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The White, Indian Woman: Olive Oatman and Her Double Identity Through Indian Captivity Narratives, Marked Body, and Public Performance

Supervisor
Ch. Prof. Elisa Bordin

Assistant supervisor
Ch. Prof. William Boelhower

Graduand
Marta Zaffalon
Matriculation Number 846763

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INTRODUCTION

> Gazing out from the pages of history, Oatman is a poster girl for our [Americans] inherently split and perpetually multiplying national identity. If her legend once illustrated the dangers of frontier Americans colliding with the ethnic unknown, it is now a parable about what mixed-race America has ineluctably become. She is a white woman of color, a foreigner in her own country, a beautiful freak whose blue tattoo denotes the shaky fault lines between civilization and savagery (*The Blue Tattoo: The Life of Olive Oatman*, 208-209).

In the closing pages of her book *The Blue Tattoo: The Life of Olive Oatman* (2011), Margot Mifflin defines Olive Oatman as the poster girl of America's national identity and its multiethnicity. The writer compares Olive's incredible story to the development of the nation's ethnological, social, and cultural composition, in which the plurality of the races is the product of a duality of identities that traces its origin back to the primordial contrast between civilization and savagery. Olive Oatman, the white, tattooed girl, and subject matter of this research, was thirteen years old when she was taken captive by Indians in 1851, tattooed, rescued, and brought back home after five years of captivity and a marked body, later turning into a public performer showing her chin tattoo, symbol of her double identity. So why does Margot Mifflin employ Olive Oatman to describe contemporary America and its mixed-raced, multiethnic composition? How is it possible that a white, colonial girl can embody the symbol of such a complex and articulated phenomenon? The main aim of this work is attempting to answer these questions by analyzing the story of captivity and post-captivity of Olive Oatman and the physical, emotional, social, and cultural consequences of her experience among the Indians and her later return to her community of origin.

As briefly introduced above, Olive was a white, thirteen-years-old girl when, in 1851, she was captured by the Yavapai tribe in the middle of the desert Gila River area, Mexico, after a raid that left her orphan of her immediate family except for her older brother Lorenzo and little sister Mary Ann. Her captivity with the Yavapai tribe lasted a year when, in 1852, after prolonged economic negotiations, the girl was rescued by another tribe inhabiting the area, the Mohave tribe, that would adopt her and care for her as a loved daughter, sister, and friend. The captivity with the Mohaves brought the girl to experience her first process of transculturation: with the Natives Olive underwent their centuries-old practice of tattooing members' bodies as a sign of membership and affiliation within the tribe. In that moment, Olive officially "crossed the threshold of assimilation" (Mifflin 89).

During captivity with the Yavapais, Olive kept her whiteness untouched but, for the duration of her stay among the Mohaves until 1856, when she returned to her community of origin in Fort Yuma, the process of transculturation brought her to a double identity, that of a white and colonial girl and an Indian one. The return to white, colonial society posed Olive issues concerning the retrieving of feminine, white, colonial, Christian social norms of behavior, manners, and clothing, along with the retrieving of the English language, elements of civilization that contrasted the state of savagery of the former captive. Olive's return to Fort Yuma advanced questions about her identity and affiliation or disaffiliation with one culture or the other as well: did she belong to white, colonial society despite her Indian manners and, most importantly, her chin tattoos? Or did she belong exclusively to her Mohave family and Indian culture? Could she belong to both of these cultures or had she inevitably to choose between one of them? The question of membership and/or disassociation between two cultures intensifies with Olive Oatman's public appearances in front of a fascinated and curious audience during the promotional campaigns of Royal B. Stratton's book, *Captivity of the Oatman Girls* (1857), an Indian captivity narrative recounting her experience among Indians. In particular, the circuit of public lectures she gave throughout the nation to publicly exhibit her marked, grotesque body was the circumstance that amplified the issue of cultural membership and marginalization. At this point, the double identity of Olive is problematized by her new role as a female public figure: now she is a white, tattooed woman performing as a public lecturer exhibiting her tattooed body and employing such body as a commodity and as a tool to promote the recent-born campaign of the American feminist movement, which was calling for women's power over their own bodies, voices and public appearances against the omnipresence of male, authoritative figures trying to manipulate and control women's own bodies, voices and public presence. When she married and adopted a daughter, Olive eventually withdrew from the public arena and dedicated the rest of her life to taking care of her beloved husband John and baby girl Mamie, making space for other two identities, that of devoted wife and mother. How many identities did Olive Oatman have? Had she to choose to be only one of them or did she have the freedom to embody all of these identities? As briefly presented above, the main aim of this thesis is to provide some answers to the questions posed in this introduction and in the following chapters.

The work is divided into three chapters, each of them following in chronological order the story of Olive from her first captivity experience with the Yavapai tribe in 1851 until her death in 1903, and eventually covering the period subsequent to her passing away. Each chapter includes the analysis of Olive's story of captivity and post-captivity and it is supported by a detailed study of topics that are correlated with the main subject matter analyzed in the chapter.

The first chapter covers the very beginning of Olive Oatman's story, with a brief initial digression over the story of the Oatman family and the reasons behind their journey westward from Independence, Missouri, for religious and economic motives. The chapter follows both experiences of captivity of the girl, the first with the Yavapais and the other with the Mohave tribe. The discussion, then, focuses on the concise but detailed explanation of the literary genre of the Indian captivity narrative, from its origin to its main characteristics and developments, followed by the detailed analysis of the Indian captivity narrative regarding Olive Oatman and written by the Methodist reverend Royal Byron Stratton, *Captivity of the Oatman Girls*. The study of this Indian captivity narrative, its characteristics, and variations during the years and the three editions published, along with the issues of gender and authorship and the role of a white, male, authoritative figure validating and manipulating the narrative, is compared to other two-well known Indian captivity narratives that deal with the same issues of the one of Stratton but managed differently. The first one is Mary Rowlandson's spiritual autobiography *The Soveraignty and Goodness of God* (1682) and the retellings of Hannah Dustan's captivity narrative by Cotton Mather's *Dux Faemina Facti* (1702) and Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Duston Family* (1836).

The second chapter follows the return of Olive to her community of origin at Fort Yuma, and her repatriation, both physical and emotional, into white, colonial society and the hardships that resulted from it, such as the process of transculturation, that Olive began while in captivity, that she had to undergo again once she returned among the whites. The main focus of this chapter is the issues of membership and marginalization between two opposing cultures and the doubling of Olive's identity, one as a white, colonial girl, and the other as an Indian woman. This topic develops into the analysis of three main elements that support the claim about her liminal status between two cultures and identities, the first one being the presence of the tattoos on her chin, the way they had been portrayed, and the meanings behind them, along with the influence they had in culture and society as Olive began to publicly exhibit them in front of the audience. Together with the subject of the marked body, the other two elements that are closely related to the dichotomy of membership and marginalization are the topics of clothing and the way clothes reflect the association with or disassociation from one culture, and the employment of several nicknames the Mohave tribe gave to Olive during her captivity, as a sign of affection and closeness to her as a beloved member of the tribe.

The third and last chapter covers the final period of Olive's life, her career as a celebrated public figure, and the definitive withdrawal from the public scene after her marriage with John Fairchild and the adoption of their beloved daughter Mamie. The chapter focuses on the figure of Olive as a public figure, a career that started with the promotional tour of Stratton's book and culminated with the

circuit of public lectures throughout the nation, in which she recounted her story of captivity and showed the public her marked chin. What this last chapter wants to highlight is the figure of Olive Oatman as compared to that of a freak show performance and performer by comparing her to the several characteristics of this phenomenon, and, lastly, her influence as one of the first symbols of the newly born American feminist movement in relation to her public performances and her power to talk back and speak truthfully about her narrative and body without the mediation and validation of a male, controlling figure with any kind of authority over herself, her body and her voice. The last portion of the chapter covers the legacy, in the literary, historical, social, and cultural spheres, that Olive left when she passed away, a heritage that still today shows its power and strength over the passing of time and the threat of oblivion.

1.“How Little We Thought What Was Before Us”: Olive Oatman’s Indian Captivity Narrative

There are many ways to tell a story, many standpoints and threads weaved together to create a sort of composition that, depending on the standpoint or thread one decides to follow, leads to another story, which in turn leads to another story, and so on. Nonetheless, the beginning and the end of the story are linked together, even if they are situated on the opposite sides of the multiple strings that create such a complex composition. Eventually, some parts of the composition are crystal clear, while other parts remain still unclear. Throughout history and following the uninterrupted development of civilizations, societies, and cultures, literature has always been one of the main pillars of that necessity, for mankind, to make sense of the world and the reality that surrounds it through a form of written expression, that progressively multiplied into many other forms. Since then, literature has always offered a broad corpus of literary genres that give stories the possibility to be told, retold over and over again, passed down from generation to generation, and through geographical places as well, resisting the passing of centuries and the threat of oblivion. Among such a great and comprehensive corpus of literary production, the genre of the Indian captivity narrative, in particular, stands out to the contemporary reader and scholar who is familiar with the concept of a main story which, inside of its narration, holds together many other stories that are equally relevant but most of the time hidden in the tangled background of the composition. To read and approach exclusively the dominant, prime narrative can be satisfactory enough to have a general understanding of the subject matter, but if one starts to single out and analyze each of the threads that make up the composition and bring to light the story that belongs to every one of it, the outcome is similar to the opening of Pandora’s box, except that in this specific case the meaning is positive, rather than negative. The parallel stories, once uncovered, flow and follow their own trajectory, but eventually, they always come back to the main story, enhancing it, and giving it more power and voice. This can be one of several ways to describe the literary genre of the Indian captivity narratives and the stories that fall under this classification of written production. There is never just one narrative path, that can be identified as the one lying on the surface, but there are many other paths that go unnoticed at first glance as well, ready to be discovered and brought into view. In this chapter three Indian captivity narratives, belonging to different time periods, authors, literary sub-genres, and modes of telling and retelling, will be analyzed and compared. The first, and primary, narrative that will be taken into consideration is *Captivity of the Oatman Girls: Being an Interesting Narrative of Life Among the Apache and Mohave Indians* (1858), a three-editions book by the Methodist reverend Royal Byron Stratton who wanted to show American audience the physical effects of the Indian captivity on the body by recounting the

experience of Olive Oatman and her sister Mary Ann. Stratton's work will be then followed by Mary Rowlandson's autobiography *The Soveraignty and Goodness of God* (1682), in which the Puritan woman described her captivity and eleven-weeks journey through the wilderness with the tribes that captured her. Finally, it will be analyzed the peculiar story of Hannah Dustan, recounted first by Cotton Mather in his *Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702), an account of the religious development in the states of Massachusetts and New England, in which Hannah Dustan's cruel actions against her captors were praised, and lastly by Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story *The Duston Family* (1836), in which the author condemned the conduct of the woman and the way in which the community applauded its member as its heroine. But before proceeding with the development of the main object of analysis, it is of fundamental importance the introduction and explication of the notion of the Indian captivity narratives, a premise that has to be made in order to grasp in their entirety the basis on which these three narratives in question are based. Moreover, a brief explanation of the concept of retelling will be made to complete the analysis and the comparison of the works.

1.1: The Indian Captivity Narrative as a genre

The literary genre of the Indian captivity narrative is regarded to be one of the earliest, most prominent, and most developmental genres in American literature, history, culture, and society. Its ability to encompass nearly all of the central pillars of the American cultural and social legacy gives to this narrative product the power to permeate what constitutes the nation's culture and society as a whole. As Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola mentions in *Women's Indian Captivity Narratives*, an accounts' collection of women taken captive by Indians, "Indian captivity narrative functions as *the* archetype of American culture, or its foundation text, in which initial contact between Europeans and Native Americans inevitably evolved into conflict and finally colonial conquest" (xi). The purpose of the Indian captivity narratives was not merely to entertain and inform white, civilized, and orthodox American readers about the brutal experiences of their fellow countrymen and countrywomen with Native Americans, but it was also an extremely influential means to indoctrinate the audience about what was considered the common enemy at the time: the pagans, savage, and beastly Indians. The genre saw its climax of success and circulation in the nation, and overseas as well, between the 15th and 19th century, but it did not come into view overnight. The precursor, the narrative production that influenced the spread of the Indian captivity narratives throughout the United States and Europe can be traced back to what are known as the barbary captivity narratives, which were accounts mostly written by English men on their experiences of captivity and slavery perpetrated by pirates and traders not only in the American and Canadian territories but also in Africa and the Middle East. At a certain

point, barbary captivity narratives and Indian captivity narratives came to influence each other (Baepler 2). Ultimately, the latter found more fertile ground in the United States, mainly as a vehicle of propaganda and a medium through which a specific national identity could be constructed, mostly based on the hatred against Native Americans and a conduct of supremacy towards them. To define in its entirety the literary genre of the Indian captivity narrative and to grasp its main characteristics and aims as a literary, religious, political, and cultural agent, it is important to outline and discern the Indian captivity narrative from the broader and more general literary product of the captivity narrative. In broad terms, a captivity narrative can be simply described as an account in which two central subjects are involved, the captor and the captive. It is clear that such a straightforward definition opens to a wide range of narratives. Among the extensive corpus of narrative forms that the captivity narrative encapsulates, the Indian captivity narrative is identified and portrayed as "a discrete American literary form that involves accounts of non-Indians captured by Indians in North America [...]" (Derounian-Stodola, *Women's Indian Captivity Narratives* xi). The period that saw this kind of narrative emerging and having great success in terms of spreading geographically, reading, and salability was not fortuitous, since the start of the Indian captivity narratives can be determined to be tracked down to that historical phase in which North America, then often referred to as the "New World," started to be colonized by the "Old World," Europe. The primary goal of Europeans once landed on the American soil, was colonization and the creation of a utopian empire which, using the words of John Winthrop and his 1630 sermon *A Modell of Christian Charity*, could forge the United States as "a city upon a hill," a beacon of light and civilization in a land of darkness and barbarism. Old World colonizers had little to no knowledge about the numerous Indian tribes that inhabited the regions they took over, the consequence being the production of stereotypes and speculations about them, a habit that transformed into one of the main characteristics of the genre in question (Derounian-Stodola and Levernier 16-17). Stereotypes of Indians were, for most of the texts under the classification of the Indian captivity narratives, extremely negative and denigrating, emphasizing Native Americans' brutality, barbarism, paganism, and scarcity of proper education, cultural and moral values, particularly with reference to the Puritan community of North America and its subsequent denominations. Indians were portrayed as an evil presence that had to be eradicated in order to free the sacred community of white, civilized, and orthodox Americans from such a devilish danger, since the United States, as mentioned before, had the goal of rising above as the nation chosen by God to guide other countries and societies as an example of moral, religious, and social conduct. Doctrine and biblical scriptures justified this behavior and were a means through which exerting power and authority. At a later time, a shift occurred, from a strictly religious use of the Indian captivity narratives to a more politically oriented aim (Kolodny 187). Among the political reasons

there were not only the internal wars between England and France and their Indian supporters but also the westward expansionism that brought American frontiersmen and frontierswomen to take possession of the territories of the west and extend the colonization process further. Simultaneously with the shift from a religious to a political purpose concerning the employment of the Indian captivity narrative as a vehicle of indoctrination and propaganda against Native Americans, there is a shift of the view of Indians as well. They started to be perceived as the main obstacle to the "Euro-American progress and civilization," which of course included Christianity (Derounian-Stodola, "The Indian Captivity Narratives of Mary Rowlandson and Olive Oatman" 41). Other stereotypes that amplified the racial discrimination and hatred towards Indians, and which were strongly opposed to the white, cultured, and pious community, concerned the custom of eating human flesh, commonly known as cannibalism, worshipping pagan divinities, their clothes, the custom of wearing piercings and having tattoos, the cruel and brutal manners, especially with regards to war culture and the capture and treatment of prisoners (for example, the practice of scalping), how they were ruled by their instincts and followed them, like animals, and their different view of life, love, society, culture, religion. It is necessary to clarify that the above-mentioned stereotypical images are, precisely, stereotypes, the cultural product of suppositions, conjectures, and lack of knowledge of Europeans regarding Native Americans, mainly based on what they experienced during their encounters with the latter and their leading imperialist mindset. This does not mean that these ideas have to be deemed as unquestionably inaccurate or, on the contrary, unquestionably accurate. They were surely based on a grain of truth, which was later adjusted by authors, editors, and publishers of Indian captivity narratives to accommodate the country's need for the creation of a specific national identity based on the opposition of two threads, that of the colonizer, the white man and woman, and that of the colonized, the Indian man and woman. One more clarification is needed, concerning the treatment of stereotypes, Indian tribes, and their customs. Every Indian tribe had its own culture, its own rules, habits, and practices. As an example, if a given tribe considered cannibalism a normal practice, it was not necessarily the general truth and custom for all the other North American tribes. Every Indian community differed based on their internal organization, traditions, and heritage. This additional specification is relevant in order to understand on a deeper level, for example, the captivity narrative of Olive Oatman and the comparison with the stories of Mary Rowlandson and Hannah Dustan. Indian captivity narratives presented a standard narrative organization as a literary text, where the development of the story followed an established pattern within its narratological structure: "Almost invariably the Indian captivity narrative concerns the capture of an individual or several family members rather than larger groupings, and its plot is most commonly resolved with the captive's escape, ransom, transculturation, or death" (Derounian-Stodola, *Women's Indian Captivity Narratives*

xi). The narratives appeared under many literary varieties such as autobiographies, biographies, diaries, short stories, children's tales, and poems, and were printed in the form of books, pamphlets, columns in periodicals and magazines, in extensive collections and anthologies. For the most part, they accounted experiences, in English, of Europeans among Indian groups, however, in the broad corpus of this literary genre, some narratives had African American captives as protagonists, as well as men and women that recounted their captivity in other languages, for instance in French and German (Derounian-Stodola and Levernier 9).

To define in its entirety the Indian captivity narrative as a literary genre without touching upon the topics of gender and authorship is to miss two of the foundations of this narrative production. The issues of gender and authorship do not operate in the Indian captivity narrative on their own, separated from one another, but quite the opposite, they influence each other and the way the narratives are produced and perceived. Starting with the issue of gender, as Derounian-Stodola points out: "Of the thousands of Indian captivity narratives in existence, a large number are by or about women, including some of the most famous. Indeed, the Indian captivity narrative is arguably the first American literary form dominated by women's experiences as captives, storytellers, writers, and readers" (*Women's Indian Captivity Narratives* xi). In the literary production of the Indian captivity narrative, the subject of gender is central both for the dichotomy of male versus female through the whole process of captivity and post-captivity and for the employment of the experience mediated by gender, specifically how male power and authority affected female experience and authorship within and without the narrative. It is not by chance that the Indian captivity narratives that will be analyzed later on are female-centered but male-mediated. The same standardization concerning the internal organization of the narrative text can be found in women's accounts of their captivity and post-captivity experiences, influenced by their gender and the different points of view, in contrast to the male counterpart. Generally, for instance, the account opens with Native Americans raiding the colonial community of the woman protagonist of the captivity narrative, burning everything down, fighting and killing the men who tried to defend the community, entering the houses, ransacking them of all their possessions, and, at last, kidnapping the female figure, or figures, inside the household and their children, eventually vanishing into the wilderness with the captives. Since the very first act of the narrative, the gendered handling of the story can be perceived, which carries on through the following acts of the story. Captivity narratives recounted by men draw attention to their physical strength and ability while fighting against Indians in an attempt to heroically save the community and themselves from the attacks of the natives, and to the use of physical and mental force to overcome the enemy in front of them and rise above the condition of the captive once fallen under the natives' confinement. What is emphasized in women's accounts, instead, is the stark opposite, that is their

submissiveness to their fate and towards the events, their supposed inability to react against what is happening to them and their children and taking their condition of captivity as a life-long circumstance. This contrasting emphasis between the two gendered approaches to the recounting of the experience of captivity and post-captivity, thus, opens a further level of discussion. Indeed, the narrative scheme is not the only aspect influenced by gender in the Indian captivity narratives, since other two elements are based on the male versus female perspective, that is the handling of the storyline and the treatment of the protagonist of the narrative:

> The social construction of men saw them as active subjects, with public as well as private roles and the ability to make choices; the accounts with male subjects therefore emphasized their physical and mental qualities as individuals, particularly their strength, endurance, and intelligence. However, women were socially constructed as passive objects, with a predominantly domestic and private role, and the inability, often, to choose for themselves; the narratives with female subjects therefore targeted women's physical frailty and emotional nature (Derounian-Stodola, *Women's Indian Captivity Narratives* xx).

The position of the woman within the narrative and authorial frame of the Indian captivity narratives as an inert and unassertive subject confined to a strictly domestic, familiar, and private sphere and deemed as a victim not just of her fate and circumstances but of her emotions and impulses as well - traits highly gendered as they were a prerogative of the stereotyped construction of the female identity and displayed through all the stages of captivity, from its beginning to its later developments - does not merely affect the way in which the female protagonist narrates the events and how she is perceived by the audience. The treatment of women voicing their captivity narratives brings into discussion the issue of authorship, which is deeply interconnected with the topic of gender in Indian captivity narratives tradition. When discussing captivity narratives with women protagonist and presented with their name on the cover, authorship has not to be assumed as directly involved with the female figure object of the narration, but it has to be intended as a domain extremely mediated and controlled by the power and authority of men, to be found in the person of husbands, ministers, editors, and publishers. In the historical period covered by Indian captivity narratives, the activity of writing performed by a woman was one of the manifold activities and behaviors targeted by gender and the resulting generalizations. For women, writing was solely a leisure activity that had to be kept private and circumscribed to her intimate sphere, excluding the possibility of extending it over the boundaries of the homeplace, not to mention the chance to write for profit and recognition. On the basis of these

premises, women were not the sole individuals performing the writing and were not completely independent in handling the process of production of the story from beginning to end. Indeed, they did not find themselves on their own with their experiences, feelings, and thoughts about captivity and life after it, as an outer presence interfered with female authority and authorship over the narrative pertaining to the woman giving her name to the story. The male figure mediated and permeated every aspect of the production, publication, and propagation of Indian captivity narratives that stemmed from women's experiences and bore the woman's name on the cover. The overbearing male presence in women's narratives had the primary aim, in the first place, to give the woman permission to share with a larger audience the narrative and what she endured, giving her approved authorization to step outside the safe and confined sphere of domesticity, and secondly, to give validation, as a powerful and authorial figure in the social and cultural realm, to the woman's narrative, emotions and considerations with regard to captivity. As a domestic creature, the role of the woman as a self-determining author of her experience of Indian captivity was in opposition to the stereotyped vision of her and her status as a passive subject under the control of a male-dominated community, society, and culture. Since female writing was only allowed within the family and closed out to a profitable goal and therefore not an activity a woman could do as a legitimate profession, if she wanted to recount her story and make her narrative public as an authoritative voice, she had to be validated and given permission by a male authority. This is the main reason why the operation of male mediation of women's texts was executed more towards female rather than male narrative products: "Gender also affects two other related areas in the captivity literature: authorship and mediation in the texts. For although male editors could and did intervene in the accounts of both male and female captives, they were more likely to mediate the women's texts" (Derounian-Stodola, *Women's Indian Captivity Narratives* xxv-xxvi).

1.2: Olive Oatman and Royal B. Stratton's *Captivity of the Oatman Girls* and the concept of self-narrative versus retelling

The brief delineation of the literary genre of the Indian captivity narrative provided so far, within its social, historical, and cultural context was necessary to analyze carefully the main Indian captivity narrative in question, Stratton's *Captivity of the Oatman Girls: Being an Interesting Narrative of Life Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*. This Indian captivity narrative is centered on Olive Oatman's five years among the Yavapai tribe in 1851, the year she was captured, and the Mohave tribe afterward, from 1852 to 1856, followed by her return to the white community of Fort Yuma, California. Even though the narration revolves around a female protagonist, what she experienced

and how she felt about Indians, the narrative is filtered and recounted by an authoritative male figure, a Methodist minister who collected, once Olive returned to Fort Yuma, the experience of the young woman in a three-editions book and a business tour across the United States to promote the work. The two following Indian captivity narratives deal with similar issues as well. Mary Rowlandson's autobiography *The Soveraignty and Goodness of God* recounts in first person the abduction, captivity, and release of the Puritan woman, and since the account is an autobiography, one may take for granted that what is found within the narration, and outside of it, is unfiltered and fully owned by the narrative voice, that of Mary Rowlandson. Instead, by looking closely at the text, the clues within and without the narrative realm of the story, what is brought into light is, again, the subtle manipulation of the narration and the publication of Rowlandson's text by prominent religious male subjects of the community. Hannah Dustan's peculiar story, her captivity and return home after the killing of her captors, and her appraisal as a heroine of the community was related several times: the two major retellings, addressed here, are those of the Puritan clergyman Cotton Mather in *Magnalia Christi Americana* and Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story *The Duston Family*. The narratives are, once again, produced by male subjects, but in this case, the point of view of the two authors diverges from the traditional treatment of the story and on the judgement of the woman protagonist of the account. While Cotton Mather applauded Hannah Dustan for her courage and lifted her up as an example of good conduct within the community despite her gender, Nathaniel Hawthorne took a different path by condemning the action of the woman against her Indian captors, eventually taking the defense of the latter, and highlighting the gendered difference between the behavior carried out by Hannah Dustan and that of her husband, who is the subject praised in Hawthorne's story.

Going back to Stratton's captivity narrative, this could be seen, at first reading, as one of the many Indian captivity narratives that compose the broad corpus of said literary genre. The tale of Olive Oatman, her captivity with the first Indian tribe, the rescue by the second, and last, Indian tribe which eventually adopted her as a family member, the return to her community after five years and the subsequent publication of a bestseller book recounting her experience brings out, if one takes a deeper look and scratches the surface of the story, many other trajectories that enrich the narrative and its outcomes in the literary, historical, cultural and social spheres, as well as making it a stimulating subject matter both for a general and academic audience. "How little we thought what was before us" (Mifflin 31). This is what Olive Oatman once wrote in her lecture notes when recalling her captivity experience among Indians, and sure enough, what she lived through was not less than inconceivable for a thirteen-years-old girl traveling with her family, consisting of her parents, Royce, and Mary Ann, and seven, almost eight children (the mother was pregnant), towards Fort Yuma, an army fort in present-day California. The Oatman family was a member of the Brewsterites, a former

Mormon splinter group that disengaged with the latter religious denomination as in 1837 the founder, the eleven-years-old James Colin Brewster claimed to have received divine prophecies that started an internal conflict within the doctrine that resulted in a schism and the implementation of a different theology, for example the abolition of polygamy, one of the main precepts in Joseph Smith and Brigham Young's Mormonism. One of the revelations that Brewster was gifted with was the creation of a sacred colony destined to be the homeland of Brewsterites, the "land of Bashan," which was located by the young founder near the Colorado River. Royce Oatman saw the opportunity, together with other members of the group, to elevate the condition of his family not just in terms of religious devotion but also concerning the economic and social sphere, and decided to undertake the journey to this promised land, hoping to find some stability. After months of arrangements, in 1850 the family, with other family units and some single men, with a total of approximately eighty-five and ninety-three people (Mifflin 29-30), left the city of Independence, Missouri, ready to reach the Yuma region and settle a new territory. After a year of traveling, during which the caravan of pioneers saw new tensions which ended up in Royce Oatman's decision to proceed the journey alone while the other members of the group stopped in Maricopa Wells, Arizona, on February 18, 1851, while advancing through the desert, the Oatman family was brutally assaulted and exterminated by a large group of Indians belonging to the tribe of the Yavapais, even though Olive and her contemporaries used to identify under the name "Apaches" all the tribes inhabiting the Southwest area (Mifflin 44). The Yavapais killed the entire family but spared Olive and her little sister, Mary Ann, age seven. Actually, another member of the family miraculously survived the raid, the fifteen-year-old Lorenzo, who was hit on the head during the attack, and left for dead. Once the Indians left the wagon and disappeared into the wilderness with the two sisters and the stolen goods, Lorenzo embarked on the journey back to the community searching for help. The reason why the Yavapais took the Oatman girls was to employ them as slaves at the disposal of the entire tribe, women and children included (Mifflin 46). The captivity among the Yavapais lasted one year, from 1851 to 1852. The very first encounter of Olive and Mary Ann with the Mohave tribe was during a gathering between the two tribes to exchange goods, and it was on this occasion that the members of the Mohaves saw the two girls exploited as slaves and they tried a first trade deal with the Yavapais, who initially refused the offer. Eventually, after having pondered on the deal, in 1852 Olive and Mary Ann Oatman were sold to the daughter of the Mohave's leader, Topeka, who brought the two sisters to their new tribe, rescuing them from their status as enslaved people: "The Mohaves said the exchange was inspired by kindness, asserting that they wanted to save the girls from the cruelty of the Yavapais" (Mifflin 52). The transition from captivity among the Yavapai tribe to that among the Mohaves affected Olive and Mary Ann profoundly and positively, beginning with the Mohave Valley, its lush vegetation and warm and

temperate climate mitigated by the Colorado River and its floods, in contrast with the desert area in which the Yavapais were located. A further significant aspect of the Mohave tribe that impacted in a positive way the Oatman sisters was the temperament of the members of the tribe, their behavior and way of living which was way more caring and familial concerning their treatment of Olive and Mary Ann. Mohaves were regarded to be affectionate, welcoming even with strangers, in good spirits most of the time, with a great sense of humor, and disinhibited when it came to the sexual sphere. The tribe's disposition and behavior toward the two sisters was one of the reasons that helped the process of assimilation of Olive and Mary Ann Oatman later in their stay among the Mohaves. As soon as Olive and Mary Ann "Arrived among the Mohaves, the Chief, whom she [Olive] calls *Espanesay*, took them into his own family, and they were treated in every respect as his own children" (Rice 102). The iconic feature that accentuates the adaptation of the sisters within the tribe, particularly concerning Olive and that gave her popularity once she made her return back to the community was her tattooed chin, a symbol of belonging and fondness among the Mohave tribe, together with the several nicknames she was given by the Indians, a topic that will be illustrated in more detail in the next chapter. Throughout the years with the Mohaves, Olive and Mary Ann learned the Indians' language quickly, and helped with the harvest, farming, and collecting plants, vegetables, and wood, they enjoyed the company of the Indians, their celebrations, leisure activities, and held conversations about religion and life, giving them advice on the best strategies to employ the soil as well. Olive was so at ease with the Mohaves that sometimes she bickered with some members of the tribe, this kind of behavior suggests that "Olive's freedom to speak her mind so pointedly to the Mohaves – something that would surely have backfired with the Yavapais – confirms her greater sense of freedom within her new tribe" (Mifflin 77). The affection of the Mohave tribe towards the girls was not one-sided, as over the years the two sisters' fondness for the Mohaves grew too, as Olive Oatman told Captain Martin Burke, the first person that interviewed her the day after her return to Fort Yuma: "…they treated us well. There was not much to eat, but I helped them, and got used to it and got along with them. They saved my life…" (Kroeber and Kroeber 316). In 1855 a merciless famine hit the Mohave Valley, causing the death for starvation of Mary Ann, age eleven years old at that point. Olive, together with the rest of the tribe, mourned her sister's death, sure that she was the only surviving member of her family, and surrendered to her reality of belonging to the tribe. But she was unaware of the fact that his brother Lorenzo, back in El Monte, California, was incessantly searching for his sisters, trying unsuccessfully to get help first from the fort's authorities and then from the state's government, until Francisco, a Mohave Indian who had contacts with the community and the authorities at Fort Yuma, let the fort know about Olive and her being alive, prompting commander Martin Burke to action by allowing the Indian to go back to the Mohaves and attempt to bring Olive

back to her brother and her community. After several days of negotiations, councils, and considerations, among tears of joy, despair, incredulity, and indifference, Olive Oatman was eventually traded to release and started her journey back to the white, orthodox, and civilized world. Olive Oatman's return to her previous life among the whites was not a smooth and spontaneous process. Coming back to white and orthodox civilization, in particular the handling of reaccustoming to the change from captivity to life within her community of origin, meant not only a physical and external adjustment, but an emotional, psychological, and cultural readjustment as well. On February 22, 1856, Olive made her return to Fort Yuma, fervently celebrated by officers and Indians who lived nearby the garrison. After a first interview conducted by Commander Burke, that was later molded by the *Los Angeles Star*, the *San Francisco Herald*, the *Daily Alta California,* and many other newspapers into an unprecedented journalistic sensationalism, Olive and Lorenzo finally met. What came after this brotherly encounter was not solely a captivity narrative, since Olive Oatman's account transformed the experience of captivity among the Indians of the young woman, and consequently the parallel story of her brother searching for her, into an editorial success and into a cultural, social and media phenomenon at the time and in the years ahead as well. Once Olive came back to Fort Yuma, she took her time to restore the English language and get used once again to the dress code, the behavior and all those social and cultural customs that were imposed, particularly on women, by the community and that undoubtedly clashed with the way of life she was accustomed to during her five years stay with the Yavapai and Mohave tribes. In an attempt to help the girl recover her former status as a true white Anglo-Saxon woman of her time by trying to remove as much as possible what she brought back from her Indian captivity, some women belonging to philanthropic circles and religious orders proposed to provide her with a place to live and means for education, while, at the state level, a bill to establish a monetary fund granting Olive fifteen hundred dollars passed, but eventually expired, without the girl never receiving the sum of money allocated to her (Mifflin 113). On a more private level, quarrels concerning the guardianship of the former captive started to emerge between surviving friends of the Oatman family, who undertook the journey westward, and immediate family members, arguments that ceased with the two siblings moving to Oregon with their cousin, Harvey Oatman. It was in the town of Gassburg, now Phoenix, Oregon, that Olive Oatman made the acquaintance of the Methodist clergyman Royal B. Stratton "who would recognize her potential, seize her story, and control her life for nearly a decade" (Mifflin 125). Eloquent and charismatic, Reverend Royal Byron Stratton used his rhetorical skills and his mastery of public speaking to grant Olive Oatman and her experience as a captive a whole new degree of popularity and success throughout the nation. His employment of the captivity narrative was that of a racial and discriminatory campaign against the Indian populations by distorting, omitting, and emphasizing what should have been

supposedly an oral narration related to him verbally by the protagonist of the Indian captivity narrative produced afterward and that should have been based on a truthful, plain, and simple account of the events. In 1857 the first edition of *Life Among the Indians* appeared, sold out almost immediately. A year later, in 1858, the title changed to *Captivity of the Oatman Girls: Being an Interesting Narrative of Life Among the Apache and Mohave Indians.* Since the text underwent several other changes over time, a topic that will be analyzed later on, it has to be specified that the text that will be referred to in this context will be the one published in 1858. The initial design of Olive Oatman's Indian captivity narrative was that of a simple, unadorned, and matter-of-fact narrative of what the young girl and her late little sister went through among the Yavapais and Mohave Indians and Olive's return to white civilization, parallel with the brother's pursuit of his sisters. The original agreement among Olive, Lorenzo, and Royal B. Stratton was to produce a narrative recounted in the first person by both Olive and Lorenzo, with an introduction by Stratton, who should have interrupted the narrative here and there to comment (Mifflin 136). What actually happened ended up with a completely different outcome from the one agreed upon between the two parts, since the minister took control of the entire narrative, and of what came afterward, satisfying his hunger for social and religious recognition, authority, respect and profit for himself and the Methodist Church. How Stratton manipulated the original account of Olive Oatman cannot be seen naively as a way to help the girl regain a position in white society and get her status back as a reputable member of the community. Both the textual and non-textual evidence prove Stratton's ultimate aim: his anti-Indian agenda and his intention to use the female-oriented experience of Olive as a tool to guide a discriminatory campaign against Indian populations by reversing her story and selectively omitting, counterfeiting, or adding facts to the narrative in order to create an appropriate account of female kidnapping, captivity, and rescue. The narrative would not have been socially accepted nor profitable if the text mentioned the possibility of the returned captive being forcibly persuaded to reenter society.

Why did Olive Oatman choose to relate her story through the figure of the clergyman? Could Olive, and her story, have been preserved from a third-person retelling and manipulation if she did it all by herself? When speaking about captivity narratives, especially those concerning Indians and white female captives, the direct involvement of an authority, a powerful religious and political male authority, was the element that allowed the narrative to be approved, published, and appreciated by the audience because of its cultural, social, and moral value. Considering that religious authorities held most of the power, this happened at the risk of having one's narrative manipulated in order to grant the author, the editor and the publisher respect and appreciation within society, by providing the public with a narrative that had its focus against Indians and the treatment of female captivity dealt under a male-mediated doctrinal lens, in fact "Ministers quickly became mediators for returned

captives who wanted to tell their stories, presented as parables of moral, religious, and, for women, feminine correctness as early as the seventeenth century" (Mifflin 147). The need for Stratton to create a story that could have been suitable to both the moral and religious precepts of the community and the racial propaganda hostile to Native Americans found its way in recounting the captivity of the young girl to celebrate her value as a restored worthy member of the community. In fact, thanks to the workings of divine providence, as he continually underlined throughout the narration, she was able to overcome the traumatic ordeal and come back heroically from her captivity among Indians as an emblem of female Anglo-Saxon power and resilience. Thus, Stratton produced a story that was not completely in line with the actual succession of events as originally reported by the one who experienced it in the first place. Stratton's process of altering Olive Oatman's account, specifically the text, can be divided into two main categories: one category concerning the structural changes in every one of the three editions of the book, and the second category regarding the content of each of the three editions. Such modifications are clearly visible and in the same way, they clearly show how the clergyman "constructed – indeed, *created* – their story [Olive and Lorenzo's]" (Derounian-Stodola, "The Indian Captivity Narratives of Mary Rowlandson and Olive Oatman" 35). The first category that will be examined is the structural one dealing with the organizational, visual, and substantial set-up of Olive Oatman's Indian captivity narrative. As it is known, the book was published for the first time in 1857 in two editions the same year due to its rapid success and for the third time a year later, in 1858 since, as Reverend Stratton wrote in the preface of the last edition "the writer can but feel grateful for the large sales that in a few weeks were effected in California. Eleven thousand were sold there in a short time, and the owner of the book has deeply regretted that it was not stereotyped at the first" (13-14). This urge for publication and adjustment was essentially driven by marketability reasons, while any kind of relationship with the actual subject matter slowly faded away throughout time and edition after edition (Derounian-Stodola, "The Indian Captivity Narratives of Mary Rowlandson and Olive Oatman" 38-39). Starting with the title, which originally was *Life Among the Indians* with the subtitle *Being an Interesting Captivity of the Oatman Girls* in the very first 1857 edition, already the second edition in the same year and the third one in 1858 carried the new title of *Captivity of the Oatman Girls: Being an Interesting Narrative of Life Among the Apache and Mohave Indians*, a change that shifted the focus from a generic account of the sisters' experience with the Indian tribes to a more gendered emphasis on the "sexual vulnerability of white women on the frontier" (Derounian-Stodola, "The Indian Captivity Narratives of Mary Rowlandson and Olive Oatman" 38). By placing as the main title the topics of captivity along with the gender of the two protagonists of the story, it was inevitable that the attention of the audience would be captured more by a female-oriented and sexually-implied narrative rather than a plain matter-of-fact account. This

strategy not only helped the captivity narrative to be socially accepted, since it was written and approved by male figures, but it also improved the popularity of the book and of the men and the woman involved in its success. Another structural element that strategically changed over time and over the editions was the visual one, concerning illustrations and engravings. The illustrational feature plays a relevant part in every text's structure, in the case of Olive Oatman's narrative this component gives the text a double function, on one side illustrations and engravings enriched the material product, making it a desirable and valuable item to have in one's collection, particularly the third edition that was printed on improved paper and engravings, had new illustrations and a red cloth cover with gilt details (Mifflin 159). On the other side, the visual elements had the instructional and propagandistic purpose of showing to the audience how the returned female captive had been brutally marked for life by her captors, giving "visual evidence of Olive's ordeal and its irreversible impact" (Mifflin 144). This combination was what prompted Stratton's *Captivity of the Oatman Girls* to be an editorial and cultural success, as both in terms of popularity and profit, the book would have been very well received by the American public if the illustrations and engravings were treated in the book as a planned means to achieve an economic and popularity gain and to educate the readers on the barbarism of Indian populations, providing them with a discriminatory agenda against the latter ones. To demonstrate this, one of the items that went the most through a strategic adjustment was the engraving of Olive showing her chin tattoos:

> But the most calculated change in the editions concerned the placement of the dramatic engraving of Olive with her facial tattoos. In *Life among the Indians*, this woodcut was put discreetly at the end of the last full chapter, before a brief conclusion; in the second edition, it appeared as a sensational frontispiece; and, in the third edition, it remained as a frontispiece but a new engraving made the tattoo marks even more noticeable (Derounian-Stodola, "The Indian Captivity Narratives of Mary Rowlandson and Olive Oatman" 38).

Alongside the changes operated by Stratton concerning title, illustrations, and engravings, the length of the text altered accordingly throughout the editions, in fact the first one had 183 pages, the second one had 231 pages and the last one had 290 pages (Derounian-Stodola, "The Indian Captivity Narratives of Mary Rowlandson and Olive Oatman" 38). The variations of the length of the account were mainly due to Stratton's broad tampering of the text, an action that was always illustrated and justified in the prefaces of each edition by the clergyman. In the preface of the second edition, for example, he explained that, differently from the first one "We trust the reader will find most, if not

all, of the objectionable portions of the first edition expunged from this; besides the insertion in their proper places of some additions that were, without intention, left out of the former one" (Stratton 10). In the preface of the third edition, he further clarified that "it was resolved to publish the book in New-York, in an improved style, and with the addition of some incidents that were prepared for the California issue, but omitted from the necessity of the case" (Stratton 14), additions that referred to geographical, traditional, and historic details, for the most part concerning the Indian tribes that captured Olive Oatman (Stratton 14). Said structural modifications are strictly linked with the second category of changes that Stratton performed within the text, that is the one regarding the content of *Captivity of the Oatman Girls*. The American anthropologist Alfred Louis Kroeber, one of the main scholars on United States' western Indian tribes and the first one to visit the Mohave tribe, once wrote about a Stratton's version of Oatman's story: "A somewhat sensational book was published which would have had more permanent value if it had sought to record more of Olive's concrete remembrances instead of vague phrases meant to thrill" ("Olive Oatman's Return" 1). Such a sharp utterance showed how the book was perceived by many literary critics and that portion of audience that was more educated on the topic and that was aware of the manipulation the story of Olive underwent under the hands of the clergyman, in contrast to the general reading public that enjoyed the book for what it was, an Indian captivity narrative belonging to a genre that at the time experienced its peak of success.

When dealing with the content of the text, the modifications the reverend made consisted of alterations, omissions, and fabrications of facts that were originally told to him by Olive and Lorenzo Oatman. The first manipulation regarded the matter of religion. As described earlier, the Oatman family adventured west mainly for religious reasons, as they were Brewsterites, a branch of the Mormon doctrine, to build a new nation following the precepts of the founder, James Colin Brewster. Even though Stratton's text is permeated by a heavy religious pathos that aimed to prove to the public how Olive experienced and escaped captivity just on account of divine providence, every reference to Mormonism was erased from the narration (Mifflin 138). This decision could have had its explanation on Stratton belonging to the Methodist church and his obligation not to mention the Mormon church in order to keep receiving help from the Methodist congregation to publish the book and gain fame as an influential member of it, giving as an explanation of the Oatman family journey toward the west as "It was intended, as the object and destination of this company, to establish an American colony near the mouth of the Gulf of California. […] every facility should be guaranteed the colonists for making to themselves a comfortable and luxuriant home" (Stratton 23). As briefly illustrated earlier, one of the main aims of the Indian captivity narratives was the indoctrination of the mainstream Anglo-Saxon American population about the dangers embodied by Indian tribes and their

savagery against the authority of white and orthodox civilization. Stratton was undoubtedly aware of the power of the discriminatory propaganda that this kind of literary genre led to, therefore a significant manipulation of the facts within the narration involved the treatment of the Indian tribes Olive spent her four years with and the language the author used to describe them, in opposition to Olive Oatman's authentic description of the Mohaves. Actually, in *Captivity of the Oatman Girls*, the man "filled the Oatman story with racist slurs in language Olive never used (at least in describing the Mohaves) in early accounts of her experience" (Mifflin 139), a strategic approach to provide the readers and the public opinion a controlled and biased depiction of the Indian tribes that, in his eyes could not have treated Olive as a loved family member, a point of view that was not imaginable, especially when a female captive was the protagonist of the narrative. The discrepancy between the original account of Olive, who described the Mohaves with positive and tender terms, and the terminology the reverend used throughout the entire narration to describe them was manifest. For instance, Olive spoke of Topeka, the daughter of the Mohaves' chief Espaniole, as "good-natured, even jovial, and sympathetic" (Mifflin 64), or, when she was interviewed by the *Los Angeles Star* in 1856 when she returned to Fort Yuma, reminiscing about Aespaneo, the wife of the Mohaves' chief "She speaks of the Chief's wife in terms of warmest gratitude. A mother could not have expressed more kind hearted sympathy than did this good woman whose gentle treatment saved her life" (Rice 103). The manipulation of facts by Stratton was clear from the very beginning of the narration, starting from the preface of the third edition of the book, in which he justified the treatment of Indians within the text and his overall view on the matter as well:

> These dark Indian tribes are fast wasting before the rising sun of our civilization; and into that history that is yet to be written of their past, and of their destiny, and of the many interlacing events that are to contribute to the fulfilling of the wise intent of Providence concerning them and their only dreaded foe, the white race, facts, and incidents contained in this unpretending volume will enter and be appreciated (Stratton 16).

According to the narration made by the clergyman, Olive had not appreciative and friendly words for the members of the Mohave tribe, who were described as "victims of this stupid, barbarous inhumanity" (Stratton 186), "unfeeling savages" (Stratton 193), or "thieving, cruel Mohaves" (Stratton 224), among the others. On one side there was Olive Oatman recounting her experience and emotionally recalling her last time seeing one of the members of the Mohave tribe, Musk Melon, before making her return to Fort Yuma, saying to him "This is the last I shall see of you. I will tell all about the Mohave and how I lived with them. Good bye" (Kroeber, "Olive Oatman's Return" 5), as she left what she ended up considering her family, while on the other side, the account of Stratton had a completely different connotation when depicting the Mohaves as "this was that of a company of

indolent, superstitious, and lazy heathen" (Stratton 167). The discrepancy between the two narrative voices, Olive's, and Stratton's, prompted another relevant manipulation of the content of *Captivity of the Oatman Girls*, a subject that deeply concerned the reverend and that could have weakened his authority and position within the church and society: the possibility of Olive Oatman choosing to stay with the Mohave tribe. In this case, the issue of gender played a significant role in the development of Stratton's narrative, since the Indian captivity narratives portrayed mostly white, female captives at the mercy of the brutality of ruthless Indians, women who eventually were rescued and brought back safe and sound to their community of fellow countrymen and countrywomen. The eventuality that the female captive was not rescued but brought back against her will, gave the Indian captivity narrative a good reason to be discarded as inappropriate and against the moral values of the community in which it was consumed, not to mention the loss of power and prestige the author of the captivity narrative could be subjected to, especially when the author of the narrative was a male figure. Stratton was aware of this possibility as well, thus he ensured to remove any chance of Olive deciding to stay with the Mohaves by her own choice. In the 1856 *Los Angeles Star* interview, Olive recounted that:

> The Mohaves always told her she could go to the white settlements when she pleased, but they dared not go with her, fearing they might be punished for having kept a white woman so long among them, nor did they dare to let it be known that she was among them (Rice 103).

Her little sister Mary Ann was already dead due to a famine that hit the tribe in 1855, and without any hope to have any family member still alive, Olive was now accustomed to her new life among Mohave Indians. Evidence of her being an actual member of the tribe were her tattoos and the nicknames she was given, which confirm her belonging to the Indian community (Mifflin 74). At the same time, Stratton, using the first-person narration by voicing Olive, related a completely different situation:

> Though we persisted in denying any purpose to attempt our escape, many of them seemed to disbelieve us, and would warn us against any such undertaking, by assuring us they would follow us, if it were necessary, quite to the white settlements, and would torment us in the most painful manner, if we were ever to be recaptured (Stratton 182).

As previously mentioned, this strategy of alteration of facts within the narration proved that the clergyman had no choice but to erase the possibility of Olive Oatman, a white, orthodox American woman, deciding to stay with her captors, uncivilized and heartless Indians, by choice. However, Olive Oatman was well aware of the influence of Stratton, and she had to accept that being too sympathetic toward the Indians would not have had a favorable effect on her public image and re-integration in the community, thus she ended up finding herself as a captive again, but in this case of Stratton and his manipulations (Mifflin 142). Stratton's handling of Olive Oatman's story, and his interventions on the structural and the contextual parts of the text, show how Indian captivity narratives such as this one had to follow a certain set of rules in order to be accepted and validated by the public, from the lower to the higher social class, even at the expense of altering the authenticity of the story as originally told by the female captive herself. The case study of Olive Oatman and Royal Byron Stratton's retelling *Captivity of the Oatman Girls: Being an Interesting Narrative of Life Among the Apache and Mohave Indians* demonstrates the permeating influence of a male-dominated society in control of the religious, political, social, and cultural power of the community over a female-oriented experience of life among Indians. It has therefore shown that the story required to be first deconstructed, then reconstructed and manipulated by means of omissions, fabrications, and alterations to ensure both the narrative and the protagonist validation, worthiness, and value by preserving the narrative of the female, submissive captive who finally returned to civilization after a long imprisonment among cruel and uncivilized Indians:

> Harvey and Harrison Oatman [Olive's cousins], with their strong religious background, and the minister Royal B. Stratton almost certainly concealed true information about Oatman's captivity […], created misinformation that gave Oatman time to readjust to white society with its blatant anti-Indian prejudices, and ironically created its own reality. That reality, in the form of wish-fulfillment, was that the captive returned from "savagery" to "civilization" culturally intact, a point Stratton emphasizes over and over in the captivity narrative itself (Derounian-Stodola, "The Indian Captivity Narratives of Mary Rowlandson and Olive Oatman" 42).

Olive Oatman's story is linked, thanks to Royal B. Stratton and the book *Captivity of the Oatman Girls*, to the concept of retelling, and to its use as a narratological but also strategical tool when dealing with the telling of a story and the narrative, ideological and cultural nuances given to the account.

Before proceeding with the description of the concept of retelling and the analysis of the other two case studies, the Indian captivity narratives of Mary Rowlandson and Hannah Dustan, it is necessary to introduce the concept of self-narrative as the counterpart of the retelling. The notion of self-narrative can be described by the words of the American psychologist Jerome Bruner as the "stories we tell about our lives: our "autobiographies"" (11). The stories that one tells in first person, without the presence of an external figure that functions as a filter and that stands between the original source of the account and the audience, are the narratives of the self where the protagonist is the sole agent that operates within the narrative and the one who is in charge to choose what to say, what to omit, what to fabricate and what kind of tones to give to his or her story. In literature, one of the prime examples of self-narrative is the autobiography, whose employment can be traced back to Ancient Greek and the Roman empire (Smith and Watson 103), and further developed in the American colonies where there was a democratization of the institution of life writing, as the one of Mary Rowlandson (Smith and Watson 115). The notion of retelling, instead, which in this specific case is a narrative retelling, can be considered as the opposite of the self-narrative since in the former case the first-person narrator does not have direct contact with the audience nor control over the narration because of the interposition of a third element that takes charge of the entire narration as a filter, contributing to the estrangement from the authenticity of the story, in fact, "The context of narrative retelling forces speakers to talk about information they only know by virtue of what has been told to them by a previous narrator, a canonical hearsay context" (Mushin 929). In this context, *Captivity of the Oatman Girls* can be regarded as a typical example of a narrative retelling, considering that between Olive Oatman's original account and the reading public, the figure of Royal B. Stratton stands in the middle as a filtrating element. In the framework of the Indian captivity narratives, the notions of self-narrative versus narrative retelling and the main Indian captivity narrative taken into consideration in this context, namely *Captivity of the Oatman Girls*, other two Indian captivity narratives will be analyzed as case studies alongside the latter, to show the differences, the similarities and the peculiarities of three narrative products that even though they belong to the same literary category, they differ from one another in terms of the handling of the experience of captivity and its treatment in the form of a literary product.

1.3: Mary Rowlandson's *The Soveraignty and Goodness of God*

In 1682, the year of its publication, Mary Rowlandson's *The Soveraignty and Goodness of God* had already been established, in the realm of the Indian captivity narrative genre, as one of the earliest American bestsellers (Derounian-Stodola, "The Indian Captivity Narratives of Mary Rowlandson and

Olive Oatman" 37). 175 years before the publication of Stratton's retelling of the experience of Olive Oatman, the story of Mary Rowlandson was regarded as the pioneer example of the genre of Indian captivity narratives not just as a literary product created to entertain the American audience but as a propagandistic tool employed to indoctrinate the public against Native Americans as well. A Puritan woman belonging to the community of Lancaster, in the state of Massachusetts, and wife of one of its most eminent members, the reverend Joseph Rowlandson, Mary Rowlandson was taken captive, with three of her four children, by the Indian tribes of the Narragansetts, Wampanoags, and Nashaways during a raid occurred in the early hours of February 10, 1676. Her captivity among Indians lasted 11 weeks, and on May 2, 1676, she was eventually released after long negotiations and a ransom of twenty pounds (Derounian-Stodola, "The Indian Captivity Narratives of Mary Rowlandson and Olive Oatman" 34). The experience of the captivity of Mary Rowlandson among the Indians produced a text that was located within the subgenre of the spiritual autobiography (Derounian-Stodola, "The Indian Captivity Narratives of Mary Rowlandson and Olive Oatman" 37), given the strong religious background of the protagonist and the imperative to prove that her survival had been achievable exclusively through the benevolence of God, divine providence, and by surrendering completely to the workings of faith and prayers. For this reason, Mary Rowlandson's ordeal, and her four-editions book, were crafted to be read from a strictly religious perspective, from capture to release, and after. The text is disseminated by Biblical quotations that are promptly explained to the public by the woman herself, since every circumstance she underwent, from finding some oak leaves to use to heal her wounds to the act of kindness of random members of the tribes who occasionally gave her food or a place to sleep at night, had to do with the workings of God and his will: "I cannot but take notice of the wonderfull mercy of God to me in those afflictions, in sending me a Bible" (Rowlandson 28). As previously mentioned, *The Soveraignty and Goodness of God* can be classified under the literary category of the autobiography, considering that the story in the book is narrated directly by the source, Mary Rowlandson herself, and therefore, her account can be defined as a self-narrative, since there seems not to be the interference of a third figure that overlaps the female protagonist of the captivity narrative and her public. Even though Mary Rowlandson wrote and published her work as an autobiography, the subtle presence of a male, authoritative figure in the background, possibly belonging to the religious Puritan sphere, can be noticed by looking at some details. The first element is the reason for her writing and publishing a story that, for the custom of the time for women, should have been kept private: "Written by Her own Hand for Her private Use, and now made Publick at the earnest Desire of some Friends, and for the benefit of the Afflicted" (Derounian-Stodola, "The Publication, Promotion, and Distribution of Mary Rowlandson's Indian Captivity Narrative" 252). Such clarification proved that the woman personally wanted to share her

story publicly but in order to do so, she was compelled to have a well-founded motive to make it public and creditable in the community's eyes, thus her explanation "reassures readers – the majority of whom would have been male - that Rowlandson possesses personal humility and that she has allowed her book to be published not to put herself on a level with male authors, but to perform a public service" (Derounian-Stodola, "The Publication, Promotion, and Distribution of Mary Rowlandson's Indian Captivity Narrative" 252). The public service performed by Mary Rowlandson through her autobiography was not only a way for her to psychologically overcome, by the act of writing, her traumatic experience of captivity, and to finally free herself from the emotional burden of such hardship, but was also a way to reintroduce herself as a rediscovered member of her community (Derounian-Stodola, "The Publication, Promotion, and Distribution of Mary Rowlandson's Indian Captivity Narrative" 240). Similarly to Olive Oatman's retelling by Royal B. Stratton, other significant elements that reveal the background involvement of a male, religious, and authoritative figure in the autobiography of Mary Rowlandson are the treatment of Native Americans and the sermonic style in which the account is presented both for the content and the structure. At the time of Mary Rowlandson's return from captivity and the publication of her autobiography, the presence of Increase Mather, father of Cotton Mather, and one of the most prominent figures of the time in the political, intellectual, religious, and social spheres in the Massachusetts Bay Colony was crucial, to the point that the scholar Derounian-Stodola argues about the "involvement of Increase Mather in sponsoring Rowlandson's text, writing its preface, and arranging for its publication" ("The Indian Captivity Narratives of Mary Rowlandson and Olive Oatman" 41). "Murtherous wretches" (Rowlandson 4), "ravenous Beasts", "Barbarous Creatures" (Rowlandson 12), are some of the terms Mary Rowlandson employed to address her Indian captors through her account, describing them with derogatory remarks that gave the narrative the discriminatory and racial tone it needed in order to be published and accepted within the Puritan American society. Nonetheless, sporadically throughout the narration, it can be sensed the woman's mild feelings of empathy toward Indians as she begins to have a more realistic and even tolerant view of her captors (Derounian-Stodola, "The Indian Captivity Narratives of Mary Rowlandson and Olive Oatman" 41). In fact, at a certain point she says, in a moment of tenderness "the Squaw laid a skin for me, and bid me sit down, and gave me some Ground-nuts, and bade me come again: and told me they would buy me, if they were able, and yet these were strangers to me that I never saw before" (Rowlandson 58). The treatment of Native Americans in the autobiography of Mary Rowlandson shows a double layer, an intricate thread: there is an outer level in which the protagonist addresses the Indians in a pejorative way as it was requested at the time for this specific kind of literary genre, due to nationalistic visions that saw in Native Americans an enemy and a threat rather than a social and cultural group. On an inner level, the presence, even if feeble, of

tolerance toward Native Americans: "Rowlandson was comparatively well treated, and some critics discern her increasing sympathy for her captors and even her gradual acculturation to tribal ways" (Derounian-Stodola, "The Indian Captivity Narratives of Mary Rowlandson and Olive Oatman" 34). This tolerance is presented more subtly within the account because of the background participation of a male, religious and authoritative figure that had to keep the Indian captivity narrative as clear as possible from any hint about feelings of sympathy and acceptance concerning Indians, a restriction that Increase Mather operated when dealing with Mary Rowlandson's text. Once again, the implied involvement of Increase Mather and reverend Joseph Rowlandson is revealed by the sermonic style of Mary Rowlandson's account. The autobiography, in fact, could be read as a sermon told by Mary Rowlandson to her Puritan community while standing at the pulpit of the church and looking down on her experience of captivity with Indians and her rescue provided by God, but the presence of a minister or a figure familiar with religious speeches and biblical studies is clear not only by the tone of the text but also by its content. In particular, two elements support this assumption, namely a list of providences experienced by the woman suddenly interrupting the flow of the narration, and the accuracy when explaining biblical quotations, two features that were commonly used by ministers during their sermons:

> A second narrative anomaly that may indicate the pen of a minister-editor occurs in the three-page list of providences which interrupts the story at a crucial stage. […] The strategy of itemizing points is similar to that used by Puritan ministers in the explication, use, and application sections of their sermons. […] This intrusion introducing the list is paralleled by another intrusion three pages later where the text returns to the narrative itself. Finally, the sheer number and appropriateness of the biblical quotations in the text may indicate that an editor with an even better knowledge of the Bible than Rowlandson herself might have inserted or augmented them (Derounian-Stodola, "The Indian Captivity Narratives of Mary Rowlandson and Olive Oatman" 41-42).

The issues of gender and authorship affected in the same way the Indian captivity narrative of Olive Oatman, retold by Royal B. Stratton, and the captivity narrative of Mary Rowlandson that, despite being narrated in the form of autobiography it is nevertheless permeated by the indirect presence of male, powerful agents in the production of the text. As mentioned before, these male figures authorize the narrative as an account both acceptable to be published and appropriate to be consumed because of the propagandistic tone against Native Americans it is imbued with. This leads to the analysis of

the third, and last, case study, that is the Indian captivity narrative of Hannah Dustan and the two retellings her story produced, one by Cotton Mather and one by Nathaniel Hawthorne.

1.4: Hannah Dustan's *A Notable Exploit* and *The Duston Family*

On March 15, 1697, Hannah Dustan, along with the midwife who was taking care of her, and her newborn child (the last of her eight children), were taken captive by the Abenaki tribe from the Quebec province, Canada, during a raid that devastated the Puritan community of Haverhill, in the state of Massachusetts. The husband of Hannah managed to escape and rescued the remaining seven children of the couple. On April 30 of the same year, the woman was able to escape her captors, together with her midwife and an English boy taken captive a year and a half before from the community of Worcester, Massachusetts (Mather 91). Such a plain and concise description of Hannah Dustan's story makes it similar to the stereotypical Indian captivity narrative that sees the female protagonist living with her Indian captors and relying solely on God, divine providence, and faith to be saved from the cruelty of her captors, eventually returning safe and sound to her white community with a story to share. This story would follow the typical scheme, as we have already seen so far, of all Indian captivity narratives, which implies the woman captive with a passive role and the male figures with the role of savior and the material and narrative holders of the protagonist's experience. The story would, again, employ the description of Native Americans as monsters, gruesome and bloody creatures threatening the nation's purity. However, the story of Hannah Dustan and the way she escaped captivity is rather peculiar, such that her story is considered to be, by critics, a foundational American myth (Brantley Johnson 17). The way Hannah Dustan, and her fellow captives, escaped from the Abenakis, and the motive behind their getaway, has to be traced back to those agitated moments of her capture by the tribe when suddenly "they dash'd out the brains of the infant against a tree" (Mather 90). The woman saw her newborn violently killed by the Indians, who smashed him against a tree, leaving the baby, already dead, on the ground, and then running away into the wilderness with their hostages. Thus, Hannah underwent not one, but two traumatic experiences, that of captivity as a complex experience on the whole, and that of witnessing the death of her newborn baby in such an evil way, generating in her an increasingly growing feeling of powerlessness, rage, and desire to seek revenge for her child. On the night of April 30, 1697, Hannah Dustan took advantage of her captors being asleep and, with the help of her midwife and the young boy, she went about to kill ten of the twelve Indians that were sleeping with them at that moment, unleashing the fury as a mother who saw her child brutally killed right in front of her:

> And being where she had not her own life secured by any law unto her, she thought she was not forbidden by any law to take away the life of the murderers by whom her child had been butchered. She heartened the nurse and the youth to assist her in this enterprize; and all furnishing themselves with hatchets for the purpose, they struck such home blows upon the heads of their sleeping oppressors, that ere they could any of them struggle into any effectual resistance (Mather 91).

The victims of Hannah Dustan included a man, two women and seven children, while only a boy and a girl managed to avoid death. What makes the story of Hannah even more atypical is the final act of the massacre she executed, since she scalped the ten Indians she brutally killed, bringing back with her their scalps as a symbol of victory. Once she returned to her community, they praised her as a heroine, gave her money, presents and recognition "but cutting off the scalps of the ten wretches, they came off, and received fifty pounds from the General Assembly of the province, as a recompence of their action" (Mather 91). The story of Hannah Dustan, her escape from captivity, and her behavior toward Indians produced several retellings, among them the retellings by Cotton Mather and by Nathaniel Hawthorne are widely known in literature and popular culture as well. These two retellings show how a female-centered story can be perceived differently by two different male points of view that pertain to diverse social and cultural environments and time periods.

In 1702 Cotton Mather, son of the notorious Increase Mather and successor of his father's fame, authority, and power in the Puritan community, published *Magnalia Christi Americana* (subtitled *The Ecclesiastical History of New England from Its First Planting in 1620, until the Year of Our Lord 1698*), a monumental two-volume work that described and portrayed the major religious developments in the states of Massachusetts and New England from 1620 until 1698. Once free from captivity and back to her community, Hannah Dustan recounted her experience to Cotton Mather who decided to dedicate her a section in his book, under the title of *A Notable Exploit: Dux Faemina Facti*, meaning "a woman the leader in achievement" (Brantley Johnson 20). The retelling of the clergyman is extremely positive toward Hannah and the action she undertook to save herself, giving the woman and her story power, validation, and recognition as the symbol of freedom of the Puritan community from the savagery of Native Americans, that represented the main threat for the civilization and progress of the country. Differently from the case studies of Olive Oatman and Mary Rowlandson, in the case of Hannah Dustan the stereotype of the woman as a passive subject of the events and of her fate is completely overturned by Hannah's destructive and ferocious behavior toward her captors. In her story, Cotton Mather saw the perfect example of the white, American, orthodox power and dominion against Native Americans: "she became the mother and liberator of New Jerusalem; and

her story became a celebration of the birth of an American race, the extermination of the Indian threat, and the flexible frontier spirit that allowed Europeans to adapt to their new surroundings, even if it meant taking on some of the "savagery" of their foes" (Brantley Johnson 17). Mather praised the woman as the exemplary model of conduct that was expected to be followed by the whole community and saw in her action the liberation of Puritans from the evil presence that was incarnated by Indians: "She frees not only herself, but the Puritans, God's elect, from evil" (Brantley Johnson 20). Here, the presence of a male, authoritative figure that gives the story validation is intentional on the part of Dustan, as she purposely told her experience of captivity to the clergyman and she implicitly gave him permission and responsibility of delivering her story to the public, by manipulating it or not. Moreover, the fact that Hannah Dustan did not publish any book or wanted to be under the public eye bestowed to the retelling of Mather even more impact, in fact "Hannah was the author of her actions, but Mather was the author of the story, and the story took on a life of its own – a mythical life even he might not have imagined" (Brantley Johnson 22). If in the eyes of Cotton Mather and the Puritan community, Hannah Dustan was the intrepid woman who revolted against her Indian captors and freed the community from the evil presence of Native Americans, in the eyes of Nathaniel Hawthorne and in his retelling of the story, the same woman is seen in considerably more negative and derogatory terms.

In 1836 Nathaniel Hawthorne published, in the periodical he was the editor of, *The American Magazine of Useful and Entertaining Knowledge*, the short story titled *The Duston Family*. At the end of the narrative, the author concluded:

> Would that the bloody old hag had been drowned in crossing Contocook river, or that she had sunk over head and ears in a swamp, and been there buried, till summoned forth to confront her victims at the day of judgement; or that she had gone astray and been starved to death in the forest, and nothing ever seen of her again, save her skeleton with the ten scalps twisted round it for a girdle! (Page 236-237).

The way Hawthorne described his itch to imagine a different ending to Hannah Dustan's captivity narrative, his yearning for a violent conclusion that sees the woman as the protagonist of brutalities perpetrated on her, rather than the actual ending, differs totally from the heroic and laudatory tones employed by Mather 134 years before. In the short story can be found three key elements that demonstrate the writer's non-indulgent position about the woman protagonist committing a violence that, until that point, could only be attributed to men. The first element that shows Hawthorne's dislike

of Dustan is that more than half of the short story is dedicated to Hannah's husband and his bravery in rescuing the remaining children of the couple during the Indian raid, and it is not by chance that the very first words that open the short story are "Goodman Duston and his wife" (Page 225). The writer amicably and empathically calls him "goodman" as a way to prove that the real man of courage in the entire story was him rather than his spouse. Since he was the only one who was able to save and protect the remaining seven children without the need to kill any other man, woman, or child unlike his wife, he is the unquestionable hero of the whole narrative (Brantley Johnson 26). The description Hannah's husband as "goodman" made by Hawthorne indicates a passive role of the man in the household, the family, and marriage dynamics, in which the woman took the lead as the masculine figure and put her husband in a submissive position by portraying him with feminine terms, overturning the typical functions of man-woman at that time (Brantley Johnson 28). Hawthorne could have considered Mr. Duston to be another victim of his wife. Another element that reveals the point of view of Hawthorne on Hannah Dustan is the use of sarcasm (Brantley Johnson 26) when approaching the description of the woman, her character, and her actions. In contrast with the tenderness and carefulness of Hannah's husband, the writer wants the audience to notice the complete opposite nature of the woman by sarcastically stating that "as is not improbable, he [her husband] had such knowledge of the good lady's character, as afforded him a comfortable hope that she would hold her own even in a contest with a whole tribe of Indians" (Page 227). Here Hawthorne is implying that the woman's determined character would have helped her overcoming even a group of savage Indians, a situation that, in the typical Indian captivity narrative is overturned, since the woman is commonly the one finding herself in a fragile and submissive position while the man, or a group of men, within and without the narrative, are the ones that have power and authority to rescue the captive and, potentially, kill her Indian captors. In Hannah Dustan's story, instead, the roles are reversed, as the traits that commonly belong to the male figure are given to the female protagonist, and inversely. "There was little safety for a redskin when Hannah Duston's blood was up" (Page 236), one more utterance permeated with sarcasm that links the analysis of this peculiar Indian captivity narrative with the third and last aspect that portrays the writer's attitude on Hannah' story: the treatment of Indians. Differently from the retelling of Cotton Mather, who was extremely passionate about the eradication and destruction of Indian people from the Puritan and national soil and heartily praised Hannah Dustan for having killed and scalped her captors, in the retelling of Nathaniel Hawthorne, the situation is once again turned upside down, in fact "Hawthorne's version of the Dustan story is also unique in its sympathetic treatment of the Indian captors" (Brantley Johnson 29). Even if the short story opens with the typical negative depiction of Indians, described as "raging savages" (Page 226), "bloodthirsty foe" (Page 227), the narrative gradually begins to take another turn, becoming

more empathetic on their part rather than the woman's, particularly when the attention is placed on the violence she committed towards the Abenakis. Hawthorne, as a writer, is aware of the fact that the dreadful killing of Hannah Dustan's newborn is commonly used by authors as an excuse to justify the equally dreadful killing and scalping of the Indians she was the author of however he does not give importance to it seeing as he believes that she may have been prone to kill even without a reason, considering her determined nature as well (Brantley Johnson 29). Hawthorne opens the narration with the stereotypical hatred toward Indians and, unable to find good reasons to depict Hannah Dustan as the heroine of the Puritan community as Mather did earlier, he goes through the short story with the tendency to empathize with Indians and the atrocious fate they fell into, as, for example, while narrating about the seven children she killed and scalped: "But oh! the children. Their skins are red, yet spare them; Hannah Duston, spare these seven little ones, for the sake of the seven that have fed at your own breast!" (Page 236). Both Hannah Dustan's retellings, that of Cotton Mather and that of Nathaniel Hawthorne, have one point in common, despite their difference in attitude toward Hannah and her actions. They are both retellings: that of a story that has been told to them directly by the source herself, as in the case of Mather, or a retelling that is the product of a literary tradition that stemmed from Hannah Dustan's story over the course of time, as in the case of Hawthorne. There seems not to be verifiable proof that Hannah Dustan wanted her story to be published for her own fame and recognition or to be a writer herself, she made sure to have her story entrusted to an authority that she believed could protect her captivity narrative from oblivion and silence, she willingly chose her female-centered story to rely on a dominant male agent who took charge of passing on her story, as the filter between the original source and the audience has been chosen carefully by the protagonist herself.

What binds together the Indian captivity narratives of Olive Oatman, Mary Rowlandson, and Hannah Dustan? Certainly, the literary genre, which they contributed to create and shape, a genre that encompasses a variety of stories, which in turn encapsulate other stories, where the threads of narration are multiple and the composition complex. This genre includes stories that are told, retold and thanks to this, resist the power of time and the fear of being forgotten. They started as simple stories of simple women, but ended up forging a genre that has allowed the creation, in literary, political, religious, and cultural terms, of an entire nation, a little seed that, once planted, has been watered for centuries and has boomed into one of the very first American genres, the Indian captivity narrative. Next, they are stories of women who, in different ways, wanted their experience of captivity to be told and remembered through time and history, coexisting at the same time with the pervasive background presence of an authoritative and controlling male figure pulling the strings of the narrative and its outcome in the social, religious, and political domain by manipulating the story both

from within and from without. In the case of Olive Oatman, the first and main case study at hand, her captivity narrative saw popularity and approval as the same popularity and approval was linked to the man who retold her story, the Methodist reverend Royal B. Stratton, who used Oatman's extraordinary experience among the Mohaves and emphasized the physical proof, at the risk of spectacularizing and exploiting her as a freakshow. Mary Rowlandson and the autobiography she wrote, in turn, was not entirely the product of her own personal experience and the faithful telling of the captivity she went through, for she saw the intromission of male agents, in her case of the authoritative Increase Mather and her husband, both people that belonged to the church, who populated her life and her story of captivity by subtly tampering the female narrative of captivity with their presence in the background of the narration and bringing into discussion not only the issues of gender and authorship but also the dichotomy of self-narrative versus retelling. Hannah Dustan, instead, willingly chose to have her story retold by Cotton Mather, the one who gave her an everlasting place in American history, literature, and culture as well. The woman decided to hand her captivity experience over to the man who, in turn, decided how to retell her account, which eventually ended up being an Indian captivity narrative that praised the woman for her actions and her courage in killing and scalping the Indians she was taken captive by, elevating her as the emblem of Puritan freedom from the evil presence of Native Americans. Later on, the retelling of Cotton Mather produced another well-known retelling, that of Nathaniel Hawthorne, who had a completely different view of the story from the former, as he despised Hannah's actions and eventually even taking the Indians' side, overturning the typical trope of Indian captivity narratives when dealing with the treatment of Indians.

Lastly, the treatment of Indians and their depiction in these accounts is the final element that connects the three Indian captivity narratives analyzed in this chapter. The treatment of Indians is, again, linked with the topics of gender, authorship, and intromission of an influential man. Both in Olive Oatman and Mary Rowlandson's cases, the description of Indians is the one following the typical scheme of Indian captivity narratives, where Native Americans are considered "the other," uncivilized, barbaric, pagan presence in the American soil that had to be eradicated in order to purify the nation and keep civilization and progress moving forward. Regarding Hannah Dustan, the handling of Indians withstood a doubling since Cotton Mather followed the common approach of captivity narratives, encouraging the Puritan community for their removal using Hannah's story as an example of conduct, while Hawthorne showed support and empathy toward them and their fate under the hands of the woman killer. These three Indian captivity narratives show how they played a relevant part in creating and shaping not only the literary genre itself but also contributed to the configuration of an entire nation in cultural, literary, political, and religious terms, portraying the

multitude of threads and nuances such literary genre consists of and that makes it a foundational element of American history and literary legacy.

Engraving of Olive Oatman. This portrait, clearly showing the tattoos on her chin, was used as a frontispiece for *Captivity of the Oatman Girls* and helped to make the book a best seller. Courtesy The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

(McGinty 124)

2."What Is Your Own Name? Olivino": Tattoos, Membership, and Marginalization

"Wearing only a bark skirt, Olive was sitting on the ground, hiding her face in her hands. Tanned, tattooed, and painted, she was all but unrecognizable as a nineteen-year-old white woman" (Mifflin 110). The return of Olive Oatman to Fort Yuma, on February 22, 1856, to her community of origin consisting of white, not tattooed nor painted, civilized and religious people was a physical, emotional, and cultural shock for the young woman, who, at this point, found herself eradicated to what she regarded to be her Indian family. The vision of the girl finally found and completely transformed into a Mohave Indian after five years of captivity struck the members of the community as well as they saw her and the physical and visual proof she brought with her. As soon as she entered the fort, she was fervently applauded by the soldiers, their wives, and a group of Quechan Indians, everyone immediately taking action to help the girl transition from her status as a former victim of captivity and outcast to her re-integration into white, orthodox, civilized American society. Despite the welcoming, Olive could not understand why she was cheered so passionately by the inhabitants of the military fort, as the people who lived at Fort Yuma were complete strangers to her, and the sight of them did not produce in Olive a feeling of relief, rather of estrangement and anxiety (Mifflin 111). Once she arrived at the garrison, she was brought to Captain Martin Burke, the commander in charge of Fort Yuma, to ask her some preliminary questions about her family and her recollections about the raid, her experience of captivity first with the Yavapai tribe and then among the Mohaves, the treatment she and her little sister Mary Ann received during captivity among both tribes and some general information about life among Indians. The interview was prefaced with this premise:

> The following questions have been put to Miss Oatman in such manner as to imply personal curiosity of her treatment whilst among the Indians, [we] received the answers opposite each question, but her memory being very defective apparently, and [she] not able to pronounce more than a few words in English, it has been very difficult to obtain [more] at the present time, for in answering questions purposely put [framed] directly opposite, she invariably says "Yes" to both (Kroeber and Kroeber 311).

From this premise and from the answers Olive gave during the interview, it is clear that the physical, emotional, and psychological turmoil that was taking place in her outer and inner life affected the unfolding of the interview. However, Captain Burke seemed to not have taken into consideration such significant aspect, taking for granted that Olive could have had, after five years of her life spent with

Indians, not only the mental and emotional capacity to sustain an interrogation but also the linguistic ability to have a conversation in English. This behavior could be read as a first, subtle attempt to remove Olive's involvement with the Mohave tribe and her affiliation with them. At this stage, the issue of the tattoos on Olive's chin had not been mentioned yet during the interview, but another factor was added to the process of erasing or trying to erase, the signs on Olive, both within and without her, of her captivity with Indians. Before the meeting with Commander Burke, she changed into typical white, colonial clothes and washed her face and hair from face pain and hair dye, into "Anglo garb" (Mifflin 111), another attempt, by whites, to erase as much as possible the signs of her captivity among the Mohaves and the status she acquired as a loved member of the tribe. The finding of Olive Oatman and her incredible story of captivity started circulating among the media and the newspapers of the nation, which began writing articles about Olive and her experience with Indians. The first magazine that got the news and obtained the interview directly from Commander Burke - and eventually transformed it into one of the main and most renowned articles about the girl - was the April 19, 1856 issue of the *Los Angeles Star*. Its reliability was due to the fact that the interview of the captain of Fort Yuma was considered, by its contemporaries, to be a valuable proof based on the number of times it was reprinted by other American newspapers (Rice 100). Olive's brother Lorenzo, who at the time was living in El Monte, California, found out that her sister was alive and was located at Fort Yuma thanks to the numerous editorials about her captivity spread throughout the country, so he immediately left the city for the military post. The encounter between the two siblings was profoundly emotional since the young woman, on her side, thought that she was the only surviving member of the Oatman family, and her brother, on his side, was afraid that the girl rescued and protagonist of all those articles was not his sister but another woman mistaken for her (Mifflin 118). When Olive and Lorenzo finally met after five years, Stratton recounted in *Captivity of the Oatman Girls*: "She [Olive] was grown to womanhood; she was changed, but despite the written traces of her outdoor life and barbarous treatment left upon her appearance and person, he [Lorenzo] could read the assuring evidences of her family identity" (277). Despite the clearly visible tattoos on the chin and the overall transformed appearance due to life in the wilderness and the inevitable changes caused by the transition from puberty to womanhood, Lorenzo was able to immediately recognize her sister, as if those familiar bounds that connected each other since birth did not disappear even after five years of separation. Not even in this case, the topic of Olive's tattoos emerged as Lorenzo did not comment about Olive's tattoos and his reaction to them, and never would (Mifflin 118). After a couple of days, the two siblings returned to El Monte, Olive being already "a media darling" (Mifflin 119). The media clamor and success of Olive Oatman's Indian captivity narrative started, as previously mentioned, from the article published by the *Los Angeles Star* and reprinted

afterward by other newspapers, such as the *Daily Alta California*, the *Evening Bulletin*, and the *California Chronicle* among others (Mifflin 113). The articles were mainly based on the interrogation conducted by Captain Burke at the time of Olive's rescue at Fort Yuma and enriched by statements that came from people more or less involved with the story of Olive: some of them were travel companions of the Oatman family during their journey westward, other were family members and acquaintances, some others were unreliable people who just wanted their moment of fame for the sake of being associated with Olive and her story in an article. The popularity of Olive Oatman and her Indian captivity narrative spread even more across the United States also thanks to a circuit of public lectures across the country that originated, at the beginning, as a promotional tour of *Captivity of the Oatman Girls*, arranged by Stratton and his hunger for recognition and authority in the society and the Methodist church. The topic of Olive's public lectures and the consequences of her exposure to the general public will be analyzed more carefully in the third and last chapter. For the moment, the success and notoriety of Olive were not only the product of her sensational tale on the whole, but two distinct topics that compose her story and that gave her a place in literature, history, and popular culture as well. The first issue discussed in this chapter is the cultural shock she experienced immediately after her return to the white community, having to deal with the transition from an already established Indian way of life, language, and behavior to a colonial and religious reality. Then, the chapter addresses the issue of Olive's tattoos as a symbol of membership and familial bond in the Mohave culture on one side and as an emblem of her status of outcast in the eyes of white, American society on the other, together with the analysis of the topics of clothing and her Indian nicknames as marks of association and de-association between one culture and the other.

2.1: Olive Oatman's Return into White, Colonial, American Society, and the Concept of Transculturation

After her return to Fort Yuma and the removal, at least superficially, of the signs of captivity such as the face paint, the hair dye, and the tribal clothes, the transformation of Olive from a Mohave Indian into a white, colonial woman formally commenced. The physical, emotional, and psychological state of the captive concerned the community, since her Indian inclinations hindered the process of reintegration of the young woman into colonial society and were considered a threat by the members of the community. Some of them were terrified by the possibility of Olive wanting to escape the colonial world to go back to her Mohave family and loved ones within the tribe, instead of remaining with her fellow white men and women and regain her reputation back (Mifflin 113). The initial handling of Olive's readaptation to the colonial reality was mainly assigned to the few female figures

living at the fort, the officers' wives, but apart from them, the only local women at Fort Yuma were prostitutes managed by Sarah Bowman, mostly known as "The Great Western" (Mifflin 109), a figure that, despite her social role, will have a special place in Olive's post-captivity narrative. The control of Olive Oatman's reclamation of social reputation was given to the officials' wives who, being authentic conventional ladies of their time and social status, had the task of deconstructing Olive's Indian tendencies, which were imbued with masculine and barbarous traits, in order to reconstruct them into white, civilized, and feminine manners, in fact "An officer's wife, evidently, was a more respectable caretaker to assign to Olive – at least in print" (Mifflin 113). This approach could be seen as a logical strategy to retrieve Olive's previous condition before captivity, but it should be kept in mind that the stark difference between the context from which she has been taken away and the context into which she has been placed does not contribute to the success the intentions of the officers' wives planned for her. As mentioned before, they seem not to take into consideration the mental and emotional state of the former captive and the experience she went through, taking for granted her willingness and ability to reacquire what she had lost after five years of a captivity occurred during her adolescence, a fact that caused her to retain more quickly and deeply Mohave manners, customs, and language. Considering this observation, it could be similarly logical that the woman who was able to take better care, physically and emotionally, of Olive was the one who nobody would have considered suitable for such a challenging matter: Sarah Bowman. The woman, with her personal background, her personality, manners, and the role she had in the fort and society, was actually the only figure who could help Olive to reintegrate into white society and to deal with the traumatic experience of removal from one culture to be reintroduced into another. Bowman's conduct and nature were similar to Mohaves' and her life experiences bonded with the ones of Olive, at the same time the tender maternal instinct the woman had toward Olive facilitated the whole process, resulting in Olive feeling more at ease with Bowman rather than the austere officers' wives:

> Bowman's unconventional nature – she was no Victorian lady – may have smoothed Olive's transition back into white America. The Western, […] had had a series of husbands […] who, like Mohave spouses, were common law, and, like Olive, she was a survivor with little schooling and no known family. Her legendary maternal touch was no doubt a comfort to Olive, who had now lost two mothers. Likewise, Bowman became attached to Olive in the weeks they spent together and later honored her by taking a crew out to tend to the Oatman family's perpetually disrupted grave (Mifflin 115).

Olive's stay at Fort Yuma did not simplify the process of reintegration, since the place was an army camp permeated by a "stagnant culture of military routine "(Mifflin 116), a totally different context from which the girl was taken away and which did not have any similarity to it, and the meager presence of female role models made the readjustment to her previous status and conduct even more tough.

One of the many aspects of Olive's reintegration into American society was the reacquisition of her ability to speak English as fluently as she spoke it before captivity. The topic of the reacquisition of the English language of a young captive is linked to the concept of transculturation, defined as "the phenomenon of merging and converging of different cultures" (Dot-Connect), coined by the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz in 1940. The case of Olive Oatman and her being taken captive from thirteen to eighteen years old perfectly fits the phenomenon of transculturation since "girls aged seven to fifteen were most likely to "take" to their new cultures" (Mifflin 129), Olive represents an evident example of this circumstance as the girl was taken captive at the age of thirteen years old and, by the time she was rescued after five years of captivity, at eighteen years old "she had very likely transculturated during her captivity: she *became* a Mohave, adopting the tribe's culture, values, and lifestyle, which made her transition daunting" (Mifflin 129). Language and linguistic abilities, the first elements that associated Olive with life as a white, civilized, colonial member of American society - and differentiated her from uncivilized, savage Indians - were removed from her set of human skills once she entered the realm of captivity in favor of the Mohave language. This determined a significant cultural shock when she returned to white society and slowed her readjustment down even more in the initial period of her stay, also because in the fort no one spoke Mohave language, so the transition back to English had to be acquired by total immersion (Mifflin 117). The opinions about Olive's reacquisition of English after captivity and the state of her linguistic abilities after her return to white society developed into two main threads that divided the media, the audience, and the public opinion. As Kroeber and Kroeber state:

> Her English had become very rusty after five years. It would be interesting to know whether she [Olive] and Mary Ann [her sister] continued to the end to speak it among themselves ordinarily when alone. I should be very doubtful that they had. A few weeks among Americans no doubt brought back a fairly fluent control of English. But it is obvious that when she first came into Yuma she spoke much better Mohave (313).

Starting from this assumption, the viewpoints divide in turn into two threads, the first one implied by the *Los Angeles Star* interview in 1856 that ended with the sentence "She converses with propriety, but as one acting under strong constraint;" (Rice 104), suggesting that the constraint could possibly be due to her not being entirely open about her life among Mohaves because of the fear of the public opinion, and to her decision to cover a possible presence, back in the Mohave tribe, of an Indian husband and child (Derounian-Stodola, "The Indian Captivity Narratives of Mary Rowlandson and Olive Oatman" 35). The second thread on this matter is Olive's "manifest timidity or bashfulness […]. This is reminiscent of a sixteen-year-old Indian girl suddenly brought into a white audience" (Kroeber and Kroeber 313). Olive's behavior, in this case, could have been just a consequence of the sudden transition from Indian to white culture and the resulting inability to readapt immediately to the colonial community, beginning from the use of English. Kroeber and Kroeber deem Olive's behavior as that of an Indian girl abruptly brought into white, colonial society instead of the conventional one of a white girl rescued by captivity among Indians, a situation that was not the consequence of transculturation, denoting that in this case "Olive was able to transculturate back to white society, but not without serious difficulty" (Mifflin 130). During her stay at Fort Yuma, the young woman resumed, gradually, the manual skills she once had before the captivity, especially she remembered how to sew, an activity that therapeutically helped her with the process of readaptation (Mifflin 117) while waiting for her brother Lorenzo to take her back to El Monte, California, where he lived and worked. After a short period in California, the two siblings moved to the city of Gassburg, present-day Phoenix, Oregon, with their cousin Harvey Oatman, where they got to know the Methodist reverend Royal Byron Stratton who, as already analyzed in the previous chapter, contributed to Olive's fame throughout the nation. Stratton, apart from *Captivity of the Oatman Girls*, had a significant role even in Olive's repatriation into white society by exploiting not only her captivity narrative but also the iconic feature that the girl physically showed, transforming her into a freakshow on one side and into a social, cultural, and historical figure on the other, enriching the tradition of Indian captivity narratives, and not only that.

2.2: Between Cultures – Tattoos, Clothing, and Nicknames as Symbols of Membership and Marginalization

One of the typical traits of Indian captivity narratives in general, and Olive Oatman's in particular, is the boundary between membership and marginalization of the captive protagonist of the story and the moral teachings these kinds of narratives are supposed to be instilled to the audience, thanks to such boundaries. Superficially, the mark of dissimilarity is the dichotomy of white, civilized, colonial

society versus Indian, uncivilized, pagan "other," the former deemed superior and considered the conventional one, while the latter being deemed a threat and an evil presence that had to be eliminated since it did not bring to American society no form of enhancement and progress whatsoever. However, if one looks closely at the matters of membership, marginalization, and supposed supremacy of one culture against the other, the shape of this dissimilarity begins to blur and become more intricated. Besides the common tropes of the captive being a member of white, colonial community before and after captivity, the spectrum is much wider: a captive could also become a fully assimilated member of the Indian tribe and not feel any affiliation with the community of origin anymore, and consequently be considered an outcast by the latter, or, he or she could experience a feeling of affiliation and marginalization regarding both communities at the same time. In the case of Olive Oatman, the boundaries between cultures, the transition from one race to another, and the abovementioned issues of membership and marginalization are marked first and foremost by the physical signs of the tattoos on Olive's body, the meaning attached to them and the consequences they had on the reintroduction of the girl into white society. The subject of clothing is an additional element that delineates both the association and disassociation with two colliding realities and ultimately the nicknames the Mohaves gave to Olive as an indicator of affiliation to the tribe as a close member of it.

"Her face is disfigured by tatooed [*sic*] lines on the chin, running obliquely and perpendicularly from her mouth. Her arms were also marked in a similar manner by one straight line on each. The operation consisted in puncturing the skin and rubbing a dye or pulverized charcoal into the wounds" (Rice 101). The present quotation is the first description ever, although very concise, of Olive's tattoos Mohaves executed on her during her stay with the tribe, as it was reported in the already well-known *Los Angeles Star* interview in 1856, as soon as the girl reentered her community. The tattoos had the power of giving Olive Oatman popularity and public attention because of the iconic feature that made the girl stand out and, later on, inspired the creation, in the 1880s, of the first tattooed circus ladies (Mifflin 2), marking her as the pioneer of a tradition of tattooed women such as Nora Hildebrandt and Irene Woodward (Mifflin 188). Olive Oatman's tattooed body was a means to exploit her as well through public lectures that quickly transformed into actual freak shows. As Jennifer Putzi wrote in *Capturing Identity in Ink: The Captivities of Olive Oatman*: "While Oatman's captivity narrative is a fascinating example of the genre, her story would most likely not have had such immense appeal for nineteenth-century American audiences were it not for one distinctive detail – the fact that both Olive and Mary Ann Oatman received chin and arm tattoos while living with the Mohave" (178). The story of Olive would have been a common tale of Indian captivity if she lacked the peculiarity of the tattoos on her chin, the ones that would get more attention because of their

visibility, and those on her arms, which would be hidden by conventional feminine colonial clothing and never revealed. Consequently, the public would have treated the narrative as a standard one, not so different from the many other captivity narratives on the market, not giving particular attention and recognition to it. On the contrary, the presence of the tattoos produced in the audience a fascination for the narrative of Olive and her marked face, in fact the girl's tattoos were used and exploited as a marketing tool for the promotion of the book by Stratton and the public lectures she gave, and photos and drawings of her tattooed faced appeared on advertisements and broadsides for her lectures to attract the public. The matter of Olive Oatman's tattoos and their meaning is debated and divided into two main viewpoints. The first one considers the tattoos as "evidence of the savagery of Native Americans and of Oatman's persistent desire to resist and ultimately escape from her captors" (Putzi, "Capturing Identity in Ink" 179), giving them a negative connotation as a symbol of entrapment and subjugation within the Mohaves and as a way to identify her as an object belonging to the tribe in case of theft by other tribes (Kroeber and Kroeber 312), a point of view strongly claimed by Stratton for his anti-Indian propaganda. The other point of view gives the tattoos a meaning of kinship and bond with the Mohaves, who considered Olive a loved member of the tribe, linked to it by the family tie of the marked body. Actually, according to Mohave culture, it was believed that "anyone without facial tattoos would end up in a desert rat hole instead of in the land of the dead" (Mifflin 78), thus assigning them a positive significance as an indication of adoption into the tribe or participation to its communal life (Putzi, "Capturing Identity in Ink" 186). Moreover, they believed that facial tattoos "allow people's descendants to recognize them in the afterlife, especially if they were generationally too far separated to have met" (Mifflin 79), ascribing to them a familial meaning of affiliation even after death. Such a viewpoint is considered, up to now, to be the most accredited one by historians and literary critics (Putzi, "Capturing Identity in Ink" 187). Mohave tattooing was simple, did not follow a regular pattern, that was selected by the person receiving the tattoos or by the member of the tribe appointed to this procedure (McGinty 98-99), the process took a few hours and it was painful, especially during the healing process that lasted approximatively a couple of days (Mifflin 78):

> The girls [Olive and Mary Ann] lay down in the grass, their heads in the laps of the tattooers, who drew charcoal designs on their chins. Using a cactus thorn, they "pricked the skin in small regular rows on our chins with a very sharp stick," Olive wrote, "until they bled freely. They then dipped these same sticks in the juice of a certain weed that grew on the banks of the river, and then in the powder of a blue stone that was to be found in low water." The stone was burned, then pulverized, then applied to the pinprick patterns that had been etched into their faces. (Mifflin 78)

It can be discussed whether Olive wanted to be tattooed or she was forced to undergo the procedure, however, the clean lines on her chin indicate that she cooperated during the tattooing process, since she chose voluntarily to be tattooed and Mohaves never forced any member to do it (Mifflin 78). The marked body formally transformed Olive into an authentic Mohave, entering the community as a beloved daughter, sister, friend, and fellow Indian woman. This metamorphosis would give her the status of an official member of the tribe and the self-identification as a Mohave Indian belonging to a clearly defined community after the loss of her previous one following her captivity back in 1851. On the other side, the metamorphosis of Olive into a Mohave and, above all, the signs of this transformation from one culture to another performed by her tattoos had her stigmatized in the eyes of the white, colonial, American society, which regarded the girl as an outcast, a victim of the savagery of Indians, and, at the same time, as a freak exploited to perform in front of an audience that saw her as a wild animal in a circus (Mifflin 79).

Despite the overall negative meaning that the white, colonial, American public conferred to Olive Oatman's tattoos and, at the same time, regardless of their ambiguous and contradictory fascination with them, the major exploiter of Olive's tattoos was the Methodist reverend Royal B. Stratton and his Indian captivity narrative *Captivity of the Oatman Girls*. This topic has been analyzed in the previous chapter and will now be investigated in relation to Olive Oatman's marked body. Although Stratton employed Olive's tattoos as a way to achieve his own personal interests, he paradoxically helped the girl reentering white, colonial society thanks to the use he made of her marked body through the circuit of public lectures and the many illustrations, drawings, engravings, and portraits present in every edition of the book. As already discussed in the previous chapter, in every edition of *Captivity of the Oatman Girls*, Stratton strategically brought about modifications regarding the structure of the text and the content, along with variations concerning the visual aspect of the book. Images of Mohave Indians, Indian life, and pictures of Lorenzo, Olive, and Mary Ann Oatman appear as key elements used not just as enrichments, but as strategic elements to vehicle the author's point of view. Undoubtedly, the focal point of the visuals was on Olive's tattoos, so much so that, at a certain point in her life, Olive would cover her chin tattoos with a black veil (Mifflin 184) or by applying makeup (Mifflin 159) to hide them anytime she felt uncomfortable when being around other people. In 1857, the year of the first edition of the book, Stratton and Lorenzo Oatman hired Charles and Arthur Nahl, two German-born artists, to draw the illustrations of the narrative, and giving to Charles Nahl, specifically, the task to draw most of the images since he had a more dramatic style which was on the same wavelength of Stratton's style and vision of the story (Mifflin 143):

> The Oatman girls appear bare-breasted, facing forward, in every depiction of their life with the Mohaves, […]. Their native attire was evidently a pleasant aesthetic shock. The tattoos, however, were not; the Nahls erased them from their visual narrative entirely. Nonetheless, Olive's tattoo played an important role in the book: it appears on the face of the returned captive, where it registers as a mark of permanent violation, […]. Olive's portrait, with her tattoo drawn in finer, more delicate lines than those of the actual tattoo, served as the coda to *Life Among the Indians*. The blue tattoo was the flourish that would make it a stand-alone story, supplying visual evidence of Olive's ordeal and its irreversible impact (Mifflin 143-144).

As soon as the Nahls took charge of the illustrations of the book, they made sure to emphasize the striking contrast between the shift from colonial to Indian clothing the Oatman sisters experienced, removing any trace of the tattoos from the girls as if the marks on their bodies never existed in the first place. Since the artistic taste of the Nahls matched with Stratton's preferences and political propaganda, it is likely that the decision to cancel any evidence of the tattoos on the captives was accorded by Stratton himself, who was the author of the account and had full decisional power over every aspect of it, unlike Olive and Lorenzo. The only place where the tattoos are clearly visible is the engraving of Olive returned from captivity at the end of the first edition of *Life Among the Indians* where they are portrayed even more finely than the authentic ones. The crucial move of positioning the engraving of Olive and her tattooed chin at the end of the book could be seen as the disclosure of the real intent of Stratton, that of taking advantage of Olive's tattoos solely to reach his social and economic goals, moving to the background his nationalistic propaganda against Native Americans. This contradictory duality regarding Stratton's view of Olive's tattoos can be interpreted in two ways, that of deeming Olive and her iconic feature as a vehicle for marginalization both of herself and the Indians, and, at the same time, a tool for exploitation as a commodity to merely profit on: "To Stratton, Oatman's tattoos represent both an embarrassment (how can one claim that she resisted transculturation if she has tattoos on her face?) and ax exploitable commodity (now that she has these tattoos on her face, they can be used in order to obtain an audience for the narrative itself)" (Putzi, "Capturing Identity in Ink" 194). Eventually, in the second and third editions of the book, the abovementioned engraving of Olive moved from the end to the frontispiece of *Captivity of the Oatman Girls* (Mifflin 146), as Stratton noticed that the positioning of the image at the very beginning of the narration could increase the marketability of the literary product and his authority within the community and the church. Stratton's duality about Olive and her facial tattoos echoed the same duality that spread throughout the public opinion and the audience that learned about her story, read the book, and attended her public lectures. As mentioned before, the public had conflicting opinions

about the girl and her marked body. On one side they saw the tattoos with a certain diffidence and unease, as a symbol of Indian savagery against the people who attempted bringing civilization, while on the other side, the powerful effect of Olive's marked chin produced the opposite effect on the audience, since it was unable to resist the interest on her and her tattoos, mirroring, in a broader way, the polarity conveyed by Stratton. One more characteristic that made Olive and her tattoos a thrilling subject for the audience was the gender of the protagonist, her young age, and the suppositions coming from such aspects. The narrative of Olive would not have been so titillating to the reading public if the subject had been a man, a young boy or a woman, or a young girl without a tattooed face, as it would have been treated as one of the several Indian captivity narratives on the market at that time. The curiosity of the public did not linger exclusively on her tattoos and their meaning of membership as an adopted member of the tribe and as a separate element isolated from the rest, but it was extended, once again, by the gender of the protagonist, a young woman of eighteen years old with a marked body, returned from Indian captivity, and the assumptions based on it. These elements produced a certain interest and sort of morbid curiosity about the captive, her story, and her body, an aspect that Stratton noticed and took advantage of, treating Olive as a freak and a commodity:

> The captive was a lady; she had to be, otherwise she would not merit the attention the media eagerly lavished on her stranger-than-fiction story. But she was no less a freak: one *Star* article described her patience with people who "rush to see her and stare at her, with about as much sense of feeling as they would to a show of wild animals." Still, the writer noted, "she fully realizes that she is an object of curiosity" (Mifflin 120).

Olive's gender, age, and tattooed body, together with her unwillingness to return to the colonial community, made her an intriguing object of attention, causing the suspicion that the tattoos were not merely a symbol of adoption and involvement within the tribe, but something deeper, a mark of marriage and pregnancy within the Mohaves, a result of transculturation (Putzi, "Capturing Identity in Ink" 180). However, a possible marriage and pregnancy into the tribe was never associated with rape, both in an article by the *Los Angeles Star* (Mifflin 120) and by Stratton in *Captivity of the Oatman Girls*, through the voice of Olive: "I considered my age, my sex, my exposure, and was again in trouble, though to the honor of these savages let it be said, they never offered the least unchaste abuse to me" (231). It was crucial to immediately clarify the matter of chastity in the book, as it was one of the main pillars of Indian captivity narratives, especially when having a female protagonist and a religious author in the background (Mifflin 149). According to Mohave culture:

> Mohave women seem to have been tattooed around the time of puberty, not before. The ritual may have prepared them for marriage, or at least signified that they were ready for marriage. Olive reached what Mohaves considered marriageable age during the time she was living with Espaniola's [the Mohave chief] family (she turned fifteen during the first year she spent in the Mohave Valley and eighteen during the last full year she lived there) (McGinty 99).

Assumptions about the possibility of Olive having married a Mohave Indian and having birthed one or more children were carried out mostly by acquaintances of the girl who knew her before captivity and eventually helped her after the return to white, colonial society. An example is the case of the rumors that started to circulate from Susan Thompson Parrish, one of the Oatman family's friends and members of the Brewster's party headed toward the West with them and other families, who, after Olive's ransom, hosted the girl at her house. The fellow pioneer first claimed that Olive married the son of the Mohave chief and gave birth to two boys, and later that "they found a frightened tattooed [sic] creature who was more savage than civilized, and who sought at every opportunity to flee back to her Indian husband and children" (Derounian-Stodola, "The Indian Captivity Narratives of Mary Rowlandson and Olive Oatman" 35), but such statements were not considered reliable since the woman was known to have lied about other aspects of the captive's experience, such as the period of time she hosted Olive at her house in El Monte, California (Mifflin 132). Moreover, Olive's reluctance to openly talk about her Indian experience, at least during the early days of her return to colonial society, could have been another factor that prevented her from revealing some aspects of life among Indians, for instance, a possible marriage and pregnancy, being aware of the fact that not every part of her story could have been suitable for the public (Mifflin 122). On the other side, the official researches, and assertions of Llewellyn Barrackman, a tribal elder and spokesperson of the tribe (Mifflin 3), stated that Olive neither married a Mohave Indian nor gave birth to any child, despite her tattoos and their meaning, among others, of marriageability within the tribe (Mifflin 132). Based on Barrackman's assertions, if Olive had married into the tribe and had had children, it would not have gone unnoticed, there would have been some sort of documented evidence, from oral sources as well, and the tribe, even to these days, would have some information about the matter, not to mention the fact that a mixed-race child would have been easily uncovered through the years. Finally, even though Olive, after her ransom, married a white man from Michigan, the couple did not have any children of their own, since Olive never had biological offspring, implying that she may not have had Indian children as well (Mifflin 132). Regardless of the accuracy or inaccuracy of the suppositions at the time, rumors created more and more curiosity and interest about Olive, her life with Mohaves, and her enigmatic aura. Stratton and Olive were aware of the rumors that circulated in the public

sphere and the girl reassured the audience about her sexual innocence with Stratton's support, and a large portion of the public was convinced by her claims. However, many Americans still had doubts about Olive's affirmations and, even after her rescue, they kept telling stories about Olive and her Indian husband and children (McGinty 100).

2.3: Pioneer Freakshow – The Meanings of Tattooed Female Bodies in the 19th Century

As analyzed so far, what made Olive Oatman a popular and iconic figure in literature, history, culture, and society was not just her incredible story of captivity among Indians, but mainly her tattooed body and the employment of it as racial propaganda against Native Americans, public performance, and profit-making commodity. The fascination of the audience for the young woman poses some questions that can be useful to understand the power of Olive as her own persona and her legacy as "the first-known tattooed white female in the United States" (Mifflin 81). How did her tattooed body generate such a clamor among the audience, the public opinion, and the community? What force did the tattooed body of Olive hold to captivate white, colonial America and give her a place, to this day, in literary, historical, and cultural tradition?

Before proceeding with the analysis of Olive Oatman's tattooed body and its influence on white, colonial America, it is important to premise it with a brief description of the tradition of tattoos and tattooed bodies in the United States until 1856, the year of Olive's return to her community and the beginning of her popularity. Given the success of travel narratives in the eighteen and nineteen centuries, the American public was already familiar with the exotic practice of tattooing, which was performed by indigenous people among themselves and without any distinction of gender and age, but executed to white, English men travelling in those indigenous areas as well. The descriptions of the practice and the marked body became a common trope in travel narratives starting in 1784 with the travel journals of Captain James Cook and his return to England from the South Pacific with Omai, an indigenous tattooed man that exhibited his body throughout the country. In the same period, in American museums and freakshows, occurred the same performances, but the introduction of the presence of white, tattooed men, most of them being former sailors, in those exhibitions began in the 1840s (Putzi, "Tattooed still" 166). The success of such exhibitions in the United States saw the birth of figures like Martin Hildebrandt, the first American professional tattooist who, in 1848, opened his first shop in New York (Mifflin 81), and James O'Connell, the first tattooed white man who participated in a performance and Captain Costentenus, among the others (Putzi, "Identifying Marks" 15). Up to this point, the exhibitions of tattooed people were a realm dominated exclusively by male figures until the 1880s, when Nora Hildebrandt, daughter of Martin Hildebrandt, made her first

appearance in 1882 as one of the first tattooed women attractions in the United States and employed at the Bunnell's Museum of New York to show her 365 tattoos all over her body (Putzi, "Identifying Marks" 13), along with Irene Woodward, one of the first tattooed circus women (Mifflin 188). These influential female figures in history and culture owe their popularity and significance to Olive Oatman, the pioneer of the tradition of tattooed ladies in the United States, as she "brought the marked white female body to the attention of American audiences for the first time" (Putzi, "Tattooed still" 166).

The combination of fascination and uneasiness provoked by Olive's tattoos and experienced by the audience at the sight of such an out-of-the-ordinary subject and body can be analyzed under three main points of view: the first one regards the moral and religious values of a female, white, colonial body marked by its antithesis, the Indian "other," possibly a male, pagan, and uncivilized figure; the second point of view concerns the vision of the woman's tattooed body in opposition to the conventional understanding of the female body in a particular period of time and social context in America, and lastly, the dichotomy of insider versus outsider between two cultures generated by both the presence and the absence of body marks that dynamically position the tattooed subject in the midst of more than one social and cultural sphere of action. Ultimately, these three viewpoints collide and intersects with each other. As already examined in detail in the first chapter and briefly touched upon again earlier in this one, the presence of a male, religious, and authoritative figure controlling Olive Oatman's Indian captivity narrative and employing the blue, striped tattoos on her chin was relevant to grant the story a social, moral, and religious validation. The parallel exploitation of both Olive's captivity narrative and her own marked body as a commodity for economic profit could be seen as another relevant factor in the legitimacy of her status of former captive permanently marked by Indians, first by the numerous newspapers that retold her story, the *Los Angeles Star* among the most famous publications, and especially by Royal B. Stratton in *Captivity of the Oatman Girls.* In a social and cultural context highly permeated by powerful religious values "Oatman's tattoos highlight the threat posed to white Christian society by the experience of captivity" (Putzi, "Capturing Identity in Ink" 179). One example of this kind of danger can be seen in the already mentioned case of Olive Oatman's possibility of having married an Indian man and having given birth to Indian children, and the rumor, immediately denied by the newspapers, Stratton, and Olive herself, of a probable rape occurred as soon as she entered the tribe during her captivity years, that would have resulted in the loss of her sexual innocence. In the early stages of the tattooing practice, in which the subjects marked by indigenous people consisted mostly of men, it is unquestionable that the sight of a young, white, colonial girl marked by clearly visible tattoos was a view that, within a very religious community, could have provoked some issues regarding the striking differences between Christian values and

Native American ones. Furthermore, the aspect that generated such anxiety within the colonial community was the fact that the practice of tattooing was strongly pervaded by masculine, exotic, and sexual connotations that contrasted with the white Christian view of the woman as a passive and sexually uncorrupted subject. For instance, in the case of Captain Costentenus, the sexual nuances suggested by the tattooing process Costentenus underwent are overtly explicit since, in the advertisement for his exhibition, he is depicted as "tied spread-eagle to stakes in the ground while an attractive, young indigenous woman uses a long tool to mark his upper thigh – the only site on his body not yet covered by tattoos. In the background, a group of indigenous men observe the process with interest" (Putzi, "Identifying Marks" 15). In the situation of Costentenus, there was no need to justify his tattoos nor the way in which he claimed to have gotten them, given that there was even an advertisement clearly describing the entire process and visible for the public without any kind of manipulation from another male authoritative figure or himself. The case of tattooed women was handled in a totally different way from their male counterpart since in their status as women the process of tattooing and the presence on their body automatically assumed highly negative tones, and thus the obligation to give reasons for them by controlling and tampering the narrative, as, in the case of Olive "tattooing, inflicted by "natives," was coerced, and the violation had sexual as well as cultural connotations" (Mifflin 165). Stratton, on his part, provided the audience with justifications and reassurances to protect the girl and himself from the harsh judgment of the public opinion and the church and to avoid social expulsion from such a powerful Christian community. The clergyman strategically refrained from mentioning any kind of issues that could have had a part in compromising his relationship with the community and the religious authorities, so he made sure to give the audience an image of Olive as a white, colonial girl that, despite her brutally marked body, was able to keep her female, Christian values intact during captivity among Indians (Putzi, "Identifying Marks" 31). The image of Olive produced by Stratton helped the nationalistic and discriminatory propaganda against Native Americans, fueling the hatred of white, colonial Americans toward Indian tribes and the threat posed by them as obstacles to civilization and progress. Stratton employed Olive's body, her clothes, and lack of them, and her tattoos for this purpose: "Oatman's physical body becomes essential to this nationalistic project in that Stratton attempts to use both clothing and tattoos to represent her supposed retention of Christian values and her eagerness to return to white society" (Putzi, "Identifying Marks" 32).

The employment of the body, marked or unmarked, dressed or undressed, as a symbol of differentiation between white, colonial culture, and Indian culture, and between feminine and chaste and male, pagan and savage, is deeply connected with the issue of the understanding of the physical body as traditional, classical on one side and as tattooed, unconventional one in nineteen century

America on the other, and the way this opposition produced both a feeling of fascination and fear in the audience toward Olive Oatman and her body, that transitioned from a conventional to an unconventional one. To understand better the concept of conventional versus unconventional body and to be able to analyze it in the context of Olive's marked body, twentieth-century theorists such as Mikhail Bakhtin, Susan Stewart, and Mary Russo developed the polarity of the classical body as opposed to the grotesque body. The classical body is "transcendent and monumental, closed, static, self-contained, symmetrical and sleek" (Putzi, "Identifying Marks" 26) while the grotesque body is "open, protruding, irregular, secreting, multiple, and changing" (Putzi, "Identifying Marks" 26), therefore when the discourse is oriented toward the presence of tattoos, these end up being considered to be elements belonging to the grotesque body rather than the classical one, as they disrupt the closeness of the classical body by penetrating the open wounds inflicted on the skin that allow the color of the tattoo to sediment and to remain into the skin permanently. The process of tattooing performed by Mohaves to Olive, particularly the image of the powder sedimented into the flesh to remain there for life, reflects the opposition between the two different bodies and the process of transformation from the classical one into the grotesque one, followed by the consequences of such transformation, that is the flexibility of identity and the vulnerability of the self:

> The grotesque body allows for flexible boundaries between interior and exterior, male and female, human and animal, as well as a number of other binaries upon which Western notions of stable identity depend. The tattoo is most obviously a manifestation of the grotesque in its disruption of the interior/exterior boundaries of the human body. In the case of Mohave tattooing, powder is rubbed into open wounds, thus dying the second layer of skin, or the dermis, and defying the limitations of the body. The wounds caused by the tattooing process, unlike other apertures on the surface of the skin, eventually heal and close over, but the tattoo remains as a constant reminder of the vulnerability of identity and flesh (Putzi, "Capturing Identity in Ink" 188).

With regard to Olive's body, a concrete example of the difference between the classical and the grotesque body, the way she transitioned from one to the other, and the audience's perception of the transformation can be explained by comparing the tattooed body of Olive, deemed grotesque, with the body of a sculptural work of art created after her return by Erastus Dow Palmer, and supposedly inspired by her captivity narrative, that represents the prototype of the classical body. This comparison can help, in practical terms, not only the contemporary public that wants to learn more about the topic of the power of tattoos and their influence on the audience, but also helped the audience of the time

to comprehend the subconscious working behind their combined feelings of fascination and unease toward the tattooed body, that is related to "the disruptive power of the grotesque" (Putzi, "Capturing Identity in Ink" 188). In 1859, Palmer completed what was considered one of the first examples of American ideal sculpture (Putzi, "Capturing Identity in Ink" 188), *The White Captive*, a white marble sculpture exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York that, as the title of the artwork suggests, depicted a young, white girl with both of her hands tied to a tree. The sculpture attracted a good amount of visitors and good reviews as well, both from the public and the art critics, but what made it truly popular at the time was the spreading of Olive Oatman's captivity narrative through public lectures and the exhibition of her facial tattoos, and the presumed claim, from Palmer's daughter, that the sculpture was inspired by Olive's story and her marked chin. The sculpture represents a young, white girl taken captive, just as Olive, and when reading her body language and facial expressions the perception is that her identification as a white, colonial, Christian woman is not brought into question, despite her nudity and vulnerable position that can suggest a sense of danger toward the captive, since her identity and her innocence are protected by her Christian heart and soul (Putzi, "Capturing Identity in Ink" 189). Regardless of this kind of nudity and subjection, Olive's identity as a member of white, colonial, orthodox America is not called into doubt either, if it was not for a substantial difference between the two bodies, which is the presence and lack of marks on them. Going back to the polarity defined earlier, the sculpture is categorized as a classical body, not just for its materiality (the white, smooth marble) but also for the identification with a kind of body that was familiar to the viewers and general public at the time, on which the lack of tattoos and its cleanliness and polish did not create any sort of anxiety toward the subject reproduced. On the other hand, the body of Olive marked with tattoos is codified as the opposite, a grotesque body, unfamiliar to the viewers because of the presence of marks that produced a feeling of tension at first, as well as of interest little by little. The issue of the claimed innocence and purity of the young woman moved to the background in favor of her grotesque body thus treated as a wild animal trapped in a cage and exploited for the public's morbid curiosity: "the sculpture illustrates the extent to which the nineteenth-century American understanding of captivity relied upon a classical representation of the white, female body, a representation clearly contradicted by the grotesque body of Oatman herself (Putzi, "Capturing Identity in Ink" 188). Even though the sculpture was presumably inspired by Olive's captivity narrative and, at the same time, it represents the prototype of the classical body, the lack of marks on it could be for two main reasons. The first one, and less supported, could be the material possibility to chisel marks on the marble, which is smooth and far too malleable, while the second motive, and more supported, is the intentional erasure of the marks from the sculpture by the artist since, according to Palmer himself "Oatman's tattoos disturbed […] "the artist's sensitivity to

the ideal," as well as nineteenth-century notions of femininity, passionlessness, and purity" (Putzi, "Capturing Identity in Ink" 190). The American public was familiar with the classical body, which did not generate in them any negative feelings, but when Olive's marked body was shown, the audience was not ready to perceive it as one of many other kinds of bodies with their own identities, and thus the general feeling was, at first, of fear and discomfort, then of attraction for a body that was previously a classical one, a "simultaneous fascination with and repulsion from the grotesque figure of the tattooed woman" (Putzi, "Identifying Marks" 28). The topic of the grotesque body of Olive versus the standard classical body of female captives in nineteen-century America is linked to another point, that of the line of demarcation between two identities originated both by the presence and/or lack of tattoos on the body and the consequences, culturally and socially speaking, of membership and/or marginalization of those physical marks on the captive. The boundaries, or their absence, between these two identities and the status of insider in opposition to outsider is another element that generated mixed feelings of fascination and repulsion toward Olive and her tattoos. For a viewer of the time who saw Olive and the tattoos on her chin, the issue of identity and status between white and Indian culture was not brought into question: the girl transitioned from white, colonial culture into Indian culture once she got the tribal tattoos and began to see herself as an adopted and cherished member of the family, her identity transitioned with her and developed into a full-fledged Indian woman, the "other," erasing her previous identity as a white, colonial, American girl. The belief that identity was a fixed concept had to do with the assumption that "the bodies of Western men and women have always been marked in culturally prescribed ways" (Putzi, "Identifying Marks" 15), as the classical body of Palmer's *The White Captive*, easily recognizable as a white, colonial, Christian American woman with her untattooed skin and, before captivity, dressed in a specific and conventional colonial style, a status and an identity clearly defined at first sight and enclosed in a rigid boundary.

2.4: Olive Oatman and Her Dual Identity – Indian Tattoos, Clothing, and Nicknames

The untraditional view of the grotesque body of Olive did not produce any doubt about the identity of the girl either, considering that she had been tattooed by Indians, her identity transitioned with her and now corresponded to that of a Mohave girl, as "the permanence and exoticism of the tattoo, […], forced a distinct recognition of cultural marking, causing concern over the disruption of identity that might result from this particular mark" (Putzi, "Identifying Marks" 15). The audience was distressed by the sight of a white woman with tattoos, however their social and cultural urge to remove her from the established category of "white, colonial, classical" woman and put her into the other established

category of "Indian, Other, grotesque" woman was as natural as their deeply-rooted custom of categorizing identities and restricting them into fixed, stagnant groups. As soon as Olive began to achieve popularity with Stratton's book and mainly with the promotional tour of *Captivity of the Oatman Girls* and the public lectures throughout the country, the feeling of uneasiness of the audience toward her started to be incorporated with a sense of fascination and interest, as she was able to link together and make it popular her extraordinary condition of former white, female captive with an Indian tattooed body. At first, the presence of her tattoos, which classified her as the Indian, "the other," and positioned her into a fixed category established by her marks – sedimented permanently into the skin - eventually shifted her position to that of an individual who could employ her marked body as a symbol of the fluidity of her identity, both white and Indian, fluctuating from one category to another and from one culture to another, rather than be stagnant into a rigid classification, without boundaries, limits, and definitive interpretations (Putzi, "Identifying Marks" 26). Her acquired ability to move from one sphere to another, the easiness of fluctuating from one identity to the other and, at the same time, make them coexist in one body and influence one another, undoubtedly represents "the possibility that the boundaries of identity are ultimately permeable and unreliable" (Putzi, "Capturing Identity in Ink" 179). The confidence of Olive in using her dual identities, the white, colonial, and the Indian one, to find her place in her community and society in general is, essentially, generated by the disruptive, changeable power of the tattoos to polarize her identity and split it into "one of us" and "one of them," giving the audience the possibility to be both fascinated and repulsed by the fluidity of her coexisting identities:

> Oatman's performances ultimately call racial and gendered identity into question. Her simultaneous flaunting of her tattoos *and* her femininity pushes her audience to consider the possibility that identity is indeed fluid and that Oatman might be, in fact, transculturated, or at least not exactly the same girl she was when she was taken captive. In this sense, Oatman could be seen simultaneously as "one of us" and "one of them." She was a white person, whose tattoos and words demonstrated the danger and savagery of the frontier and the necessity of taming it. Yet she was also an "Other," a white woman who looked native, who had lived in a native culture, and was rumored to have been adopted by or even married into a native tribe (Putzi, "Capturing Identity in Ink" 193).

Together with tattoos, other two elements that marked the captive's association and de-association between white, colonial identity and Indian identity are the topics of clothing and nicknames once

entered the Indian community and the consequences of these two aspects when returning to the community of origin. These three elements, tattoos, clothing, and Indian nicknames, play a significant part in both the membership and the marginalization of the captive and her choosing to affiliate with the white community, the Indian one, or let these two identities coexist and blend in order to create a fluid identity, as it has been previously analyzed. The first topic of discussion will be the one concerning clothing and their employment in Olive's captivity narrative, and how such use marks the position of the captive as white, Indian, or both, and lastly the discussion will move to the topic of her Indian nicknames and the value they had within the Indian realm and in the moment the captive reentered white, colonial society. In Indian captivity narratives, the issue of identity linked to one's clothes, the lack of them, and the social and cultural meanings of clothing is highly relevant when it comes to the distinction between the white and colonial American and the "other", uncivilized Indian, in particular at the moment of the capture, after the raid, and the pivotal moment in which the captive enters for the first time the Indian community and gets stripped of her own colonial clothing to be immediately changed into Indian, tribal ones, only after having been exposed in front of the tribe in complete nakedness. In this kind of literary genre, the terms "naked/nakedness" and "stripped" are used by the captives to describe both their condition of total nakedness and their forced change of clothes, from colonial fashion into Indian clothing, as well as the description of Indian lootings of their lands, houses, and goods during the raids, a collective plunder that had the same emotional weight on the colonists' existence and identity, especially during captivity and once their return to white society (Castro 134). Jennifer Putzi's assertion that "the bodies of Western men and women have always been marked in culturally prescribed ways" (15) is not solely about the tattooed bodies and the way they mark men and women's social and cultural identities, but it also relates to the clothed body and to how clothing can be a mark of social and cultural identity as well, determining the social and cultural boundaries of the individual within. Gender identity and cultural identity were performed through clothing, which labeled the colonists as civilized, as well as indicating their social status and the position they had in the community, and their gender (Castro 115). Clothing was essential to delineate the boundaries not only between men and women and their role in the community but particularly to define the limits between the association to white, colonial, civilized American community and its opposite Indian, uncivilized, "other." As a matter of fact, in the captives' accounts, starting from the very beginning of the narrative in which the colonists are ransacked from their belongings and, later, stripped and dressed in Indian clothes, the emphasis is immediately put on their "preoccupation with what they described as nakedness and constant descriptions of their various states of dress" (Castro 107). Since clothing meant personal, social, and cultural identification with a specific group, the anxiety of the captives toward the removal of their colonial clothes was a crucial

part of their captivity and post-captivity, as the state of nakedness, physical and emotional, had an important part in the definition of the captive's identity and the way he or she was able to handle it once reentered the white, colonial community. In the case of Olive Oatman, she herself underwent the trauma of being stripped of her colonial clothes and changed into Indian fashion when she was captured by the Yavapai tribe, a dramatic cultural shock for a Mormon girl who diligently followed the conventional doctrinal and colonial fashion, observing that "Their mode of dress [of the Yavapais], (but little dress they had!) was needlessly and shockingly indecent, when the material of which their scanty clothing consists would, by an industrious habit and hand, have clothed them to the dictates of comfort and modesty" (Stratton 135). The same happened with the Mohaves, that were "Bark-clad, where clad at all, the scarcity of their covering indicating either a warm climate or a great destitution of the clothing material, or something else" (Stratton 166-167). At least at the beginning of her captivity with the Yavapai tribe, the experience of Olive followed the same narrative pattern of the common captive's concern in considering nakedness as the worst part of captivity since the undressing of their clothes stripped them of their social identity and without any visible marks that could demonstrate their social status (Castro 107), positioning them into a grey area between the white and Indian realm. According to the account in Stratton's book, the fact that Olive was so judgmental about the way the Yavapais and the Mohaves dressed and their need, in her eyes, to be as scantily dressed as possible, reflects her retained female Christian values of decorum and purity, that followed the common trope of linking material nakedness with spiritual nakedness, as well as with sin and shame (Castro 116), thus "Oatman's Christian decency and feminine modesty are reflected in and perhaps even textually constructed by her judgement of the Indians and their apparently inexplicable lack of any desire to cover their bodies with clothing" (Putzi, "Capturing Identity in Ink" 181). However, in *Captivity of the Oatman Girls*, Olive's clothes and those of her little sister Mary Ann are not mentioned until the conclusion of the book when, before entering Fort Yuma, Olive asks to change from her native attire - bare-breasted and wearing only a bark skirt – into a colonial, calico dress. Until that point, the process of nakedness from colonial into native fashion is scarcely described throughout the narrative (Putzi, "Capturing Identity in Ink" 181). The drawings of the Nahl brothers confirm this point, considering that the first drawing sees the two sisters arriving at the Yavapai camp wearing their colonial-style attires consisting of a long dress with short sleeves, while the following illustrations throughout the entire narrative depict Olive and Mary Ann already in their Indian fashion that is a short bark skirt and bare-breasted, actually "when depicted in the company of Indian women, […], the girls are distinguishable only because they are shaded differently by the artist; otherwise, they appear to be Indian themselves" (Putzi, "Capturing Identity in Ink" 182). At this point, the cultural and identitarian shift Olive underwent during her captivity concerning the change from

colonial clothes to Indian fashion could be considered one of the numerous aspects of the process of transculturation she experienced. After five years of captivity among Indians, four of them spent with the Mohave tribe whose emotional, communitarian and familiar affiliation had been officially sealed with the tattoos on her body, Olive was by now sure that no member of her immediate family survived the Yavapai raid and claimed her as a missing person, especially considering that she was located in the middle of a vast desert, so she had no reason to believe that someone could find her and take her back to her white community, therefore she was less pressured to repatriate (Mifflin 131), along with her growing feelings of affection toward her Mohave family. In Indian culture, "Being stripped by one's captors often meant that one had been chosen for adoption. In these instances being reduced to nakedness was frequently followed by body painting, washing, redressing in Indian clothes, having one's hair cut or pulled out in the Indian fashion, and being adorned with piercings and jewelry" (Castro 128). As it is known, Olive experienced nakedness, body painting, and redressing into Mohave clothing as a process of adoption within the tribe, and such conditions, along with the one previously mentioned, played a role in her decision to fully embrace her new Indian identity as a recognized member of the tribe, and being unconsciously subject to the transformative force of Indian clothing which was "powerful enough to transform the wearer both externally and internally into an Indian" (Castro 131). Olive did not try to resist the powerful transformative force of Mohave clothing and decided to accept it as a new identity both externally with a new, visual way of dressing and internally as a newly found self, a sort of rebirth as a new Indian woman within and without herself (Castro 131). Both in the real experience of Olive and the Nahls' drawings, the body of the young woman, tattooed and dressed as a Mohave Indian, becomes a manifest marker of race (Putzi, "Capturing Identity in Ink" 183) that defines her as an Indian woman, but also as a white, colonial one as well in the moment of the change from one attire to the other, as in the case of her return to Fort Yuma. Once returned to her white community and her desire to change from Indian attire to colonial one, the power of clothing mentioned above acquires a wider connotation as a visual, cultural, and social signifier of race, gender, and social status (Putzi, "Capturing Identity in Ink" 183) as it denotes Olive's ability to transculturate back to white society (Mifflin 130) and adjust her identity based on the polarity between white and colonial and Indian thanks to the employment of clothing as well.

Along with tattoos and clothes, the other element that made Olive a recognized member of the Mohave tribe is the presence of the several nicknames the Mohaves gave her during her four-years stay among them, another significant aspect of the process of transculturation the girl experienced and which, in some specific cases, fostered the conviction, among the audience, that the young woman had been an Indian wife and mother when in captivity. As it is commonly known, and based on the

definition provided by the Britannica encyclopedia, the term nickname is explained as "an informal name used to replace a formal one, often giving rise to familiar or humorous terms" (Costa), most of them generated by peculiar physical characteristics that defined a specific individual by the employment of descriptive terms, along with the use of the nicknames to identify the individual within the community through social bonds and affiliation (Costa). Therefore, the employment of nicknames within a community, a family, a social circle, or a tribe, as in the case of Olive, emphasizes the familial and intimate tone and use of such designations, which strongly marks the affiliation and membership of the individual with the community he or she belongs to, while, at the same time, marking the same individual as an outcast in the case of comparing the person with another community in which he or she does not belong to, or belonged to in the past but drifted apart at some point. Regarding Olive Oatman, the various nicknames she was given by the Mohaves are a further element that clearly shows how the girl fully transculturated into the tribe and how she was fully accepted as a respected and recognized member of the Indian community by acquiring the same status the other members of the tribe had. Nicknames, in the Mohave community, were based on their linguistic structure and the way they managed to spell the colonial name of the captive and the consequent distortion of the latter, their social and familiar rules, and the genitals of the captive or the Indian at issue. Olive's nicknames were "Ali" or "Aliútman," "Olivino," "Oach," and "Spantsa" (Mifflin 73). Starting with the first two nicknames, "Ali" or "Aliútman," these originated from the linguistic differences in language and sounds between the Mohave and the English language since they are essentially "a rendering of Olive Oatman for which the Mohaves, whose language includes a "v" sound, deliberately – and seemingly affectionately – elided the two names" (Mifflin 73). The intimate tone of these two nicknames already implies the Mohaves' feelings of affection toward the girl, as they produced a nickname that could have a familial sound both to them and their new daughter, sister, and friend. Furthermore, according to the Kroeber brothers in their paper *Olive Oatman's First Account of Her Captivity Among the Mohave*, in which it can be found the very first interview conducted by Captain Burke as soon as Olive returned to Fort Yuma in 1856, the Mohaves, back in 1903 when Alfred Kroeber visited the tribe, still remembered her with the name "Aliútman" (311).

Concerning the Kroeber brothers' paper, which contains the transcription of Olive's interview with Captain Burke, to the commander's question "What is your own name?" she answered "Olivino" (311). It does not seem to be an actual nickname, since its assonance with her first and last name is undeniable, and such supposition could be traced back to Olive's young age when she was taken captive, during her stay with Mohaves and the learning of their language, during which she retained scant remembrances of the English language, since she began the process of assimilation at a very young age: "by 1856 Olive was pretty much accultured to Mohave living. She must have retained

many memories of her eleven American years, as she retained some English; but for five years there had been nothing to implement or nourish these remembrances, while new experiences and activities more and more overlaid them" (Kroeber 313). The third nickname, "Oach," along with "Spantsa," which will be analyzed later, is one of Olive's sobriquets that, more than any other, mostly proves her membership and affiliation within the Mohave community, as it was the girl's clan name that associated her with her Mohave family, composed by the leader Espaniole, his wife Aespaneo, and their daughter Topeka. In Mohave culture, "Mohave women used clan names passed down from their fathers, which they retained even after marriage. The names were shared by all the women, and individualized by descriptions. […]. Olive would only have been given a clan name if she were considered a full Mohave" (Mifflin 74). The familial and genealogical connotation of this nickname is a clear indication of her status of affiliation and acceptance within the tribe, considering that it was given solely to close members of the family unit and banned to strangers or marginalized individuals, actually "the very fact that Oatman was nicknamed confirms her acceptance within the culture; if she had been marginalized within the tribe, she would never have warranted one" (Mifflin 74). The intimate significance and undertone of the nickname "Oach" is particularly symbolic in light of the fact that it was handed down from woman to woman throughout the centuries, as a sort of reminder of the feminine power to birth children that will guarantee the preservation of the tribe through the passing of time and the threat of oblivion. For this reason, "Oach" opened a discussion about the possibility, or not, of Olive having acquired the status of Indian wife and mother during her stay among the Mohaves, in fact "her clan name also masks her marriage status. If, after some period of adaptation, she was married – and Mohave girls of the period did so in their early to mid-teens – her name wouldn't show it" (Mifflin 74). As previously explained, the clan name that was passed down did not change when the woman married, as it was retained even after the union, and, in Olive's case, it could not have been an indisputable proof of her condition as Indian wife and mother within the tribe. The last nickname that is going to be analyzed is "Spantsa," which carried the same established evidence of Olive's status as a member of the tribe as "Oach," but with a completely different connotation from the latter.

Mohaves, like other tribes in the area, had a great sense of humor and loved "bawdy sobriquets referring to – or flatly advertising – genitalia" (Mifflin 73), in fact, the nickname "Spantsa" had two specific meanings: "rotten vagina" or "sore vagina" (Mifflin 73). The origin of the nickname can be explained in four different ways, the first being the physical condition in which Olive first arrived in the tribe, that is during the period of her menstruation and with her private parts covered in old, shredded clothes. The second explanation had to do with the perception of personal hygiene Mohaves had, compared to the habits of the whites. Mohaves took great care of their bodies and their

appearance and used to bathe every day in the Colorado River, while the whites did not wash themselves every day and, in contrast to the Indians, they considered a splash of water to be the replacement for a complete washing of the body. For this reason, Olive could have been perceived, once arrived in the tribe, as unclean and unsanitary based on the standards of hygiene the Mohave tribe had. Next, according to Michael Tsosie, a Mohave Indian who had been the director of the Colorado River Indian Tribes Museum in Arizona (Mifflin 73), the other two explanations of the origin of the nickname "Spantsa" could derive from the intense sexual activity of Olive or the frequent sexual intercourses she may have had with a vigorous Indian man during her stay within the tribe (Mifflin 73). Curiously, the nickname "Spantsa" was also printed on the travel pass the commander at Fort Yuma, Captain Burke, wrote to ransom the girl and it could be theorized that it was invented by Quechan Indians, who had regular interactions with soldiers at Fort Yuma, entrusting one of them to rescue her. It could be speculated that, if the Quechuan man sent to the Mohave tribe to rescue Olive had tried to have a sexual approach with her and was immediately pushed away by Olive, he could have used this nickname to take revenge and to made her known among the other soldiers at the garrison. However, this speculation was easily dismantled since, in Mohave culture, the nickname "Spantsa" was not used with harmful intentions, considering that Mohaves used their dead relatives as insults. As analyzed in this portion of the chapter, all the nicknames they gave Olive were intended to describe their affection and care for her and to prove her strong affiliation as a loved member of the tribe (Mifflin 73-74).

Assimilation and marginalization, the multi-faceted process of transculturation with its prismatic nuances, and the consequences such conditions have on the outer and inner life of an individual: these are the elements that make the story and the experience of captivity and post-captivity of Olive Oatman an extraordinary account of the resilience of a young, white girl that, at the age of thirteen, finds herself overwhelmed by events that will lead her to transculturate back and forth between Indian culture and colonial reality. The passage from one race to another, from one culture to another, developed in her a polarity of identities that she never stopped taking care of, even after the return to white society, and employed to therapeutically make sense of the world and her new dual identity, that of Mohave woman and white, colonial woman. The difficult recovery, once returned to Fort Yuma, of her linguistic abilities and the use of the English language, that she progressively lost during her captivity, the help she received from the officers' wives of the garrison and Sarah Bowman, the emotional meeting with her brother Lorenzo that, despite five years of separation and the marks on his sister's face, was able to immediately recognize the now eighteen-years-old sibling he thought he lost, these were the first, challenging steps of Olive's reaccustom to white, colonial society. Society and audience, on their part, had a significant role in Olive's transition from the Indian reality she was

taken from, as well as her identification as a Mohave woman, white woman or both, a topic that brought into light the issues of membership and marginalization between two opposite cultures, mainly originated by the presence of her chin tattoos, their multiple cultural significances and their double meaning of affiliation with the tribe on one side and the marginalization from white, colonial society on the other. Nevertheless, the tattoos produced in the audience mixed feelings of uneasiness and fascination toward the marked body of Olive and its implied cultural and social meanings, starting from the assumption of the tattooed body as a symbol of savagery and moral impurity in contrast to the Christian, colonial view of the female body, which had to be preserved as innocent and chaste to define the moral and ethic values of the woman protagonist of the captivity narrative. Moreover, the comparison between the classical body, familiar to the audience of the time, and the grotesque body of Olive marked by tattoos created a combination of feelings that, in turn, produced the identification of Olive as both "one of us" and "one of them" (Putzi, "Capturing Identity in Ink" 193). Along with tattoos, what defined Olive as a fully accepted member of the Mohave tribe, but, at the same time, made her reassimilation into white society challenging, were the native clothes and their power of shifting the individual's identity and social status and the several nicknames the tribe gave her as a solid proof of her affiliation to the Mohaves as a daughter, sister, friend. The power of Olive lied in her ability to face the challenges of transculturation, first from the white, Mormon reality to the Indian, pagan one, and eventually from the Mohave culture to the white, colonial one. She did not transition as smoothly as one could think, she faced the fear of losing her immediate family and, then, her Mohave one, she overcame the public manipulation and exploitation of herself and her captivity narrative by Stratton and the ambivalence of having two identities. She eventually got through all of the struggles life put in front of her and gifted American literature, history, and culture with her extraordinary experience of life among the Indians and the whites as well:

> She assimilated twice: first, as a Mohave, where the evidence is overwhelming that she was fully adopted into the tribe and that she ultimately considered herself a member. She was taken at a vulnerable age, had no known family to return to, and bonded with the family that both rescued her from the Yavapais and have her their clan name. She submitted to a ritual tattoo, bore a nickname that confirmed her insider status, and declined to escape […]. By the time Francisco [member of the Mohaves] came looking for her, Olive had become a Mohave, and almost certainly didn't want to go "home". Her second, perhaps more difficult, assimilation occurred after her ransom, when she was plucked from her tribe against her will (Mifflin 195).

Olive Oatman by Powelson Photographic Studio. One of a series of *carte-de-visite* photographs taken in Rochester, New York, after publication of *Captivity of the Oatman Girls*. Courtesy Arizona Historical Society, Tucson (AHS no. 1927).

(McGinty 120)

3."Did I Say Happiest Period of My Life?": Public Performances and Legacy

Following the return to Fort Yuma and the family reunification with her brother Lorenzo, the only surviving member of the Oatman family, after five years of captivity among Indians, Olive Oatman entered another stage of her life, that of a celebrated returned captive, public figure as a tattooed lady and public speaker showing the Indian marks on her body to an appalled audience, and, lastly, a woman who eventually decided to withdraw from the public arena to dedicate her life to her beloved husband and daughter, in the quiet of her house. The extraordinary life path of Olive could be divided into three main chapters, that similarly reflect the trajectory of this work as well, life chapters defined by main events that influenced the numerous threads of Olive's story and the way such threads affected her public and private life and the way she made sense of the world, both within and without her, once returned to her community of origin and with the signs of her affiliation and affection toward her Mohave family forever marked into her skin. As analyzed earlier, the first chapter is defined by Olive's life before captivity with her Mormon family and their travel westward to settle down and start a new life, a project that was brutally interrupted by a bloody raid led by the Yavapai tribe that stripped Olive of most of her family, except her sister Mary Ann and her brother Lorenzo. The second chapter of Olive's life, as previously explained, deals with her experience of captivity among Indians, first with the Yavapais and later with the Mohave tribe, portraying the process of transculturation the girl underwent and her membership with Mohaves by means of tattoos and change from colonial to Indian attire. At this point, the third and last chapter of her life story covers Olive's return to white, colonial, American society and the consequences of her coming back to her community, the sensational public and media coverage she experienced as a public figure traveling throughout the nation to promote Stratton's book *Captivity of the Oatman Girls* and, later, her own story of captivity and the display of her tattooed chin through a circuit of public lectures that turned into freak shows showing her grotesque body in front of a fascinated and morbidly curious audience. These last topics will be analyzed in detail in this chapter, following the trajectory of Olive Oatman's main life events and experiences from her departure from El Monte, California, until her marriage with John Brant Fairchild in 1865 and her death in 1903, ultimately giving voice to the legacy she left to American literature, history, and culture as well.

3.1: Olive Oatman as a Female Performer in 19th Century America

The new phase of Olive's life started in El Monte, California, where she moved with her brother and was hosted by the Thompson family, who were travel companions of the Oatman family during their journey westward in search of the Brewsterites' Eden, the land of Bashan. The family hosted the siblings in their hotel, the Willow Grove Inn, and treated Olive like a daughter (Mifflin 120). There, the girl and her tattooed face generated a media clamor as numerous newspapers, as already explained in the first and second chapters, began writing articles about her, her marked body and physical appearance, and the overall mannerism captivity left her with, as she "presented a human interest epic with legs" (Mifflin 119). While in California, she spent her time readjusting to white, colonial society and the changes American society and the whole community went through during her five years of captivity, reacquiring the education she abandoned by studying and writing, and, at the same time, dealing with the effects of the traumatic experience of transculturation that highly influenced both her physical and mental state. Everyone around her noticed the psychological distress of the young woman, who tried her best to conceal it while in public or among family members, friends, or acquaintances, but despite that, no one openly discussed the matter in the many articles dedicated to her. In fact, the mental state of the former captive was much more manifest in the correspondence Olive kept with the people she felt closer to her: "The coverage emphasized her cheery compliance as an interview subject and her frightening adventures as a cultural castaway, but rarely commented on her psychological condition, which was surely shaky. Only private letters and memoirs painted a more nuanced picture" (Mifflin 122). Susan Thompson described Olive as "a grieving, unsatisfied woman, who somehow shook one's belief in civilization. […] more savage than civilized" (Mifflin 122), while Olive wrote, in a letter to friends in San Diego: "I feel once more like myself since I have risen from the dead and landed once more in a civilized world…It seems like a dream to me to look back and see what I had ben thrue *[sic]* and just now waking up" (Mifflin 123). On one side, the point of view of Susan Thompson concerning Olive and her mental state, that of a woman battling against the distress of having lost her Indian family, collides with Olive's personal point of view about her own situation, which seems to be the opposite, since she feels relieved about her return to white, colonial society. These divergent perspectives support the claim that the girl was experiencing what is now known as post-traumatic stress as she was coping, and would cope all her life, with the emotional fractures created by the polarity between the white and Indian identities that coexisted within her (Mifflin 123): "Olive was clearly grappling with post-traumatic stress. She may have been grieving for her lost Mohave family, struggling with her adjustment to white culture, or both. She had adapted or "acculturated" […] to the Mohaves at least to the extent that being ripped away from them was emotionally and psychologically painful" (Mifflin 128-129). While dealing with such

discomforting state of mind, one of the many pivotal moments in Olive's life began with the meeting with Harvey Oatman, cousin of Olive and Lorenzo, who traveled from Gassburg, Oregon, to El Monte to visit the two siblings and persuade them to move to Gassburg with him. In the summer of 1856, Olive and Lorenzo made their arrival in Oregon and started a new chapter of their lives there, living with Stephen Taylor, a Methodist minister, and his family, and working at the Oatman Hotel, property of Harvey (Mifflin 127). Olive's life slowly began to assume the connotations of her life before captivity, she was well integrated into the social sphere of the town, even though she surely did not go unnoticed as "there would be no anonymity for Olive Oatman, "the heroine," as a fellow churchgoer called her, in the fledging town of Gassburg" (Mifflin 126). Her living with a Methodist minister was an influential factor in what she would experience later on as a public figure, lecturer, and performer, in some way. She started attending the Methodist church, where she was introduced to the reverend Royal B. Stratton, the man who saw in Olive, her tattooed face, and her captivity narrative a way to gain economic profit and power as a religious, cultural, and social authority first with the book *Captivity of the Oatman Girls* and later with the promotional tour of the narrative and the circuit of public lectures he put Olive through all over the country. The success of the Indian captivity narrative was immediate, and so for the clergyman it was clear that he had to print more copies than expected in order to meet the demands of the market and the reading public. Thus, in 1857, when the first edition had been already published, he moved, together with his family and the Oatman siblings, to Santa Clara, California, where he joined a Methodist committee affiliated with the University of the Pacific, while Olive and Lorenzo attended a preparatory school at university, thanks to the first takings of the book sales. Olive attended the Female Collegiate Institute, a very rigorous college that, once again, was at the opposite end from her previous life with the Mohave tribe, as "less than two years earlier, Olive had been wandering around shirtless and barefoot in the Arizona desert, sleeping in the sand, and foraging for food; the supervised "freedom" of campus life must have chafed by comparison" (Mifflin 154). As the book sales and the demand for more copies increased, and the hunger for profit and notoriety of Stratton as well, the revered negotiated for the printing of a third edition, in 1858, by the well-known Methodist publishing house Carlton and Porter, established in New York. The decision to move to New York caused Olive and Lorenzo to leave school and follow Stratton, where an intense promotional campaign of the book officially began by a notice, placed by the clergyman, in the *Methodist Quarterly Review* (Mifflin 156). What drew the audience to the promotional campaign of *Captivity of the Oatman Girls* and the public lectures of Olive was the sensationalistic advertisement used to promote the events that strongly emphasized the marked body of Olive, rather than her captivity narrative itself, and was reproduced and used to advertise the events (Putzi, "Capturing Identity in Ink" 178). The advertisement consisted mainly of

broadsides which included visual images such as drawings, engravings, photos, and quotes taken from the numerous articles that circulated about Olive at the time, such as "She will bear the marks of her captivity to her grave" (Putzi, "Capturing Identity in Ink" 178), to strengthen the already impressive power of the illustrations (Putzi, "Capturing Identity in Ink" 178), and Stratton's view of the narrative as an anti-Indian propaganda rather than the unfiltered account of the female former captive. The handbills of the promotional tour and the lectures also featured provoking headings to attract more public, and therefore more economic and social opportunities for Stratton, such as "Lo! The Poor Captive!" (McGinty 172). Up to this time, the events Olive attended were just the promotional tours of the book, in which the leading spokesperson was Stratton, while Olive stood in the background, notwithstanding the Indian captivity narrative promoted was hers instead of the clergyman's. The turning point from the promotional tours led by Stratton to the national circuit of public lectures that made Olive into the leading spokeswoman and person of note started on May 10, 1858. The reverend, aware of the incredible success of the narrative and its promotional campaign, booked a lecture at the Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church in New York, and advertised the event in the *New York Tribune* the day before, officially marking the beginning of the public lectures' circuit Olive became known for. Since the third edition of the book had been entrusted to the Methodist publishers Carlton and Porter, with the ubiquitous presence of Stratton, who controlled every single aspect of the book and its advertising campaign, it is not clear who had the successful idea to turn the promotional tours into public lectures which had Olive as its only protagonist, as it should have been since the very beginning. Eventually, the marketing strategy resulted in a great success as it combined the incredible story of the young woman and her marked skin with her inclination to public speaking. As it already happened with the promotional tours, initially the spokesman was Stratton, but then he realized that the only person who could be in charge of the speeches was Olive:

> Who originated the idea for promoting sales of *Captivity of the Oatman Girls* with lectures – Stratton or Carlton – is unclear. In any case, it was a brilliant strategy and, as events were soon to demonstrate, ideally suited to Olive's natural talent for public speaking. Although no reviews of the May 10 event have been found, it must have gone off well, for it set the pattern for a host of similar appearances over the ensuing months, and even years. Stratton appeared at some of the events, but it soon became obvious that Olive was the real star, and before long, she assumed sole responsibility for the lectures (McGinty 172).

As already illustrated earlier, one of the impactful strategies that boosted the success of Olive Oatman's lectures was the visual aspect of the events, concerning both the way the events were advertised to attract the public and, once the public was present at the lectures, how the physical marked body of Olive was employed to raise the fascination toward and the notoriety of the young girl even more. By focusing, at first, on the visual aspect of the advertising approach concerning Olive's lectures, it has to be mentioned the power of images such as drawings, engravings, and, mainly, daguerreotypes and photographs that were employed in the broadsides promoting the events. These two ways of capturing the world, its reality, and the people living in it were already known in the United States at that time, since "from their inception in 1839, the daguerreotype and the photograph have been credited with altering the nature of subjectivity and the place of the subject in history. For some, the photograph and the daguerreotype held out the prospect of eternal life and a realm somewhere between the material world and the imagination" (Humphreys 686). Because of their nature of perpetuity and visual force, photographs and daguerreotypes, in the case of Olive Oatman, had a strong influence on her being perceived not only as a public figure, but also as a public performer and, at the same time, living public performance that was treated as someone pertaining both to the material world – she was a real person with real tattoos – and imagination – since she was a real person with real tattoos she was portrayed by the person who took the photo as a subject who, over time, could have been seen as product of the artist's imagination. Once in New York, Olive and Lorenzo met Moses Sperry, their great uncle, who hosted them for two months (Mifflin 156). During their stay at the Sperry's house, Moses brought Olive to Rochester, New York, to have photos of her taken professionally before the publication of the third edition of the *Captivity of the Oatman Girls* on the East Coast (Mifflin 159). Thanks to Moses Sperry, what came out of this photoshoot was one of the most famous pictures of Olive Oatman, known for the strategic and subtle combination of tattoos and clothing in favor of advertisement and public performance of Olive's marked body. The set of photos taken in Rochester consisted of Olive placed in traditional poses: "in one, she is seated, her hands clasped in her lap, while in the other, she stands, one hand placed on the back of a chair […]. She wears an elaborate dress with a row of shiny buttons down the front and a white lace collar and cuffs" (Putzi, "Capturing Identity in Ink" 190). The latter is the one that would become one of the most popular pictures of the young girl since some details show how the body of Olive, her dress, her tattooed chin, and her posture and gaze as well, are accurately calculated to transform Olive in both a performer and a performance, thanks to the disruptive power of her marked, grotesque body bravely standing up to the audience, helped by the designs on the dress that copy those on her chin and arms as well:

> Yet the designs on Oatman's dress – at her wrists, elbows, and ankles – replicates the lines on her chin, thereby drawing attention to the tattoos rather than away from them. The design also hints at the presence of Oatman's arm tattoos, hidden beneath her clothing. The standing portrait is particularly striking in that more of Oatman's dress is visible and, unlike in the seated portrait, Oatman stares boldly into the camera, apparently challenging her audience to read and interpret the marks on her chin (Putzi, "Capturing Identity in Ink" 190-191).

As already analyzed in the previous chapter, the tattooed body of Olive, deemed grotesque, versus the classical one of Palmer's *The White Captive*, more familiar to the audience of the time, was employed by Stratton and, later, by Olive herself to attract more public, thus economic profit and social recognition, and lectures where the best way to do it. Olive was still in the process of readjusting to white, colonial society and life before captivity, she needed earnings that could have helped her pay for housing and education, and even though she had some relatives and acquaintances who could have lent her a hand, she was aware she could not rely on them forever, so she decided to take the lead of the circuit of public lectures and began showing her chin tattoos, exploiting them as a commodity (Mifflin 164). The advertisement promoting her lectures, with its broadsides featuring appealing drawings, engravings, daguerreotypes, and photographs portraying the former captive and her marked face were just the initial stage of the public exploitation of Olive's body through her tattoos, given that "Olive's willingness to call attention to her tattoos is striking. In Oregon she had been painfully self-conscious about the tattoos and had constantly attempted to hide them from new acquaintances. […]. In her lecture appearances, however, she was not at all reluctant to invite her audience's attention to the tattoos. She must have recognized that the blue lines were, at least potentially, a double-edged sword" (McGinty 175). The decision to transform her tattoos from something to hide and be self-conscious about into a commodity to be exploited was mirrored not just by Olive's awareness of the economic gain such decision would have had on her life, education, and overall condition as mentioned above, but was also justified during her lectures that, from the few surviving typescripts of her notes, followed a strategic scheme in explaining her choice to publicly show her tattoos and, therefore, to employ them as a commodity without the fear of being criticized by the public opinion (Putzi, "Capturing Identity in Ink" 191). She began her lectures by stating that she was not at ease with speaking in public, even though she was considered a "spellbinding speaker" (Mifflin 169) and a "gifted lecturer" (McGinty 174). This assertion strongly challenges the feminine confinement to domesticity versus the male public presence in every aspect of social life, a topic that has already been analyzed in the first chapter when discussing women's Indian captivity narratives, which were published to be read by a wide audience rather than being

circumscribed to the woman's home life and considered just and intimate leisure activity limited to the privacy of the woman's household. The same issue emerges, perhaps more manifestly, when analyzing the lectures given by women as the sole spokesperson of the event rather than those performed by men. Before proceeding with the analysis of Olive's lectures, it is important to open a parenthesis on the subject of women and public speaking in 19th-century America to understand better the impact of Olive Oatman's lectures on American society and culture. As with the practice of writing for a reading public, public speaking, that is delivering speeches, lectures, sermons, debates, and so on, was a realm of social life that was limited exclusively to male, authoritative figures, while their female counterpart was restrained to the domesticity and intimacy of their household in which any of the abovementioned public practices was highly disapproved, if not completely forbidden, especially when the act of public speaking was performed in churches and religious places: "From an early date, most devout Christians had honored St. Paul's injunction: ""Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law"" (McGinty 172-173). In a white, colonial, traditional, Christian society highly gendered and led by powerful male figures with full authority in almost every aspect of social, cultural, political, and religious life, women who practiced public speaking not only were seen as "having crossed the boundaries of so-called natural feminine behavior" (Putzi, "Capturing Identity in Ink" 191) as they stepped outside supposed different spheres of action within society, but they also went against the taboo that considered women who spoke in front of an audience as not respectable and sexually ambiguous as well (McGinty 173). In choosing to deliver her own lectures "Olive was one of the first women to defy the social stigma attached to women speaking in public. Her personal history was well calculated to attract audiences, and she had the voice, poise, and presence to hold their attention. But she almost certainly shared the trepidations, the sometime acute stage fright, that struck other women who attempted to defy the prohibition" (McGinty 173). Going back to Olive's lectures and the scheme she employed to deliver her lectures and justify her presence on the stage as a tattooed woman, despite the bravery of performing such a tabooed act as a female public figure, she had to face not just the stage fear, but also the fear of criticism that would inevitably come at her in her position. The assertion of her being reluctant to speak in public puts her in a safe place, as she highlights the fact that she is delivering the lectures out of duty rather than desire (Mifflin 166): "Neither the position of public speaking nor the facts that I am to relate are in harmony with my own feelings, for my nature intuitively shrinks from both. But I yeald *[sic]* to what I conceive to be the opening of providence & the sterne *[sic]* voice of duty" (Putzi, "Capturing Identity in Ink" 191). Moreover, the focus on her performing a duty rather than something out of desire and willingness to share her story of captivity instead of entrusting the narrative to a third person can be noticed in

another statement of Olive, in which she claims that she is not a public lecturer but a narrator of events (Richardson), emphasizing her position of female public figure that was not supposed to stand on a stage and perform an act pertaining to the male sphere, while at the same time imposing her presence as a woman in a place highly dominated by men. Following these premises, which were employed to pave the way for the main topic of Olive's lectures, and after having recounted the story of captivity among Indians, she would exhort the audience to look at the lines on her chin, the permanent marks of her captivity that turned Olive into both a performer and a performance by "making a spectacle of herself – Olive pushed the boundaries of feminine propriety in appearances that could only be validated by her victimhood. […] after years with the uninhibited Mohaves, her body image was probably very different from that of other white women, which may have been what enabled her to present herself publicly in the first place" (Mifflin 167-168).

Besides the mere economic reasons, the decision of Olive to openly display her marked chin in front of an audience in spite of the restricting beliefs that did not allow women to perform public acts, shows how the young girl was willing to risk harsh criticism, or worse, and take the lead of her own Indian captivity narrative and her own body to rewrite her narration and detach it from the one of Stratton and the multitude of male figures that surrounded and manipulated it. The fact that her body and her body image were completely different from those of her female, white contemporaries is another element that shows the willingness of Olive to disrupt the male authority over female bodies trough public lectures, affirming female power over female bodies, following the concept of "rewriting the woman to counteract the subversive representation of females in the phallocentric culture" (Richardson). The way Olive's life, story of captivity, lectures, and the public exposure of her body influenced the feminist discourse will be analyzed later in the chapter, but for now it is important to keep in mind the issues of gender and the public exhibition of female bodies, especially those that did not conform to the standards of the time, in contrast to the puritanical view of such performances:

> Oatman may be reluctant to speak, but she is also an authority on Mohave culture and the experience of captivity. She may appear quite feminine, but she also draws her audiences' attention to her tattoos. In fact, her directive highlights the performative nature of her lectures, and the importance of her body, as well as her words, to that performance. Overall, the images and the lecture attempt to balance the exploitation of the tattoos and the assertion of Oatman's white, Christian womanhood in order to both attract audiences to the performances and avoid criticism such as those that were leveled at female public speakers throughout the century (Putzi, "Capturing Identity in Ink" 191).

Even though, at some point, Olive took charge of the circuit of lectures and disrupted the gendered boundaries limiting women in the social arena, it has to be taken into consideration that she could have been still following Stratton's national and discriminatory agenda against Native Americans, in fact "she establishes the theme of white superiority" (Mifflin 166) during her lectures, probably because she knew she could take a risk about the public exhibition of her female body but not about the public subversion of Stratton's propaganda against Indians, a behavior that would have provoked a negative backlash toward her. During the lectures she changed some details about her captivity, for example, she claimed that she had been made a slave by the Mohave tribe, and the tattoos were proof of her condition of slavery, or, the tortures inflicted on her and her sister not only by the Yavapais but by the Mohaves as well (McGinty 175), a lecture script that was for the most part "suffused with an anti-Indian bias that closely reflected Stratton's own prejudices" (McGinty 174).

The reason for this could have been a matter of self-defense from the public opinion, which was more sensitive about the topic of Native Americans and the need to defeat them, thus "for her own survival, Olive had publicly chosen between binaries" (Mifflin 179), one being her white, colonial status and the other the Indian, Mohave one. Despite the anti-Indian tones of her lectures, Olive affirmed and reassured that she had no political aims, but, on the contrary, the lectures were a personal project to tell her story of captivity rather than letting someone do that: "Oatman claimed not to have a political purpose for her public speaking. Clearly her lectures supported a racist national policy toward the Native American tribes of the Southwest. Yet Oatman herself identified her project as entirely personal" (Putzi, "Capturing Identity in Ink" 192). On the other hand, it can be noted that the white, propagandistic tone of the lectures "might be explained on grounds wholly separate from her own inner feelings. The lectures, after all, were never really about the Indians but about *Captivity of the Oatman Girls* and Olive's desire to promote its sales" (McGinty 177). Even in this case, the double identity of Olive, which has been analyzed in the second chapter, influences the evolution and behavior of Olive during the lectures period. The period covered by Olive's lectures can be circumscribed from the spring of 1858 until the years of the Civil War. The tour stretched throughout a wide area of the nation - New York, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois (McGinty 173), and she definitely closed her lecturing career in 1865 in Rochester (Mifflin 169).

3.2: Lectures or Freak Shows? Similarities and Differences of Olive Oatman's Public Performances

Olive Oatman was not merely a public figure, a lecturer, a woman breaking the gendered boundaries between public and private and disrupting male authority over female bodies, narratives, and identities, she was also able to publicly show her tattooed, grotesque body in front of an audience and recount her experience of captivity by retrieving her own body, narrative and (double) identity. For all these reasons, she was, at the same time, both a performer and a performance herself, perhaps even without realizing it. Her career as public figure, performer, and performance, could be traced back to the very beginning of her story, her applauded return to Fort Yuma after five years of captivity, when she was already well-known. From that moment on, people never really stopped talking about her, discussing about her story, her tattoos, speculating about what happened during her stay among Indians, the meanings of the marks on her chin, and guessing whether what she said out loud was the truth and what she possibly could have hidden beneath her calculated silence. Then, with Stratton's book, its promotional tour, and the beginning of the intense advertisement of the events throughout the country, the notoriety of Olive increased even more and eventually culminated with the circuit of public lectures. The tattooed young girl exhibited her marked, exotic body to show the signs of captivity and her dual identity that coexisted within her and that the audience could see, a public exhibition that took place for several reasons, which have been previously analyzed. To the list of motives for Olive's display of her body, one has to be added in order to understand the idea of her being both a performer and a performance. Since the lectures employed a public display of Olive's tattooed face, such events could assume the tones of exhibitions of a bizarre, out-of-the-ordinary person who wanted, or was paid to, display his or her own exotic, unusual body to highlight the oddity of their figure toward a homogeneous public accustomed to classical, standard bodies: a performance that had both entertaining and educational purposes, as in the case of Olive, who toured the country to present herself as entertainment and, simultaneously, an educational freak show (Mifflin 164). Generally speaking, as the Britannica encyclopedia explains, the term "freak show" describes "the exhibition of exotic or deformed animals as well as humans considered to be in some way abnormal or outside broadly accepted norms" (Chemers, "Freak show"). The definition provided by the encyclopedia is broad and generic, therefore it has to be integrated and developed within the sphere of action that this discussion is about, that is the case of Olive Oatman and her public exposition as a tattooed woman. The meaning of freak shows, the culture and tradition behind them is way more complex and richer, the same as Olive's case study and her involvement, marginal or not, aware, or unaware, with this kind of social, cultural, and historical phenomenon. Before proceeding with the analysis of Olive's involvement with the phenomenon of freak shows and the consequences such

engagement had in her own story, it is necessary to open a parenthesis on the origin and development of this phenomenon to understand on a deeper level the connection with Olive Oatman and her marked body as a public performer and performance. The origin of the freak shows can be traced back at the turn of the 18th and 19th century in Europe, in particular in Paris, Madrid, and London, in the form of zoological gardens and parks (Putova 92). The shift from zoological gardens and parks into the freak shows known nowadays was caused by the developing colonial expansion of European countries, the growing scientific interest in racial classifications between European and non-European races, Darwinism, and fascination toward the discipline of anthropology and ethnography (Putova 91-92), elements that, in turn, saw their expansion in Europe because of the presence of non-European, exotic men and women brought in the continent by travelers, ethnographers and anthropologists as objects of study and, eventually of public display for educational reasons and, particularly, for entertainment. At this point, zoological gardens and parks did not offer entertainment to the public anymore whereas the display of "exotic individuals, their bodily otherness, physical handicaps, actual or presumed anomalies and any deviations from European population norms" (Putova 93) did, and with a great amount of success and attendance. The interest in this kind of show, besides the mere morbid curiosity of the masses, had to do with the idea of the superior race, the white, Western one, versus an inferior race, the indigenous and savage one, a belief that was applied not only to non-European people but to people with disabilities and/or physical anomalies as well: "an exotic picture of the members of non-European cultures or physically handicapped people evoked the triumph of Western civilization over technological backwardness of preliterate societies" (Putova 91). This assumption reached the masses and influenced the fascination of the public toward such odd, bizarre figures which strongly emphasized the difference among races. The popularity of the freak shows saw its peak between the 19th and 20th century, becoming a significant part of zoological gardens, exotic villages, circuses, anatomic and wax figure museums, cabinets of curiosities, exhibitions, and fairs (Putova 92). Based on the country and its cultural and social context, freak shows had their specific names and styles, for example in the United Kingdom and the United States there were human zoos, freak shows, sideshows or dimeshows (Putova 92). At these events, one could see, among the most famous figures, Siamese twins, bearded ladies, dwarfs, giants, albinos, monkey women and monkey men (Putova 93). The very first protagonist of a freak show was Saartjie Baartman, an African American woman from the Khoisan tribe who was brought to London in 1810 by William Dunlop, a British doctor. She was nicknamed Hottentot Venus, and she was exhibited, in humiliating conditions, in marketplaces and circuses until 1815, when she passed away. Baartman was a well-known freak show because of her oversized and abnormal buttocks and genitals, not in line with the standards of European, Western society (Putova 93). The success and power of freak shows were not merely due to the performances

and the performers, but by the person, or people, who organized them and had control over the whole event and those involved with it. These entrepreneurial figures were the impresarios, who made sure to promote the events and give the public what they wanted, together with traders in the colonies, colonial office workers, and missionary societies. The more exotic and out-of-the-ordinary the performer was, the better, both for them in terms of profits and notoriety, and for the public as well, who paid to see the shows and was willing to see more to entertain themselves and to strengthen their position of superiority in opposition to what they viewed. The success of freak shows gave impresarios more motivation to find new and bizarre performers, powered and influenced by the colonial discourse of the dichotomy of superior versus inferior race, putting emphasis on stereotyped views of the "freaks" to satisfy the public and the racial assumptions of the time:

> This in turn was enhanced by positive reactions of the public that required more exoticism, more colonial products and more native populations living under the civilized custody of the white man. Organizers usually searched for new and fresh human freaks with distinctive features and abilities, or for people who could be incorporated into a show. Impresarios focused on commercial success, which is why they also took advantage of stereotypes and presentation cliches in a manner that corresponded to the purpose to satisfy the public expectation (Putova 94).

Concerning the United States and the figure of the impresario, the man who made freak shows one of the most famous attractions throughout the country was Phineas Taylor Barnum. He started his career in the 1830s as he displayed, in his first freak show, what was presumed to be a 160-year-old, blind former nurse of George Washington. He is mostly known for The Greatest Show on Earth, a circus that opened in New York in 1881, but he previously ran the Barnum's American Museum in New York, his shows featuring exotic animals, wax figures, jugglers, Albinos, Lilliputians, giants, bearded women, and Siamese twins (Putova 95). Among these performers, there were also Maximo and Bartola, nicknamed Aztec Children or The Last of the Ancient Aztecs, who were bought when they were children in Salvador to perform in freak shows. However, to appeal to the public, Barnum made up their story by recounting that they were randomly found in the town of Iximaya, in Meso-America (Putova 95). The presence of Maximo and Bartola among the more traditional performers of Barnum's freak shows demonstrates how the great racial heterogeneity within the realm of the shows gave racial theorists, ethnologists, and anthropologists the possibility of analyzing the number of new specimens of human beings by means of racial characterization by attributing to freak shows

the purpose of educational tool, not only of entertainment. While at the same time, the public was able to have such scientific knowledge available and suitable for them to understand:

> This confirmed the fact according to which shows "depended on a supply of curiosities from abroad, which in turn provided racial theorists with new "specimens" to analyze. Racial characterizations were then funneled back into the materials purveyed by freak show promoters, lending them an air of respectability and further securing scientific to mass culture. Ethnology gained access to rare specimen, and racial ideology was disseminated to a broad public" (Putova 95-96).

With the beginning of the First World War, freak shows were still an appreciated form of entertainment, but the situation changed in the post-war period, as they slowly started to disappear from the European entertainment culture. The decline of freak shows was signaled by the performances of a member of the Pygmy tribe of Batwa, Ota Benga. This native performed in the zoological garden in the Bronx in 1906, trapped in a cage, he was able to escape and started working at a cigarette factory, eventually committing suicide because of the conditions of inhumanity he went through and the impossibility of returning to Congo (Putova 101). The humiliating conditions of the performers, the advent of Nazism which refused to let immigrants expatriate to work in the shows, and the advent of the growing movie industry, after the Second World War, as the monopolizing form of entertainment gave freak shows their definitive last breath of life (Putova 101).

After a brief explanation of the origin, development, main features, and figures regarding the phenomenon of freak shows, these elements can now be compared to the case study at hand, that of Olive Oatman, and analyze the possibility, or not, of the former captive being treated as a freak show herself, given the public exposure of her disfigured, tattooed chin in front of a white, Western, racially, and culturally homogeneous audience. Going back to the abovementioned generic definition of freak shows provided by the Britannica encyclopedia, "the exhibition of exotic animals as well as humans considered to be in some way abnormal or outside broadly accepted norms" which does not mention the possibility of humans developing abnormalities or anomalies in their lifetime, but, instead, it seems that such abnormalities directly come from birth, and, consequently, do not match with the conventional view of the white, Western, classical body. Olive was not born with any physical anomalies or handicaps that distanced her from the standards of the time, she actually embodied the conventional view of a white, colonial, Anglo-Saxon girl who perfectly fitted the characteristics of her own race. However, at one point in her life, she had been indelibly marked by Indians, an action

that shifted her from a status of conventional and standardized member of white, colonial America into a tattooed, grotesque, tribal woman, in which the presence of tattoos caused her to be deemed as an abnormal, anomalous figure that could be suitable to perform in a freak show anyway. The growing interest in disciplines such as ethnology and anthropology by scholars and scientists who employed performers of freak shows as specimens to analyze racial characterization, together with the belief in the superiority of a race over another and the influence such aspects had on the general public attending the shows, combining both the educational and the entertaining element, are mirrored in Olive's lectures. The combination of Olive's story of captivity and post-captivity, the display of her tattooed chin, and the explanation of how Mohaves made them and why, along with Olive's double identity as white, colonial woman and Indian woman could have been enough elements to regard her as a freak show performer, considering that both the promotional tour of the book and the circuit of lectures attracted a considerable number of visitors. What counteracts this supposition is the physical position of Olive on the stage during her public appearances, the background, and the unfolding of the lectures. She simply stood on stage narrating her story and showing her marked chin to the audience, there seems to be no mention of any kind of background surrounding her while, in the case of freak shows and their performers, they were "presenting primarily physical differences of individuals that could be accompanied by acrobatic or other artistic abilities […]. It was important to simulate the routine life of indigenous people in a village through which visitors could walk and participate in various activities" (Putova 94). As mentioned above, during the lectures Olive did not offer the public any type of acrobatics or artistic ability besides narrating her story and displaying her tattoos, the fact that there seems to be no mention of a specific background strategically built to attract the audience, nor the possibility of the latter to participate in activities connected with her and her performance are all elements that could oppose to the supposition of Olive being a freak show performer. Two more aspects concerning Olive's involvement or non-involvement with freak shows that need to be analyzed are the advertisement methods employed and the figure, or figures, in charge of the organization of the events and their performers, the impresarios. As previously explained, the figure of the impresario in the realm of freak shows was fundamental for their success and popularity, as well as for the impresario himself, who gained economic profit and notoriety along with the success of his shows. The entrepreneurial ability of the impresario impacted the shows, their popularity, and their originality in terms of the degree of weirdness the performers exhibited. Even in this case, impresarios were usually male, authoritative figures who had complete control over the performances and the performers, who were accurately chosen to satisfy the demand of the public for entertainment and impresarios own desire to gain money and popularity, employing the racial discourse of the superiority of one race over the other as an appealing element. Hence, the advertising methods

employed by impresarios had to be strategically studied to attract more audience and to build their loyalty, the first strategy being the common one as "the main advertising campaign started by choosing an exciting title, […] that was complemented with a corresponding illustration on a poster or billboard" (Putova 95), broadsides were then accompanied by announcers who invited the audience to enter or by impresarios themselves who gave short lectures or leaflet to the passers-by, or the typical advertisement in newspapers (Putova 95). Following the end of the show, visitors then "could buy souvenirs, posters, illustrated postcards, photographs, leaflets or […] pamphlets with a CV of the freaks exhibited. Some human freaks went after their performance among the public and signed autographs. Promotion included cooperation with anthropologists, anthropologic societies and organizers of the shows" (Putova 95). In Olive's case, the impresario figure was Royal B. Stratton, who, once he found her story and the peculiarity of her tattooed face, he immediately seized the opportunity and exploited her as a freak show performer, especially by leaning on the racial connotations the narrative and the body of the young girl had. In the same way impresarios exploited their performers as anthropological and ethnological specimens as proof of racial superiority and inferiority, laid bare in front of the audience, the same did Stratton as racial propaganda against Native Americans and their supposed inferiority, employing both Olive and her marked chin as a model for anthropology and ethnology studies. However, concerning the advertisement, Stratton did employ several strategies of advertising methods to attract the public toward the promotional campaigns and the public lectures of Olive, but he chose to keep the advertisement simple by using broadsides and announcements in the various newspapers. Differently from freak shows, the public did not engage in any sort of activity after the events, Olive never signed any autographs nor were the events associated with any cooperation with scientific associations. The Methodist Church, in a way, sponsored the book and the events but never took part publicly and manifestly in the campaign and the lectures. The analysis of Olive's connection with or estrangement from the phenomenon of freak shows positions her in a grey area in which some elements provide proof of her being a freak show performer, while some others distance her from this possibility. In spite of all the contrasting elements, Margot Mifflin illustrates what seems to be the best interpretation of Olive's association and, at the same time, detachment with the phenomenon of freak shows:

> Olive could have cashed in as a sideshow or at least a dime-store attraction, and she certainly fit one definition of a freak: "an ambiguous being…who is considered simultaneously and compulsively fascinating and repulsive, enticing and sickening." But freaks did not typically tell their own stories – their autobiographical broadsides were usually fictionalized and scripted for them – nor did they invite legitimate, book-length biographies. Olive's story, no matter how

contaminated by Stratton, was her own. While her lecture handbills amplified the sensationalism of her exceptional double life, they also insisted on her ethnographic authorship (165).

3.3: From Fascinating Public Figure to Beloved Wife and Mother – Olive Oatman's Life after Public Success

During the last years of her career as a public lecturer, the life of Olive took an unexpected turn when, in 1864, after a lecture in a church in the town of Farmington, Michigan, she met what would have been her future husband, John Brant Fairchild, a farmer and a rancher, a man who would change her life forever (Mifflin 182). At that point in her life, the possibilities of Olive marring a respectable man, settling down, and eventually fully transculturating back to white, colonial society were low due to her past as a captive, her tattooed chin, and the rumors about her having left an Indian husband and children when she made her return to Fort Yuma. Fairchild, instead, was intrigued by the story of Olive and what she went through, and he could relate to the experience of dealing with Indians as well, since in 1854, he lost his brother Rodney during a battle against a band of Apaches while they were driving cattle from Mexico and Texas to California (McGinty 180; Mifflin 182). After the lecture, Fairchild's mother and sisters invited Olive to their house, as they all were fascinated by her and her story, and only a year later, in July 1865, he proposed to her, and the couple married in Rochester in November of the same year. At the time of the marriage, Olive was twenty-eight years old and Fairchild was thirty-five. Along with the union with her husband came the decision of Olive to put an end to her career of public speaking to dedicate her life to her husband and, possibly, to her children, defining this period of change as "the happiest period of my life" (McGinty 181). Contrary to the predictions, Olive actually married into a wealthy and well-respected family: Fairchild's father was a civil engineer and his two brothers were, respectively, a lawyer and a doctor. The wealth of the family came from the activities of herding and selling cattle, along with Olive's husband's ability to invest in it, eventually becoming a successful money broker (Mifflin 183). In 1872 the couple moved permanently to the town of Sherman, in the state of Texas. There, Fairchild continued to manage his business and improved it as well by co-founding the City Bank which boosted his wealth and the social integration in the town both of her wife and himself (McGinty 181). The spouses lived in a big, two-story Victorian home decorated with a well-manicured lawn, flower gardens, and a servant (Mifflin 185). Olive and John were quite integrated into Sherman's social circles, people described Olive as shy and reclusive while her husband as handsome, distinguished, and phlegmatic, however, the general view was that of a romantic couple who did not socialize so much. Olive spent her time doing charity work, taking care of the children of Sherman's orphanage, managing her house, and

writing letters to her family members and close friends, and, in 1873, the couple adopted a three-week-old baby girl named Mary Elizabeth, who Olive and John lovingly called Mamie. The life of Olive in Texas finally had all the characteristics of a normal, quiet, pleasant existence marked by a loved husband and daughter, a nice home, and an overall feeling of peace and stillness, in which the memories of captivity and post-captivity, promotional campaigns, public lectures and the display of her tattooed body did not completely disappear but had been stored in the background to make space for new memories and the celebration of a new life. In Sherman everyone knew Olive and her past as a former captive, she wore a veil to cover her chin tattoos every time she had to leave the house (Mifflin 184), while her husband found himself to be very protective toward and devoted to his wife, as he not only bought her a wonderful house with servants and every possible comfort, but he also defended her from rumors about her past and the trauma of recounting her story of captivity any time the opportunity presented itself. Fairchild went as far as buying every copy of Stratton's book to destroy them and to forbid guests to ask Olive about her life among Indians:

> In Sherman Fairchild demonstrated his devotion to Olive in many ways. He not only provided a comfortable house for her and their adopted daughter but also staffed it with servants and took pains to ensure that Olive's privacy was protected. He bought up and destroyed every copy of *Captivity of the Oatman Girls* that he could lay his hands on and he made it a rule that no guest in his home was ever to ask Olive any questions about the Indians (McGinty 183).

The life and story of Olive had always been defined by the presence of male, white, authoritative figures controlling and exploiting her narrative and tattooed body, such as reverend Stratton. Olive's husband, even though he had a completely different approach from that of the clergyman, as well as his goals and behavior, was still a figure that strongly influenced her life in a seemingly positive way compared to Stratton's. Fairchild went to great lengths to protect his wife, he was aware that, although she was now living a traditional, peaceful, family-oriented life, the traumatic experiences of captivity and post-captivity still haunted her both in physical and mental terms, so he appointed to himself the duty of defender of Olive from the public opinion and that of censor of her wife's Indian captivity narrative. He might have thought that the removal of *Captivity of the Oatman Girls* from the market would have healed her wife's traumatized physical and emotional state, and would as well saved him from the public embarrassment of having married a former Indian captive marked with tattoos. It seems that he wanted to reclaim Olive's position of a white, colonial woman married to a wealthy and well-respected member of Sherman's elite social circles:

> If Stratton had controlled the telling of Olive's Indian history, Fairchild appointed himself its censor. Before the wedding, he bought and burned every copy of the Oatman book he could find, possibly out of shame about his wife's dark past and her public life. He may simply have wanted to protect her; it probably didn't take long for him to learn that the wounds of her traumatic past were still tender. The Oatman story had served its purpose – notably bringing Fairchild and Oatman together; but it did not reflect well on the society wife Fairchild envisioned for himself as a wealthy businessman (Mifflin 183).

In spite of Fairchild's efforts to protect his wife and their social reputation, and despite Olive's new life, the consequences of what she went through until that point in her life started to affect her physical and mental well-being more frequently. The woman was fighting against debilitating eye troubles, headaches, and depression, and she often spent several months in bed or in hotels and sanatoriums specialized in curing such ailments. She used to visit the Springbank Hotel and Bathing Establishment in St. Catharines, near Niagara Falls, founded by the well-known surgeon and physician Theophilus Mack, who tried to help Olive heal from her medical issues (Mifflin 186).

Eventually, the origin of Olive's ailments was deemed to be neurasthenia, a medical condition caused by a "depletion of the central nervous system's energy reserves, brought on by the stresses of modern life, with symptoms ranging from weakness and fatigue to headaches and depression" (Mifflin 186). Neurasthenia was very common among middle- and upper-class women of the time and was formulated by the popular neurologist Weir Mitchell who found a cure for such condition as well, the so-called rest cure, that would have helped women recover from "cultural and psychological conditions that spanned "hysteria," postpartum depression, and anxiety" (Mifflin 186-187). The rest cure consisted of the temporary removal of women, overwhelmed by domestic responsibilities, from their homes to be brought into dedicated structures that could allow them a period of mental and physical inactivity and seclusion that could last several months at a time (Mifflin 187). This was supposed to be the cure for women extremely stressed by domestic, familiar, and marital duties who found themselves in need of some rest and unproductivity from the exhaustion of nineteenth-century modern life. Although neurasthenia affected mostly women, men suffered from this illness as well, but the cure for them was the opposite of that given to women. In order to heal their neurasthenia, men had to break away from their everyday routine and travel west, emulating the typical life of a frontier man going westward, trying to get food, sleeping in the open air, and returning to a condition of pre-civilization (Mifflin 187). Men's cure against neurasthenia is similar, if not the same, as that of a Mohave, and the same Olive's experienced during her five-year stay among Indians. It could be seen as a paradox if one takes into consideration the fact that the medical issues of Olive, both physical

and mental, could have been caused by her experience westward, living in the wilderness, sleeping in the open air, and getting food from what nature provided at the moment, and the return to a condition of savagism and barbarism, in fact "It sounded a lot like the life of a Mohave. Paradoxically, the cure form men's neurasthenia may well have been the root cause of Olive's" (Mifflin 187).

In the case of Olive, the rest cure proposed by Mitchell did not help her since she was not the typical female neurasthenic who could not handle the flow of modern life as a conventional ornamental woman, as defined by the American economist and sociologist Thorstein Veblen in his 1899 work *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. According to Veblen "the leisure rendered by the wife in such cases is, of course, not a simple manifestation of idleness or indolence. It almost invariably occurs disguised under some form of work or household duties or social amenities, which prove on analysis to serve little or no ulterior end beyond showing that she does not occupy herself with anything that is gainful or that is of substantial use" (Veblen 81-82). Once Olive married John Fairchild, she became an ornamental woman for all intents and purposes, but such profound shift made the readjustment to white, colonial society even more difficult, such that the rest cure provided by Mitchell would have been ineffective in the case of Olive, who was highly sensitive and vulnerable about her new life based on idleness and leisure:

> Unlike the typical female neurasthenic, who was deemed overwhelmed by the pace of modern living, Olive may simply have been unable to adjust to a life of leisure after growing up among the unconstrained Mohaves and spending her early adulthood as a traveling celebrity. In Texas she personified Thorstein Veblen's ornamental woman, moneyed and idle, volunteering and running a household. If the effect of this unvaried existence drove many average women to despair, Olive's history would only have heightened her vulnerability to it, and any number of factors could have exacerbated it: menopause, biochemical depression, or the ripple effects of post-traumatic stress (Mifflin 187).

Eventually, Olive's medical conditions worsened and she was forced to a life of reclusion in her house, and with advancing age, she found herself mourning the loss of two of the most important female figures in her life, her mother, and her little sister Mary Ann, at the same time yearning for female companionship, as she wrote in the several letters to her aunt Sarah Abbott (Mifflin 187). During the last years of her life, one of the Fairchild's family friends tenderly recalled that "I used to sit by the fire, when a child, watching Mrs. Fairchild and admiring her kind and gentle ways […], her sweet face was surrounded by beautiful white hair like a halo. The tattoo had faded to a pale blue,

and of course I was so used to seeing it I didn't even notice it anymore" (Mifflin 196). On March 21st, 1903, Olive died of a heart attack in her sleep in the quiet of her home, her death was announced in some of the main newspapers of Sherman, as the *Sherman Daily Register* and the *Sherman Weekly Democrat* (Mifflin 196). Even after her death, her husband John made sure to protect her from the public, Stratton, and the Mohave tribe as well by sealing in iron her coffin and marking her grave with a tombstone made with granite, to prevent the Indians from reclaiming her body (McGinty 189), eventually inscribing the tombstone with her birth name to honor her true identity (Mifflin 197). In 1907, John Fairchild died while in bed at the age of seventy-seven, the year after their beloved daughter Mamie moved to Detroit, Michigan, where she married and gave birth to a baby girl who lived just for a few days but bore the name of her grandmother, Olive (Mifflin 197).

> Olive's legacy, like her Mohave ethnicity, would be more notional than genealogical. She had slipped into another skin and passed as a Mohave, then she peeled away her Indian self and resumed her whiteness, leaving no genetic trace in either realm. Still, a fertile afterlife awaited her: she would be reborn, again and again – in newspaper articles, short stories, and novels – well into the twenty-first century (Mifflin 198).

3.4: Olive Oatman and Her Legacy

The story of Olive did not end with her death, since her legacy as a literary, historical, social, and cultural figure that influenced American literary, historical, social, and cultural spheres remained after her passing away in many forms, such as newspaper articles, short stories, novels and more, well into the twenty-first century and, hopefully, in the following years as well. In the last part of this chapter, the focus will be on Olive Oatman's legacy not only in the literary and historical realms but especially in the social and cultural ones, from the trend of giving newborn baby girls the name of the former captive to her influence on the feminist discourse regarding the power of women over their own bodies and their right to make their voices heard across a world of male and authoritative figures. After her death, Stratton's *Captivity of the Oatman Girls* kept being published in many new editions, starting with the revised and abridged edition edited by Charles H. Jones, and made available by the Oregon Teachers Monthly in Salem, Oregon in 1909, in which Jones reduced the original text to 119 pages but maintained the essence of the original version and Stratton's prose. In 1982 Time Life added the third edition of the Indian captivity narrative, made into a deluxe version, to its Classics of the Old West series, and in 1994 a facsimile of the 1935 fine-press edition was reprinted, to meet the ongoing demand of the reading public and scholars of such incredible story (McGinty 189-190).

Occasionally, on days when the newspapers did not have any resounding story to report, the drama of the Oatmans would be pulled out from storage and released as a novelty item, particularly in the Southwest. The first story of this kind dates back to 1913 when the *Syracuse Herald* issued an article involving some relatives of Olive living in the area, but without any real reason, while the last dates back to 2007 in a *San Pedro Valley News Sun*'s article, once again for no apparent reason at all (Mifflin 199). Along with newspaper articles, rumors about Olive, her life, her family, and her past as an Indian woman did not cease but, on the contrary, such rumors began to emerge, probably more intensely as compared to the period in which Olive was alive. Most of these rumors appeared to be implausible and without foundation, some of them being very bizarre and inventive. Some storytellers claimed to have saved her from the Indians or to have known her. One of the most peculiar examples of this kind of fabrication is the case of John Oatman, a well-off Mohave man living in Arizona, who became famous for the article about his troubled divorce from his wife issued on April 30, 1922, on the *(Phoenix) Arizona Republican*. In this article, besides the facts concerning the divorce cause, the man claimed to be the grandson of Olive:

> John Oatman claims to be the grandson of Olive Oatman, famous in Arizona history. In 1851 the Oatman family while on its way from Illinois to California was massacred by Indians. One daughter, Olive, was spared and forced to marry a Mohave brave. She became such a thorough Indian woman that years later, when her brother insisted that she leave her husband and children, she went insane ("The Oatman Divorce Case" 29).

The preceding quote, by mentioning the newspaper's certitude of Olive having been an Indian wife and mother, and her going insane, brings the analysis toward two other rumors that had been perpetrated not only during Olive's life but after her death as well. The first one, which has already been discussed in the second chapter, regards the possibility that Olive might have married a Mohave man and might have given birth to their children, given the speculations concerning her chin tattoos and their supposed meaning of marriageability and sexual intercourse within Mohave culture. For example, in1863, a newspaper of Austin, Nevada, reported that a man by the name of George Washington Jacobs had taken into his care some Indian children and one of them was "a beautiful light-haired, blue-eyed girl, supposed to have been a child of the unfortunate Oliv[e] Oatman" (McGinty 190), or, again, in 1893 a newspaper of Phoenix, Arizona, reported that Olive gave birth to three children, one of them being a mixed race boy working in Phoenix and identified as "Joe" (McGinty 191). In the case of the girl in Austin, the association with Olive was never confirmed nor

denied because the girl died before any test could have been made, while, in the case of Joe, the boy was questioned about his association with Olive but he never confirmed or denied the facts reported on the article either (McGinty 191). With regards to the rumor about Olive going insane, the man who planted it was the writer E.J. Conklin, who wrote in his travelogue *Picturesque Arizona* in 1878 that the woman went insane and died in an insane asylum (Mifflin 190). The rumor was then perpetrated by the historian Hubert Howe Bancroft in his 1882 and 1889 books, and even after her death, such fabrication was revived in the preface of the 1935 edition of *Captivity of the Oatman Girls* (Mifflin 190). Another aspect of Olive's heritage was the process of fictionalization of her story, which started when she was still alive and continues even now in the present day. The fictionalization of her experience of captivity created new points of view and interpretations of Olive's story, together with the understanding of the historical mindset of the author of such fictional products and what the protagonist of the narrative went through: "when it was fictionalized […], the Oatman experience acquired rich new subtexts, revealing as much about the historical mindset of its appropriators as the dramatic plight of the captive" (Mifflin 199). The process of fictionalization of Olive's narrative started in 1872, when Maria Amparo Ruiz de Burton, a Baja California native, employed the figure of Olive to shape the fictitious figure of Lola Medina, the protagonist of her satirical novel *Who Would Have Thought It?* (Mifflin 199). In the mid-1960s, the story of Olive and her rescue was adapted for one of the first TV shows about the woman and her experience among Indians, that is the television series *Death Valley Days*, and the episode broadcasting the story was titled "The Lawless Have Laws", aired on October 1st, 1965, and starring the future president Ronald Reagan interpreting Colonel Martin Burke (Mifflin 200-201). In 1956 the well-known movie by John Ford, *The Searchers*, was released, starring John Wayne as the male lead (Mifflin 203). The movie, inspired by the story of Olive, deals with the plotline of captivity and rescue but, differently from Olive's narrative, the white captive resists the return to her community of origin (Mifflin 203). During the post-feminist wave of the 1980s, the American writer Elmore Leonard revived, for the first time, the figure of Olive in a completely different way in his 1982 short story "The Tonto Woman." In this fictional product, the figure of Olive and her involvement in the experience of captivity is exhibited in the form of a sexually, eroticized, and unashamed protagonist, as the writer "seized on the one glaring but perpetually sublimated theme of her ordeal – her sexuality, and for the first time, she was unabashedly eroticized" (Mifflin 203). In 1997, Olive appeared as a romantic heroine in Elizabeth Grayson's book *So Wide the Sky*, in which the main protagonist, Cassie Morgan, was, once again, inspired by the former captive (Mifflin 204), while, in 2003, the author Wendy Lawton wrote *Ransom's Mark*, one of four children's books in which the story of Olive is narrated to a younger audience (Mifflin 206), boos that were sold with a collectible figurine of Olive that was worth 695 dollars (Mifflin 3). More

recently, the figure of Olive inspired the character of a TV series called *Hell on Wheels*, which aired from 2011 to 2016, in which the character of Eva Oates is highly inspired by Olive since the character shows marks on her chin similar to those of Olive (Van Huygen). Regarding the historical and cultural aspect, the legacy of Olive and her memory had been commemorated and honored by the Arizona chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, which, in 1920, became interested in the grave site of the Oatman massacre, now known as "Oatman Flat", and started to work on their project of having the site recognized as a place of commemoration and historical and cultural value (McGinty 194). The grave site saw the passing of time, the harshness of the weather, and the relentless movement of travelers and pioneers headed to the west, from the discovery of the bodies of the members of the Oatman family found by friends and acquaintances back in 1851, to the official settlement by the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1954. The philanthropists asked the Congress for help, they wanted the grave site to be fenced and decorated with a monument, and eventually, the site was declared an official historical and cultural national landmark, safely enclosed with a fence and adorned with a granite and concrete tombstone on which a bronze plaque brought the following inscription (McGinty 194-195): "In memory of/the Oatman family/six members of this pioneer family/massacred by Indians in march 1851/erected by the Arizona society/Daughters of the American Revolution – 1954" (McGinty 195). Along with the efforts of the Daughters of the American Revolution and their enthusiasm in giving Olive and her family a deserving place in the national history and culture, the community as well made their own contribution to keep the memory of Olive alive and everlasting by giving the name of the captive, or variations of the name, to baby girls born between the late 1850s and 1860s, as Olive Oatman Cribbs, Olive Oatman Fretts, Olive Oatman Hooker, Olive Oatman Pearce, Mary Olive Oatman Raley, Olive Oatman Smith, Olive Oatman Stockett, and Olive Oatman Willet among others (McGinty 178). The popularity of Olive and her influence even in mass and popular culture extended to the topography of the country as well, in fact in the Black Mountains of Mohave County, in the state of Arizona, can be found a small, census-designated town named Oatman, in honor of the former captive. The town began as a small mining camp in 1915 (Goudy 153), but nowadays it has been transformed into a Wild West tourist attraction famous for the wild donkeys wandering freely in the streets (Goudy 156). In Oatman, the tattooed face of the girl adorns the Olive Oatman Restaurant, which is placed across the street from the Oatman Hotel, famous for having hosted the famous actors Clark Gable and Carole Lombard during their honeymoon (Mifflin 2). Among the Mohaves, the memory of Olive was still vivid, as they remembered the girl and her little sister Mary Ann with great affection, as they told the anthropologist Kroeber when he visited the Mohave Valley in 1903 (McGinty 193). However, the members of the tribe were reluctant to talk about Olive, because they feared incriminations coming

from the whites, the same issue that occurred when the chief of the tribe decided to let Olive return to Fort Yuma, but at some point, Kroeber was able to have a conversation with Tokwatha, an old Mohave man who knew Olive and participated in the journey to Fort Yuma with the girl and Francisco, the Indian mediator. (McGinty 192-193) The Indian "sat down with Kroeber under the shade of a Mohave ramada to answer his questions and reminisce about Olive's departure from the valley" (McGinty 193). Generally speaking, the tribe kept its reluctance in speaking about the Oatman sisters and Olive, since every time they tried to talk about the topic their words were "misunderstood, twisted, turned against them" (McGinty 193), even though they thought that they did the right thing in rescuing the sisters from the Yavapais, accepting, and nurturing them as loved members of the tribe (McGinty 193). The memory of Olive is still being honored nowadays, as the comments of Llewellyn Barrackman and Michael Tsosie, two members of the tribe, have been employed in this work and have been very helpful in understanding the issues raised during the analysis of the topics here addressed.

One of the most significant aspects of Olive Oatman's impact and legacy in American culture is strongly associated with the topic of feminism and the discourse regarding the power of women over their own bodies and their right to have their own space and to employ their own voices in order to be heard and understood, against the controlling and dominating presence of male, white, authoritative figures that want to silence and manipulate women, their own bodies, voices, and personal stories. In 1845, the American journalist and women's rights advocate Margaret Fuller published her book *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, in which she argued for legal, educational, and economic equality and freedom for women (Mifflin 170) by positioning them at the same level as their male counterparts coexisting in the same egalitarian status: "the conditions of life and freedom recognized as the same for the daughters and the sons of time; twin exponents of a divine thought" (Fuller vi). Fuller's manifesto was then followed, in 1848, by the Seneca Falls Convention, in the state of New York. This convention was considered to be not just the first conference regarding female rights, but also the moment in which American feminism officially began, prompting the beginning of the first wave of the feminist movement as well. These two historical reference points are relevant to understand the position of Olive within the sphere of feminism and the development of the movement at the time since when she started the promotional campaign of the book, and in particular, the circuit of lectures, the phenomenon was already established but still recent concerning its integration in the social and cultural composition of the nation. As it has already been discussed early in the chapter, the activity of public speaking performed by women, along with several other activities performed outside the privacy of the household, was strictly prohibited, and deemed inappropriate and sexually ambiguous, especially when the speaking took place in religious places such as churches.

Even though the first wave of feminism, that emerged with the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, was already starting to develop in the social and cultural fabric of the country and was starting to give women the possibility to have their own freedom regarding their life and their career, they were still banned from public activities, since "public speaking itself was a freedom women had barely tested" (Mifflin 170). When Olive entered the realm of public speaking, first with the promotional campaign of her Indian captivity narrative and later with the circuit of public lectures, the ban imposed on women from such activity was effective, such that figures like Sarah and Angelina Grimkè, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, and Sarah Winnemucca, among other, fought the social and cultural restrictions by bravely taking the stage, facing the audience, and publicly speaking about the causes they were supporting, paving the way for Olive's career as public speaker, performer and performance, and symbol of women's empowerment. The Grimkè sisters, twenty years before the publication of Stratton's book, were criticized by a group of Congregationalist ministers who accused them of their unfeminine lectures about abolitionism (Putzi, "Capturing Identity in Ink" 191), Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, a woman of color, publicly spoke about women's issues such as the feminist movement, abolition, and temperance, and finally Sarah Winnemucca, a member of the Paiute tribe, lectured to help her tribe survive white colonization (Putzi, "Capturing Identity in Ink" 192). With regard to Olive, the act of public speaking and display of her tattooed body in front of the audience was a performative action she was forced to do because of Stratton's impositions at first, in which the narration of her story and the exhibition of her marked chin were manipulated and controlled by a man with power and social, religious authority who gave the girl on the stage the validation to expose herself without being criticized by the public opinion. The turning point of Stratton's control over Olive's voice and body occurred once the girl saw the opportunity to take full control of her narrative and her body, reclaiming her own story and her own marked body without the approval of the clergyman. She reclaimed her narrative and her body by "talking back," as the American feminist writer bell hooks explains in her 1989 homonymous work *Talking Back*:

> true speaking is not solely an expression of creative power; it is an act of resistance, a political gesture that challenges politics of domination that would render us nameless and voiceless. As such, it is a courageous act – as such, it represents a threat. To those who wield oppressive power, that which is threatening must necessarily be wiped out, annihilated, silenced (8).

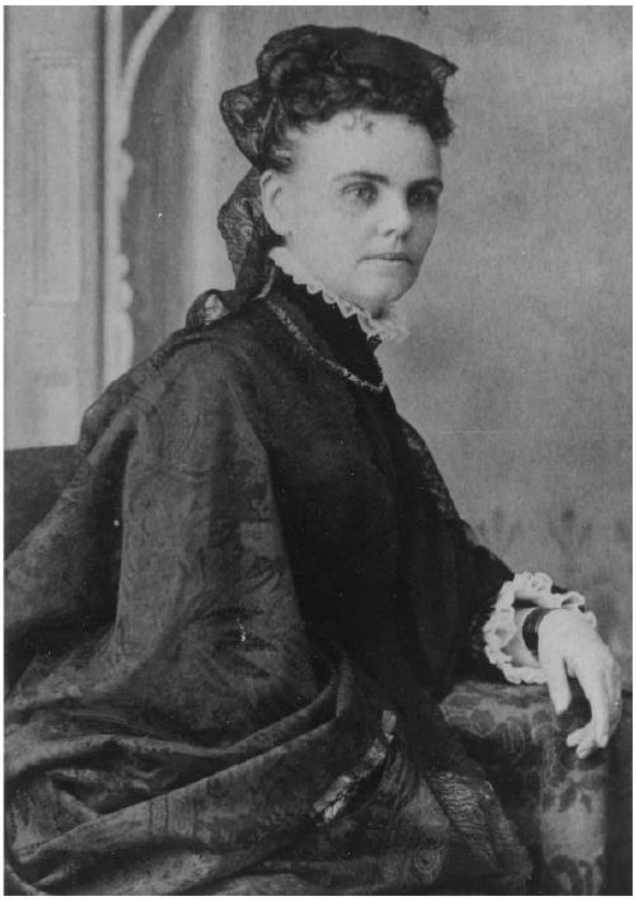
Olive "talked back" and "spoke truthfully" as soon as she got the opportunity to release herself from the oppressive power of a man who took control over her life, narrative, and body until that point, she

finally freed herself from the position of nameless and voiceless figure that the clergyman imposed on her because of his fear of Olive's power as a woman with a voice that could not be silenced forever. She was able to climb back from the annihilation and forced silence she had been forced to stay in, giving her female contemporaries living proof of their strength and potential to raise their voices, show their bodies, and tell their stories without the need for male validation, as "the importance and relevance of her speech, the reason her lectures went on for years was because of her ability to wield rhetoric so effectively that she was able to talk back in a way that used the dominant narrative to dismantle the hierarchy, and therefore removing the identity forced upon her in the dominant narrative" (Richardson). The way in which she reclaimed her power as a woman, tattooed captive, performer, and performance, and helped women do the same was by means of having her two identities coexist, that of Indian, tattooed woman and that of white, colonial one when delivering her speeches. At the end of her lectures, she would address the women in the audience, not the men, by telling them that, despite her being a young woman in a situation that was out of the ordinary (that is captivity), she was still able to overcome the hardships life presented her, and the fact that she was on the stage, talking to her female contemporaries and proudly showing them the proof of captivity, tattoos, was fundamental because she gave women the confirmation that they had all the abilities and the tools to face life and its adversities (Richardson). Then, she would address the same women and tell them to appreciate their homes, families, the tranquility and quietness of their lives, and the comforts of modern life and society, as she once had all of these things before captivity, and the sudden lack of them for many years made her extremely grateful and present in the moment, enjoying what she did not have during her five years among Indians: "You have pleasant homes[,] kind parents & affectionate brothers & sisters… and perhaps the luxuries of Christian society. I once had all these; & having experienced in frightful contrast, the other extreme, I think I know now how to appreciate the word Home & had I one should know how to enjoy it" (Mifflin 170).

The duality of Olive's utterances toward the women attending her lectures, how she both persuaded them to reclaim their power over their narratives, bodies, and voices against their controlling male counterparts and believe in their abilities to overcome life and the adversities of existence, she also made them aware of the stillness and peacefulness of simple, traditional household life, a condition that she was stripped from during her five years of captivity and her career as a public figure. In the story of Olive Oatman, the subject of duality is a sort of fil rouge that seems to be present in every aspect of her life and narrative, as she was both an Indian and white, colonial girl, she was both a performer and a performance, and she was at the same time a pioneer feminist and a traditional, colonial woman devoted to her family, house, and Christian values. The impact of her lectures and public display of her body, her addressing the women among the audience and intentionally forgetting

the presence of men, and her power of "talking back" were mitigated by the other identity of Olive, that of a woman who, despite her public career and out-of-the-ordinary past, was still in search of a traditional, quiet life simply as a wife and a mother. Olive Oatman, by balancing these two aspects of herself, succeeded in what early feminism in that period began to promote, that is the ability of women to escape socially and culturally imposed categorizations, showing their potential as individuals who can reinvent themselves every time they feel the need to, as Olive did her entire life:

> Like other early women speakers, Olive blunted the effect of this transgression by campaigning for women's domesticity while she lived the life of a professional, traveling alone, appearing publicly and getting paid to tell her story and show her body. Nonetheless, her enormous fortitude as a captive was an irrepressible element of her appeal; it demonstrated the innate potential of even the most humdrum pioneer girl, showing the kind of feminine capability feminists had begun to promote (Mifflin 170-171).



Olive Oatman at age forty-two. In her later years, Olive was painfully sensitive about her Mohave tattoos and wore a veil whenever she left her house. This picture shows, however, that she had learned to almost completely hide the tattoos with powders and creams. Courtesy Abbott Collection, Morrison, Illinois.

(McGinty 134)

CONCLUSION

"Woman. Othered. Intelligent. Celebrity. Victim. Survivor." (Richardson), as well as white and Indian, devoted wife and mother, a daughter and sister, a friend, a performer and performance, a public figure and private person, a traditional 19th-century woman, a pioneer feminist, and an American icon: this is Olive Oatman, the woman protagonist of this work, a work that is not merely an academic research but also a narrative of Olive's life from her first experience of captivity in 1851 until her death in 1903 and after her passing away, a story that began 173 years ago and still nowadays influences United States' literary, historical, social, and cultural tradition. Olive cannot be categorized into just one single identity, as her story and experience of captivity and post-captivity, as well as her life on the whole, clearly show the potentiality of an individual to develop a plurality of identities that can coexist and enrich the individual's inner world and personal narrative, without the socially imposed obligation to choose only one identity to be valued and recognized. This work re-traced the ways in which she transculturated twice, from a white, colonial society to the Indian one and back to her community of origin, after five years of captivity, with a marked body. The study has showed how she experienced life as a public figure who exhibited her tattooed body in front of an intrigued audience which saw her as an animal in a cage. Thus, she went through the hardships of being a woman in 19th century America publicly speaking and showing her body in a society dominated by men with power and authority over women's bodies, voices, narratives, and identities.

Olive has become the symbol of the plurality of identities that characterizes individuals and their presence in the world, behavior, character, and personal narrative. In fact, she did not belong to a single category, and she did not identify herself into a specific group since, as previously mentioned, since she was both white and Indian, a conventional woman of her time but also a pioneer feminist because of her public performances, she experienced life as a celebrity but also as a fond wife and mother as well. The main goal of this work has been to demonstrate how Olive Oatman's story has been the product of plural identities coexisting in her and thus to analyze both the power such plurality had in shaping her life and personal story, along with the influence she had on the shaping of the newly-born American feminist movement. Throughout the unfolding of the three chapters of this work, the development of Olive Oatman's identities is explained with the analysis of the main topics that each chapter covers, which eventually merge into the main aim of this work and the answers to the questions posed at the beginning of the research: how many identities did Olive Oatman have? Had she to choose to be only one of them or did she have the freedom to embody all of these identities?

In the first chapter, the experience of captivity, first with the Yavapai tribe and then with the Mohaves, the subsequent process of transculturation the girl underwent, and, in particular, the literary product the captivity of Olive produced, that is Royal B. Stratton's *Captivity of the Oatman Girls*, brings to light the very first question about the development of Olive's plurality of identities, since the Indian captivity narrative based on her story was written, manipulated and controlled by a male, authoritative figure that problematized the main issue Indian captivity narratives were subjected to, meaning the matter of gender and authorship. As examined in the chapter, public writing performed by a woman was an activity highly frowned upon by white, colonial, religious, male-dominated society. If a woman wanted her story to be recounted for a reading audience, the narrative had to be performed by a man with religious, political, and social authority in order to give it validation to be presented to the audience, despite the several manipulations and tampering of the narration, and, in turn, silencing completely the woman's voice and narrative in favor of male power and authority over female presence in society. This was the case of Olive Oatman's Indian captivity narrative and its manipulation at the hands of the Methodist reverend Stratton, because of his hunger for public recognition, anti-Indian political agenda, and economic profit. He controlled and distorted the narrative of Olive, manipulating both the narrative and its protagonist as that of a white girl and former captive, giving Olive no other opportunity to speak her truth and claim her narrative as her own. *Captivity of the Oatman Girls* has been compared to two other well-known Indian captivity narratives that disclose the same issues of gender and authorship of Olive's, namely Mary Rowlandson's spiritual autobiography *The Soveraignty and Goodness of God* and Hannah Dustan's double retelling by Cotton Mather in *Dux Faemina Facti* and Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Duston Family*. Both Indian captivity narratives highlight the inability of a woman to tell her own story and talk back to reclaim her real identity against the identity created by the man controlling and dominating her narrative and her voice. During her first years of post-captivity, Olive was silenced by the pervasive and ruling presence of Stratton, who determined her identity as a white girl turned into an Indian one, not by choice but under constraint. However, Stratton would not know that the girl he was putting into a precise category would have been able, at one point, to escape that categorization and reclaim her identity, voice, and story.

The second chapter marks the repatriation, physical and emotional, of Olive to white, colonial society and the consequences of the process of transculturation. The doubling of Olive's identity into a white and, at the same time, Indian girl is emphasized first and foremost by the presence of the tattoos on her body, especially those on her chin, together with the change from colonial to Mohave clothes, and conversely, and the use of nicknames the tribe gave to her during her stay as a sign of membership and affection. Besides clothes and nicknames, elements that, once returned to Fort Yuma, Olive never

employed as tools to claim the plurality of identity, the tattoos were the aspect that mostly produced one of the very first doublings of Olive's identity, particularly at the moment in which her marked body began to be employed as a public exhibition, at first to promote Stratton's book during the promotional tour and, eventually, during Olive's career as a public lecturer. Once again, the topic of women performing any sort of activity in public shows up, in this case with the influential presence and power of Olive's tattoos and how she decided to use them. The tattoos, the meaning behind them and the rumors of them being a sign not only of membership but also of marriageability and sexual intercourse within the tribe and the speculations about Olive's status of Indian wife and mother created, in the eyes of the public, another identity which was not defined by Olive herself. Her decision to publicly exhibit her body and finally take charge of her own body and identity by distancing herself from Stratton's control and the way in which the public defined her, was the turning point for Olive's reappropriation of her own identity, and the plurality of identities that coexisted within her. The awareness of such plurality culminated in the determination to allow herself to define, in her own terms, what she wanted to be, regardless of the many identities the public opinion gave to her, and the tattoos were the physical proof of such a breakthrough.

In the third and last chapter, the career of Olive as a public figure and lecturer telling her story and showing her marked body accentuated the need for the woman to talk back and speak truthfully about her personal narrative and body, emphasizing the plurality of identities existing within her. This circumstance gave her the motivation to escape from the socially imposed role of the woman as a passive, submitted subject confined to the characterization of her identity performed by society and limited to just one option, meaning the conventional view of the woman as the angel of the heart, and valued merely on such identity. Reclaiming her real story, exhibiting her own body, and giving voice to what had been silenced until that moment provided her with a renewed strength to determine who she was and what she wanted to be, in particular when the public exhibitions of Olive had been compared to the phenomenon of freak shows, their performers and performances. With her marriage to John Fairchild and the adoption of their daughter Mamie, Olive officially withdrew from the public arena to dedicate her life to her beloved husband and baby girl. The new life of Olive, in the quietness of her house and surrounded by her family and friends, was the complete opposite of what she experienced during the five years of captivity, the period following her rescue and the years she spent traveling throughout the nation as a celebrity, a status which was in stark contrast with her new reality as a wife and a mother. The contrast between her life before marriage and motherhood and life after these two events did not produce in Olive any sort of anxiety concerning her identity, since the new reality she was experiencing enriched the plurality of identities she developed during her life. The duality of her identity as white and Indian was emphasized by another double identity, that of public

figure and wife and mother as well, as she never repudiated her past as former captive, public lecturer, performer, and performance in favor of her new identity as a woman who wanted to dedicate the rest of her life to her husband and daughter. Olive never repudiated any of the many identities she defined herself with, because if she ever attempted to do so, she would transform into another woman, erasing her individuality and uniqueness as Olive Oatman, the white and Indian woman.

"There has been quite a change taken place with me" (Mifflin 213): this is what Olive wrote in a letter to her aunt Sarah Abbot in 1866 to update her about her marriage with John Fairchild and their new life as a newlywed couple. The words of Olive are particularly significant as they portray not only the feeling of change she was experiencing as she was entering a new chapter of her life, but also the main goal of this work as well, which is the development of Olive's plurality of identities and the freedom to choose who she wanted to be and what she wanted to be, without having to choose one single identity, but, on the contrary to be able to embrace all of them to forge a unique individual with her unique characteristics. Olive's approach to her identities assimilated into the recently-born feminist discourse that was taking place in the United States in the period of Olive's career as a female public lecturer. Olive was one of the earliest symbols of American feminism because she embodied the perfect example of the prototype of woman feminists started to speak about, a woman who could be who she wanted and what she wanted, who could choose between a plurality of identities and identify herself with one or more of them, or all of them, even if they opposed with one another. Olive taught women to talk back, raise their voices, and speak truthfully about their personal narratives without the validation of a controlling man behind them, she taught women to take full control of their stories, bodies, and identities over men's authority and manipulation:

> Olive Oatman's choice to not accept the identity created by others, her determination to retell her story, and reclaim her voice to forge an alternative identity encourages us to rethink the role women have had in rhetorical history as we continue writing, rewriting, speaking, and talking back with the women of the past, future, and present (Richardson).

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