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Where Mediterranean and American Captivity Narratives Meet: The Case of Captain John Smith

Brooke A. Stafford
Creighton University

> *The Warres in* Europe, Asia, *and* Affrica*, taught me how to subdue the wilde Salvages in* Virginia *and* New England*, in* America . . ."
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> Captain John Smith*, Advertisements*, 1631

Abstract

John Smith recognized the connections between his Ottoman Empire exploits and his adventures in the New World. He drew attention to them in his *Adverstisements for the Unexperienced Planters of New England, or Anywhere* (1631). His awareness of these connections suggests that we too should read captivity narratives comparatively. By juxtaposing Smith's captivities in Turkey and in Virginia, we can see the particular significance of their connection for Smith's own life and writing as well as their interrelatedness as genres. Together, Smith's narratives demonstrate his departure from the providential framework that was common to many captivity narratives, and his movement towards self-reliance as a heroic Englishman. Written in reverse-chronological order, the narratives demonstrate how, through the careful use of providential and individualist narrative frameworks, Smith emphasizes the possibility of the individual hero who, through his own self-presentation, eventually returns home only to change the meaning of his home identity.

Keywords

John Smith, Pocahontas, Tragabigzanda, captivity narratives, Jamestown, Virginia, Ottoman Empire, Islam, Christianity

When Captain John Smith presented his experiences in the Ottoman Empire as preparation for his New World exploits on the first page of his *Advertisements for the Unexperienced Planters of New England, or Anywhere* (1631), he suggested the significance of reading *Advertisements* as an exercise in reading tales of captivity comparatively.[1] The positioning of Smith's experiences in Europe, Asia, and Africa alongside those in the New World through an exploration of his narratives of captivity in Turkey and Virginia points to the interrelatedness of these experiences in general and to the special relationship between these experiences and the narratives that John Smith writes about them in particular. Smith uses both what I will call his Mediterranean captivity narrative[2] and his Virginian one to construct the heroic identity for which he is recognized today. The unique reciprocal relationship between Smith's Mediterranean and Virginian[3] captivity narratives, fostered

[1]Jennifer Goodman notes that this statement indicates that, for Smith, the movement from military action in the relatively "local" arena of Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa, to more of it in the New World marks his engagement with the "time-tested pattern of progression from regional warfare to enlistment in an international crusade" (198-199) such as is common in chivalric tales. This notion of the chivalric hero is important to my reading of Smith as well since his narratives evoke a heroic Englishness distinct from the religious English identity evoked in other Mediterranean and American narratives of captivity.

[2]I use the term "Mediterranean captivity narrative" to refer to those captivity narratives written by English subjects who were taken captive by any of the peoples who bordered the Mediterranean, including the inland territories of the Ottoman Empire. Many English subjects experienced captivity in areas such as Morocco and the Barbary States. Although Smith's captivity was in less common locations—Turkey and Hungary—it shared many of the characteristics of Moroccan and Barbary captivity. The category of the Mediterranean captivity narrative enables us both to examine Smith's and other narratives commonly termed "Barbary captivity narratives" in the context of one another and also to mark the distinctions between captivity in various locales.

[3]Smith's Virginian narrative is well known, but his Mediterranean captivity narrative receives little attention. This reflects the critical treatment of captivity narratives more generally. American captivity narratives, as foundational texts for what would become the American literary canon, preceded Mediterranean captivity narratives in their entrance into the critical realm. Only in the past decade or so have

by the fact that he writes the narratives of his experiences in reverse chronological order, enables Smith to depart from the providential lens common to many Mediterranean and American narratives. In the Virginian tale, he qualifies the providential framework typical to many earlier narratives of captivity to establish a framework of individual heroism, and then uses that heroic framework in the Turkish narrative to nearly replace the providential one. Rather than only affirming and legitimating Smith's role within the English community, his narratives rewrite ideas about Englishness, creating new models that are formed in relation to the Mediterranean or American other. Contained within Smith's captivity narratives are tales of his own bravery and ambition, rather than praise of God's goodness and favor such as we often see in earlier Mediterranean narratives or later American ones.[4]

Recent criticism of late-seventeenth to eighteenth century Mediterranean captivity narratives attends to the way the English writers of these narratives viewed themselves, the Islamic others they encountered, and the English nation itself. Turning to earlier narratives written in the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries, such as Smith's, we gain a more complete picture of the stakes of Mediterranean captivity and the difficulties captives' experiences pose to a normative concept of English identity defined by language, loyalty to the monarch, heterosexual masculinity, and Protestantism. This context, in which religious conversion is a primary concern, leads to the genre's often emphatically providential focus. Glimpses of individual heroism are subdued in favor of attempting to present a religiously stable identity. Additionally, Mediterranean captivity narratives illuminate

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Mediterranean captivity narratives come to the attention of literary critics and much of the criticism about them is influenced by or written in response to the critical work on American captivity narratives. The scholarship dealing with captivity narratives tends to focus primarily on texts written by, or based on accounts from, white women in colonial America who were taken forcefully by neighboring tribes.

[4]See Daniel Vitkus' *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption* (NY: Columbia UP, 2001) for several examples of narratives from Barbary and Gordon Sayre's *American Captivity Narratives* (NY: Houghton Mifflin, 1999) for examples of American narratives that adhere to this model.

and expose an intimate relationship between captive and captor that forever changes the captives. Because of the threat that Islamic states posed to England in the period, these narratives are peculiar accounts of capture, slavery, escape, and repatriation; they seem to legitimate their authors' return to England while also presenting a renegotiated sense of English identity. Thus the paradigm of Smith's Virginian tale, although it relates events that occurred later, stands as rhetorical legitimation for the tale of his earlier Turkish captivity. The foundation laid by his Virginian narrative allows Smith to write his Turkish tale through a different, more unapologetic, lens than is available to most returned Mediterranean captives.

Before turning to Smith's narratives in detail, it is useful to outline the implications Mediterranean and American narratives held for the captives' English identity. Mediterranean captivity narratives tend to be not only reaffirmations of the former captives' Englishness, as they have often been read in the past, but also renegotiations of Englishness and of English perceptions of the cultures of the captors, including Turks, Moors, and Spaniards. The renegotiations of Englishness in these narratives entail an interweaving of nation, religion, and gender which is often complicated by captive experiences—especially since captives often define their experience as one based on challenges to their theology and their masculinity, two integral elements of Englishness itself during this period. When the authors describe in detail their interactions with their captors, we can see both those aspects of Englishness most threatened by captivity and the changes captivity effects. As the former captives describe their captors, they sometimes convey anti-Islamic sentiments, but these narratives are not, Vitkus reminds us, "simply exercises in the demonization of the Other, along the lines of a reductive Saidian 'orientalism'" (26). Indeed, these narratives demonstrate the complexity of the captive experience and its paradoxical productivity: not only does it produce labor and potential ransom for the captors, but it also produces new kinds of value for the captives—new knowledge, new skills, and changed identities. The individual crises voiced in popular printed narratives, along with the challenges faced and given voice to by returned captives, question England's sense of inviolability and superiority as well as its distinctions between the

self and the other. The narratives attempt to solidify English identity but actually call its stability into question.

Smith's Virginia narrative is written, like typical Mediterranean narratives, from the perspective that his Englishness and his authority should remain unquestioned. The Virginia narrative holds closely to the Mediterranean generic model and makes a later departure from generic norms possible in Smith's narrative of his captivity to the Turks in which he acts on his own and faces much greater threats to his identity; there he is made a slave and stripped of all outward markers of his Englishness. He recuperates and legitimizes his steadfast Englishness by dramatizing his capture and escape, emphasizing its solitary nature and the glory he gained for himself and, by association, for England. In so doing, Smith emphasizes his individual strength and fortitude rather than piety. In the two tales that Smith tells, he fulfills the "heroic roles of both the European Renaissance and the American frontiersman" (Lemay 4). Each narrative affects the other as England continues to face a threatening foe in North Africa and the Levant, and also meets some success in colonizing the New World. Smith uses his Virginia narrative to prove his Englishness and his Mediterranean captivity tale to demonstrate how firmly established his Englishness was even prior to his exploits in Virginia. Together, the two make evident the importance of reading Smith's New World and Ottoman experiences reciprocally. They make each other possible: Smith's experience with the Turks prepares him for his New World experience, and his New World narrative provides a rhetorical foundation for his Mediterranean captivity narrative. Read in the context of one another, the two narratives show Smith's dependence on rhetorical savvy to make the case for his experiences and his English identity as worth valorization and possibly reward in the form of a continuing role in England's New World colonial efforts.

Smith tells the story of his Virginian captivity in a number of places throughout his extensive corpus.[5] Of the eight references to his captivity under Powhatan, all published between 1622 and 1630, with the exception of one in an unpublished letter to Queen

[5] See J. A. Leo Lemay's *Did Pocahontas Save Captain John Smith?*, especially pp. 19-57, for a thorough accounting of each appearance of what Lemay calls "the Pocahontas episode" (19) in Smith's writings.

Anne in 1616, most are only a few sentences in length. Two explicitly refer to Pocahontas as the instrument of God sent to save Smith's life and, in two more, the narrative is followed by a providential interpretation. The most complete telling of the story appears in Book Two of Smith's *Generall Historie* (1624) and goes on for several pages. This closely follows the model of the Mediterranean captivity narrative but introduces the New World strategy of using technology to avoid disaster. It begins with an account of how Smith was taken by the Powhatans and explains that

> they tyed him to a tree, and as many as could stand about him prepared to shoot him, but the King holding up the Compass in his hand, they all laid downe their Bowes and Arrowes, and in a triumphant manner led him to Orapaks [a nearby hunting village], where he was after their manner kindly feasted, and well used.
>
> (Smith 2.147)

This introduction to his captivity demonstrates Smith's attempt to avoid capture using the tools available to him—here, technology—and also his status as an exceptional threat. Smith's description of the many men who prepared to shoot him, even when he is tied to a tree, suggests to the reader that Smith must have seemed to pose a real threat to his captors. His exceptional status is reinforced when, having been spared because of the King's fascination with Smith's compass, he receives a bountiful feast. Nothing about Smith's encounter with his captors is small in his telling of the tale; at every turn, Smith creates a dramatic situation that emphasizes his paradoxical strength and vulnerability.

From here, the narrative continues along conventional lines, describing the mode of travel Smith and his captors undertake as well as the clothing and customs of his captors. These descriptions, like those in Mediterranean narratives, demonstrate the intimacy of the captive's encounter with the culture of his captors. While depicting in detail some of the tribe's customs, Smith also takes the opportunity to use his inability to interpret the actions of his captors to demean them, casting them into the stereotypical New World role of cannibal. After recounting the bounty with which he

was presented at mealtimes—enough, he says, to "have served twentie men" (2.148)—he claims that their generosity "made him thinke they would fat him to eat him" (2.148). Smith instantly distances himself from his captors, making them categorically other. Smith's distancing of himself from his captors is especially important in maintaining his steadfast Englishness even as he reveals that his captors sought to make him a key part of their tribe. He reports that they asked for his advice about how best to attack Jamestown and offered in return "life, libertie, land, and women" (2.148), an offer much like that made to English captives in the Mediterranean in return for converting to Islam and working within the North African maritime world.[6]

Smith takes advantage of this request and his proximity to the colony by sending a written message to Jamestown that warns that colonists of the impending attack, gives them instructions on how

[6]For the English in the Mediterranean, sexual concerns were intimately related to religious concerns, which often translated into economic concerns. Religious identity is central to Mediterranean captivity narratives as it is to their American counterparts: the authors locate their captivity primarily in theological terms. They call themselves captives, prisoners, and slaves almost interchangeably except for the fact that captivity, unlike the other categories, is defined by the threat it poses to the captives' Protestant identity that encompassed their sexual and economic behaviors. The common belief was that conversion brought different sexual choices—from marrying a Turkish or Moorish woman to practicing sodomy. Additionally, conversion to Islam required circumcision which, in English stage representations of the issue, was often conflated with castration. So the English convert to Islam risked either hyper-sexuality or emasculation according to popular views. In neither case did he embody the English ideal. Despite these factors, the temptation to convert to Islam, or "turn Turk," was great; conversion could bring economic opportunity, freedom, and a chance to start over in a new place. That many captives did decide to convert to Islam—or were forced to do so—cast a shadow of scandal and doubt on returned captives and so most narratives emphasize the returned captive's steadfastness in his Protestantism and, by implication, his sexual practices. Captives who wrote their stories focus on their strength and constancy, claiming to have resisted conversion or to have assimilated only temporarily in order to preserve their life or gain information about their captors' culture.

to frighten the Powhatan messengers, and also requests that certain things be given to the messengers. That his letter works to procure them certain goods causes the messengers to return to the tribe and proclaim "that he [Smith] could either divine, or the paper could speak" (2.149). This event, perceived as supernatural by the tribe, is followed by the tribe's entertainment of Smith with what he calls "most strange and fearfull conjurations" (2.149) that he associates with the devil. Smith appears to have negotiated a new position within the community—he is not a participant in their rituals, yet, by juxtaposing the ceremony performed for him with the messengers' response to the effectiveness of his letter writing, Smith represents this episode as a direct response to his own "conjuring" abilities. The language Smith uses to depict the ceremony is especially telling. A potentially frightening spectacle becomes child's play when there "presently came skipping in a great grim fellow" and other "such like devils came rushing in with the like antique tricks." They dance around Smith for "a pretty while" and, after completing the ceremony, "they feasted merrily." Though the members of the Powhatan tribe are costumed with animal skins, have painted faces, and use "a hellish voice," Smith does not represent this ceremony as threatening. Instead, he waits patiently and learns that the ceremony was "to know if he intended them well or no" (2.149-150). His explanation of these events again places Smith in a unique position for a captive, one that reflects the effect his proximity to his home—Jamestown—has on his experience. Even as one Englishman alone, he claims he was perceived as a threat to the Powhatan tribe. The result, Smith implies, is that his captors believe he means them well since he claims to have been welcomed into the homes of various tribal leaders after this event. Additionally, "all the Kings women, and their children, flocked about him for their parts [of the feast], as a due by custome, to be merry with such fragments" (2.150). Smith represents himself as a provider to the tribe, inverting the actual tribe/colony relationship between the Powhatan and the Jamestown colonists who often needed the tribe's help.

The tone of the narrative and his position as a diplomat/captive changes when Smith arrives in Werowocomoco to see Powhatan himself. Smith contrasts Powhatan's hospitality to that of his brother's from the start by including the detail that,

after giving him water with which to wash his hands, he receives "a bunch of feathers, in stead of a towell to dry them" (2.151). Then Smith silently mocks his hosts with faint praise, recounting that they "feasted him after their best barbarous manner they could" (2.151) and reads back onto the feast the events that would follow. Smith's ultimate censure of his hosts as threats to the colonists—and especially to himself—comes in his relation of the now-famous near-execution scene:

> a long consultation was held, but the conclusion was, two great stones were brought before Powhatan: then as many as could layd hands on him [Smith], dragged him to them, and thereon laid his head, and being ready with their clubs, to beate out his braines, Pocahontas the Kings dearest daughter, when no intreaty could prevaile, got his head in her armes, and laid her owne upon his to save him from death.
>
> (2.151)

Here, at the climax of the narrative, Smith grammatically absents himself from the scene. The pronoun "him" would seem to refer back to Powhatan, but, knowing that this is not the case, the reader must put Smith into the moment. Smith's resistance is also only implicit; it takes many men to drag him to the stones. Clearly, Smith is unwilling to go forward to what is represented as a sort of makeshift altar, but he simultaneously refuses to describe his resistance in detail, forcing the reader to wonder whether his resistance was cowardly rather than heroic. The implied method of execution also figures significantly in the narrative; it is a crude indication of the threat that Smith's mind, rather than his strength, poses to the natives' community.

Pocahontas' intervention changes the typical captivity-narrative trajectory dramatically. One of Smith's captors steps in for him; he does not rescue himself or manage to escape. In fact, this intervention does not release Smith from captivity but secures for him a role and place within that community. Powhatan becomes "contented he [Smith] should live to work to make him [Powhatan] hatchets, and her [Pocahontas] bells, beads, and copper" (2.151). But within the space of two days it becomes clear that this imagined role is nothing but fantasy. Instead, Powhatan and his

men proclaim that "now they were friends, and presently he should go to James towne, to send him [Powhatan] two great gunnes, and a gryndstone, for which he would give him [Smith] the country of Capahowosick, and for ever esteeme him as his sonne Nantaquod" (2.151). Smith has no say here—he is evidently still captive to Powhatan, a status he makes clear by noting that "he still expect[ed] (as he had done all this long time of his imprisonment) ever houre to be put to one death or other: for all their feasting" (2.151). Smith harbors a distrust of the Powhatans that maintains his distance from them. They may call him friend and even offer him sonship, but Smith clearly maintains and upholds the captive/captor divide in his representations of the relationship.

Near the end of his narrative of captivity, Smith introduces the genre's typical Providential framework. Just after an admission of his fear, Smith asserts that "almightie God (by his divine providence) has mollified the hearts of those sterne Barbarians with compassion" (2.152). With this, his return to Jamestown is nearly complete. In fact, the moment at which Smith passes from being a captive Englishman to a returned one is not narrated. Smith simply relates that he presented his escorts with the items they requested of the English and that, finding the weapons too heavy, he fired them and caused icicles and limbs to fall out of a nearby tree at which "the poore Salvages ran away halfe dead with feare" (2.152). Immediately afterwards, Smith refers to himself as part of a "we" once again. His re-entry into Jamestown is remarkable in its ease, but receives no comment; it is an assumed outcome. Though Smith later reestablishes communication with his former captors, he positions himself as a resident of Jamestown, part of a "we" who gives the men some toys and presents to take to the tribe. Trifles replace the useful tools and weapons Powhatan requested and Smith regains the agency he temporarily relinquished when pointing to Pocahontas as his savior. Smith's "escape" seems easily achieved and involves little to no risk on Smith's part. He never gives up his assumed position of power and, by firing the guns to frighten the Powhatans, he once again relies on technology as proof of that power. Captivity, in this case, becomes simply one more step toward establishing effective communications and relations with the colony's neighboring tribe. Smith recasts himself as a diplomat whose embassy goes awry but recovers in the end to

the benefit of both parties. For Smith, it is much easier to legitimate to his reader his Virginia experience since there, tenuous though his authority was in the unstable colony, he inhabits a role in an English project. It is in his best interest to downplay his "escape," discussing his return as if it was never in question and conveying the notion that his authority, and his Englishness, remained unquestioned throughout.

In the Ottoman Empire, however, the situation is quite different. In Smith's Mediterranean narrative, we first encounter him in eastern Europe fighting against the Ottoman Empire. This is a solitary endeavor for Smith as an Englishman, not a nationally legitimated one as his later Virginia adventure would be.[7] It is perhaps not surprising, then, that Smith published narratives of his New World exploration and captivity first, since in his earlier exploits in the East he acted as a free agent, gaining glory for himself. Only after he has served the English colonial project in the New World does he write his earlier adventures and claim that, through them, he also benefited England. In reading the narratives together, there is a definite sense, as Smith himself suggests, that his experiences with the Ottomans prepare him for those in the New World. But his publication of these narratives in reverse chronological order also indicates a more complex rhetorical maneuver; Smith's experiences in the New World serve to confirm his Christian Englishness and thus allow him to practically forgo the usual religious framework in his Mediterranean captivity narrative. In this case, Smith is captured by the Turks while he is fighting on the side of the Prince of Transylvania and, after he is sold as a slave, he faces more significant threats to his Englishness than he would later in Virginia.

His narrative, like other Mediterranean captivity narratives, attempts to (belatedly) legitimate Smith's return to England and his steadfast Englishness. This endeavor is facilitated by the reputation he has established for himself in his telling of his Virginian captivity. Parallels in the two narratives include that, in Turkey, "he had been captured and enslaved by the enemy then spared through the intervention of a Lady Tragabigzanda" (Sayre 62) much as in Virginia he was captured by the Powhatans and then "saved" by

[7]Though private investors funded the Virginia Colony, the Virginia Company was given a charter by King James in 1606.

Pocahontas. However, it is also important to note the differences between them, differences that indicate the differences in the English position in the New World versus the Islamic Mediterranean. The English approach the New World as colonists who assume dominance over the peoples they encounter (despite their constant reliance on the Indians for survival), but, in this period, they have no such pretensions in their dealings with Islamic nations. For Smith encounters the Turks as a result of war between Christendom and Islam that signals the military and religious threat posed to Europe and England by Islamic states.

In the Turkish episode, published in Smith's *True Travels* in 1630, Smith falls during a battle and awakens to find himself a captive. His captors take him to Axopolis and sell him as a slave. He eventually finds himself in Constantinople, a gift to a woman he calls Charatza Tragabigzanda and who treats Smith well (3.186-187). Jennifer Goodman argues that here the "Turkish lady, one Charatza Tragabigzanda, lives up to the established role of the Saracen princess of chivalric fiction. She is of noble birth, kindhearted, and apparently susceptible to the charms of the captive captain" (205). The narrative implies that the relationship between Smith and Tragabigzanda may have had the potential to be a romantic one, but as Smith is a gift to the Lady from her betrothed, this is an impossible scenario. However, the narrative does bring up questions about Smith's loyalty to the sexual expectations for an English, Protestant identity, and it promotes a sort of horrified fascination with the potential for sexual encounters with one's captor, much like that which has become a lasting legacy in popular representations of Smith's relationship with Pocahontas (consider, for example, Disney's 1995 animated feature, *Pocahontas*, or Terrence Malick's 2005 film, *The New World*), despite the fact that there is no evidence for a romantic relationship between them and the fact that Pocahontas later married another colonist, John Rolfe.

However, though Tragabigzanda "tooke (as it seemed) much compassion on him" (Smith 3.187), the potential romance or friendship does not lead to Smith's freedom in this case. Instead, it illuminates the fact that, as a slave, he must be useful in order to avoid worse conditions. Tragabigzanda knows of this requirement, and she wants to protect Smith. Consequently, "having no use for

him, lest her mother should sell him, she sent him to her brother, the Tymor Bashaw of Nalbrits, in the Countrey of Cambia, a Province in Tartaria" (3.187).[8] Once he arrives in Nalbrits, Smith faces more typical treatment as a slave: the Timor commands "his Drub-man to strip him [Smith] naked, and shave his head and beard so bare as his hand, a great ring of iron, with a long stalke bowed like a sickle, rivetted about his necke, and a coat made of Ulgries haire, guarded about with a peece of undrest skinne" (3.189). All outward markers of Smith's Englishness are taken from him and he becomes anonymous, one of "many more Christian slaves" (2.146). Statements like this one point out Smith's subjection to the Turks, but they also confirm his steadfast Christianity. By noting that many of the slaves are Christian, Smith reminds his audience that despite the known benefits of "turning Turk" (converting to Islam), such as freedom and the opportunity to pursue governmental positions, he, as part of this slave community, stayed true to his Christianity.

Already displaced by their captivity, captives faced a second iteration of displacement in slavery. Many captives were sold as slaves at markets in major cities such as Constantinople, Algiers, or Sallee. Slavery is the ultimate inversion of the *imagined* dynamic between English and Islamic peoples. It provides concrete and irrefutable evidence that the Turks and Moors were often more powerful than the English and were able to take away Englishmen's self-ownership as well as their ability to return home. Slavery questions the possibility of a "complete" return to England and Englishness on two levels: slavery jeopardizes one's opportunities to return, and it challenges one's identity by forcing slaves to participate intimately in the culture of the captor. Slaves were forced to serve in galleys, to work in their masters' households, or to perform other sorts of labor. Following the

[8]Lewis claims that while Smith served Lady Tragabigzanda he was forced to dress as a woman and then disrobe, serving the Lady and her friends in the nude. He also claims that Smith was given to the Timor by Tragabigzanda's mother who was afraid that her daughter and Smith were becoming too close. None of this is discussed in Smith's narrative itself, but this sort of speculation serves to demonstrate the lasting fascination with Smith's life and the tempting urge to fill in the blanks Smith leaves in his narratives.

account of Smith's arrival in Nalbrits are several ethnographic sections detailing the customs of the Turks, slaves, and Tartars of that place. Smith uses his position as captive here as he does in his relations of his captivity under Powhatan—as an opportunity to make detailed ethnographic observations. These observations perform a dual function. They set Smith apart from his captors and also reveal the intimacy of his encounter with them. The substantial descriptions of life as a slave in North Africa included in many captivity narratives provide useful information about cultural practices at the time, but they also emphasize that Englishmen were slaves, a fact which dramatically alters an idealized English identity.

Largely as a result of the intimate contact between slave and master, many English captives turn Turk either literally by converting to Islam, or figuratively by engaging in cultural cross-dressing, temporarily donning the clothing and customs of their captors. We see the latter strategy in Smith's narrative. Converting to Islam was greatly feared by captives and struck at the core of their identity, especially as it was articulated in theological terms. Several narratives tell of other captives being forced to convert—rarely the narrator himself as, truth aside, it would simply be too risky to admit[9]—and even of a couple of Englishmen who choose to switch. In John Rawlins' 1622 narrative, we find a warning he received from a group of English slaves: captives who are not sold as slaves may be "compelled to turn Turks or made subject to more vilder prostitution" (Rawlins 102). (Sexual slavery is a cause of great anxiety for captives and a threat to their claims of heterosexual masculinity.) Though more permanent forms of turning Turk are rarely related, some captive-authors admit to having culturally cross-dressed—and passed—in order to escape their captivity. They justify this identity swap by claiming it was the only means to a necessary end, but their ability to successfully cross-dress among their captors indicates how well the captives knew the culture of their captors and also how close they were to actually assimilating to the Others' culture. A fine line distinguishes cross-dressing and assimilation, namely, the fact that the captives discard their

[9]Thomas Pellow's narrative poses an interesting exception to this general rule.

"disguise" once they have escaped. The stories that the captives tell about turning Turk and cross-dressing pose serious questions about who and what determines one's identity, highlighting not only the importance of appearance, but also the power dynamics involved in identity formation. Thus, while being a slave challenges the notion of English superiority, Smith's response to it also confirms his Christian identity.

Finally, unlike in his Virginian narrative, Smith relates his manner of escape. He claims that "All the hope he had ever to be delivered from this thralldom was only the love of Tragabigzanda, who surely was ignorant of his bad usage" (Smith 3.200),[10] but he manages to secure his own escape through what he describes as a kind of heroic action that comes naturally to him. This characteristic heroism, in combination with an emphasis on Providentialism, is a hallmark of returned Mediterranean captives. Unlike most Mediterranean captives, however, Smith has already established that God favors him in his Virginia narrative, so here he need not emphasize a providential intervention to justify his heroic acts of self-preservation. As Smith tells it, the Timor visited him one day in the grange and "tooke occasion so to beat, spurne, and revile him [Smith], that forgetting all reason, he [Smith] beat out the Tymors braines with his threshing bat [. . .] and seeing his estate could be no worse than it was, clothed himself in his clothes, hid his [the Timor's] body under the straw, filled his [Smith's] knapsacke with corne, shut the doores, mounted his [the Timor's] horse, and ranne into the desart at all adventure" (3.200). Smith, apparently surprising even himself, secures his escape through murder. He violently destroys his owner and almost instinctively asserts his superiority over the man who presumed to own him. This action recalls Smith's earlier military exploits in which he established a reputation as a heroic warrior by defeating three Turks in single combat, as memorialized on the coat of arms awarded to him by the Prince of Transylvania. Though he notes that his actions are irrational, Smith reinvokes his status as a

[10]Much has been made of the fact that Smith often relates interactions with noble women who assisted him in his travels, including Lady Tragabigzanda and Pocahontas (see Sayre 62 and Philip Young's "The Mother of Us All: Pocahontas Reconsidered").

solitary English hero through his escape. However, he complicates his steadfast Englishness when, in order to safely reach Russia, Smith dresses in his dead owner's clothing, disguising himself as a Turk. Here, as occurs in many other Barbary captivity narratives, Smith successfully impersonates his captors, walking a fine line between assimilation and cultural cross-dressing, only to establish firmly his identity as a Protestant Englishman by discarding the clothing at the end of his journey. Once he secures his freedom, Smith does mention God. He writes that after he wandered for two or three days, "God did direct him to the great way of Castragan, as they call it" (3.200). So Smith secures his freedom, but God secures his return to Christendom. Smith's Turkish experiences suggest a different and earlier formation of Englishness based on relations with a different kind of captor, one that is viewed as "civilized" and developed even as it is condemned as barbaric, unlike the Native American culture that the English perceived as uncivilized, if also prelapsarian, and thus an easier target for incorporation or eradication.

Together, Smith's narratives enact a double legitimation of his Englishness after various captivities in Turkey and Virginia. Both provide information about the captors' culture and indicate the intimacy with which the captive encounters those cultures. However, the narratives also highlight the distinct circumstances and problems of captivity in different locations. Smith must combat the traumatic experience of enslavement and violent escape in his text in ways that his Virginia captivity does not necessitate. Likewise, the two narratives reveal the ways in which the situations call for a different sort of written persona. In the Virginia narrative, Smith must maintain his persona as a leader who is respected by his fellow countrymen and his captors alike; in the Mediterranean narrative, Smith maintains an individual heroic persona, reassuring his reader that even alone he can resolve any situation—including enslavement—even if violence is required. Together, Smith's narratives work as narratives not only of captivity but also of repatriation. As such, the narratives speak to English concerns with maintaining a stable group, and even national identity even as they change that identity.

Smith's Turkish and Virginian narratives create an image of Smith as a self-reliant, heroic Englishman who no longer depends

on God to deliver him from bondage. Smith's departure from providential conventions suggests a changing sense of Englishness that coincides with growing English confidence in the New World. Above all, his captivity narratives emphasize both the importance of a captive's return to England or to the English colony and the author's ability to sustain English Protestant identity. His narratives act as witnesses, testifying in third person to Smith's worthiness for reincorporation and celebration in English society. For Smith, the providential framework in his Virginia narrative gives way to one of heroic individualism in his Mediterranean narrative. Through a negotiation of providential and individualist frames, his narratives create the possibility of the hero who returns home through individual actions, but in the process they subtly change the identity of the home he returns to.

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