

Research Article

Captivity and the Unsettled Self: Mary Rowlandson, King Philip's War, and the Making of Early American Narrative

Stacie Connell* 

Department of English, Jacksonville State University, Jacksonville, United States

Abstract

This study examines Mary Rowlandson's *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration* (1682) as a foundational text in early American literature that connects theology, trauma, and identity through the framework of liminality and the unsettled self. Rowlandson's narrative reflects the complex relationship between Puritan orthodoxy and psychological survival under harsh and often violent conditions during King Philip's War. Through close textual analysis in conjunction with critical scholarship (Kolodny, Burnham, Derounian-Stodola, Logan), the research provided investigates how Rowlandson's narrative of captivity negotiates the limitations of identity, gender, cultural belonging, and religion within a patriarchal, colonial society. The analysis demonstrates that the segmented "Removes" within the narrative structure not only physical displacement but also a spiritual and psychological transformation, moving the protagonist through a liminal phase of self-remapping. The results imply that Rowlandson's text functions as both a personal testimony and a genre-defining captivity narrative highlighting tensions between female agency, trauma, and spiritual authority. The results establish Rowlandson's narrative as a lasting framework for American captivity tales, foregrounding questions of liminal space, identity, survival, and the negotiation of cultural binaries. Ultimately, *the Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration* is a critical discourse on readings of early American cultural production and its negotiation of colonial and spiritual boundaries.

Keywords

Captivity Narrative, Liminality, Puritan Identity, Trauma and Survival, King Phillip's War, Rowlandson

1. Introduction

In 1675, Mary Rowlandson exposed the cultural realities of colonialism colliding with Native American life when she was taken as a captive. Her ordeal would leave an indelible mark upon her spiritual and psychological consciousness, changing the trajectory of her entire life. Later, when she wrote and published her narrative, Rowlandson would address themes of civilized versus savage, freedom versus captivity, and male dominance versus female submission, reflecting not only her

own journey through personal trauma, but also sending a message about the broader social anxieties of colonial New England. In studying the boundaries of colonial selfhood and structure, the *Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (1682) offers an interesting analysis of physical and metaphorical liminality, revealing how Rowlandson's compelling account shapes not only the religious and cultural streams of colonial New England but also transforms the framework of dominant American narratives and the

*Correspondence: Stacie Connell (sconnell@jsu.edu), Stacie Connell (stacecsj@gmail.com)

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captivity genre for many centuries to come.

2. Main Content

2.1. Liminality and Identity

Mary Rowlandson was embedded within the cultural and religious streams of colonial New England. She was a devoted mother and wife in the Puritan community in Lancaster. Her husband, Joseph Rowlandson, was a humble and well-respected minister within the Puritan community, and together they had three children. Although Rowlandson does end her narrative with the words of one who once “used to sleep quietly without workings in my thoughts, whole nights together,” it was unrealistic to believe that trouble and turmoil were not lurking outside the door (Rowlandson) [20]. In fact, during this time, the frontier was a place of profound instability and conflict.

According to the website *National Women's History Museum*, “For Puritans, the threat of an Indian raid, especially during King Philip's War, was an ever-present worry” [16]. In Rowlandson's narrative she states, “On the tenth of February 1676, came the Indians with great numbers upon Lancaster. At length they came and beset our own house, and quickly it was the dolefullest day that ever mine eyes saw” [20]. According to Douglas Edward Leach in his article “The ‘When's’ of Mary Rowlandson's Captivity,” Rowlandson was held for “eighty-three days” as a “prisoner and slave of the Indians, finally ransomed and released on the second of May near Mount Wachusett [and often] being weak from hunger journeyed a total distance of at least 150 miles, mostly on foot, and usually bearing a heavy load” [12]. Colonial anxieties were extremely high before and during this time. According to Leach, Rowlandson's *Narrative* conveys a sincere sense of historical viability and authenticity, distinguishing it from the fictionalized captivity accounts of its time. The initial assault on Lancaster was led by Nipmuc warriors allied with the Wampanoag under Metacom, or King Philip. As Jules Zanger [23] observes in “Mary Rowlandson's Captivity Narrative as Confessional Literature,” the textual specificity with which Rowlandson identifies these tribes, as well as her direct association with Quinnapin and Weetamoo—both connected to Metacom—establishes her narrative and captivity in verifiable cultural and historical context. This anchors the narrative in lived experience rather than fictional interpretation. Yet, precisely through these encounters with Indigenous others, Rowlandson enters what Zanger describes as a liminal “space ... absent of spatial and temporal differentiation,” a psychological threshold where identity becomes fluid and uncertain [23]. Within this in-between condition, as Annette Kolodny suggests, Rowlandson undergoes a process of transformation—an inner reckoning across the boundaries of faith, culture, and selfhood that moves her toward spiritual and existential redefinition.

2.1.1. Historical and Cultural Context

Annette Kolodny, “Among the Indians: The Uses of Captivity,” suggests a stronger and more interpretive understanding of these texts and their idealism concerning identity, trauma, and power in colonial spaces. Kolodny argues that Rowlandson's narrative is best studied and analyzed through the lens of both physical and metaphorical liminality, illustrating how her ordeal operates on both a social and spiritual plane. Scholarship proves that Rowlandson's journey exists “in between” cultural identities and ideological frameworks, ultimately shaping and transforming both the personal identity and the Puritan discourse she re-enters [11]. Many critics claim that Rowlandson's identity within the captivity narrative is marked by ambiguity. Michelle Burnham, in her article “The Journey between: Liminality and Dialogism in Mary White Rowlandson's Captivity Narrative,” notes that throughout Rowlandson's experience, the liminal space of in-between is shown as a crucial framework where her cultural interactions with the hostile savages are juxtaposed with Rowlandson's meek Puritan upbringing. Burnham argues that on one side of the narrative, the reader sees a Puritan Woman and the meek Puritan upbringing from New England enduring through a spiritual testing by standing on values and faith in God [4]. On the other side, the narrative shows the physical space of adaptation and the natives who are holding her hostage while she endures pain, suffering, and grief beyond comprehension. Rowlandson's spiritual and physical pilgrimage is full of vivid details. It is written with an emotional language that allows the reader to see and feel the anxiousness and strain of a woman caught between two worlds. Her cultural position is the liminal space “betwixt and between” Puritan upbringing and the Algonquian natives [4]. To Burnham, Rowlandson's experience in the ‘no man's land’ captures the instability of residing between two different worlds. Rowlandson is neither fully English nor fully integrated Native. She is neither completely captive nor entirely free.

Likewise, Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola, in the article “Puritan Orthodoxy and the ‘Survivor Syndrome’ in Mary Rowlandson's Indian Captivity Narrative,” similarly points out the duality within Rowlandson's narrative style. Derounian-Stodola acknowledges the aspect of ‘survivor syndrome’ and explores both the psychological and spiritual pressures that shape [7]. Derounian-Stodola emphasizes Rowlandson's narrative experience and voice. Similarly, Burnham and Derounian-Stodola identify the duality in Rowlandson's narrative between trauma and interpreting the experience through Puritan orthodoxy. Derounian-Stodola highlights the idea of psychological reality versus religious expectation as she states, “I believe, however, that the narrative's duality arises not merely from this contrast between participant and observer, but additionally from a clash of codes between Rowlandson's psychological and religious interpretations of her experience” (3). It is only through Rowlandson acknowledging the vast divide between the two liminal spaces of home versus captivity

that true revelation can arise. Rowlandson states in her narrative, “I have seen the extreme vanity of this world. One hour I have been in health and wealth, wanting nothing, but the next hour in sickness and wounds and death, having nothing but sorrow and affliction” [20]. To Derounian this is seen as tension between “head and heart, intellect and emotion, spirituality and secularism [which are] fundamental to Puritan literature” [11, 12]. It is a place of transformation where the fractured boundaries of Rowlandson’s world are challenged in the process of forming a new identity in order to survive the trauma.

2.1.2. The Unsettled Self

Survival is one of the key factors within Rowlandson’s narrative. Derounian-Stodola’s recognition of the reformed identity within the liminal space between psychological and spiritual tension acknowledges the fight Rowlandson faces in the ambiguous place in between. In agreement, Lisa Logan extends the conversation yet shifts the focus from the intrinsic internal conflict faced by Rowlandson to a sharper focus on the physical, broad spaces she inhabits. Whereas Derounian-Stodola focuses on the clash between captive and participant’s internal struggle, to Logan, the tension becomes more evident through the actual physical movement and negotiation throughout the literal and metaphorical landscape Rowlandson crosses. As Logan notes, “Physical spaces reveal Rowlandson’s concern with identity and social, ideological, and discursive positions” [13]. To this, Logan refers to the wilderness as being a challenging zone where Rowlandson must face her Puritan identity to see whether she will survive or cave to the plans of the enemy. This is reminiscent of Jesus, who is tempted within the wilderness in Matthew 4: 1, where scripture notes, “Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted” (NIV). Jesus faced the daunting, geographical wilderness and survived and conquered. The biblical motif here is that many suffered through wanderings, exile, and intense spiritual trials throughout the Bible, and the lesson inherent to the suffering was that spiritual clarity was just as precious as physical endurance. Just as Jesus emerged from the wilderness victorious and strengthened, Rowlandson endures danger and displacement with grace and aplomb to preserve her Puritan identity and come out of the trial with a re-constructed selfhood.

This spiritual testing, both physical and mental, within the wilderness also echoes what Andreea Mîngiu’s article calls the Bunyanesque pilgrimage, where one moves through trials and tribulations toward an ever-powerful redemption [18]. This accentuates the biblical aspects in conjunction with the physical trials of captivity. Mîngiu weaves through the same ideas as Derounian-Stodola when discussing the physical suffering and spiritual wrestling Rowlandson endures. Like Derounian-Stodola, Andreea Mîngiu identifies clear markings of ‘survivor syndrome,’ noting that Rowlandson speaks of the once

peaceful nights that are now disturbed with weeping [18]. It is clear from Rowlandson’s own words that post-captivity shows a woman with lingering guilt, emotional trauma and dislocation, grief, and sorrow. Mîngiu argues that the narrative, at this point, becomes a coping mechanism as a means to move forward in the wake of her survivor’s guilt. Even in the midst of facing the demons of the past, Rowlandson continues to show strength and reliance upon the biblical passages that sustain her in the very midst of the fiery trial. The scriptures continue to comfort her afterward as she labors beneath the heavy burden of trauma and guilt. According to Mîngiu, this takes the captivity narrative into the realm of both devotional testimony and historical record, allowing Rowlandson to tell her side of the story and express her faith and doubt in a world that can be cruel and unforgiving.

While Mîngiu focuses heavily on the Bunyanesque journey of a captive pilgrim through the wild, unknown landscape as well as the shadow of survivor’s guilt that persistently plagued Rowlandson, Elizabeth Scarbrough’s “Mary Rowlandson: The Captive Voice” shifts a little more toward the lingering trauma and how this shapes the overall tone of Rowlandson’s voice [21]. Likewise, Scarbrough, much like Mîngiu, acknowledges the resilience and strength that it took for Rowlandson to survive the captive situation, and although she survives, her voice is not unshaken. Instead, it is hesitant in some places, often layered with miniscule moments of doubt, and unsettled [18, 21]. Much like Burnham, Derounian-Stodola, and Lisa Logan, Scarbrough offers a fresh perspective that illuminates Rowlandson’s experience of liminality and the unsettled self.

Scarbrough emphasizes the internal conflict of the unsettled self as set in motion by the turmoil and displacement where “the root of her conflicted response was firmly grounded in Puritan norm” [21]. Rowlandson is neither fully conformed to her captors nor fully immersed in her Puritan life. Her voice within the narrative is just as uncertain. Instead of saying that it is good to be afflicted, as the biblical example David does, Scarbrough points out that Rowlandson states that she hopes, in some measure, that her affliction is good. There is a big difference between saying it is good and “I hope I can say in some measure...” (Rowlandson) [20]. Her voice and wording imply doubt. Scarbrough exemplifies the moment of weakness by stating that “Captivity is complex... [and] the fact that a woman was able to survive such harsh conditions without a man protecting her challenged the cultural belief that women were weak” [21]. The hesitation unlocks the ability to see the tension of a woman filtering through and navigating two worlds as well as two voices. This reiterates Michelle Burnham’s argument that Rowlandson’s narrative is more than just a physical journey. It is a state of continuous in-between. The idea of liminality, as noted by scholars such as Derounian-Stodola, Logan, Kolodny, and Scarbrough, explains the concept of space and actions that make up the essence of the captivity narrative in early American literature.

2.2. Trauma, Testimony, and Survival

A more refined look from Scarbrough's perspective shows the captivity narrative as being made up of the unsettled self and disconcerted voice that Rowlandson wrestles with throughout her emotional and spatial journey. Aaron Graham, in his article "By the Waters of the Susquehanna, I Laid Down and Wept: The Trauma of Removal in Mary Rowlandson's *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*," moves a little deeper into the study of liminality by sectioning off the "Removes" as representing the sacramental boundary of Rowlandson's Puritan identity as well as being the marked physical state in her displacement. Much like previous scholars, Graham covers the traumatic journey of Rowlandson by focusing on Rowlandson's Puritan identity and the shifting landscape of the traumatic "self" from the beginning of captivity to release. In the beginning, Rowlandson demonizes the Native captors as a means to maintain Puritan standards. It is only through the 'Removes' that one can see the shifting taking place. Graham notes that "... during the first half of the narrative, Rowlandson's discourse characterizes the Indians in brutish, inhuman, and often bestial terms in order to establish a strict dichotomy between her captors and her Puritan identity" [10]. It is through her experience that the strict binary is adopted between her captors and her identity. The more Rowlandson physically moves away or removes herself from the Puritan comforts of home, the more her identity shifts and the binaries are changed. Graham speaks of the 'Removes' as being boundaries that take Rowlandson farther and farther from Lancaster and represent the 'demarcation of the spatial limits of her Puritan identity,' which has 'been lost in her subsequent removal' [10]. These binaries are what make up her understanding of home versus the wilderness, Puritan identity versus Native, and captivity versus freedom. As Graham points out, "As Rowlandson is removed further from this center of her Puritan identity, even the binaries she erects to function as a new set of boundaries between her identity and the constructed alterity of her captors deteriorate" [10]. Graham argues that "the notion of alterity" pervades Rowlandson's narrative journey, with "alterity being a space occupied by everything that is not congruent with one's identity" [10]. At the onset of her captivity, the Indian is vengeful, violent, and diabolical" [10]. However, the "English Puritan must be civilized, empathetic, forgiving, charitable, pious, patient, loyal, and elect" [10]. The two opposites are of the utmost extreme and require tremendous reconstruction. There is a great divide between the two boundaries. One example happens during the "First Remove" as Rowlandson is describing her travel and the party coming upon an abandoned English house. Rowlandson has high hopes of staying within the house as a means of reviving her Puritan identity through the familiar cultural marker. Yet, the Natives tease her, as Rowlandson points out, "What, will you love English men still?" (Rowlandson) [20]. According to Graham, this encounter shows Rowlandson's struggle to maintain normalcy, identity, and selfhood amid the

fluctuating cultural boundaries.

The scholars agree that Rowlandson deals with the unsettled self and the confused and broken voice in her spatial and emotional journey before and even after her captivity. Aaron Graham, however, goes a little deeper by studying liminality through the sectioned-off "Removes" as the sacred boundaries between Puritan identity and overwhelming displacement [10].

2.3. Gender, Voice, and Authority

Jennifer L. Fife in "Vulnerability, Trauma, and Testimony" expounds on all of these same ideas with a heavy focus on gendered vulnerability immersed within a patriarchal framework. Fife acknowledges that captivity "is both a physical and mental state, and trauma [which] results from the convergence of that physical and mental captivity" [9]. Women were considered "too weak and unable to assert any agency at all" [9]. When Graham mentions the "First Remove," he highlights the loss of connection to Puritan life; however, Fife looks at the same Remove through the lens of vulnerability, where a woman is voiceless, made visible, and mocked, especially during times of displacement. Fife states, "The real traumatic and post-traumatic experience and effects [are the disadvantage of] living in a vulnerable body" [9, 10]. Later, Rowlandson is able to turn this vulnerability into power as she "utilizes her suffering as a means of reasserting her worth and purity in a community that might otherwise question it" [9]. It is her way of being resistant and "rewrite [ing] herself back into the Puritan community" [9]. In the aftermath of violence, Rowlandson is able to reclaim her voice and transform her vulnerable status through narrating her story. Her testimony is not passive but overt and resistant to the White woman being kidnapped by the Indian stereotype.

Rebecca Blevins Faery acknowledges that the typical stereotype of women being kidnapped by the natives, the vulnerability of women, and how this type of narrative shaped race, gender, and American identity was something that Rowlandson fought against with her narrative. This is why the publication, and the exposure brought about by Rowlandson's narrative, were an essential part of her reforming her identity while maintaining her Puritan values as one who escaped captivity with her "chastity, along with her Christian identity, intact" [8]. Mary Rowlandson was able to speak out as a voice "whose experience has given her authority outside the fold of the Puritan community" [8]. Because of women's status within the patriarchal society as being vulnerable and weak, "her ability to fight back and to say no... was also problematic and made her suspect within that community [with the ever-present] question of her sexual integrity during captivity" [8]. To be acclimated back to the world she knew before within Puritan society, Rowlandson knew that she had to maintain a "sustained voice of the Christian soul living through her own trial in the wilderness" while coming out of the ordeal "not found wanting" with sufficient faith "to guarantee salvation and... 'redemption,' as the Puritans termed it, [so that she] should be

welcomed back into the fold of the Puritan community with open arms" [8]. According to Faery, it was well known that women who "survived captivity among Indians" suffered intense scrutiny and "sexual suspicion" [8]. This was one of the main reasons it is assumed Rowlandson chose to write the narrative, as "she needed to prove herself worthy, both sexually and spiritually, of re-entering the Puritan community" [8]. This invites a closer examination of the cultural narrative and how it shaped the building and the reception of Rowlandson's account. Scholars such as Aaron Cloyd, as well as Lisa Brooks, scrutinize Faery's idealism that Rowlandson's narrative and purpose are all about proving herself "worthy, both sexually and spiritually, of reentering the Puritan community" [2, 5]. To Lisa Brooks, the reintegration must be studied through the spatial and cultural landscape, the veritable looking glass that offers a distinct and transformative look into both the Puritan and Indigenous mapping of belonging, identity, and place. For Brooks, this can only be accomplished through the merging of the colonists' and Indigenous people's perspectives into a single vision of the war's events and spaces [2]. While the looking glass perpetuates two lenses that shift and merge between two worlds, it is only heightened and escalated by the outbreak of King Philip's War.

Author Lisa Brooks offers a fresh and transformative look into the different aspects of history and literature through the duality of the looking glass concerning colonists, specifically Mary Rowlandson, and the tenuous connection between captivity and King Philip's War [2]. Rowlandson's experience coincided with the war and, according to the narrative, brought her face-to-face with King Philip himself. Brooks evaluates not only Rowlandson but also the traditional Puritan captivity narrative during that time. She believes that the narratives were often centered on the perspective of the colonists versus the Indigenous voices and their historical accounts. Brooks calls this the "two sides of the looking glass that are in relational opposition" [2]. To Brooks, the duality of the looking glass presents not only colonist versus Indian but also covers geographical locations such as home versus the wilderness. Rowlandson notes that she "must turn [her] back upon the Town" in order to obediently follow her captors into the vastness of "the wilderness" (Rowlandson). Brooks considers this an internal and external location. She states, "At the same time, in her references to wilderness, Rowlandson also implied that she was entering a place of inner solitude and danger, where she could potentially lose her way from the Christian life" [2, 20]. Brooks acknowledges that this was a worse fate for Rowlandson since the "physical violence that could be inflicted upon her" was entirely "worse than any physical violence" [2]. In addition, when Rowlandson spoke of a wilderness, "she evoked a meaning familiar to her contemporaries, and to us, reflecting her perception of a physical landscape and the spiritual condition she faced during captivity" [2]. Each moment carries the weight of personal versus historical throughout Rowlandson's narrative. When she meets King Philip, for example, Rowlandson expresses her feelings and emotions and

yet fails to acknowledge the historical impact of the moment, which Leonardo Buonomo acknowledges as crucial and historical grounding, reinforcing the narrative's historical authenticity.

Leonardo Buonomo notes that King Philip's War (1675-1676) was known to be one of the bloodiest conflicts in the history of North America. The inclusion of this meeting authenticates and validates Rowlandson's historical account, reinforcing the purpose of the narrative in the annals of history [3]. Despite the fact that historians later acknowledge the war to be horrific and bloody for both sides, Rowlandson finds the encounter with the war chief, King Philip, to be much different than expected. King Phillip shows a modicum of kindness by offering Rowlandson a seat and a smoke with him. He gives her food in exchange for the service of making clothes for his son. By adding these thoughts, Rowlandson humanizes King Philip rather than leaving the impression of the bloody warrior he was known for. Rowlandson states in her narrative, "On the morrow morning we must go over the river, i.e., Connecticut, to meet with King Philip" (Rowlandson) [20]. She later adds, "Then I went to see King Philip. He bade me come in and sit down and asked me whether I would smoke" (Rowlandson) [20]. No longer is he the volatile banality of the colonies, but for a moment, he is a chief entertaining a guest. It breaks the vision and fragments the narrative somewhat.

This event in the narrative happens around five or six weeks after captivity. Rowlandson's account is in the time and place where King Philip was maintaining his tribe in preparation for the march on Northampton, a frontier in the Connecticut River Valley. According to records, this account aligns with the historical event of March 14, 1676, when Native tribes attempted to attack Northampton but were stopped short of their victory. Buonomo sees this interaction between Rowlandson and King Philip as a departure from her otherwise demonizing depiction of the Natives. In fact, Rowlandson shows King Philip as being kinder and more sociable, which lends a human quality that is shown very little in her narrative when discussing the captors. According to Buonomo, Rowlandson's testimony becomes not only an unintentional war record but also a link to understanding the shifting perspective and dual identity of Rowlandson's thoughts and feelings toward the Natives [3]. Through interaction with King Philip, she attempts to show her intention to balance the historical witness with a strong Puritan interpretation. She examines everything through a biblical lens, situating her testing and trial as equal to Job's as well as the Israelites' journey through the wilderness. Buonomo admits that as time passes, Rowlandson learns "to recognize diverse human qualities among her captors... to make the best of her condition and to look at things in new ways" [3]. This duality of endurance woven through real-time occurrences of colonial conflict is what completely solidifies Rowlandson's narrative as both a significant piece of American literature and an invaluable documentation of history.

3. Results

Rowlandson's experience and narrative is "one of the earliest ethnographies of Native American life, and the first written by a woman" [5]. In essence, Rowlandson's narrative "remains an important source for understanding how those ideologies took shape and voice... [and should] be [continually] counted significant among [early] American women writers" [8]. Early American literature carried ideas of both spirituality and the liminality of the in-between physically and emotionally. The phase of being caught between cultures and striving to attain and retain one's identity lays the groundwork for the narrative to emphasize not only survival and endurance but also the negotiation of one's identity, culture, and beliefs. The transformation of the American Narrative and the captivity genre is indelibly linked to Mary Rowlandson's narrative of personal trauma during a foundational time in colonial history. Her narrative not only speaks of the search for self and identity, but it also serves as a historical document of colonial anxieties and Puritan faith. Rachel De Luise acknowledges that "Rowlandson's narrative triggered a wave of Indian captivity narratives [which] is [still] evident centuries later" [6]. She later describes Rowlandson as a "pioneer of the Indian captivity narrative" [6]. This was a remarkable feat since women did not have a 'voice' in the patriarchal Puritan society at that time. In agreement with this point, Annette Kolodny, in her article "Among the Indians: The Uses of Captivity," notes that the captivity genre was "regarded by scholars as one of the few distinctly American literary genres. For the Puritans, captivity served as a vehicle for moral instruction and spiritual conversion [11]. Rowlandson's narrative thus becomes a blueprint of the captivity narrative, where female virtue versus cultural binaries as well as spiritual testimony walked a fine line between self-abasement and moral authority.

Meghan Daniele Madden positions Rowlandson's Narrative as the beginning point for all Native American captivity narratives by the late seventeenth century. It was around the 1600s that captivity narratives began to gain recognition and popularity [15]. These narratives often served as vital cultural roadmaps for understanding colonial identity. Much like Rowlandson's narrative, many narratives of the time combined personal autobiographical elements peppered with ethnographic reporting and deep moral instruction. The binary, or dichotomy, between Natives and colonists separated the savages from the dignified and the heathen from the godly. Madden notes, "With the publication of Mary Rowlandson's narrative of her personal ordeal during, and ultimate redemption from, Indian captivity in 1682, captivity narratives became an integral part of American history" [15]. However, Madden argues that these narratives were not dependable at all times because they were biased in their perception of colonists versus Natives. She adds, "To a large extent, then, the narratives tend to be one-sided as captives present Native Americans as violent savages, uncivilized heathens, and lazy drunkards" [11]. In this aspect, the Natives were unable to refute any and all

stereotypes because of the difference in language. This allowed the captivity narrative authors to "inadvertently speak for them" [11]. Rowlandson's narrative follows along these same lines, according to Madden, as it "implicated Indians as the 'savage heathens'" while often praising her own faith and endurance as being ordained and set by God. It is with caution that Madden suggests scholars should refrain from fully trusting and using "captivity narratives for historical information. Cultural barriers, including language, prevent a significant representation of Native American voices in this genre" [11]. It is because of this that Madden looks at Rowlandson's narrative as being full of complicated colonial power and dynamics, which often underscores the true historical weight of the genre.

Pamela Lougheed in "The Sovereignty and Goodness of God" builds upon the genre foundation by examining Rowlandson's text through Puritan theology and providence. Lougheed analyzes Rowlandson's interpretation of "Indian malice" as being deeply racialized within a theological worldview. Lougheed argues that this framework often inhibits binaries of good versus evil, civilized versus heathen, and Christian versus devil while still maintaining the Puritan idea of divine will [14]. Likewise, Kathryn O'Hara's [19] analysis in "Female Captivity Narratives in Colonial America" demonstrates how the narratives were shaped and molded to reinforce communal religious orthodoxy in the midst of binaries and opposition. In Rowlandson's narrative, O'Hara admits that Rowlandson struggles between dualities [19]. She is at once a beacon of spiritual enlightenment, spouting scriptures to sustain her through the difficult times, and at other times she is a traumatized survivor showing doubt and adaptation. Her story speaks of untainted spiritual growth, but as O'Hara admits, these captivity narratives are not the unvarnished truth. In fact, many of these narratives are heavily shaped by male editors. O'Hara states that while "Female captivity narratives played contradictory roles [and] while they recorded each captive's unique experience, male editors often included their own cultural, moral, and religious values into the written work [while] the general trend in the scholarship on female captivity narratives reflects an effort to separate the captives' voices from the influence of male editors" in order to determine the true effects of their harrowing journey [19]. After all, "the majority of captivity experience during the colonial period came from women... [and they] therefore held the largest base of experience with captivity" [19]. Yet, the message that was being brought forth had to be approved and adhered to the Puritan doctrine. O'Hara discusses the importance of adherence to "sacred principles [because] if a single community member disobeyed or lost faith, the entire community suffered" [19]. Even though both Lougheed and O'Hara agree that male editors strongly tried to maintain control of the female narratives, "they failed to overshadow the female captives' unique experiences and knowledge," which gives these narratives their enduring complexity [19].

The unique female voice and enduring complexity of the

female narratives are highlighted by Pamela Lougheed and Kathryn O'Hara. The tension between the imposed Puritan orthodoxy and the assertion of the woman's voice struggling desperately to be heard is something that Lougheed and O'Hara note as being significant to the captivity narrative. Nataliya Shpylova-Saeed, however, looks beyond the thematic and deeper into the texts' overlapping nature between Puritan discourse, personal testimony, and the cultural aspects, which tend to overlap within the narratives and compete for space. Shpylova-Saeed discusses the idea of dialogism—various points of view or multiplicity of voices within Rowlandson's text. Much like previous scholars, Shpylova-Saeed spends time dissecting the duality in Rowlandson's writing. She covers the diversity of restructuring "self" in order to cope with the trauma and survive [22]. For Rowlandson, the narrative seemingly becomes a healing balm and a place where she can voice her trauma while still standing firmly in orthodoxy. Although Shpylova-Saeed agrees with Lougheed and O'Hara in the fact that Rowlandson's narrative does carry undertones of male authority and voice, she also acknowledges that Rowlandson's own voice speaks loudly in the mix. Shpylova-Saeed notes that "Through her captivity story Rowlandson deals with trauma, and through her traveling experience she works out the map of self" [22]. In the remapping process is where Rowlandson's true voice shines through. Shpylova-Saeed points out that this remapping is an essential part of Rowlandson's post-captivity in order to "turn her personal guidance, amidst the chaos... into a great lesson" [22]. It is through this duality, the world of the in-between, where Shpylova-Saeed acknowledges that Rowlandson combines "the individual and the universal," where Rowlandson's trial "involves dislocation, movement, and adaptability, emphasizing her travel through space," and the remapping of her experience and voice, which comes through as both "geographical and mental... [as well as] spiritual wilderness" [22]. Looking geographically, her narrative is a valuable historical and cultural document. [Yet] on the other hand... her own feelings and emotions and attempts to deal with her fears, discomforts, and anxieties are closely observed and related to the reader as she encounters interactive spaces of pain, sorrow, trauma, and doubt. The competing voices are part of the struggle and self-construction that often-shaped identity within the lived emotional experience of the early American autobiography [22].

Rachael McLennan, in the article "Spiritual, Secular, and Enslaved Selves," discusses the importance of the American autobiography. McLennan states that an autobiography in early America reflected self-reliance as a cultural value, which can influence behavior, which reinforces American autonomy. McLennan points out that "Rowlandson's autobiography purports to describe her literal and spiritual 'restoration,' with the intent of providing edification and spiritual consolation for her religious community" [17]. It is the "I" that speaks for her experiences, and yet, McLennan, presents a different look at spiritual autobiographies from her own studies. She states, in

agreement with the critic Shea, "Could the self ever be banished from first-person narrative?" [17]. In agreement with this point, McLennan notes that Rowlandson's "autobiography... dramatizes the self and its allegiances as shifting territory" [17]. Ruth Banes argues that "the spiritual autobiographer located values through introspection and intuition [while] the secular autobiographer defined his values by observing the results of his actions" [1]. To back up this idea, Banes also points out that the "stylistic device which typifies the exemplary self is the use of parable form. By telling a story to illustrate a moral, an autobiographer can force his self-importance to recede, even if he is the main character of the parable" [1]. McLennan argues that Rowlandson's text is more than a captivity narrative, which was often parallel with fictional works. Rowlandson's work should be considered autobiographical and a representation of the exemplary self. Banes calls this "the prevailing autobiographical persona" as the exemplary "pattern [where they] fit their individual histories into a preconceived pattern: religious, political, or mythical... [and this] includes three devices: apologetic openings, parable form, and the purposes of Divine Providence" [1]. The exemplary pattern works "together to explain and justify writing about oneself" [1]. McLennan backs this up by noting that Rowlandson's work declared "the illustration of God's favor—the workings of Providence. It prioritizes the pursuit of spiritual truths. It is designed for edification of others" [17].

4. Conclusion

A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson is a historical and spiritual account of Mary Rowlandson's treacherous journey as a captive of the Wampanoag Indian tribe. Her account is deeply personal and an account of survival and endurance during a tumultuous time in America's history. Scholars such as Derounian-Stodola, Burnham, and Kolodny explore ideas of liminality and the impacts of survivor syndrome, while authors such as Brooks, Faery, and Fife talk about Rowlandson's narrative through the lens of gendered vulnerability and cultural dualities. From historical aspects and connections to finding authenticity and purpose within Rowlandson's writing, many scholars agree that the personal trauma and Puritan expectations encountered by Rowlandson reveal the tensions between the imposed narrative and the personal, lived experience. Rowlandson was a survivor and an enduring presence in early American literature. Her narrative, which is presented in "Removes," charts the remapping of selfhood and the journey through liminal spacing and sets the standard for American captivity narratives for many years to come.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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