳及改信敘事作品中，即展現出美國原住民基督徒在族裔與宗教認同衝突中，尋求族裔自主性的渴望。跨越雙文化並為西方宗教的傳播者與代言人，阿培士身陷極度的認同與抗拒的矛盾。在其自傳與佈道中，阿培士以高分貝的語言修辭嚴辭批評基督教傳教士言行不一的虛偽宗教行徑，質疑白人履踐基督教義中愛人如鄰教義之能力。他選擇以逆轉論述的方式，顛覆長期以來白人以文明/野蠻對立的二元思考，以證明原住民較白人和善人性的一面。同時，他將原住民與以色列的猶太人受壓迫及放逐失落家園的處境相比擬，揭開基督教殖民傳播背後所隱藏之複雜的宗教與種族意識形態，挑戰了白人的種族主義及其對原住民的歧視待遇。阿培士極具原住民族裔意識與觀點的的論述使其自傳與傳道語言充滿批判性與抗爭性。

## 關鍵字

族裔	宗教倫理	俘虜敘事
自傳	傳道	改信敘述

Applying concepts from gender studies, religious studies, postcolonial studies and ethnic studies for detailed textual analysis, this research projects choose typical genres of writing in the early American literature--captivity narratives, autobiographies, and conversion narratives as focus of studies. White Rowlandson's captivity narrative, and William Apess's works are drawn upon to illuminate the interfaces of gender, ethnicity and religious ethics. The first part of the project explores Mary Rowlandson's captivity narrative, showing a white woman's perspective in an age when white-Indian relations were tense. The second part of the project studies the ethnic consciousness of William Apess, a mixedblood Native Christian missionary who straddled two cultures in the early nineteenth century. Apess's ethnic consciousness is crystallized in his poignant critiques of Christianity that white racists upheld to suppress Indian freedom and rights during Manifest Destiny period. Through ironical accounts of his personal conversion experience and his observations on disputable practices of Christian doctrines pertaining to the treatment of other races, Apess uncovers the complicated and ambivalent ethnic attitudes intermingled with contradictory Christian mores. Proposing to reverse whiteness into ethnicity in his autobiography and sermons, Apess in effect attempts to unsettle the dominant ethnic as well as religious ideologies by writing and articulating his ethnic subjectivity into genres marginalized in the Western literary tradition.

Key words: captivity narrative, autobiography, ethnicity, gender, religious ethics

## 二 報告內容

### Preface:

The presence of Indianness in the early American literature was never ignored or downplayed. In Thomas Jefferson and James Cooper's writing, the accounts of the Indian lives and customs are given weight. Their interesting accounts of the early Indians help readers see the place of the Indians in the shaping of American culture and nation.

However, the Indians, who are portrayed to be generous, friendly people by James Cooper, are, as Leonard Cassuto argues, objectified by the Puritans as inhuman savages, the representatives of the grotesque. In fact, from the moment when the Puritans reached the American continent to seek religious freedom, religion has been a discourse dominating the moral philosophy of the early American people, affecting their perception and evaluation of a racial and religious "Other". Yet the religious intolerance that the Puritans and other religious groups manifested seems to be in contradiction with the political goal for equality and freedom that the revolutionists advocate.

### Objective:

The purpose of this research is to gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which gender and religious doctrines affect the perception and interactions of different ethnic groups, particularly the Indian-white relations, from the colonial period to the early nineteenth century.

### Literature review

At the end of her essay, "Indians': Textualism, Morality and the Problem of History," Jane Tompkins, after giving a thorough review of scholarship in the early American literary studies, argues to acknowledge the relativism which prevails in the interpretation of historical events. By relativism, Tompkins means the perspective and the position which restrain historians, cultural critics and even literary scholars from providing objective accounts or interpretations. Tompkins points out that scholars sometimes face the dilemma of how to make a sensible moral judgement due to the fact that accounts of historical events marked by "conquest, massacre, and genocide, on the one hand; torture, slavery, and murder on the other" (73) are usually biased. She thus sees the impossibility of making a moral judgement because the truth, seen in the light of her poststructuralist understanding, is manifested in so many different versions by historians that no truth is determined. This realization of the indeterminacy of truth due to

the "the effect of bringing perspectivism to bear on history" leads Tompkins to assert that the only idea left in our understanding of history is merely "perspectivism itself" (75).

Although Tompkins's problematization of history indicates the difficulties of addressing the issue of Indian/white relations in terms of morality, an examination of Mary Rowlandson's captivity narrative and William Apess's conversion narrative and autobiography, however sharpens our understanding of Indian-white relations from different perspectives. Both texts reveal the attempt to claim for a more humanitarian treatment of people of different races.

### Discussions

Mrs. Rowlandson's captivity narrative, which places the Rowlandsons' experience of captivity against famous historical event of Pequot Philip King's War, provides important elements for historians, ethnographers, and anthropologists to have a glimpse into the lifestyle and customs of the American Indians in the seventeenth century. The religious sentiments manifest in her texts reveal clearly how a Puritan lady was able to sustain her will while she went through the spiritual and physical predicaments in captivity by virtue of her strong faith in Christianity. This narration and examination of personal suffering and forbearance from a religious perspective serve to testify the significance of God's test on mortal beings. Nevertheless, Mrs. Rowlandson's focus on the portrayal of Indian captivity seems, in some way, to reinforce the brutality of the other race, deepening the chasm between the dualism of white civilization and Indian savagism. Fortunately, her female sentimentality and feminist sensibility allow her to observe the Indian community in a less prejudiced manner. Using her talents for domestic affairs Mrs. Rowlandson gained an opportunity to integrate herself into the Indian community and realize the gentleness and humanity of the Indians. Although captivity cut her off from her familiar community and deprived her of physical freedom, she however was able to relate herself more closely to God, reexamining the religious meanings of her

experiences. Thus, rather than placing harsh reprimands on the "immorality" of the other race, Mrs. Rowlandson looked inward and shifted from her puzzles about worldly suffering to a deeper exploration of the design of the heavenly father. Her inward, self-conscious interpretation of God's design of her life seems to have helped her become more receptive of (or sometimes blind to) the differences manifest in other race.

On the other hand, for the mixed-blood native Christian, William Apess, his ethnic consciousness makes him unable to be blind to the racism which arises from Europeans' dogmatic, biased perception of the colored people. In his conversion narrative and autobiography, his severe attack on the white missionaries, their dissemination of misrepresented image of Indians and Indian Christians to justify the inferiority and incompetence of Indians reveals his resistance and antagonism against the white prejudice. In his sermon, he draws upon the prevalent theory of his time--The Ten Lost Tribes of Israel to stress the equality of different races, arguing that Indians were also the descendants of God and deserved also the fair treatment of God. Additionally, he adopted rhetorically ironical reversal discourse to subvert the idea of the white supremacy in terms of morality. The purpose of his ironical narrative and speech is ostensibly to breach the moral hypocrisy of the white missionaries, who in his judgment were in complicit with the European imperialists to exploit and oppress the natives on the continent in the name of religious salvation. His attack on white Christian world and his attempt to seek justice for Indian people reached its climax when he decided to take side with Marshpee tribe to fight for the sovereignty of their own tribal affairs. All in all, the reversal discourse that Apess proposes pertaining to ethnicity revealed the antagonism and grievance lurked in his minds, and his national discourse about the self-governance and his strong appeal to racial equality from the perspective of religious morality discloses ironically his resistant, polemical and subversive temperament.

It is apparent that Apess's writings attest to the fact that Native Americans have struggled

for equality, justice and love, and that they have sought to rectify misrepresentations by showing their character as morally good as other races. Nonetheless, no matter how hard they have tried to demonstrate their virtues as Native Christians, their ethnicity excludes them as otherness.

In conclusion, Apess's writings expose the incongruity between politics and moralism. Despite his endeavor to unsettle the racial ideology of the nineteenth century through the employment of reversal discourse, and despite his attempt to challenge the idea of white supremacy by hailing the noble qualities of the Indians, Apess, unfortunately, is still restricted to a dualistic thinking of good vs. evil, superiority vs. inferiority, a thinking that European colonizers rely on to subjugate the other race. His reversal discourses addressed to foreground the humanity and equal worth of Natives merely disclose the antagonism lurked in his mind. And his appeal to Christian mores to challenge the sinful act of white colonizers fails to lead him to see beyond ethnicity the right of equality that all human beings are endowed with.

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#### 四、成果自評

本研究對過去較鮮為學者注意的十九世紀初期的美國原住民作家如 William Apess 在美國文學及文化之地位有更為深入的瞭解，尤其是 Apess 的自傳及其改信基督教之敘事中對基督教教士挾帶宗教文化優越感所形成之種族主義進行嚴正之批判，更顯見其族裔意識。有關 Apess 作品之研究部分論文題名 *Religious Ethics and Ethnicity in the Writings of William Apess* 已為西班牙 University of A Coruna 於 2003 年 10 月舉行之美國文學中之倫理與族裔國際研討會 (1 International Conference Ethics and Ethnicity in the Literatures of the United States) 接受並發表。另一部份有關俘擄敘事中之性別，宗教與族裔之議題討論論文亦將尋找適當期刊發表。