

ABSTRACT

HALL, MOLLY SUZANNE. *Captivated by Texts: Male Anxieties, Editorial Input, and Reader Responses in Captivity Narratives, 1675-1724*. (Under the direction of committee chair Susanna Michele Lee).

Captivity narratives produced in New England between 1675 and 1724 featured female protagonists that upheld idealized standards of behavior for women. Female characters within these stories acted submissively, were model mothers, and strictly adhered to a gendered hierarchy. Through these images, captivity narratives dictated appropriate behavior to women. In the midst of frontier violence, the threat of Catholicism from New France, and England's exertion of greater authority in colonial governance, male authors, editors, and readers used the narratives as a means to confront their fears in these arenas. Captivity narratives prescribed female behavior as a result of male anxiety over their ability to provide for, protect, and litigate for their family and community as a whole; while men could not always assert their authority over the colony, they could dictate behavior for the smallest unit of society—the family.

In an atmosphere of warfare, political uncertainty, and everyday worries over providing material support and effective protection to their families, men struggled to live up to conceptions of masculinity. Since men maintained minimal control over warfare and imperial politics, they looked for a means to express anxieties without threatening their sense of masculinity. Captivity narratives allowed men to explore their failures through the female protagonists. While men maintained little control over warfare and English politics at home and abroad, men needed an outlet for the expression of these anxieties that would not threaten their masculinity. Captivity narratives allowed male authors and editors a means of

conveying their anxieties through the voice of their female protagonists. Similarly, male readers utilized these narratives as a means of exploring potential patriarchal failures as well.

The narratives, being both prescriptive in nature and metaphorical in a manner that allowed readers to explore larger colonial anxieties, served as a means through which they could confront relations between indigenous peoples and English colonists in terms of gender constructions. To assess the overall effectiveness of the prescriptions for female behavior promoted within captivity narratives, as well as the effectiveness of such narratives as an outlet for the expression of male anxieties, it is necessary to examine the audience and response to such narratives. Through an examination of literacy, narrative publication, and documented responses to the narratives, we can decipher the ways in which captivity narratives reached their audiences and their salience.

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Captivated by Texts: Male Anxieties, Editorial Input, and Reader Responses in Captivity
Narratives, 1675-1724

by
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A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
North Carolina State University
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

History

Raleigh, North Carolina

2013

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BIOGRAPHY

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INTRODUCTION:

Sarah Gerish, “a very young, beautiful, and ingenious damsel” was lounging at the garrison with her grandfather in Dover, New Hampshire on the afternoon of June 28, 1689, when suddenly, a group of Wabanaki Indians attacked. Gerish was terrified of them but obeyed when they asked her to gather the other civilians. She went into an adjacent home and found only a sleeping baby. Rather than deliver the child to the raiders, she climbed into the bed with the baby and tried to hide herself. The “savages” quickly discovered her and forced her to march with them. They dashed the brains of the infant against a nearby tree. Horrified, Gerish was taken into captivity by this Indian group, unsure of her own fate.¹

Nearly all Indian captivity narratives begin in this manner. A victim was taken captive by cruel and “barbarous” Indians after witnessing the brutal murder of family, friends, and neighbors. The narratives then typically outline the journey, noting the captive's interactions with their captors, the types of food that they consumed, and the ways in which they remained religiously devout. Captivity narratives typically end with a story of redemption, unless the captive chose to stay behind, or, in Sarah Gerish's case, died.²

Captivity narratives written between 1675 and 1724 displayed idealized images of female behavior. Within women's stories, all adhered carefully to normative gender roles. Narratives emphasized submissive behavior, perpetuated a gendered hierarchy, and described women through their relation to children. In the few instances in which women strayed from

¹ Cotton Mather, “Of the Captivity and Sufferings of Miss Sarah Gerish, who was Taken at the Sacking of Dover, in the Year 1689 by the Indians; as Communicated to Doctor Cotton Mather, by the Rev. John Pike, Minister of the Place,” in *Indian Captivities or Life in the Wigwam; Being True Narratives of Captives Who Have Been Carried Away by the Indians, from the Frontier Settlements of the United States, from the Earliest Period to the Present Time*, ed. Samuel G. Drake (Auburn: Derby and Miller, 1851), 70-71.

² Mather, “Of the Captivity and Sufferings of Miss Sarah Gerish,” 70-71.

these ideals, authors offered justifications for such behavior and dissuaded readers from mimicking such acts. These tales served as prescriptions for female behavior and became a mechanism of a reassertion of male dominance over the family—the one unit of society that individual men maintained direct reign over.

An atmosphere of warfare, political uncertainty, and everyday worries over proving material support and effective protection to their families perplexed men. Failure in many of these arenas seemed imminent, particularly as indigenous peoples burned their homes and captured their wives and daughters. Even more worrisome, some women chose either to remain with their Indian captors or married French men and became baptized Catholic. This flight suggested a failure of patriarchal authority. While men maintained little control over warfare and English politics at home and abroad, men needed an outlet for the expression of these anxieties that would not threaten their masculinity. Captivity narratives allowed male authors and editors a means of conveying their anxieties through the voice of their female protagonists. Similarly, male readers utilized these narratives as a means of exploring potential patriarchal failures as well.³

A great deal of scholarship deals with women's Indian captivity narratives. Early twentieth century works tend to focus almost entirely on the narratives as wartime propaganda and religious testimonies. These studies cite captivity narratives as the first form of American literature and emphasize their connection to the eventual growth of the United States. This was initially an area of focus for literary scholars rather than historians. In the

³ Ann M. Little, *Abraham in Arms: War and Gender in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 2.

1970s, historians began to examine the relation of captivity narratives to the American frontier experience, both as reflections of the “American experience” and as mythology.⁴

A renewed interest in captivity narratives occurred in the 1990s. These studies are a product of social and cultural historiographical trends and place issues of gender, authorship, and authority within the colonial context at the center of their analysis. Mary Rowlandson’s narrative has been the primary focus of study for many of these monographs because of its length, female authorship, and the fact that it was the first colonial-era American bestseller.⁵

June Namias situates her examination of women’s Indian captivity narratives around different categories of identity. Namias’s *White Captives: Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier*, also published in 1993, is organized around three key ideas of white womanhood revealed in Indian captivity narratives: Survivors, Amazons, and Frail Flowers. She bases these categories on the content and chronology of these narratives. Namias argues that Survivors were characteristic of narratives from the colonial period and featured women as active agents in their stories, although they did not escape captivity on their own. Authors crafted the amazon Archetype during the period of the early republic; these women typically escaped their captivity through violence. Lastly, the Frail Flower type prevailed in the 1830s and 1840s and sought to reinforce domesticity and gender roles of that era. Namias argues

⁴ Joanne M. Jahnke Wegner, “A Dead Woman’s Dress: Gender and Race in Captivity During the Minnesota Indian War of 1862” (MA Thesis, The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, 1994). Although the argument of this thesis lies beyond the scope of my paper, I found the historiographical section very helpful. The works of Richard VanDerBeets are the first to categorize captivity narratives as an American genre. Richard VanDerBeets, *The Indian Captivity Narrative: An American Genre* (Lanham: University Press of Amherst, 1984); “The Indian Captivity Narrative: An American Genre,” Ph. D. dissertation, University of the Pacific, 1973. See also Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence-The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1160-1860*, (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1973). Slotkin argues that the captivity narratives met the criteria of American myths, and thus reflect the development of an American character.

⁵ Kathryn Zabelle Derounian, “The Publication, Promotion, and Distribution of Mary Rowlandson’s Indian Captivity Narrative in the Seventeenth Century,” *Early American Literature* 23.3 (1988): 239.

that the frail flower was simply a victim of forces that were beyond her control or a result of her gender: “She is the poor, hapless woman who is taken unaware. She is shocked and distressed by her capture and by the deaths and dislocations that go with it. What makes her a candidate for Frail Flower status is that she rarely emerges from her shock, distress, and misery.” Namias’s categories show that depictions of women within narratives changed with the social and political climate of New England.⁶

Namias emphasizes that captivity narratives brought marginalized groups, specifically women, children, and Native Americans, to the center of American frontier history. Captivity narratives highlight an array of complex relationships that existed on the frontier between white men and women, white women and Indian men, and white children and their adoptive Indian families. Since gender norms in Native American societies typically differed from those belonging to the English, captivity exposed white female captives to gender roles that were less rigidly patriarchal. While Namias’s pioneering work examines the content of the narratives, she fails to consider their production, and does not critique how authors and editors imposed their own interpretations into the tales.⁷

Like Namias, Derounian-Stodola and Levemier examine the importance of the captivity narrative and the ways in which these narratives changed over time through literary, mythological, and historical interpretations in *The Indian Captivity Narrative, 1550-1900* (1993). These historians particularly focus on white women and define the messages that images of women in captivity conveyed to audiences at different points in American history.

⁶ June Namias, *White Captives: Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 24; 44.

⁷ Namias, *White Captives*, 1-17.

They argue that Puritan women grounded their own conceptualizations of identity in their roles as mothers, sisters, and daughters. The authors note that women's ties to family were typically at the forefront of their captivity narratives. Derounian-Stodola and Levernier state that "their narratives stress that captivity's main metonymy was the dramatic and decisive fracturing of the original family unit. Family, of course, symbolized not only individual households but society at large and the greater social chaos caused by American Indian incursions." Clinging to these familial roles was one vital mechanism of survival for women in captivity. Despite recognizing the link between captivity and the family, Derounian-Stodola and Levernier do not consider how readers might interact with the texts, interpret captivity, and apply it to their own lives.⁸

More recent scholarship situates women's Indian captivity narratives within a broader colonial context. Historians who emphasize the world-context of the tales assert that the stories are symbolic of larger processes that were occurring in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Linda Colley positions the American Indian captivity narratives within the context of similar narratives that emerge in British colonial settings such as the Middle East and India. She asserts that to fully understand the meaning of the stories, "the micro-narratives need to be placed within a larger macro-narrative."⁹

Colley argues that the colonial-era narrative is neither a unique form nor solely a testament to the creation of an Anglo-North American identity. She asserts that through the descriptions presented in the captivity narratives, women sought to draw a distinct line

⁸ Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola and James Arthur Levernier, *The Indian Captivity Narrative, 1550-1900* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1993), 112-113.

⁹ Linda Colley, *Captives* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2002), 97.

between whites and indigenous peoples. By portraying Natives in this light, women perpetuated the legitimacy of colonial endeavors. Captivities could further represent a failure of the Crown to protect the colonists, therefore representing a crisis of loyalty. There is thus a tension between Native, English, and American colonial identities embedded within these stories. This paper expands on Colley's thesis by asserting that the relief of male anxieties was another way in which captivity narratives aided the English colonial project.¹⁰

Teresa Toulouse similarly places these narratives within a larger colonial framework in *The Captive's Position: Female Narrative, Male Identity, and Royal Authority in Colonial New England* (2007). Toulouse focuses primarily on the function of the white female captive as a metaphor for white male colonists' relation to the mother country of England and a cultural identity crisis. Although the narratives feature woman as the primary subject, Toulouse argues that male notions of identity confusion were represented by these stories. The examination of female captivity narratives thus represent a progression towards the emergence of a white American male identity.¹¹

Toulouse argues that Mary Rowlandson's narrative depicts a woman who, despite her loyalty to the English colony and tenets of Puritanism, emerges from her captivity culturally changed. She is therefore "simultaneously loyal and border-crossing." Through a comparison of this interpretation with the roles of men in the English colonies, Toulouse asserts that although males defended British authority, they simultaneously felt that it "threatened colonial political sovereignty."¹²

¹⁰ Colley, *Captives*, 140-155.

¹¹ Teresa Toulouse, *The Captive's Position: Female Narrative, Male Identity, and Royal Authority in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 2.

¹² Toulouse, *The Captive's Position*, 47-51.

Toulouse's work emphasizes male attitudes and fears relating to their authority within the colonial context in regards to the Rowlandson narrative. This paper will also explore this issue, but will argue that this model works not only for Rowlandson's narrative, but also for other captivity narratives from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Furthermore, men also responded out of anxieties relating to Indian warfare and uncertainties regarding protecting and providing for their families, not only political turbulence.

Additionally, most captive women left no documentary record behind. 46 percent of female captives either stayed with their captors, died, or left no surviving record of their fate. Out of the 54 percent of female captives that came back to English society, only the stories of a handful made it into print. Since this study seeks only to analyze the prescriptive elements of the texts rather than captivity as a phenomenon, the majority of captive women remain unaddressed here.¹³

Perhaps the least explored facet of captivity narratives is the reactions of readers to the texts. In order to achieve such an analysis, I blend the historiography on captivity narratives with book history. The theoretical framework for analyzing reader responses to particular works lies in the field of the history of the book. Book history as a discipline emerged in France, where it is known as *l'histoire du livre*, and further developed in Germany as *Geschichte des Buchwesens*. Historians within this subfield seek to trace out the distribution of books, analyze the ways in which readers interpreted and interacted with the printed word, and assess trends relating to the popularity of specific genres and bestsellers.

¹³ Emma Lewis Coleman, *New England Captives Carried to Canada* (Portland, ME: 1925); Alice Baker, *True Stories of New England Captives* (New York: Garland, 1976 reprint of 1897 ed.); and Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750* (New York: Vintage Books, 1982), 203.

Robert Darnton, perhaps the most prominent book historian and theorist, argues that book history concerns itself with the “social and cultural history of communication by print,...how ideas were transmitted through print and how exposure to the printed word affected the thought and behavior of mankind during the last five-hundred years.”¹⁴

In the United States, historians use book history as a means of deciphering larger historical processes both in Europe and the United States. Three major studies written by American scholars in the 1970s—Natalie Zemon Davis’s *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (1975), Robert Darnton’s *The Business of Enlightenment: A Publishing History of the Encyclopedie, 1775-1800* (1979) and Elizabeth L. Eisenstein’s *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (1979)—provide the theoretical foundations for the study of books. These works examine the history of European books. They question how books were produced, who made them, issues of audience, the roles of national and religious ideologies in their creations, the transmission of ideas via books, and censorship.¹⁵

Several scholars also focus on the role of books in British colonial America. Hugh Amory pays particular attention to methods of printing and bookselling in New England, while historian David D. Hall studies readers and writers within this region. By examining the practicalities of book publishing in colonial New England, as well as literacy trends and distribution, these scholars construct a history of books that considers social, cultural, and

¹⁴ See Cathy N. Davidson, “Toward a History of Books and Readers” in *Reading in America: Literature and Social History* edited by Cathy N. Davidson (Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 3-4; and Robert Darnton, “What is the History of Books?” in *Reading in America*, 27.

¹⁵ See Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France: Eight Essays* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975); Robert Darnton, *The Business of Enlightenment: A Publishing History of the Encyclopedie, 1775-1800* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979); and Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

political trends as well. In his 1989 work, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England*, Hall argues that religious culture in New England was based on the foundation of nearly universal literacy and a wide availability of printed texts. Calvinists fashioned their notions of piety through scripture, texts, sermons, and discussion, while the sacred nature and paramount authority of the Bible elevated the importance of written texts in general. Likewise, lay people also used captivity narratives in a personal way and utilized them for their own personal functions while simultaneously realizing their religious value.¹⁶

Few historians examine captivity narratives through the framework of book history. In the 1970s, some began to examine the relation of captivity narratives to the American frontier experience, both as reflections of the “American experience” and as mythology, while historiographical trends in the 1990s assessed issues of gender and authority within a colonial context. More recent scholarship situates women’s Indian captivity narratives within a broader colonial context and assert that the stories symbolize larger processes that occurred in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Kathryn Zabelle Derounian’s 1988 essay, “The Publication, Promotion, and Distribution of Mary Rowlandson’s Captivity Narrative in the Seventeenth Century” remains among the only works to assess a narrative within the context

¹⁶ Hugh Amory, “Printing and Bookselling in New England, 1638-1713,” in *The History of the Book in America, Volume One: The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*, edited by Hugh Amory and David D. Hall, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 83-116; David D Hall, “Readers and Writers in Early New England,” in *The History of the Book in America, Volume One*, 117-151; and David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989).

of book history. In this essay, Derounian assesses the physical production and distribution of the Rowlandson narrative.¹⁷

While Derounian's piece details the production and distribution of the Rowlandson narrative, she does not assess readers' interpretations of the work. Some scholars highlight the notion of literature as an activity, and therefore place the interactions between the reader and the text at the pinnacle of their studies. In most cases, it is impossible to gauge the inner experience of an ordinary reader; however, it is possible to reconstruct the social context of reading, and, as Walter Ong notes, to assess the ways in which the texts themselves shape the response of the reader. In his assessment of *The Canterbury Tales* and *A Farewell to Arms*, Ong argues that the opening pages create a frame and cast readers in a particular role. Darnton further contends that typography, syntax, and style further determine the ways in which texts convey meanings. A thorough assessment of reader response, then, considers both the ways that texts constrain readers, as well as the liberties that readers take with the texts. This paper will gauge reader responses to seventeenth and eighteenth century captivity narratives through an analysis of such frames and stylization, while also considering the written records of readers.¹⁸

Despite the high level of action, excitement, and plot present in these narratives, they were more than simply entertaining stories. As authors and editors, males manipulated the texts. In the midst of frontier violence, the threat of Catholicism from New France, and England's exertion of greater authority in colonial governance, male authors, editors, and

¹⁷ Kathryn Zabelle Derounian, "The Publication, Promotion, and Distribution of Mary Rowlandson's Indian Captivity Narrative in the Seventeenth Century," *Early American Literature* 23.3 (1988): 239-261.

¹⁸ Walter J. Ong, "The Writer's Audience is Always a Fiction," *PMLA* 90 (1975): 9-21; and Darnton, "What is the History of Books?," 45.

readers used the narratives as a means to confront their fears in these arenas. Captivity narratives prescribed female behavior as a result of male anxiety over their ability to provide for, protect, and litigate for their family and community as a whole; while men could not always assert their authority over the colony, they could dictate behavior for the smallest unit of society—the family.

On one level, captivity narratives represent thrilling stories that attracted readers with tales of danger, adventure, and tantalizing--and sometimes sexualized--descriptions of “the Other.” Advertisements for Mary Rowlandson’s narrative, for instance, emphasize “her cruel and inhumane Usage amongst the Heathens for eleven Weeks.” Terms like “inhumane” and “heathens” show the sensationalism associated with such stories of captivity. Long narratives like those of Rowlandson and John Williams, functioned essentially as forerunners to novels. More often, however, stories of captivity existed as short snippets included within larger works, like sermons. The prevalence of these shorter narratives suggest meanings beyond mere excitement. Such works provided readers with a means to explore both their own realities and imagined ones. The narratives, being both prescriptive in nature and metaphorical in a manner that allowed readers to explore larger colonial anxieties, served as a means through which they could confront relations between indigenous peoples and English colonists in terms of gender constructions. To assess the overall effectiveness of the prescriptions for female behavior promoted within captivity narratives, as well as the effectiveness of such narratives as an outlet for the expression of male anxieties, it is necessary to examine the audience and response to such narratives. Through an examination

of literacy, narrative publication, and documented responses to the narratives, we can decipher the ways in which captivity narratives reached their audiences and their salience.¹⁹

¹⁹ “Advertisement for Mary Rowlandson’s Captivity Narrative,” in *The Term Catalogues, 1668-1709 A.D.; With a Number for Easter Term, 1711 A.D. A Contemporary Bibliography of English Literature in the Reigns of Charles II, James II, William and Mary, and Anne, Volume I: 1668-1682*, edited by Edward Arber, (London: Privately Published, 1903).

CHAPTER ONE: AUTHORS, EDITORS, AND PRESCRIPTIVE LITERATURE

I was taken by the Indians, when Casco Fort was taken, (May) 1690. My husband being slain, and four children taken with me. The eldest of my sons they killed, about two months after I was taken, and the rest scattered from me. I was now left a widow, and as bereaved of my children; though, I had them alive, yet it was very seldome that I could see them, and I had not liberty to discourse with them, without danger either of my own life, or theirs; for our condoling each others condition, and shewing natural affection, was so displeasing to our Indian rules, unto whose share we fell, that they would threaten to kill us, if we cryed each to other, or discoursed much together.²⁰

– Hannah Swarton

Indians violently abducted Hannah Swarton from her Massachusetts Bay home as members of the Wabanaki Confederacy attacked Fort Casco in a siege that resulted in the death of approximately two-hundred English settlers. She witnessed the death of many loved ones and endured separation from others. Her captivity exposed her to an entirely different way of life than she had been accustomed to at Casco Fort. She learned to eat foods such as turtle, moose liver, and dog flesh, ultimately describing them as “sweet morsels.” Swarton, a Puritan, claimed her resistance to Catholicism as her greatest victory, aside from the survival that God provided during her captivity. Swarton’s experience resembled the tales of many other female captives between 1675 and 1724. Narratives like Swarton’s became widely published and read chronicles that reinforced barriers between “white” and “Native,” becoming religious models.²¹

²⁰ Cotton Mather, *Humiliations Follow’d With Deliverances* (1697; repr., New York: Garland Publishing, 1977), 51. Cotton Mather recorded the stories of many female captives in various sermons, essays, and other publications.

²¹ Mather, *Humiliations Follow’d With Deliverance*, 52-63. During her captivity, an Indian woman sought to convert Swarton to Catholicism. Likewise, Frenchmen who purchased Swarton from her captives also attempted to alter Swarton’s Puritan beliefs. According to Mather’s account of the captivity, Swarton resisted both attempts. See also Jenny Hale Pulsipher, “‘Dark Cloud Rising from the East’: Indian Sovereignty and the Coming of King William’s War in New England,” *The New England Quarterly* 80.4 (December 2007): 588-613. The attack on Fort Casco was part of the larger King William’s War (1688-1697), in which the Wabanaki Confederacy, in conjunction with the French, thwarted English settlement in

During the late seventeenth century, several different forms of literature prescribed gender roles for white, Puritan females. This literature included Indian captivity narratives, sermons, and books published during this era that sought to set models of behavior for women, specifically in regard to their roles as wives and mothers. Authors reiterated these standards of behavior not because gender roles changed drastically during this period; rather, such prescriptions resulted from colonial male anxieties that derived from political upheaval and Indian warfare during the late seventeenth century. Men, yearning for some amount of control in their lives during this tumultuous period, focused on maintaining their authority over the smallest Puritan unit—the family. Not only did the prescription of acceptable modes of female behavior give male heads of households a sense of control in their own lives, but it also alleviated some concerns regarding the possibility of women gaining more authority within the home, the church, and the larger community.²²

Between 1689 and 1730, Indians took over three-hundred European men and women captive in northern New England and typically transported them to Canada. Native Americans had several reasons for taking captives, including revenge, ransom, slavery, and

Maine.

²² Early scholarship on the Puritan family emphasized its hierarchical structure and relationship with the church. Although written nearly seventy years ago, Edmund S. Morgan's *The Puritan Family* remains the seminal work on the topic. Morgan describes the role that fathers, mothers, and children filled within family life. He argues that the family—the smallest unit of Puritan society—was reflective of the larger social order of the Congregationalist church. Just as families were the foundation of the church, the church was the foundation of society as a whole. Despite the detail given to the structure of the family within this work, Morgan does not address what would happen if this structure were to be threatened. How would the church have protected their family units? How would men have protected their wives and children? How would white males cope when their entire social structure was challenged? No studies that examine the Puritan family fully address these issues. Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan Family: Religion and Domestic Relations in Seventeenth-Century New England* Revised ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1966). See also Levin L. Schücking, *The Puritan Family: A Social Study from the Literary Sources* trans. Brian Battershaw (New York: Schocken Books, 1970); John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970); and Judith S. Graham, *Puritan Family Life: The Diary of Samuel Sewall*, (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2000).

as a means of replacement for dwindling populations following warfare and disease-related deaths. During this period, men and women captives were taken in nearly equal proportions. However, the fate of captives differed based on both age and gender. Women were much more likely to survive and live as adopted members of the indigenous societies, while Indians frequently killed European men immediately during raids. Furthermore, women more often chose to stay with their Indian captors or French allies; as many as 27 percent of women stayed, while 13 percent of men decided to stay in Canada.²³

Because authors littered captivity narratives with stereotypes, historians often cite them as instruments of propaganda. Within the first British North American produced captivity narrative, Mary White Rowlandson expressed anti-French and anti-Indian sentiments. Subsequent narratives enunciated similar feelings towards these groups, although an amplified aggression emerged during the years surrounding Metacom's War (1675-1678) and King William's War (1688-1697). Through depictions of Indians as "barbarous savages" incapable of properly cultivating the wild, Europeans justified expansion and dispossession. Colonists later characterized the British similarly around the time of the American Revolution. These images sought to sway public opinion towards opposing these enemies.

²³ Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750* (New York: Vintage Books, 1982), 202-204; Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola and James Arthur Levernier, *The Indian Captivity Narrative, 1550-1900* (New York: Twain Publishers, 1993), 2-8; June Namias, *White Captives: Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 25; Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998); and Daniel K Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

Other key themes within captivity narratives included devout religious expressions and the development of an American identity.²⁴

While there were certainly a significant number of female captives, very few left any type of record behind. Among those who did write about their experiences were: Mary Rowlandson (1682); Mary Plaisted (1690); Mary Ferguson (1690); Hannah Swarton (1690); Hannah Swarton (1697); Hannah Dustan (1697); Mary Corlis Neff (1697); Elizabeth Hull Heard (1699); Sarah Gerish (1699); Mehetable Goodwin (1699); Eunice Williams (1704); and Elizabeth Hanson (1728). Male anxieties arose from several different avenues during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in New England, including Indian warfare, especially Metacom's War (1675-1678); political turmoil with England; the threat of Catholicism both from Anglican English officers and from the neighboring French; and economic concerns that affected men's abilities to provide for and protect their families. Within narratives that feature female protagonists, authors crafted narratives in which themselves and readers could insert themselves and explore fears and emotions that crept beyond the bounds of Puritan manhood. English men based ideas of masculinity within the realms of war, politics, and family governance. Households were responsible for the proper ordering of society as a whole. The inability of Anglo-colonial men to offer protection to their homes and families from fire, captivity, and death posed a grave challenge to their

²⁴ Derounian-Stodola and Levernier, *The Indian Captivity Narrative*, 17, 26-29; and Christopher Castiglia, *Bound and Determined: Captivity, Culture-Crossing, and White Womanhood from Mary Rowlandson to Patty Hearst* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 2.

masculinity. Captivity narratives offered men a means to explore these potential failures in a safe space.²⁵

To begin, an exploration of the creation and distribution of narratives is crucial. Given trends in literacy within colonial New England, it remains likely that the narratives reached many women in an oral format. Literacy rates for women during this era were relatively high and stood around 50 percent, while nearly 75 percent of men could read. While evidence shows that most people in New England familiarized themselves with the narratives, not all of them read the documents themselves. For instance, colonists throughout the region knew the story of Eunice Williams, daughter of the famed captive, John Williams, who published an account of his own captivity. While Eunice Williams chose to stay with her adoptive indigenous family, including her husband and child, she made several visits to English territory following her father's death. The church in Deerfield, Massachusetts experienced record attendance on the days that Williams made an appearance, suggesting that her reputation and whereabouts were a matter of contemporary knowledge that stretched beyond the bounds of the narrative.²⁶

²⁵ Ann M. Little, *Abraham in Arms: War and Gender in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 2, 4, 7. See David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989). Hall argues that the use of the term "Puritan" is problematic because it suggests that people in New England practiced or exemplified a "total or perfect" faith. Hall's work highlights the prevalence of popular lore and religion in the region that often strayed from true Puritan ideologies. For the purposes of my study, I employ the word "Puritan" as a title for non-Anglican, non-Catholic colonists living in New England towns that were ruled by institutions in which Calvinism and the government functioned as one entity. I make no claims regarding the success or failure of people in the northeast to exemplify strict Puritan ideals.

²⁶ See Kenneth A. Lockridge, *Literacy in Colonial New England: An Enquiry into the Social Context of Literacy in the Early Modern West* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1974), 128; Linda Auwers, "Reading in the Marks of the Past: Exploring Female Literacy in Colonial Windsor, Connecticut," *Historical Methods* 13 (1980): 209; Ross W. Beales, Jr., "Studying Literacy at the Community Level: A Research Note," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 9 (1978): 93-102; E. Jennifer Monaghan, "Literacy Instruction and Gender in Colonial New England," in *Reading in America*, 53; David D. Hall, "Readers and Writers in Early New England," in *The History of the Book in America, Volume One: The Colonial Book in*

Although Mary Rowlandson's and John Williams's narratives became bestsellers, most other narratives existed within larger publications, like sermons, or as a portion of longer anecdotes. Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana: or The Ecclesiastical History of New-England from its First Planting in the Year 1620 unto the Year of Our Lord 1698, in Seven Books*, featured many of his sermons, including ones that detailed the captivities of Hannah Swarton, Mary Neff, and Hannah Dustan. While Mather sold many copies of this work, countless people heard these stories orally, likely through a reading of the sermon verbatim by Mather himself or another literate person, or through oral transmissions by family members or neighbors from memory. While prescriptions remained intact when simply read aloud, those passed on from memory would likely have lacked many of the prescriptive qualities. While it is impossible to know what these oral versions actually said, they most likely strayed from the master narratives created by men like Mather, who very carefully selected their words to convey particular meanings.²⁷

the Atlantic World, ed. Hugh Armory and David D. Hall (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); 120; John Demos, *The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 98; and Arthur Benedict Berthold, *American Colonial Printing as Determined by Contemporary Cultural Forces, 1639-1763* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1934), 7-9, 21-29. Until 1760, Massachusetts printed more than in any other colony, and before 1740, more printing was done in Massachusetts than in all of the other colonies combined. As the hub for American printing, this could mean that all of these Massachusetts published narratives, despite the varying strength of Puritanism elsewhere in the New England colonies, reflected the strong Congregationalist outlook of the Massachusetts Bay colony. This, combined with the slow adoption of printing presses in the southern colonies, could explain why captivity narratives became such a phenomenon in New England but not in the southern colonies. Furthermore, different colonial regions printed different types of books. For example, books relating to theology were much more prevalent in the New England colonies. Because of the relation between theology and captivity narratives, such stories did not become a phenomenon in other regions. Furthermore, because of their strong religious preferences, New England colonists would have more anxieties relating to the threat of a Catholic, Anglican, or secular state, whereas the other colonies may have been more apathetic in this regard.

²⁷ Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana; or The Ecclesiastical History of New-England from its First Planting in the Year 1620 unto the Year of Our Lord 1698, in Seven Books* (London: Printed for Thomas Parkhurst, 1702). Both Cotton Mather and his father, Increase, took a particular interest in captivity narratives. Increase Mather is largely believed to have written the introduction to Mary Rowlandson's

Given that the authors of captivity narratives were familiar with literacy rates and common modes of story transmission, they probably did not expect the stories to actually dictate proper modes of behavior for women on a large scale. Rather, male authors used these narratives to metaphorically express their anxieties relating to larger colonial issues. Gendered behavior prescriptions embedded within the narratives allowed men to feel a sense of patriarchal social control, regardless of the amount of power that actually manifested from these efforts.²⁸

Printed books passed through a circular life cycle, or “communications circuit,” that included the author, publisher, printer, shipper, bookseller, and then the reader. The reader was at the heart of the circuit as the consumer, but also because of the influence that his tastes and preferences wielded over authors. Furthermore, authors themselves also read. From these interactions, genres and modes of style emerged that directly shaped the texts. Criticism also played a crucial role in this cycle, as authors anticipated, responded to, and corrected their subsequent works. The “communications circuit” thus transmitted and transformed messages through the mechanisms of reading and writing. Each phase of this process was entangled in other social, political, cultural, and economic systems.²⁹

narrative. Furthermore, Increase Mather provided his own version of Rowlandson’s captivity in *A Brief History of the War with the Indians in New England* (1676). These prominent Puritan ministers reached large audiences through their publications as well as their sermons.

²⁸ Leslie McCall, “The Complexity of Intersectionality,” *Signs* 30 (2005): 1771-1800. McCall proposes that historians explore the concept of intersectionality, or the relationships between multiple dimensions of social relations across time and space. By examining how various phenomenon intersect, historians make history more complicated, critical, and complete. McCall offers three different methodologies to intersectionality—anticategorical, intracategorical, intercategorical—that, when combined, offer expansive, balanced histories in which all possible factors are examined within a larger discourse. I seek to employ this idea of intersectionality through my analysis of the book trade, male anxieties, conceptions of gender, colonial rhetoric, and transatlantic phenomenon to assess reader reactions to captivity narratives.

²⁹ David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), 69; Frank Luther Mott, *Golden Multitudes: The Story of Bestsellers in the*

In late seventeenth century Europe, a book had to sell a minimum of one thousand copies to ensure the publication of subsequent editions. Books that went through five or more editions in New England in a period of at least fifty years earned the designation of “steady seller.” Mary Rowlandson’s narrative offers a key example of a steady seller—four editions appeared in 1682 alone. Publishers printed the first edition in Boston; only eight pages of this version still exist. Two editions were printed in Cambridge, Massachusetts, while a fourth edition appeared in London. The publication of the piece in London highlighted its importance. Colonists often considered books from London more valuable. Colonists deemed books printed in the colonies as less valuable and often refused to list them in wills and inventories. For that reason, historians have a skewed perception of how many British colonists owned copies of captivity narratives, particularly since the majority of them did not achieve a London publication.³⁰

United States, (New York: McMillan, 1947), 303; Kathryn Zabelle Derounian, “The Publication, Promotion, and Distribution of Mary Rowlandson’s Indian Captivity Narrative in the Seventeenth Century,” *Early American Literature* 23.3 (1988): 239; and Hall, “Uses of Literacy,” 80. England and the colonies shared many commonalities in terms of the books trade. For instance, both shared common personnel, maintained small presses and small runs, and faced geographic and social limitations in terms of book distribution. However, the American book industry in the late seventeenth century showed a lack of development, in part to restrictions placed on them by the monarch during the Dominion of New England. Modes of transportation also limited and affected the book trade. While transport facilities likely had little effect on the book trade in large publishing centers like London and Paris, they played crucial roles in the book trade business in rural areas and the colonies. Prior to the nineteenth century, publishers typically sent books out in sheets. The customer then bound them on their own. The quality of the binding varied based on the preferences and financial situation of the customer. Shipping costs were high because the size and weight of the sheets, as well as the fact that paper could be easily damaged due to adverse weather conditions, accidents, and the friction of the ropes. As a result, a majority of the cost involved in book production came from shipping. In order to make a profit, booksellers sold most books at relatively steep prices, meaning that books reached a limited clientele at first. Libraries, sharing, and pirated copies, however, made books more accessible.

³⁰ Robert Darnton, “What is the History of Books?,” in *Reading in America: Literature and Social History* edited by Cathy N. Davidson (Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 30, 42-42; Derounian, “The Publication, Promotion, and Distribution of Mary Rowlandson’s Indian Captivity Narrative in the Seventeenth Century,” 246; and Hall, “Uses of Literacy,” 26.

The English developed increasingly sophisticated print technologies during this period as a means for the nation to exist on both sides of the Atlantic. Printing and book trading took root as an extensive trade network. Written documents connected the “New World” with England both as a means of relaying practical information regarding news and basic communication, but also emphasized a shared English culture and language. Literacy bound the English community together on either side of the Atlantic in opposition to the illiterate “savages” that authors depicted as the captors within captivity narratives.³¹

Writing emerged as a literary career in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, although many people wrote before this time. During this period, readers began to consider the intentions and importance of the author during their reading endeavors. The author gained an authoritative position as an intellectual laborer. The author ultimately became a model of an educated English person. Records of many captivity narratives were typically ministers rather than career authors, but many used their writings as a means of their own expression. An exploration of the content of captivity narratives therefore reveals the intentions of these early authors.³²

Similarities in the structures of captivity narratives suggest that they served a common purpose and highlights the manipulation of an editor. Although captivity narratives differed dramatically in length, they shared a same basic narrative structure. Some were only a paragraph, whereas others, like those of Mary Rowlandson and John Williams, were more

³¹ David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989, 1-15; Hugh Armory “Printing and Bookselling in New England, 1638-1713,” in *The History of the Book in America*, 83-116; Darnton, “What is the History of Books?,” 40; and Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse, *The Imaginary Puritan: Literature, Intellectual Labor, and the Origins of Personal Life* (Berkeley and Las Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), 20, 307.

³² Armstrong and Tennenhouse, *The Imaginary Puritan*, 1-7, 21.

than seventy pages. Some narratives featured first-person narrators, while authors wrote others in the third-person. Similarly, some appeared as individual books, while other stories were parts of larger sermons or works, like Cotton Mather's epic *Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702). Despite these differences, most adhered to the same basic narrative pattern, modeled after Rowlandson's tale.³³

Captivity narratives typically began with an initial raid, or battle between the English and indigenous peoples. Colonists were portrayed as victims, whereas native were depicted as cruel barbarians that murder innocents and kill children. In fact, nearly all narratives include scene where an Indian "knocks" an infant's brain against a tree. The author then described the captivity. This usually included a journey to a different location—or, in Rowlandson's case, "removes." During this portion of the tale, the author outlined interactions between the captive and her captors. Captivity narratives typically ended with a redemption. In most cases, female captives were ransomed or sold to the English or French. With few exceptions, the female protagonists did not run away. Biblical allusions were often littered throughout the tales. The shortest of narratives either focus on one of these portions—the raid, captivity, and redemption—or quickly go through all three. Although this narrative pattern became a characteristic of the genre, it did so through the editorial hand. The fact that male editors placed the stories of captivity within this narrative template suggests that they maintained the ability to shape the narratives in additional ways beyond

³³ John Williams, *The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion; or, A Faithful History of Remarkable Occurrences in the Captivity and Deliverance of Mr. John Williams, Drawn up by Himself, to which is Added a Biographical Memoir of the Reverend Author, with an Appendix and Notes, by Stephen W. Williams*, 6th ed, 1795, reprint (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1966); Rowlandson, *The sovereignty & goodness of God*; and Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*.

titles and prefaces, including word choice, pairing the narratives with other texts, and characterization.

All captivity narratives from this period—both male or female—come from the words of the captives themselves or were mediated by ministerial figures. Ministers Increase Mather, Cotton Mather, and John Pike took a particular interests in captivity narratives and relayed the tales of Quintin Stockwell, Sarah Gerish, Elizabeth Heard, Robert Rogers, Mehetable Goodwin, Thomas Toogood, Hannah Swarton and others. Mary Rowlandson, John Williams, and John Gyles wrote their own narratives, although Increase Mather edited Rowlandson’s piece. Williams also communicated the tale of his daughter, Eunice, a famed “unredeemed captive.” An anonymous author, likely a minister, wrote down Elizabeth Hanson’s narrative, although he supposedly directly transcribed it from her own words. Through these works, male authors aimed to reassert their control and authority in the colonies. In order to do so, they crafted prescriptions that aimed to regulate the family.

Families, the smallest unit of society in New England, were structured hierarchically. Families served to instill values and skills that members utilized within the larger realm of the community. Men, as husbands and fathers, were situated at the head of this unit. Men acted as the primary societal regulators, while the church also maintained a similar function. The Congregationalist church punished fathers when members of the unit went astray. The church, composed of these family units rather than individuals, was the basis of state development. The ordered family worked as the framework for all of Puritan society; each person played a specific function that was essential to the entire community. Men generally

served as economic and material providers, while women were caregivers and turned raw materials provided by the husband into useful objects.³⁴

Women, although community members with specific roles, were still regulated by their husbands. Puritan sermons and literature reinforced a reciprocal husband-wife relationship. Prominent minister Cotton Mather instructed that husbands and wives should “always be contriving to be blessings to each other.” Reciprocity, however, did not equate equality. Men and women had specific roles, the former as the household leader and the latter as a subservient member. Minister Benjamin Wadsworth, author of *The Well-Ordered Family* (1719), noted, “a husband’s government ought to be gentle and easy, and the wife’s obedience ready and cheerful.” The couple thus represented a distinctly hierarchical relationship.³⁵

A Puritan woman’s primary role was to serve her husband and to provide religious instruction to her children. Minister Wadsworth asserted that “amazingly great will your guilt and danger be, if you neglect the Religious Education of your children.” Puritans emphasized the value of literacy within the Church and supported education. Women therefore played a significant role in the perpetuation of the Church.³⁶

³⁴ Morgan, *The Puritan Family*, 133, 143.

³⁵ Cotton Mather, *Essays to Do Good*, ed. George Burder (Boston, MA: Lincoln and Edmands, 1808), 47; Morgan, *The Puritan Family*, 43; Benjamin Wadsworth, “*The Well-Ordered Family: Or, Duties. Being the Substance of Several Sermons, About Family Prayer, Duties of Husbands and Wives, Duties of Parents and Children, Duties of Masters and Servants*” in *The Colonial American Family: Collected Essays* ed. David J. Rothman and Sheila M. Rothman (New York: Arno Press, 1972), 35; and Ann Marie Plane, *Colonial Intimacies: Indian Marriage in Early New England* (Ithaca and London: Cornell Univeristy Press, 2000), 17.

³⁶ Rothman and Rothman, *The Colonial American Family*, 74; and David D. Hall, ed., *Puritans in the New World: A Critical Anthology* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), 71, 154.

Since Puritans considered men and women as spiritual equals, many women were literate and read scripture themselves. Girls received an education, though not as extensive as the education that boys received. Rather than focusing on skills for work outside of the home, girls often acquired skills that would be beneficial to them as wives.³⁷

The captivity narratives produced in the New England colonies during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries reflected and reinforced the hierarchical aspects of the Congregationalist churches and its ideal nature of gender relationships. Ministerial authorship and editing account for this aspect of the prescription of female behavior. The anxieties of ministers regarding their authority in the communities, particularly in light of changing regimes in England, led them to assert their control wherever possible. Women, although not directly threatening ministerial or male authority in the colonies, became an outlet upon which these men could exert their control and seek to perpetuate a status quo that was favorable to them.³⁸

While women wrote some narratives themselves, men, particularly ministers, wrote many more. Furthermore, men edited and published all narratives. This ensured that men had the final say on what aspects of the account were deemed appropriate for the public audience, and therefore had the ability to focus on aspects that reinforced the gender roles endorsed by

³⁷ Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment*, 32-34; and Morgan, *The Puritan Family*, 97-108.

³⁸ Alan Taylor, *American Colonies: The Settling of North America* (New York: Penguin Books, 2002), 276-280. Following the death of King Charles II in 1685, his brother, James, a Catholic, became the king of England. James initiated more authoritative rule over the colonies by establishing the Dominion of New England, a super colony that joined together the five New England colonies with New York and New Jersey. James appointed new governors to regulate the colonies. These appointees often stripped locals of property rights and political office. For instance, Governor Andros in Massachusetts restricted town meetings, revoked land titles, and more strictly enforced the Navigation Acts. This more authoritative and Anglican rule threatened colonists' political, economic, and religious autonomy.

the Church. The narratives of Mary Rowlandson, Elizabeth Hanson, and Elizabeth Heard were all written by the women themselves or were direct transcriptions of their words. Cotton Mather wrote many narratives, including those of Hannah Swarton, Mary Plaisted, Sarah Gerish, Mehetable Goodwin, and Mary Ferguson. Mather based these relations on testimonials from the women and on stories that he heard from other ministers and men in the community. Since Mather did not rely on direct accounts, he may have manipulated the stories to reflect his religious, social, and political objectives.

Although Hanson's and Heard's narratives were written in first person and were supposedly direct transcripts of their own words, ministers wrote them. This gave the author an opportunity to inject his own perspectives or agendas into the narratives. Similarly, Increase Mather edited and prefaced Rowlandson's narrative, although she penned the tale herself. The preface in particular created a lens through which readers viewed the work and emphasized certain feminine characteristics that the church endorsed, including mothering, obedience, and submissiveness.³⁹

Instruction for children often began with hearing others reading aloud and with the memorization of certain texts—often religious in nature. Mothers utilized catechism and

³⁹ *God's Mercy Surmounting Man's Cruelty, Exemplified in the Captivity and Redemption of Elizabeth Hanson* (Keimer: Philadelphia, 1728) 3; Bunker Gay, *A Genuine and Correct Account of the Captivity and Sufferings and Deliverance of Mrs. Jemima Howe* (1792) in *Women's Indian Captivity Narratives*, ed. Katheryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), 91-104; Susanna Johnson, "A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Johnson," in *North Country Captives: Selected Narratives of Indian Captivity from Vermont and New Hampshire* ed. Colin G. Calloway (Hanover and London: University of New England Press, 1992), 67; and Increase Mather, *The sovereignty & goodness of God, together, with the faithfulness of his promises displayed; being a narrative of the captivity and restauration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson. Commended by her, to all that desires to know the Lords doings to, and dealings with her. Especially to her dear children and relations, 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* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Samuel Green, 1682), preface.

scriptural texts in their teachings. Literacy emerged from this process. As a result, boys and girls both learned to read in their native tongue, leading to nearly universal literacy in New England—if literacy is defined as the ability to read English. Many people, especially women, did not know how to write, and only “learned men,” many of whom were ministers, knew Latin.⁴⁰

Because of the close association between religious texts and the acquisition of literacy, children in New England absorbed many components of religiosity at a young age. In this sense, literacy and religion were inseparable. Printed works therefore maintained a great deal of authority. As a result, “to read was to see: the act of reading was akin to looking in a mirror...people in New England perceived speech and writing as continuous and interchangeable.” Captivity narratives therefore not only exposed readers to exciting and moralizing tales, but also allowed them to explore themselves through them.⁴¹

Many women in Puritan society were therefore literate but many did not know how to write. As the wife of a prominent minister, Mary Rowlandson was an exceptional case because she was highly-educated. Although historians cite Rowlandson’s tale as the model captivity narrative in terms of content and structure, it also functioned as a model in terms of ministerial interference. Increase Mather authored the eight-page preface to the Rowlandson narrative. Within his introduction, Mather urged readers to forgive Rowlandson for submitting her account—an act that contradicted Puritan opposition to women speaking publicly or writing. He asserted that the educational value of the narrative was the only

⁴⁰ Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment*, 7, 32-34. Hall relied on signatures, court testimonies, records of bookkeepers, and voting records to determine who could read and write during this period in New England.

⁴¹ Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment*, 38, 40-42.

reason he deemed this female-penned tale appropriate for publication. Mather stated, “This gentlewoman’s modesty would not thrust it into the press, yet her gratitude unto God made her not hardly persuadable to let it pass, that God may have his due glory.” Mather made Rowlandson’s voice public because of the educational purposes of her devout Puritanism.⁴²

Even though Increase Mather supported the publication, he also called it “a pious scope which deserves both commendation and imitation.” He saw the benefit of such a narrative to the New England community, but he clarified that this was an exceptional case. Women were typically not allowed to make such public statements or publish any type of writing. Puritan society even barred women from participating orally in religious services, a form of expression not modest enough for the Puritan woman.⁴³

Unlike Rowlandson, Hanson did not write her narrative; however, her story was supposed to be a direct transcription of her own words. The anonymous ministerial author of Elizabeth Hanson’s tale explained in his preface that her narrative had value because it so clearly conveyed “the mercy and preserving hand of God.” The religious nature of Hanson’s narrative, along with the presence of a male intermediary who relayed the story to the public, legitimized the publication of her narrative.⁴⁴

⁴² Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty & Goodness of God*, preface. Rowlandson’s narrative has been the most studied because it was the only one to have definitely been written by a woman. Additionally, because of its long length, there is a lot more material to analyze. Rowlandson’s narrative is considered to be the model upon which subsequent captivity narratives are based. While I have attempted to consider all of the narratives involved in this study equally, Rowlandson’s narrative is more prevalent because there is so much information within it, whereas some of the other narratives are only a couple pages long.

⁴³ Mather, preface to *The sovereignty & goodness of God*, preface; and Lonna M. Malmshiemer, “Daughters of Zion: New England Roots of American Feminism,” *The New England Quarterly* 50 no. 3 (1997): 486.

⁴⁴ *God’s Mercy Surmounting Man’s Cruelty*, 2.

With the exception of Hannah Swarton's narrative, the accounts written by Cotton Mather typically appear in the third person. Through an incorporation of the narratives into other works, like sermons and essays, Mather made the stories and the captives themselves less important. Rather, he placed an emphasis on the messages that he hoped to convey. His father's preface to Rowlandson's narrative served as a precedent. The narratives penned by Cotton Mather were often shorter than those of women who had other publishers or writers, most notably Hanson, Howe, and Johnson. Mather's accounts did not reflect an emphasis on truth or portrayal of time. For instance, Mehetable Goodwin's narrative was the same length as Sarah Gerish's and Elizabeth Heard's, despite the fact that Goodwin's captivity lasted for five years, while Heard's and Gerish's lasted a maximum of six months. Mather remained more interested in conveying certain points about the captivities and the women in them rather than offering truly representative accounts.⁴⁵

Cotton Mather and other ministers had a particular interest in women's tales of captivity because female church membership increased during the late seventeenth century. As the Church more frequently recognized women as spiritual role models as time progressed, captivity narratives penned by Cotton Mather did not contain the apologetic

⁴⁵ Cotton Mather, *Decennium luctuosum. An history of remarkable occurrences, in the long war, which New-England hath had with the Indian salvages, from the year, 1688. To the year 1698. Faithfully composed and improved*, (Boston: B. Green and J. Allen for S. Phillips, 1699) in *Indian Captivities: Or, Life in the Wigwam, Being True Narratives of Captives Who Have Been Carried off by the Indian* ed. Samuel G. Drake (Auburn: Derby and Miller, 1851), 71-72; Cotton Mather, "Narrative of the Captivity and Sufferings of Miss Sarah Gerish," in *Indian Captivities*, 68; Cotton Mather, "Three Narratives of Excessive Distress," in *Indian Captivities*, ed. Samuel G. Drake (New York: AMS Press, 1851), 70-71. 111-112; Mather, *Humiliations Follow'd With Deliverance*, 52-63; and Cotton Mather, *A Notable Exploit; wherein, Dux Faemina Facti, in Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702) in *Women's Indian Captivity Narratives*, ed. Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), 55-60. Cotton Mather's first narratives, those of Dustan, Neff and Swarton were first published as part of a sermon entitled, *Humiliations Followed with Deliverances* (1697) and then published in his *Magnalia Cristi Americana: Or the Ecclesiastical History of New England* (1702).

prefaces that were attached to earlier tales, like those in Increase Mather's introduction to Rowlandson's narrative. Cotton Mather wrote a great deal on the roles of women within the Congregationalist church. Ministerial literature did not convey what New England women thought or believed, but could provide insight into the qualities praised or detested by men. The sermons were thus more reflective of male ideals than actual feminine realities.⁴⁶

Additionally, Mather authored a book entitled *Ornaments for the Daughters of Zion*, which aimed to instruct women on their proper roles in the community and in the church. The manual achieved popularity, with three editions published between 1691 and 1741. Mather cited Eve as the "mother of humanity" and instructed women to similarly fashion themselves primarily as mothers. His book offered depictions of women that were quite typical of hierarchical Puritan society. For instance, he described women as "the fearful sex." He intended for women to identify with Eve while keeping her faults in mind. Mather utilized images of women in captivity narratives in a similar manner.⁴⁷

While the women he portrayed typically adhered to Puritan standards, he warned readers of emulating them entirely. For example, Hannah Dustan and Mary Neff made "blows upon the heads of their sleeping oppressors," killing nine and then subsequently escaping with their scalps, but he did not advise the emulation of such aggression. Mather

⁴⁶ Cotton Mather, *A Notable Exploit*, 55-60; and Ulrich, *Good Wives*, 202-214. Cotton Mather's religious writings centered on the role of women within church communities more so than the work of other ministers. Nearly half of the funeral sermons written by Cotton Mather between 1689 and 1728 were written on behalf of women, while 75 percent of his peers' funeral sermons were written for men. Cotton Mather clearly recognized the growing importance of female church members. In Charles Evans's *American Bibliography* he lists fifty-five elegies, memorials and funeral sermons for women and fifteen other works addressed to women published between 1668 and 1735. Cotton Mather wrote twenty-seven of the titles mentioned. While Mather did publish considerably more works than other Puritan ministers, the fact that nearly 40 percent of the works involving Puritan women were written by him should be noted.

⁴⁷ Cotton Mather, *Ornaments for the Daughters of Zion* ed. Pattie Cowell (Delmar, NY: Scholar's Facsimiles and Reprints, 1978), 20.

made clear to readers that, because of the peculiarity of the captives' circumstances, the protagonists were allowed to take on certain roles that they could not in the presence of a white male authority:

“One of these women took up a resolution to the intimate action of Jael upon Sisera; 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.”⁴⁸

Within chapters four and five of the Book of Judges, Jael offered hospitality to a Canaanite general, Sisera, and then subsequently killed him, supporting the Israelite's military efforts against the Canaanites. Dustan's efforts aid the English cause in the same fashion that Jael helped her people. Mather thereby used the Bible as a justification for Dustan's actions while also highlighting their exceptional nature. These documents therefore remained educational—women were supposed to simultaneously learn from them and be wary of the more rebellious aspects.⁴⁹

Ministerial authorship and editorship provided an opportunity for men to inject their own anxieties, fears, and ideals into the captivity narratives of women in a manner that allowed them to prescribe and perpetuate standards of female behavior. Little evidence, however, suggests that female gender roles were changing significantly during this era. Men thus sought to reinforce certain modes of behavior in order to reassert their masculinity and control over the domain in which they controlled—the home. Men's anxieties arose from Indian warfare, difficulties in providing basic material and economic necessities for their families, and uncertainty regarding their authoritative status in the trans-Atlantic empire.

⁴⁸ Mather, *A Notable Exploit*, 60.

⁴⁹ Mather, *A Notable Exploit*, 58-60.

Ministers had a particular stake in this uncertainty, given their prominent leadership roles within New England communities. As England threatened these leadership roles, colonists sought to instill their influence and control over their subordinates within the hierarchical structure of Puritan belief. Captivity narratives served as an outlet for the expression of ministers' fears and an exertion of a certain amount of control over their congregations. Because of the close relationship between the family unit and the Puritan church in New England, ministers did not only prescribe gender roles within the realm of religion and community within captivity narratives; rather, these men additionally dictated the terms of the most intimate of relationships—that between a mother and her child.⁵⁰

Since the family comprised an integral component in the composition of Puritan society, women's roles as wives and mothers were central to the well-being of the community. Ministerial literature highlighted modes of behavior that they deemed essential to this gendered hierarchy. Increase Mather, in his essay regarding miscellaneous observations, carefully reinforced standards for female behavior. For instance, he relayed the following story about young Abigail Eliot:

⁵⁰ See also Ulrich, *Good Wives*; Elizabeth Reis, *Damned Women: Sinners and Witches in Puritan New England* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1997); Mary Beth Norton, *Founding Mothers & Fathers: Gendered Power and the Forming of American Society* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996); and Carol F. Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1987). While women may have had to take on extra responsibilities in the colonies than they would have in England as men worked to build infrastructure, this did not cause women to challenge the authority of colonial male leaders. For instance, as Ulrich, who relies heavily on probate records, argues in *Good Wives*, it was not unusual for women to assist their husbands in their professions and trades. It was also deemed socially acceptable for women in the early seventeenth century would often fill in for their husbands when they were away. In *Damned Women*, Reis asserts that women in early colonial New England were less subordinate than many European women of their day and, because of the nature of setting up colonies, had less rigid prescriptions. However, Puritan women still lived in a society that was highly patriarchal and were only perceived as equals in the spiritual realm.

“When she was about five years old, playing with other children under a cart an iron hinge being sharp at the lower end hapned to strike her head, and pierced into the skull and brain. The child making an outcry, the mother came; and immediately drew out the iron, and thereupon some of the brains of the child which stuck to the iron, and other bits were scattered on her forehead.”⁵¹

Although it appeared that she was going to die, a doctor saved Miss Eliot with an operation.

While this initially appeared as a simple story of a young girl’s brush with death and her miraculous recovery, Mather ended the narrative by stressing that the young woman eventually became “the mother of two children,” a fact that was irrelevant to the rest of the tale. Mather conveyed this fact to illustrate that even women who experienced extraordinary circumstances had one clear life objective: to become a mother.⁵²

Increase Mather’s son, Cotton Mather, similarly reinforced the importance of motherhood in his essay titled “Elizabeth in her Holy Retirement.” Mather not only stressed motherhood as women’s most important and sacred duty, but also argued that women should remain happy and joyous during their pregnancies:

“And the first thing, to be propounded unto you, it; That you do not indulge an indecent impatience or discomfort, as the state, which you find ordered you...froward pangs of dissatisfaction, harboured, and humoured, in you, because you see that in sorrow you are to bring forth children, may displease heaven, and bring yet more sorrow upon you.”⁵³

Many pregnant women had a difficult time maintaining this cheerful demeanor given high rates of infant mortality, in addition to the physical burden of pregnancy; however, Puritans defined masculinity in relation to a man’s sense of control over the family. If a man’s wife

⁵¹ Increase Mather, *An Essay for the Recording of Illustrious Providences* intro. James A. Levernier (Delmar, New York: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1977), 33.

⁵² Mather, *An Essay for the Recording of Illustrious Providences*, 34.

⁵³ Cotton Mather, “Elizabeth in her Holy Retirement. An Essay to Prepare a Pious Woman for her Lying in. Or Maxims and Methods of Piety, to Direct and Support an Handmaid of the Lord, Who Expects a Time of Travail” in *The Colonial American Family*, 3.

seemed happy, it reflected highly on himself and made him successful in his endeavors relating to the family. Puritan beliefs also linked childbearing to religion; Mather stated, “But certainly your pregnant time should be above all your praying time.” Ministers thus reinforced the connection between a woman’s place in society and the reproductive role of the female body.⁵⁴

Some ministerial literature from this period also reinforced the hierarchical nature of marriage and reinforced the idea of this union as reflective of the relationship between God and mankind. In *The Well-Ordered Family*, Reverend Benjamin Wadsworth asserted, “The husband is call’d the head of the woman. It belongs to the head, to rule and govern...though he governs her, he must not treat her as a servant, but as his own flesh.” Minister John Rowlandson further elaborated a great deal on the idea that the relationship between a husband and wife should mirror the relationship between God and man: “They retain good thoughts of him (God) in his withdrawment, or absence, As the Spouse in the Canticles, she calls him her beloved husband still. As the faithful wife: she retains good thoughts of her husband, and keeps up her respect, though he be gone from home.” Ministers portrayed the nature of the relationships between a man and God and a man and his wife as though they ought to be the same. Rowlandson further wrote, “They will seek him, till he returned again, when the Lord forsakes others, they will seek vanities, to make up the want of God’s presence. The Adultress in her Husband’s absence, will seek after other lovers. The true saint will be satisfied in nothing else but the Lord till he return.” In summation, he concluded that

⁵⁴ Mather, “Elizabeth in her Holy Retirement,” 22; Demos, *A Little Commonwealth*, 131-132; and Morgan, *The Puritan Family*, 46.

“for thy Maker is thy Husband, a loving, careful, tender husband too; can the Wife be willing to part with her Husband?” thereby drawing a direct parallel between these two relationships.⁵⁵

Because of this reflective relationship, men expressed their anxieties regarding their favor with God within their relationships with their wives. Puritans believed that the hardships they experienced were punishments from God. Since men were responsible for the actions of their entire family unit, it was advantageous for men to reinforce appropriate modes of behavior within the literature that they produced. This expression also relieved their anxieties regarding their position with God, an area in which they had little control. They could supervise their families, however, so men asserted their dominance in this aspect of their lives. The reinforcement of the hierarchical structure of the family and men’s control over this unit also allowed men to feel a sense of control in response to the encroaching threat of Catholicism on the frontier. This assertion of power was evident in the prescriptive attitudes towards motherhood conveyed within captivity narratives.

Authors of captivity narratives perpetuated and celebrated the idea that a woman's primary role within the Puritan family was caregiving. As mothers, women were expected to clothe, feed, nurture, and teach their children. Nearly all women taken captive by Indians between 1675 and 1724 were either mothers or midwives. In many cases, Indians captured children alongside their mothers. Captivity narratives portrayed motherhood through the eyes of women separated from their children, either by distance or by death, or through the

⁵⁵ Wadsworth, *The Well-Ordered Family*, 35-36; and John Rowlandson, *The Possibility of Gods Forsaking a People, That Have Been Visibly Near & Dear to Him Together, With the Misery of a People thus Forsaken, set Forth in a Sermon, Preached at Weathersfield, Nov. 21, 1678. Being A Day of Fast and Humiliation* (Boston, 1682), 160-162.

perspective of women who acted as mothers during the duration of their captivity. The author of Elizabeth Heard's narrative, Cotton Mather, identified her through her role as a mother, wife, and daughter even though she was older than most other female captives and had only adult children: "Mrs. Elizabeth Heard was a widow of good estate, a mother of many children, and a daughter of Mr. Hull." This reinforced the fact that Puritans during this era defined women through their relation to men and through the reproductive functions of their sexed bodies.⁵⁶

Indians took captives during raids or as acts of war. As survivors, female captives faced separation from their families, husbands, children, neighbors, and friends without knowledge of who lived or died. Since Indians took captives from their communities and families, the children with them remained their only physical and emotional tie to the world they left behind. Unsurprisingly, motherhood played a crucial role in almost every narrative. Cotton Mather described all of the women in his narratives from the very beginning in terms of their relation to children, either through motherhood, or, in Mary Neff's case, as a midwife and caregiver to Hannah Dustan and her children. Despite the fact that Elizabeth Heard was older, Mather mentioned her adult children in her narrative.⁵⁷

Likewise, although the captives missed their entire families, they repeatedly mentioned their anxieties regarding separation from their children. Authors filled many of the narratives with descriptions of the difficulties of caring for a young child in captivity and the

⁵⁶ Cotton Mather, "Narrative of the Remarkable Escape of the Widow Elizabeth Heard also Taken at the Destruction of Major Waldron's Garrison at Dover," in *Indian Captivities*, 71; and Jeanne Boydston, *Home & Work: Housework, Wages, and the Ideology of Labor in the Early Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990): 1-29.

⁵⁷ Mather, *A Notable Exploit*, 53-60; and Mather, *Decennium luctuosum*, 71-72.

anguish associated with separation from one's child. This emphasis on motherhood reinforced the primary role Puritan society expected women to fill in the community, a role that made them tremendously valuable. Cotton Mather and other male authors and editors perpetuated their concept of a woman's most vital roles in the community: giving birth, caring for children, and raising them to be spiritually pure.⁵⁸

Captivity narratives represented the failure of English-colonial parents to protect their children and highlighted a key fear of men—the destruction of the family unit. Indians often sold captive children to other indigenous nations, resulting in further familial separation. This separation and inability to protect their children endured as a key theme in several of the captivity narratives. For instance, Elizabeth Hanson stated that “at that time I suffered in being under various fears and doubts concerning my children.” While already grieving for the initial deaths and separation from family members and adjusting to their new environments, these women coped with the additional burden of further separation.⁵⁹

Although this separation left many doubts as to the fates of their children, female captives gained access to information regarding their whereabouts and potentially visit them if they were nearby. In some instances, captive women sent messages to their separated children, instructing them to pray and read the Bible, showing readers that the religious instruction of children was one of womankind's most paramount duties. Rowlandson, when able to speak to her separated son, wrote that she “asked him whether he would read [from the Bible],” and expressed immense joy to find him later praying. Similarly, Elizabeth

⁵⁸ Mather, *A Notable Exploit*, 53-60; and Mather, *Decennium luctuosum*, 71-72.

⁵⁹ *God's Mercy Surmounting Man's Cruelty*, 19; and Little, *Abraham in Arms*, 93.

Hanson's daughter impressed her when she sung a psalm to the Indians as they paraded through the woods. Despite the hindrances of captivity, Rowlandson and Hanson fulfilled their roles of mothers, not only in terms of providing food for their young ones, but also in ensuring the proper guidance of their souls.⁶⁰

In several narratives, authors devoted a great deal of space to a description of the ramifications of such loss to mothers. This was particularly evident in Mary Rowlandson's narrative:

“About two hours in the night my sweet babe like a lamb departed this life, on Feb. 18, 1675—it being about six years and five months old. It was nine days from the first wounding in this miserable condition, without any refreshing nature or other except cold water. I cannot but take notice how at another time I could not bear to be in the room where any dead person was, but now the case is changed—I must lie down by my dead babe, side by side, all the night after.”⁶¹

Within the narrative, she continued to write about the death of her child for several pages, noting that her captors buried the child in the wilderness. Rowlandson also discussed the grief that she experienced when she told her other children of their sibling's death. The image of a grieving mother curled up with her dead child all night reinforced the idea that a mother was responsible for caring for her child and ensuring that his soul had safely departed, and inspired a hatred for the Indians that caused this situation. Furthermore, the death of Rowlandson's child suggested a deterioration of patriarchy and hinted at potential societal ruin if men failed to contain the threat of indigenous warfare. Readers caught a glimpse of

⁶⁰ Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty & Goodness of God*, 10-12; and *God's Mercy Surmounting Man's Cruelty*, 10.

⁶¹ Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty & Goodness of God*, 11.

the failure of colonial men to protect their wives and children and explored their own anxieties through this story.⁶²

Many scholars have examined Mary Rowlandson's narrative from a religious perspective, asserting that it served as a model for spiritual devotion during difficult times. In her narrative, however, Rowlandson expressed grief, sympathy, and worry for her family nearly as often as she quoted scripture and praised God. This adhered closely to the Puritan belief that God and religion were primary in a woman's life, but children and their well-being ranked as a close second. For instance, Rowlandson wrote, "I went up and down mourning and lamenting: and my spirit was ready to sink, with the thoughts of my poor children." Although she continued to rely on God, the fate of her children weighed heavily on her heart.⁶³

Many narratives detailed the brutal murder of infants and described the mother's inability to effectively protect her child. Dustan asserted that "the salvages would presently bury their hatchets in their [the infants's] brains, and leave their carcasses on the ground for birds and beasts to feed upon." Mather devoted the entirety of Mary Plaisted's narrative to this theme. In this single paragraph story, the author carefully chose which aspects to emphasize: "She had been out of her bed of family sickness but three weeks when she was taken, and like others, she was obliged to wade through swamps and snow, when at length

⁶² Mitchell Breitwieser, *American Puritanism and the Defense of Mourning: Religion, Grief, and Ethnology in Mary White Rowlandson's Captivity Narrative* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 55. Mitchell Breitwieser departs from the typically discussed Puritan significances of Mary Rowlandson's narrative to discuss how the loss of her children and separation from her husband are the primary focus of her story. In doing so he argues that her narrative is less valuable as a jeremiad and that its true value lies in its development of a Puritan manner of dealing with the zone of the grave, as Puritanism's area of both greatest bonanza and greatest risk, a circle of human ground needing to be mapped out.

⁶³ Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty & Goodness of God*, 13.

she was relieved of the burthen [sic] of her infant son by her cruel master, who, after dashing out its brains, threw it into a river!” Mather identified Plaisted only through her role as a mother. Indians killed her baby. The fact that this murder was the only incident conveyed within the brief narrative suggests that Mather intended it to serve a very specific purpose.⁶⁴

Although this rhetoric reflected a blatant characterization of indigenous peoples as “barbaric” or “savage,” the authors additionally conveyed the utter terror that these young mothers endured in losing a child by murder. Such brutal statements also served to dissuade families from moving to the frontier, away from church communities. Plaisted’s brief narrative reflected men’s fears regarding Indians and their own abilities to protect their families in a frontier environment. Just like the helpless mother and child depicted in the story, men felt unable to escape the threat of Indian warfare and worried about defeat. By placing themselves in the role of the woman and child, male authors and editors gained a safe space in which they could metaphorically express their fears and explore the ramifications of failure.⁶⁵

While in captivity, mothers particularly expressed concern for the souls and burial rites of their dead children. Mary Rowlandson, for instance, was particularly worried about the burial conditions of her child; she stated that “when I had been at my master’s wigwam, I took the first opportunity I could get, to go look after my dead child.” Similarly, Goodwin urged her captors to let her bury her infant herself, although her captors denied this request.

The burial, in addition to its religious significance, also reflected a woman’s last

⁶⁴ Mather, *A Notable Exploit*; 59; and “The Narrative of Mary Plaisted,” in *Indian Captivities or Life in the Wigwam*, 113.

⁶⁵ Cotton Mather, “Three Narratives of Excessive Distress,” in *Indian Captivities*, 113. The account of Mary Plaisted’s captivity is only two sentences long.

responsibility in terms of care-giving for her young child. This showed women that even in times of great strife, motherly and religious duties must remain paramount.⁶⁶

Furthermore, a particular order of grief existed that female captives conveyed within their captivity narratives; this order reflected the hierarchical nature of Puritan society and the Congregationalist church. Elizabeth Swarton, for instance, cried, “I was now bereaved of my husband, children, friends, neighbors, house...” This sentiment mirrored Mary Rowlandson’s own expression of grief: “All was gone, my husband gone, my children gone, my relations and friends gone, our house and home...” These remarks represented the definitive order in which women were supposed to construct their social relationships: women were first obligated primarily to their husbands, followed by their children, extended family, friends, and neighbors. This reinforced the importance of social hierarchy in Puritan society and clearly conveyed to female readers the importance of their proper place.⁶⁷

Women harbored concern for both the spiritual well-being of their children as well as their ability to provide for the basic needs of their children to ensure their survival—two areas that perplexed English men as well. Many narratives depicted women who had just given birth or who had an infant; this is partly due to the fact that most married Puritan women spent their lives, until menopause, in a cycle of birth and nursing. In an average family, women typically nursed a child for about a year and gave birth approximately every two years. Elizabeth Hanson, for instance, gave birth only fourteen days before her capture.

When unable to make enough milk to breast feed her starving baby, an Abenaki woman

⁶⁶ Johnson, “A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Johnson,” 67; Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty & Goodness of God*, 11; and Cotton Mather, “Three Narratives,” in *Indian Captivities or Life in the Wigwam*, 111.

⁶⁷ Mather, *Humiliations Follow’d With Deliverance*, 52-63; and Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty & Goodness of God*, 6.

showed her how to make a concoction out of crushed walnuts, corn meal, and water, a milky substance that ultimately prolonged the child's life. Mehetable Goodwin faced similar difficulty in feeding her child: "This, through her hunger and hardship, she being unable to nourish from her breast, occasioned it to make grievous and distressing ejaculations." This struggle that women faced in regard to feeding their children paralleled the frustration that men sometimes experienced in terms of feeding their families and was therefore a means through which authors and editors expressed their own anxieties in relation to this topic. This included economic hardships resulting from the Dominion of New England, anxieties over harvests, and hunting issues.⁶⁸

Captive women with living children worked hard to ensure the safety of their children and provide for their basic needs. Mehetable Goodwin struggled to keep her five-month-old baby alive. Cotton Mather wrote that "her Indian master told her that if the child were not quiet he would soon dispose of it...[so] sometimes she would carry it from the fire out of his hearing, when she would sit down up to her waist in the snow, for several hours." Goodwin rarely noted any of her own difficulties and instead focused on her role as a mother and the ways in which she met these ideals during her captivity.⁶⁹

Mary Rowlandson's narrative also expressed examples of the ties between self-sacrifice and motherhood that were key principles in Puritan society. Although wounded during the initial raid, when she was taken captive, she still held her young son despite her

⁶⁸ "God's Mercy Surmounting Man's Cruelty, Exemplified in the Captivity and Surprising Deliverance of Elizabeth Hanson, Wife of John Hanson, of Knoxmarsh, at Kecheachy, in Dover Township, who was Taken Captive With Her Children and Maid-Servant, by the Indians in New England, in the Year 1721," in *Indian Captivities or Life in the Wigwam*, 113-126; Mather, "Three Narratives," 111; Morgan, *The Puritan Family*, 42-47; and Demos, *A Little Commonwealth*, 133.

⁶⁹ Cotton Mather, "Three Narratives," 111-112.

pain. This image—of a woman trying so desperately to provide comfort to her child, despite her intense pain—reminded colonial readers of the importance of motherhood and reinforced that role.⁷⁰

In addition to motherhood, captivity narratives also prescribed submissive characteristics as ideal modes of female behavior. In most narratives, authors framed captivity as an uncomfortable abnormality that must be remedied by redemption or an escape. In order to survive, women relied almost exclusively on their “womanly skills.” Although this was in part due to their religious convictions, an adherence to the normalities of home-life also served as a coping mechanism. Since Puritan society found it impermissible for women to escape their captivity via violence or flight, women made the situation more bearable by adhering to the values of the culture that they left behind and by attempting to perform the duties and functions that they typically filled within the household and the community.

During the initial raids, many women chose to hide. While men took up arms and fought, women hid in spaces that were largely defined by their femininity. Elizabeth Heard “hid herself in a bunch of barberry bushes, in the garden.” Young Sarah Gerish took cover in a nursery, under blankets beside a baby. Women hid in locations that were considered feminine—the garden and the nursery. Through this emphasis on gendered space, male authors and editors illustrated the helplessness of the situation that the women were in and reinforced gender roles.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Johnson, “A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Johnson,” 67; Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty & Goodness of God*, 1-5; Mather, “A Notable Exploit,” 183; and Mather, “Three Narratives of Excessive Distress,” 111.

⁷¹ Mather, “Narrative of the Remarkable Escape of the Widow Elizabeth Heard,” 71-73; and Cotton Mather and John Pike, “Narrative of the Captivity and Sufferings of Miss Sarah Gerish, who was Taken at the

Authors of captivity narratives also prescribed female behavior more directly. Although Mehetable Goodwin lived in captivity for five years, Mather wrote only two pages about her in his *Magnalia Christi Americana*. Rather than including a description of her entire captivity, he chose only to emphasize scenes involving Goodwin and her infant. The key themes Mather relayed in her story included her inability to protect her baby, the savage nature of Indians, and extreme submissiveness:

“He violently snatched the babe out of its mother’s arms, and before her face knocked out its brains; and having stripped it of its few rags it had hitherto enjoyed, ordered the mother to go and wash them of the blood wherewith they stained! Returning from this sad and melancholy task, she found the infant hanging by the neck in a forked bough of tree.”⁷²

Captive women, like Goodwin, often interacted with their masters in a similar manner that they would have with their husbands: submissively. They also took care of their own children, fulfilling the motherly role that was so valued in Puritan society. Like Goodwin, Mather also described Sarah Gerish’s devout submission; she refused to flee even when she was given a golden opportunity:

“Her barbarous captors decamped from the place of their night’s rest, leaving this little captive girl asleep and covered with a snow that in the night had fallen; but at length awaking, what agonies may you imagine she was in, on finding herself left a prey for bears and wolves, and without any substenance [sic] in a howling wilderness, many scores of leagues from any plantation!”⁷³

Not all women acted submissively, however. Hannah Dustan and Mary Neff escaped their captivity through violence, making “blows upon the heads of their sleeping oppressors.” They killed and scalped nine Indians. Despite this violence, Mather emphasized that this was

Sacking of Dover, in the Year 1689, by the Indians,” in *Indian Captivities or Life in the Wigwam*, 68-70.

⁷² Mather, “Three Narratives,” 111.

⁷³ Mather, “Narrative of the Captivity and Sufferings of Miss Sarah Gerish,” 70.

an abnormality that other women should not emulate. The circumstances were extreme; the women were upset that the Indians had killed Dustan's children and sought to protect themselves and assert revenge. Mather stated that he conveyed this narrative with some hesitancy, and devoted very few pages to its description.⁷⁴

Authors continuously reinforced the idea that certain social and economic tasks were appropriate and essential to Puritan femininity within captivity narratives. In most narratives, authors emphasized women's performance of bartering activities and neighborly aid—behaviors women typically exhibited in their Puritan communities. Female captives relied on the skills that they had acquired within their households to ensure their survival. Elizabeth Hanson fulfilled a role within her master's home that was quite similar to what she typically did at home: “[he ordered] me in his absence to get in wood, gather nuts, &c [sic]. I was very diligent about cutting the wood and putting it in order.” The author made it clear that Hanson carefully followed her master's orders and served him in a manner that reflected the skills of an ideal Puritan housewife. She used her obedient submission as a defense when her master threatened to kill her shortly after.⁷⁵

Similarly, Susanna Johnson fulfilled household duties within her master's home and within the larger Indian community as a whole. Johnson stated that “I was a novice at making canoes, bunks, and tumplines, which was the only occupation of the squaws.” She viewed the work of female Indians as incompatible with her desired standards of action. However, she imitated them in the performance of her duties as a means of participation in the available

⁷⁴ Mather, *Humiliations Follow'd With Deliverances*, 12. Hannah Dustan is the first of the captives considered by Namias to fit the American “Amazon” archetype. These types of captives often used violence as a way to evade Indian capture or to initiate an escape one in captivity. Namias, *White Captives*, 29-36.

⁷⁵ *God's Mercy Surmounting Man's Cruelty*, 113-126; and Boydston, *Home & Work*, 1-29.

feminine community. Despite the fact that she was worked in a manner similar to that of Indians, she did not overstep the boundaries laid out for her by her Puritan society. Many Puritan women served as “deputy husbands” and aided their husbands in their trades. The very fact that women within the narratives relied on their prescribed gender roles to ensure their survival conveyed their importance to readers and showed appropriate standards of female behavior.⁷⁶

Property-holding men secured their manhood through relationships with women—especially their wives—in a precarious balance of power that caused anxiety. Manhood was established through the assertion of heterosexual male identity, ideally within the confines of marriage, which in turn rested on men’s efforts to tame female sexuality, itself paradoxically constructed as naturally unruly and largely beyond control. The prescriptions for female behavior laid out within captivity narratives served this purpose.⁷⁷

Authors of narratives with female protagonists crafted behavior prescriptions within them as an assertion of their control. Through the stories, male authors expressed anxieties in a metaphorical nature that did not challenge their sense of authority or masculinity. In turn,

⁷⁶ *God’s Mercy Surmounting Man’s Cruelty*, 119; and Johnson, “A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Johnson,” 67. Ulrich notes that “as ‘deputy husbands,’ wives crossed gender boundaries without challenging the patriarchal order of society. Settling accounts, commanding field hands, negotiating with Indians, or filling orders for planks and staves, New England women demonstrated their ability to perform male work, but in doing so they also proclaimed their loyalty to their husbands. Deputy husbands acted within rather than against traditional definitions of female responsibility, proving that in the pre-modern world position was always more important than task.” Within this framework, Ulrich further examines women’s roles as housewives, mistresses, consorts, mothers, neighbors, Christians, and heroines. Although the work spans a century (1650-1750), it sometimes fails to account for change over time. This paper, which also spans a century, acknowledges that, while change certainly occurred, the prescriptions laid out in women’s Indian captivity narratives remain the same throughout the period and therefore reflect an ideal proposed by male authors rather than a reality. Ulrich, *Good Wives*, 35-50, 238.

⁷⁷ Elizabeth Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England: Honor, Sex, and Marriage* (New York: Longman, 1999), 16.

male readers used the struggles of women to explore their own anxieties regarding Indian warfare, masculine identity, colonial authority, and religious threats. By projecting their fears onto women through captivity narratives, male authors not only expressed anxieties without threatening their masculinity, but also exerted authority in a world where they had little control over anything else. This is particularly evident when women's narratives are contrasted with tales of captivity that featured white male protagonists. Men's captivity narratives tended to portray ideals of masculinity and stress strength, rationale, and property.⁷⁸

Men were more likely to die than be taken captive and live on as adopted member of indigenous groups. Many more women became captives, although the fates of the majority are unknown. The themes that prevailed in men's narratives differed dramatically from those prevalent in women's narratives. Men's narratives tended to uplift their own masculinity, emphasize strength and adventure, and end with redemption by their own means. For the most part, men themselves penned their narratives rather than ministers, but their works were still subject to male editorial input as well. Like female narratives, male narratives also achieved immense popularity. For instance, only the popularity of John Williams's narrative rivaled that of Mary Rowlandson's tale. Williams narrative also thrived as a "steady-seller," with six editions published in the eighteenth century alone. A juxtaposition of men's and women's captivity narratives reveals the distinctly gendered nature of each and the prescriptions that abound from the female-associated texts. The stark contrasts evident in the

⁷⁸ Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England*, 8; Anne S. Lombard, *Making Manhood: Growing Up Male in Colonial New England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 16; and Michael S. Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 10-11.

narratives also imply different experiences for readers. While men's narratives emphasized victory and strength and were more adventure-oriented, women's narratives exuded danger and flirted with the forbidden. On the one hand, the gross depictions of food, the ineptitude of men to save women—at least initially—and the death of children highlight a failure of the patriarchal order and allowed male readers to explore their own failures through the experiences of female protagonists. On the other hand, men's narratives reinforced English cultural, spiritual, and political superiority while simultaneously reinforcing authoritative and successful images of white men.⁷⁹

Male captives often defied their captors through attempted escapes. All of the men's narratives from this time period included a scene in which the male character either attempted or contemplated escape. Robert Rogers "being under such an intolerable and unsupportable burden of Indian luggage, was not so able to travel as the rest; he therefore, watching for an opportunity, made his escape."⁸⁰ Furthermore, John Gyles wrote:

"Then others put a tomahawk into my hands, and ordered me to get up and sing and dance Indian, which I performed with the greatest reluctance, and while in the act, seemed determined to purchase my death, by killing two or three of these monsters of cruelty, thinking it impossible to survive their bloody treatment..."⁸¹

Puritan colonial men considered "civility" a crucial component of their identity as a man; they feared becoming "savage" like the Indians. Gyles's account therefore displays one source of male anxiety—the maintenance and perpetuation of British standards of life while being surrounded by the wild. Gyles made clear, however, that he did not completely

⁷⁹ Demos, *The Unredeemed Captive*, 51; and Namias, *White Captives*, 49-83.

⁸⁰ Mather, "Three Narratives," 110.

⁸¹ John Gyles, "Memoirs of Odd Adventures, Strange Deliverances, etc., in the Captivity of John Gyles, Esq., Commander of the Garrison on St. George River, in the District of Maine," in *Indian Captivities or Life in the Wigwam*, 84.

succumb to the demands of his captors. Although he was forced to participate in the ceremony, he still contemplated killing “the monsters.” His use of this term further makes it clear that he did not endorse the behavior that he was being forced to exhibit.⁸²

The theme of men contemplating killing their captors, even when they took no physical action to do so, prevails throughout men’s narratives from this era. Quinton Stockwell wrote, “I thought if any of the English would awake, we might kill them all sleeping. I removed out of my way all the guns and hatchets, but my heart failing me, I put all things where they were again.” While Stockwell wanted to kill his sleeping captors, he did not do so in this moment. This reflects the value of reason that Puritans considered a trait unique to “civilized” men.⁸³

Other narratives depicted men that secured their fates through violent action. Thomas Toogood’s brief narrative explained his evasion of capture:

“While the Indian was getting out his strings to bind his prisoner, he held a gun under his arm, which Toogood observing, suddenly sprang and wrested it from him; and momentarily presenting it at the Indian, protested he would shoot him down if he made the least noise. And so away he ran with it unto Quochecho.”⁸⁴

This narrative, only a paragraph long, existed only to emphasize Toogood’s victory over the invading Indians and his ability to make rational decisions. Ideal men in colonial New England exuded maturity, rationality, responsibility, self-control, and courage, all qualities that Toogood embodied in his narrative.⁸⁵

⁸² Lepore, *The Name of War*, 5.

⁸³ Increase Mather, “Narrative of the Captivity of Quintin Stockwell, Who Was Taken at Deerfield, in Massachusetts, by a Party of Inland Indians, in the Year 1677,” in *Indian Captivities or Life in the Wigwam*, 62; and Lombard, *Making Manhood*, 6-10.

⁸⁴ Mather, “Three Narratives,” 113.

⁸⁵ Lombard, *Making Manhood*, 8.

Furthermore, authors stressed property in narratives with male protagonists. Landholding was one key attribute that defined manhood during the British colonial period. Gyles discussed the destruction of property in his narrative: "...soon after, the Indians set on fire the fort and houses, which made a terrible blast, and was a melancholy sight to us poor captives, who were sad spectators!" Since Puritans closely related property and manhood, this description symbolized the destruction of his masculinity. Gyles's role shifted from an authoritative position in his home life and community to a more submissive role within the nation of his captors. Stockwell also emphasized property, taking detailed notes regarding the Indian's wigwams.⁸⁶

Additionally, authors of men's captivity narratives emphasized hunting and other duties that Puritan doctrine considered masculine. For instance, Indian captors ordered that Stockwell make a shirt, a job that New England colonists considered women's work. He refused to perform this action until his master ordered him to complete the task. Gyles's and Stockwell's narratives both described hunting as one of their primary duties. Puritan society expected men to function as providers of food and material items for their families. Although economic hardship and indigenous warfare challenged this responsibility, the authors of captivity narratives depicted the male ideal: even in times of hardship or immense difficulty, men could still provide.⁸⁷

Some men's narratives expressed anxieties more directly. For instance, Gyles wrote, "When my mother heard the talk of my being sold to a Jesuit, she said to me, 'Oh, my dear

⁸⁶ Gyles, "Memoirs of Odd Adventures," 77; and Mather, "Narrative of the Captivity of Quintin Stockwell," 61.

⁸⁷ Gyles, "Memoirs of Odd Adventures," 82; and Mather, "Narrative of the Captivity of Quintin Stockwell," 62.

child, if it were God's will, I had rather follow you to your grave, or never see you more in this world, than you should be sold to a Jesuit; for a Jesuit will ruin you, body and soul!"

This clearly conveyed anxieties regarding the French threat along the frontier; however, while it appeared in a male's narrative, the author recorded this fear from the perspective of the captive's mother rather than the man himself. This showed that men felt anxious regarding the possible intrusion of Catholicism into their Puritan world, particularly amidst the rule of James II and as they ventured further west near French territory. Catholicism threatened the entire structure of their society, particularly because of the unity between the church and the government in North American Puritan society.⁸⁸

Through an emphasis on the domesticity and sexual purity of Puritan women in contrast with the roles that Indian women filled in their societies, captivity narratives indicated modes of behavior that male authors and editors deemed appropriate for women in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These narratives defined the duties that Puritan men expected women to perform, particularly in regard to motherhood, household chores, submission to their husbands, and their attitudes towards community. While the religious nature of these narratives held educational value for all Puritan colonists, the narratives also dictated proper gender roles to their female audience in particular.

This prescription of behavior allowed men to carefully regulate their wives and families when they could not completely regulate larger aspects of society—the church, government, and economy during times of political struggles within the empire and with indigenous nations. Although women did not challenge patriarchal authority on a large scale

⁸⁸ Gyles, "Memoirs of Odd Adventures," 78.

at this point, the ever-changing political and social climate of colonial New England created an atmosphere in which men feared the reversal of traditional gender roles. In order to preserve the status quo and perpetuate some aspects of normal life and control, authors and editors prescribed gender roles through captivity narratives. Given the anxieties that men experienced due to Native warfare, a loss of colonial autonomy during the reign of James II, the encroachment of Catholicism into the Puritan periphery, and challenges to basic survival, it is evident that the prescription of female behavior and the regulation of the family unit showcased in sermons, captivity narratives, and other pamphlets from this era were created as a means of ensuring control in at least one domain of a male's life—the family.

Ministerial reactions to captivity and the subsequent narratives were one way that men reached a broad audience in an effort to preserve certain gender roles. Most narratives confirmed behaviors that already aligned with values supported by the church, so an advocacy of these narratives by the clergy only seemed natural. Because of Puritan beliefs, women thought that their survival was a sign from God of their redemption from punishment. Not only did ministerial support and perpetuation ease male anxieties by solidifying their rule over the home, but it also offered a sense of control to ministers who felt that their roles as community leaders were threatened.

Males also worried about Indian threats. Metacom's War represented one such perilous situation. Many men saw their families, homes, and lives destroyed. Authors filled the narratives with images of "barbaric" Indians and allusions to their "savagery." This imagery symbolized the anxieties men felt about their place in the "New World". By placing

themselves in the role of the women or the children, male authors and editors explored the possibility—and nightmare—of failure safely, and allowed their readers to do the same. This was not a topic that men openly discussed, for it would have shown that they were weak.

Although captivity narratives had other functions, authors also used the narratives as a means of prescribing idealized female gender roles. The actions of the captive women within the narratives offered women examples of appropriate behavior in terms of motherhood, domestic duties, and religious piety. Men drafted, edited, and promoted captivity narratives as a means of expressing their own anxieties regarding the hardships of the New England colonial experience. By advocating certain modes of female behavior, men took control of one aspect of their social, economic, and political lives despite other uncertainties that perplexed them.

CHAPTER TWO: MALE ANXIETIES, FEMALE BEHAVIOR, AND “THE OTHER”

In her captivity narrative, Hannah Swarton described one of her captors: “My Indian mistress, was one that had been bred by the English at Black point, and now married to a Canada Indian, & turned papist.” This description embodied many of the fears English men harbored in relation to their colonial world. To male readers, the mistress represented the result of the failure of white men to effectively protect their families, perpetuate Protestantism, and sustain “civilization.” The mistress was either of English or mixed ancestry, but married a Canadian Indian and became a baptized Catholic in lieu of a return to English-colonial society. Although the Indian mistress’s history remains unclear, her fate characterized male fears, particularly in an environment where captives, like Eunice Williams, sometimes chose to live a life similar to that of the Catholic-indigenous woman.⁸⁹

In response to fears surrounding indigenous warfare, the presence of France to the west, Catholicism, colonial authority, land availability, and difficulties in providing protection and food for their families, men manipulated tales of captivity into a mechanism for prescribing female behavior. Since most of these anxieties arose from the larger project of the colonial project, individual men had little control over them. As a means to reassert their masculinity and control, men sought to regulate female conduct through captivity narratives. Particularly through tales that contrasted Puritan and indigenous women, captivity narratives

⁸⁹ Cotton Mather, *Humiliations Follow'd With Deliverances* (1697; repr., New York: Garland Publishing, 1977), 55; Ann M. Little, *Abraham in Arms: War and Gender in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 2; and John Demos, *The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994). Eunice Williams was the daughter of famed captive John Williams, both taken captive at Deerfield in 1704. Eunice Williams gained quite a bit of popularity herself as an “unredeemed captive.” She married an Indian man, had children with him, and refused to return to English society. She eventually did visit her English siblings following her father’s death, but refused to permanently leave behind the life that she had made for herself with her captors.

promoted idealized gender roles, underscored submissiveness, exuded control, and upheld the supposed superiority of English “civilization.” Male authors and editors drew strict divisions between “English” and “indigenous,” terms that became synonymous with “good” and “bad” behavior. Men used these distinctions both as a method of control and as a manifestation of their anxieties relating to Indian affairs.

Male anxieties arose from several different avenues during the late seventeenth century in New England, including Native warfare; political turmoil with England; the threat of Catholicism both from English officers and from the neighboring French; and economic concerns that affected men's abilities to provide for and protect their families. Indian warfare posed a significant threat to British colonists in New England and caused male anxieties over how to protect their families and property. In *A Relation of the Troubles which have hapned in New-England, by reason of the Indians there* (1677), Increase Mather described relations between American indigenous peoples and Englishmen since the founding of Jamestown in 1607. He argued that relations between Puritans and neighboring Indian communities in New England fared much better initially than those in the Virginia colony. Unlike Virginia, which largely attracted male immigrants, New England's early immigrant population included entire families. Furthermore, the indigenous population had already been decimated by disease before European settlement occurred in this area. The prevalence of families and the crippled Native population dissuaded violence on either side.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Increase Mather, *A Relation of the Troubles which have hapned in New-England, by reason of the Indians there*, 1677; In his theory of “virgin soil epidemics,” Alfred W. Crosby asserts that the chief cause of Native population loss post-contact was the lack of immunity that the Native population had to European diseases. The Natives had not been exposed to these types of ailments before and therefore did not have the antibodies to combat them. As a result of this susceptibility, millions of Natives died due to disease, creating a permanent population loss. More recent research suggests that although diseases were devastating to the

The Pequot War (1637-1638) shattered this period of peace. The war broke out when allies of the Pequots murdered John Stone, an English smuggler and privateer. This brutal war culminated in the massacre at Mystic Fort, a genocidal attack on Pequot elderly, women, and children trapped inside the swamp. Colonial soldiers set the enclosure on fire and those that fled were either murdered, sold into slavery, or taken into refuge by other nations. This resulted in the complete dispossession of the Pequot.⁹¹

Years later, the ultimate breakdown of relations between the English and the Native peoples of New England manifested itself in Metacom's War (1675-1678). Jill Lepore argues that this war represented a fight to maintain identity. Colonists sought to preserve their "Englishness," while Natives fought to maintain their "Indianness." Indian raids and warfare directly challenged Puritan men's abilities to protect their families, particularly as they witnessed the slaughter or capture of neighbors, family members, and friends by their wartime enemies. Furthermore, the strict distinction between "civilized" and "savage"

Native North American societies, factors such as warfare, murder, and interbreeding with the English further reduced the populace. Alfred W. Crosby, "Virgin Soil Epidemics as a Factor in the Aboriginal Depopulation in America," *William and Mary Quarterly* 33 (1976), 289. See also Russell Thornton, "Aboriginal North American Population and Rates of Decline, ca. A.D. 1500-1900," *Current Anthropology* 38, no.2 (April 1997). Arthur Benedict Berthold defined the parameters of New England during this period based both on religion and geography. New England encompassed Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, although Rhode Island was free to any denomination. The southern colonies of Virginia, Maryland, and the Carolinas were largely Anglican, although Maryland had a large Roman Catholic base. The middle colonies were Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, and Delaware, none of which maintained a religious state. Many captivity narratives occur within the New England boundaries as established by this definition and along its northern Maine frontier. See Arthur Benedict Berthold, *American Colonial Printing as Determined by Contemporary Cultural Forces, 1639-1763* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1934), 7-9, 21-29.

⁹¹ William Bradford, "Of Plymouth Plantation" in *Bradford's History of Plymouth Plantation, 1606-1646*, ed. William T. Davis (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908); John, Mason. *A Brief History of the Pequot War: Especially of the Memorable Taking of their Fort at Mistick in Connecticut in 1637* (Boston: S. Kneeland & T. Green, 1736); and John Underhill, *Newes From America; or, a New and Experimentall Discoverie of New England; containing, A True Relation of their War-like proceedings these two yeares last past, with a Figure of the Indian Fort, or Palizado* (London: J.D. 1638). See also Alfred A. Cave, "Who Killed John Stone? A Note on the Origins of the Pequot War," *William and Mary Quarterly* 49.3 (July 1992): 509-521.

composed a crucial element to the identity of Puritan men. A threat to their “civilized” nature thus posed a threat to their sense of manhood.⁹²

Puritan colonists rooted white manhood in New England in landownership, so particularly devastating to the colonists was the loss of homes and property that resulted from Metacom’s War. Property functioned as a crucial element in the foundation of culture for seventeenth century Englishmen. Only homeowners and heads of families attained full manhood status. Ideal husbands embodied the roles of provider, procreator, and master. Two key components of manliness were economic competence and marriage. Property, in particular, was one area in which men gained a sense of self. As colonists saw their homes burned and their family members murdered, their senses of identity, civility, and safety were simultaneously challenged.⁹³

Mather and other Puritans viewed the ensuing conflict as punishment for the sins of the colony. Likewise, colonists viewed victory as evidence of God’s support and that Indians were the heathen enemies of God. Puritans expressed these views not only in their accounts

⁹² John Easton, “A Relacion of the Indyan Warre” (1675; reprinted in Charles H. Lincoln, ed., *Narratives of the Indian Wars, 1675-1699*, (New York, 1913), 8-12; Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), x, 5-8; Michael S. Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 1-11; and Anne S. Lombard, *Making Manhood: Growing Up Male in Colonial New England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 132. The conflict involved the Wampanoags and other eastern Algonquians, including the Nipmucks, Pocumtucks, Narragansetts, and the Abenakis against the New England colonists and their colonial allies, the remaining Pequot and Mohegan. John Sassamaon allegedly leaked information to the Plymouth governor that Metacom (also known as King Philip) was plotting an attack against English settlers. Colonists hanged three Wampanoags in retaliation. Infuriated over these deaths and the unfair trial that they received, in addition to many other grievances against the English, Metacom launched a war that lasted fourteen months.

⁹³ “Town of Lancaster, Petition to the Governor and Council of Massachusetts, March 11, 1675” in Henry S. Nourse, ed. *The Narrative Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (Lancaster, Massachusetts: J. Wilson and Son, 1903), 80-81; John Locke, *The Second Treatise on Government*, (1690; reprint Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 1986); Lepore, *The Name of War*, 76-87; Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 1-11; and Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World, 1492-1640* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 16-40.

of Metacom's War, but also in sermons, captivity narratives, diaries, and other forms of literature from this period. This tension between colonists and Natives in New England caused male anxieties regarding their abilities to protect their families.⁹⁴

Male anxieties in New England in the latter portion of the seventeenth century also arose from political struggles with England that challenged their authority within the colonies. In 1684, King Charles revoked the Massachusetts Bay Charter, which significantly restricted colonial autonomy. This was a response to a 1678 announcement by the Massachusetts legislature that proclaimed that “the lawes of England are bounded within the fower seas, and does not reach America.” New England male colonists, especially political leaders, were particularly upset that the charter had been revoked without them getting a chance to defend it: “Our charter was with a most injurious pretence (and scare that) of law, condemned before it was possible for us to appear at Westminster in the legal defense of it.” Politics, a sense of independence, and rational decision-making composed key parts of manhood during this period; the struggle over authority in Massachusetts Bay therefore had both political and gendered implications. As men lost their voice in the political domain, their identity as patriarchs was at stake. Men felt that their masculinity had been threatened since they were not allowed to rationally defend their charter or make decisions about it.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Mather, *A Relation of the Troubles which have hapned in New-England*; Andrew Pittimee et al. “Petition to the Governor and Council of Massachusetts, June 1676” in Daniel Gookin, “An Historical Account of the Doings and Sufferings of the Christian Indians in New England,” *Transactions and Collections of the American Antiquarian Society* 2 (1836), 527-28; John Hull, Journal Entry, August 24, 1676 in George Madison Bodge, *Soldiers in King Philip's War*, 2nd ed. (Leominster, Massachusetts, 1896), 479-80; Jill Lepore, *The Name of War*, 125-150; and Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 90-105.

⁹⁵ Massachusetts Colony Records, v, 200; Nathaniel Bifield, *An Account of the Late Revolution in New-England. Together with the Declaration of the Gentlemen, Merchants, and Inhabitants of Boston, and the Country Adjacent. April 18, 1689* (London: Rose and Crown, 1689), 8; Lombard, *Making Manhood*, 11; and Alan Taylor, *American Colonies: The Settling of North America* (New York: Penguin Books, 2002), 80,

Following the death of King Charles II in 1685, his brother, James, became the King of England. New England colonists saw James II as a possible threat not only because he openly practiced Catholicism, but also because he sought to rule the royal colonies more authoritatively. For instance, he appointed military men to colonial office and ordered them to forcefully control any amount of colonial protest or action that contradicted the king's objectives.⁹⁶

In order to curb New England liberties and crackdown on defiance, James II consolidated the New England colonies, New York, and New Jersey into one entity—the Dominion of New England. This measure eliminated the sense of autonomy that New England colonists had experienced for the past few decades, especially since the decree dissolved the assemblies that they had used to govern. These assemblies were legislative bodies in which men in New England had dictated legislation and ruled their colonies nearly autonomously. Furthermore, the Dominion gave the King and to the military officers that he appointed much more authority. This measure therefore stripped men in the New England colonies of the authority that they had become accustomed to and threatened the sense of independence that was a key component of their vision of manhood. The loss of male authority in the colony as a whole jeopardized the position of men as rulers of the home, particularly since the structure of the household mirrored that of the state. This subordination within the larger English community therefore posed dire consequences for their position in the family as well and thus challenged their patriarchal rule.⁹⁷

276.

⁹⁶ Taylor, *American Colonies*, 276.

⁹⁷ Taylor, *American Colonies*, 276; Lombard, *Making Manhood*, 178-179; Little, *Abraham in Arms*, 2; and John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (New York: Oxford University

King James II appointed military officer Sir Edmund Andros as governor of the Dominion of New England. Andros stripped Puritan officials of their roles in the court and as militia leaders, instead appointing Anglicans to power within the super colony. Andros posed a dire threat to Puritan leaders, as the governor banned the practice of taxes paying out clerical salaries and reserved one Boston meetinghouse for Anglican services. Furthermore, Andros invalidated the land titles of many Puritans, restricted town meetings, and levied new taxes to pay his lavish salary and fund the new military presence that he established in the colonies. Many colonists further disliked Andros because he enforced the Navigation Acts, which weakened the port's business. This economic hardship, combined with the high taxes, caused serious financial woes for many New Englanders and therefore challenged their abilities to provide for their families materially.⁹⁸

Many colonists rebelled against the measures taken by Governor Andros. On April 18, 1689, a mob of provincial militia and citizens revolted against the governor. While there were no casualties, Puritans did take Anglicans into custody, including Andros himself. According to the “The Declaration of the Gentlemen, Merchants, and Inhabitants of Boston, and the Country Adjacent, April 18, 1689,” protesting colonists were outraged that over the new taxes, the dissolution of their charter, and the promotion of unpopular men in the militia. Furthermore, New England colonists expressed anxieties relating to the dual threats of the

Press, 1970), 131-132.

⁹⁸ Taylor, *American Colonies*, 277-280. The Anglican reign of James II ended when William and Mary took the crown from him. Rumors of the “Glorious Revolution” did not reach the colonies until 1689. As officials such as Andros attempted to suppress these rumors, rebels plotted to take advantage of the situation in order to dissolve the Dominion.

French and Catholicism. The authors of this declaration asserted that the French treatment of the English in the colonies was worse than “Turkish cruelties.”⁹⁹

As a result, the leaders of the Massachusetts Bay Colony reclaimed control of the government, as did the former leaders of the other colonies that made up the Dominion of New England. This resulted in a makeshift government until 1692, which Governor William Phips finally arrived. Although the Massachusetts colonists did not secure a complete restoration of their 1629 charter, a compromise charter was established.¹⁰⁰

Turmoil within the empire and with the indigenous population spawned economic and religious anxieties. In terms of religion, Puritans in New England faced not only the threat of French Catholicism to the west in the Great Lakes region and Canada, but also challenges from within the empire during the reign of James II. To the west, New France posed both a religious and territorial threat to the New English colonies. Puritans were particularly hostile to popery, even within Protestantism, as they worked toward a purification of the Anglican Church. As an ancient enemy that was simultaneously vying for territory in North America, the French posed a territorial threat to the English colonies as well. Captivity narratives exude anxieties regarding the religious and territorial threat posed by New France. Early scholarship on captivity narratives maintained that the documents served as instruments of anti-French propaganda. In most published tales of captivity, authors detailed how the captive resisted conversion to Catholicism by Catholic aboriginals and French intermediaries.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Bifield, *An Account of the Late Revolution in New-England*; and Taylor, *American Colonies*, 80.

¹⁰⁰ Bifield, *An Account of the Late Revolution in New-England*; and Taylor, *American Colonies*, 280-283.

¹⁰¹ See Richard VanDerBeets, *The Indian Captivity Narrative: An American Genre* (Lanham: University Press of Amherst, 1984); "The Indian Captivity Narrative: An American Genre," Ph. D. dissertation, University of

The narrative of Hannah Dustan depicted the resistance of Puritans to Catholicism. In her narrative, Dustan outlined how she and her fellow captives refrained from Catholic practice during their time in captivity:

“In obedience to the instruction which the French have given them, they would have prayers in their family, no less than thrice every day; in the morning, at noon, and in the evening; nor would they ordinarily let so much as a child, eat, or sleep, without first saying their prayers. Indeed, these idolaters, were, like the rest of their whiter brethren persecutors, and would not endure that these poor women should retire to their English prayers, if they should hinder them. Nevertheless, the poor women, had nothing but fervent prayers, to make their lives comfortable, or tolerable.”¹⁰²

Despite these attempts, the captives remained steadfast in their devotion to Puritanism.

Likewise, Mather emphasized Hannah Swarton’s resistance to Catholicism in her captivity narrative:

“For the lady of my mistress, the nurse, the priests, the friars, and the rest, set upon me, with all the strength of argument they could, from scripture, as they interpreted it, to persuade me to turn papist; which they pressed with very much zeal, love, intreaties, promises, if I would turn to them, and sometimes hard usages, because I did not turn to their religion. Yea, sometimes the papists, because I would not turn to them, threatened to send me to France, and there I should be burned because I would not turn to them.”¹⁰³

Even in the most dangerous of circumstances, female captives refused to abandon their religion. In this way, authors used these female protagonists as models for readers. At the same time, this repetitive attention to the threat of Catholicism revealed anxieties within the ranks of the Puritan clergy regarding the perpetuation of their brand of purified Protestantism within the North American continent.

the Pacific, 1973; and Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence-The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1160-1860*, (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1973).

¹⁰² Mather, *Humiliations Follow'd With Deliverances*, 44.

¹⁰³ Mather, *Humiliations Follow'd With Deliverances*, 62-63.

The brief narratives presented in Cotton Mather's *Good fetch'd out of evil* (1706) particularly highlights Puritan anxieties in relation to the French presence in North America. The title in particular highlighted the danger of "popish idolatries":

*Good fetch'd out of evil, in three short essays. I. A pastoral letter, of Mr. John Williams, the faithful Pastor of Deerfield; now detain'd a captive in Canada; written to part of his flock, and some others, returning out of their captivity. II. The conduct and constancy of the New-English captives when strongly tempted unto the popish idolatries. And certain plain poems, written by some of them, to fortify their children against such temptations. III. An account of most remarkable and memorable deliverances, received by many of the captives; and great things done by their Almighty Deliverer for them. Collected and published, that the glorious God may have the glory of his power and goodness; and that his people may reap some advantage from what has befallen their brethren.*¹⁰⁴

Within the title alone, Mather emphasized the threat of "popish idolatries" and connected it directly to the phenomenon of captivity by placing it within a text that focused solely on that topic. His telling of John Williams, Hannah Parsons, Hannah Bradley, and several anonymous captivities thus serve the purpose of outlining the popish threat.

In this piece, Mather argued that "the French use all means imaginable, to reduce their captives under the idolatries and superstitions of the church of Rome. Their clergy especially, are indefatigable in their endeavours to captivate the minds of these poor people, unto the Romish religion...the successes of the French converters have been upon very few, but some feeble and easy children." The narratives presented in this piece were short;

¹⁰⁴ Cotton Mather, *Good fetch'd out of evil, in three short essays. I. A pastoral letter, of Mr. John Williams, the faithful Pastor of Deerfield; now detain'd a captive in Canada; written to part of his flock, and some others, returning out of their captivity. II. The conduct and constancy of the New-English captives when strongly tempted unto the popish idolatries. And certain plain poems, written by some of them, to fortify their children against such temptations. III. An account of most remarkable and memorable deliverances, received by many of the captives; and great things done by their Almighty Deliverer for them. Collected and published, that the glorious God may have the glory of his power and goodness; and that his people may reap some advantage from what has befallen their brethren*, (Boston: printed by Bartholomew Green, 1706), title page.

however, their intended message was quite clear. They both emphasized the French and Indian alliance while simultaneously depicting stories of “horrible death and torture.” This work not only served as anti-French and anti-Indian propaganda, but, through scenes that depicted the “bloody intentions” of these groups, relayed the fear that the English felt in regard to the French presence on the continent and their allegiance with many Native American groups.¹⁰⁵

The presence of French men within captivity narratives further illustrate Puritan disdain for New France. The majority of captivity narratives end with redemption. In many cases, French men purchased the captive from their indigenous master, and subsequently sold them to the English. For example, Sarah Gerish was ransomed to the French and sent “to the nunnery, where she was comfortable provided for; and it was the design, as was said, for to have brought her up in the Romish religion, and then to have her married...” Sir William Phips aided in her return to the English, although she died sixteen months later, in 1697.¹⁰⁶

French men also served as intermediaries in the redemption of Mehetable Goodwin. She was taken to Canada so that her master could “make merchandise of her.” In route, a group of French Indians conquered her party. They “took Mrs. Goodwin and presented her to the French captain of the party, by whom she was carried to Canada, where she continued five years. After which she was brought safely back to New England.” In the instances of Gerish and Goodwin, French men played crucial roles in the redemption of the captives. In these conclusions, the French functioned as a barrier to “the wild.” French men were not

¹⁰⁵ Mather, *Good fetch'd out of evil*, 17, 26

¹⁰⁶ Cotton Mather, “Narrative of the Captivity and Sufferings of Miss Sarah Gerish,” in *Indian Captivities or Life in the Wigwam, Being True Narratives of Captives Who Have Been Carried off by the Indians*, ed. Samuel G. Drake (Auburn: Derby and Miller, 1851), 70.

depicted as “civilized,” like the English—after all, they were Catholic, and viewed by Puritans as “barbarians.” The French acted as intermediaries, or liminal figures in the drama of captivity. They did not return the captives immediately, and the narratives counted time spent with the French as years in captivity. In this way, depictions of the French within captivity narratives were sometimes contradictory. While most captives expressed joy when French Catholics purchased them from Indians, they also made extraordinary efforts to limit their time in Canada and staunchly resisted Catholicism. This was most evident in the narrative of Elizabeth Hanson. Her captors ransomed her to the French, who eventually sold her back to the English. During her time in Canada, she detailed how comfortably she lived among the French. However, her husband later died in an effort to prevent a marriage between their captive daughter, Sara, and a French man.¹⁰⁷

Fear of Catholicism, both along the French frontier and from Anglicans residing in New England, was one reason that ministers reinforced and prescribed behaviors for Puritan women. Within ministerial literature, ministers commented upon community members that had rejected Catholicism. For instance, when the French tried to convert Hannah Swarton to Catholicism after they ransomed her from the Indians, she resisted, an act that was stressed in the narrative that was penned by Cotton Mather. Just as Puritans perceived a religious threat of Catholicism by the French, they also feared the physical threat of Native Americans.

¹⁰⁷ *God's Mercy Surmounting Man's Cruelty*, 125-126; and Cotton Mather, “Three Narratives of Excessive Distress of Persons Taken at the Destruction of Salmon Falls, in the State of New Hampshire, on the Twenty-Seventh of March, 1690; viz., the Cruel Torture of Robert Rodgers, the Five Years' Captivity of Mehetable Goodwin, and the Fortunate Escape of Thomas Toogood,” in *Indian Captivities or Life in the Wigwam; Being True Narratives of Captives Who Have Been Carried Away by the Indians, from the Frontier Settlements of the United States, from the Earliest Period to the Present Time*, ed. Samuel G. Drake (Auburn: Derby and Miller, 1851), 111-112

Cotton Mather described the influence of both the French and indigenous inhabitants on the Puritans in New England:

“Have bloody, popish and pagan enemies, made very dreadful impressions upon us, and captivated and butchered multitudes of our beloved neighbors? Let us humbly confess, our sins have deserves that we should be all of us, altogether given up, unto the will of our enemies, to serve our enemies in the want of all thing, and have our lives continually in doubt, under their furious tyrannies.”¹⁰⁸

This outlined the threat posed by the French and aboriginals to Puritan leaders. Indians were viewed as “savages,” a notion that authors reinforced in captivity narratives. Indians, particularly in the years surrounding Metacom’s War and King William’s War. Although Indians took white captives before this point, it was not until this time that narratives were published. Through the prescription of female behavior, men sought to assert their control over their wives in a time when they had little control over other aspects of their lives, reflecting the masculine ideals that included rational self-control, economic independence, and responsible fatherhood.¹⁰⁹

The placement of captivity narratives with texts that outlined anti-Catholic sentiments, submissive female behavior, and Indian “cruelties” reveal the intentions of the male editor. These larger documents framed the ways in which readers interpreted their messages and highlight the anxieties that editors injected into the works through such frames. For instance, Increase Mather attached a sermon of Mary Rowlandson’s deceased husband, John Rowlandson, to the first edition of her published narrative. In his sermon, titled *The Possibility of Gods Forsaking a People*, Rowlandson perpetuated the idea that the

¹⁰⁸ Mather, *Humiliations Follow'd With Deliverances*, 12.

¹⁰⁹ Lombard, *Making Manhood*, 11.

relationship between a husband and wife should mirror the relationship between God and man: “They retain good thoughts of him (God) in his withdrawment, or absence, As the Spouse in the Canticles, she calls him her beloved husband still. As the faithful wife: she retains good thoughts of her husband, and keeps up her respect, though he be gone from home.” The nature of the relationships between a man and God and a man and his wife were portrayed as though they ought to function similarly. He further wrote, “They will seek him, till he returned again, when the Lord forsakes others, they will seek vanities, to make up the want of God’s presence. The Adultress in her Husband’s absence, will seek after other lovers. The true saint will be satisfied in nothing else but the Lord till he return.” In summation, Rowlandson concluded that “for thy Maker is thy Husband, a loving, careful, tender husband too; can the Wife be willing to part with her Husband?” thus drawing a direct parallel between these two relationships.¹¹⁰

Rowlandson elaborated on the connection between a man’s spiritual and marital relationships in this sermon: “I will even forsake you saith the Lord: a burden heavy enough, and you are like to feel it so ere long, heavy enough to break your Backs, to break your Church, and your Common wealth, and to sink in your haughty Spirits, when this Burden shall come upon you, in its force and weight.” With all of this uncertainty regarding their position with God and with their marital relationship mirroring their spiritual relationship, men wanted to exercise control over their families in the fashion that they believed God

¹¹⁰ John Rowlandson, *The Possibility of Gods Forsaking a People, That Have Been Visibly Near & Dear to Him Together, With the Misery of a People thus Forsaken, set Forth in a Sermon, Preached at Weathersfield, Nov. 21, 1678. Being A Day of Fast and Humiliation* (Boston, 1682), 160-162.

controlled them. Furthermore, the emphasis on female submissiveness displayed within the sermon legitimized the publication of Mary Rowlandson's female penned document.¹¹¹

The physical context of other narratives likewise indicated the author's or editor's intended messages. Cotton Mather published Hannah Swarton's and Hannah Dustan's narratives within a larger work, *Humiliations Follow'd With Deliverances* (1697), the full title of which demonstrated the purpose behind this collection:

*Humiliations Follow'd With Deliverances; A brief discourse on the matter and method of that humiliation which would be an hopeful symptom of our deliverance from calamity. Accompanied and accommodated with a narrative, of a notable deliverance lately received by some English captives from the hands of cruel Indians. And some improvement of that narrative. Whereto is added a narrative of Hannah Swarton, containing a great many wonderful passages, relating to her captivity and deliverance.*¹¹²

Mather placed these narratives within a larger commentary on the wrongdoings of Puritans in New England. The captives simultaneously represented punishment and redemption. The need for deliverance—which served as the key theme of this work—assumed that New England colonists faced threats to their religion from both indigenous “heathens” and French Catholics. Readers would therefore examine these narratives with these threats in mind. In this way, editors affected how the public consumed such texts.

The placement of other narratives similarly highlight the role that editors played in shaping interpretations of the texts. Mather published the narratives Mary Ferguson, Mehitable Goowin and Sarah Gerish within his *Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702). He also reiterated the tales of Hannah Dustan, Mary Corlis Neff, and Hannah Swarton within this

¹¹¹ Rowlandson, *The Possibility of God's Forsaking a People*, 154.

¹¹² Mather, *Humiliations Follow'd With Deliverances*, title page.

work. Within the opening pages of the piece, Mather reinforced the religious nature of the documents:

“I WRITE the *Wonders* of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION, flying from the Depravations of *Europe*, to the *American Strand*: And, assisted by the Holy Author of that *Religion*, I do, with all Conscience of *Truth*, required therein by Him, who is the *Truth* it self, Report the *Wonderful Displays* of His Infinite Power, Wisdom, Goodness, and Faithfulness, wherewith His Divine Providence hath *Irradiated* an *Indian Wilderness*.”¹¹³

In this sense, Mather contextualized the narratives of Ferguson, Goodwin, Gerish, Neff, and Swarton within a larger work that emphasized the triumph of the New England Puritans over the Indian “heathens.” While the Native Americans had not truly been defeated, this work maintained that stories of redemption, like these captivity narratives, existed as proof of God’s favor. More importantly, the placement of captivity narratives within these larger stories show that editors maintained the ability to frame the narratives to fit their own purposes. In the case of Mather’s *Magnalia Christi Americana*, anxieties regarding the perpetuation of Puritanism and the threat of indigenous peoples were placed at the forefront.

White males also faced challenges regarding their abilities to feed and financially provide for their families, particularly in times of warfare with the Algonquian peoples. Although white males could do little about these larger colonial threats and challenges to their authority as decision-makers in New England, they maintained the ability to regulate their own familial units. Through sermons and literature, male authors and editors reinforced appropriate modes of behavior for women. This offered male patriarchs—both as writers and

¹¹³ Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, 1.

readers of captivity narratives—a bolstered sense of masculinity in this time of colonial uncertainty and loss of authority.

Under the rigid patriarchal system of English Puritanism, men possessed paramount authority over families, civic government, and church congregations. Court documents reveal that very few women challenged this authority during this period. Courts commonly convicted women of crimes such as thievery and fornication; rarely did women directly assault the authority of their husbands or communities. In terms of daily work and labor, women's activities remained largely the same throughout the period between 1675 and 1724. Women performed duties both within and outside of the home. Puritan women cared for their children, prepared food, produced textiles, performed an array of household duties, participated in networks of barter and trade, and assisted with their husbands' duties as farmers or artisans.¹¹⁴

Captivity narratives drew deep divisions between white, Puritan women and indigenous women. Although the images of Natives within the narratives have traditionally been read as anti-Indian propaganda, the depictions of Native American women served as foils to Puritan ideals of white womanhood. In this sense, then, the characterization of indigenous women and the distinct lines between “savage” and “civilization” further prescribed acceptable modes of Puritan female behavior in response to male anxieties. Indian warfare and the inability to protect their families was one area that evoked male uncertainty;

¹¹⁴ George Francis Dow, ed. *Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County*, vol. 7-9 (The Essex Institute, 1919); Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan Family: Religion and Domestic Relations in Seventeenth-Century New England* Revised ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 133-135; Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 11-68; and Jeanne Boydston, *Home & Work: Housework, Wages, and the Ideology of Labor in the Early Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990): 1-29.

by placing women in the role of colonial society, men confronted the possibility of losing. Furthermore, by juxtaposing “savage,” “bad,” and “Indian” with “civilized,” “pure,” and “Puritan,” males clearly indicated to women which behaviors were acceptable and which were not.

The central characters in female Indian captivity narratives, the captive women, were not intended to be heroines; rather, they were supposed to be relatively helpless souls who used their faith in God and their distinctly feminine skills to survive their captivities. Authors of captivity narratives dictated normative gender roles to readers and maintained that even in times of personal and social upheaval, the rules must not be broken. The female protagonists in the stories conformed to Puritan gender codes even in the extraordinary circumstances of captivity and refused to challenge these mores. Through an unwillingness to forage and hunt, readiness to barter with Indians, submissive interactions with their masters, and participation in their adoptive communities, captive women upheld images of supreme feminine virtue.

Captivity narratives appealed to motherhood, particularly in terms of self-sacrifice for both the family and the community as a whole through images of submission and participation in activities that were considered feminine. For instance, Mary Rowlandson frequently knitted throughout her entire narrative. Even as she traveled, she “carried only my knitting work and two quarts of parched meal.” Her primary responsibilities—textile production and duties involving food—conform to Puritan expectations of women’s work. Rowlandson’s narrative in particular emphasized her inability to do anything about her situation. For God to restore her, she must exhibit particular feminine qualities, like passivity,

obedience, humility, and dependence. In a sense, this type of behavior demonstrated the dependence that the colonies had on England and the role that they were supposed to fill. Men, able to identify with this model, used this to convey their own anxieties regarding their status in the Atlantic world and the ambiguity of their roles as leaders within this community. The narratives were therefore simultaneously a way for them to express their own anxieties while ensuring that they retained control over one aspect of their lives—their superiority over their women and families.¹¹⁵

Female captives, although hesitant to actively seek redemption, ensured their own survival through means that conformed to and perpetuated Puritan conceptions of gender roles. Beyond prayer, Mary Rowlandson turned to trading and bartering as a means of survival. In Puritan towns, women often traded and bartered various homemade goods or food; Rowlandson continued this tradition in captivity. For instance, she used her knitting skills to trade for provisions; she did not, however, attempt to go out and forage or hunt for her own food, regardless of her hunger. Rowlandson wrote, “Then came an Indian and asked me to knit him three pair of stalkings, for which I had a hat and a silk handkerchief. Then another asked me to make her a shirt, for which she gave me an apron.” She could then use the goods that she acquired to barter for food when her master failed to provide. This showed

¹¹⁵ Mary Rowlandson, *The sovereignty & goodness of God, together, with the faithfulness of his promises displayed; being a narrative of the captivity and restauration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson. Commended by her, to all that desires to know the Lords doings to, and dealings with her. Especially to her dear children and relations, 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* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Samuel Green, 1682), 18; Boydston, *Home & Work*, 11-13; and Toulouse, *The Captive's Position*, 41.

that Rowlandson, along with other female captives, relied on modes of behavior that were acceptable to their own communities, rarely overstepping the boundaries.¹¹⁶

Furthermore, Rowlandson received some monetary payment for mending a shirt for King Philip. Rather than keep it, she immediately handed it over to her master. Likewise, when an Abenaki trader gave Rowlandson a knife for a similar endeavor, she immediately handed it to her master. She wrote, “I carried the knife in, and my master asked me to give it him, and I was not a little glad that I had anything that they would accept of, and be pleased with.” Rowlandson, although working to ensure her survival, did so through channels that would be deemed appropriate by her Puritan community, maintaining a submissive stance as she would with her husband and only performing activities that were normative for her gender.¹¹⁷

During periods when Rowlandson’s master failed to provide her with adequate provisions or banished her from sleeping in his wigwam, Rowlandson turned to her new community, just as she would have done in New England. She asked Indians in the settlement for a place to sleep or for food. Just as trade and barter were appropriate female behavior in certain circumstances, so was neighborly aid. Similarly, Hannah Swarton turned to her Indian neighbors when she was unable to obtain provisions from her master. She viewed this as an acceptable alternative to being given food; she did not write about attempting to find or hunt for food on her own: “I did make a fire and smoke to invite some Indians, if I could spy any, to come relieve us.” Swarton did not attempt to hunt or forage

¹¹⁶ Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty & Goodness of God*, 46-53.

¹¹⁷ Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty & Goodness of God*, 40.

on her own; rather, she hoped to lure nearby Indians to her campsite for trading purposes and neighborly aid.¹¹⁸

The reluctance to forage and hunt, the willingness to barter with homemade goods, the immediate submission to their masters, and the acceptance of neighborly aid conformed to modes of behavior that were acceptable for women in Puritan New England. Rather than challenging traditional gender norms in their unusual situation, captive women generally decided to adhere strictly to Puritan guidelines of gender hierarchy and religious devotion. These narratives thus conveyed the appropriate roles of women to their audiences, and showed that even in times of great difficulty, the rules must not be broken.¹¹⁹

Most of the narratives depicted women who were redeemed from captivity passively, through no actions direct action of their own. Authors attributed freedom to strong religious devotion and the acts of their husbands or other Anglo colonial men. Few women redeemed themselves through violent activities or stealthy escapes; in fact, this was discouraged. Sarah Gerish, for example, did not escape even when her captors left her behind. She had fallen asleep and her captors decided abandon her. Gerish, afraid of being alone in the wilderness, ran to catch up rather than taking the opportunity to escape. Likewise, Rowlandson advised a fellow female captive not to attempt an escape, stating that “I wished her not to run away by any means, for we were near thirty miles from any English town.” While her fellow captive

¹¹⁸ Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty & Goodness of God*, 46-53; and Cotton Mather, *Humiliations Follow'd With Deliverances* (1697; repr., New York: Garland Publishing, 1977), 51-72.

¹¹⁹ Mather, *Humiliations Follow'd with Deliverances*, 51-72.

viewed escape as a viable option, Rowlandson argued that it was an impossibility without the assistance of white men.¹²⁰

The majority of female captives from this era found redemption through male-initiated ransom. Indians often sold captives to the French, where they worked as servants until ransomed again to the English. This was the case for Swarton, Gerish, Hanson, Goodwin, and Plaisted. Rowlandson, however, was ransomed directly to her husband by the Indians. Thus the majority of female captives submissively stayed with their captors until a third-party sought their redemption.¹²¹

Although the majority of women took a submissive stance regarding their captivity, several female captives actively sought to redeem themselves, including Elizabeth Heard, Hannah Dustan, and Marry Neff. Despite the fact that these women did not rely on men to save them, authors justified their actions through claims that the captives' motivations were feminine since the narratives stressed submission, neighborly aid, and action only when death was the immediate alternative. For instance, Elizabeth Heard hid from the Indians during the initial attack and attempted to flee. When she came into contact with them, she asked the Indians "what [they] would have," thereby indicating that she was taking a submissive position to them immediately. She fled to a part of town with a strong military presence for protection. Cotton Mather, however, asserted that "[the garrison] would have been deserted, if she had accepted offers that were made her by her friends, to abandon it, and retire to

¹²⁰ Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty & Goodness of God*, 15; and Mather, "Narrative of the Captivity and Sufferings of Miss Sarah Gerish," 70-71. Sarah Gerish died after her captors ransomed her to Frenchmen. She never returned home. Cotton Mather heard her story from another minister and included it in one of his essays.

¹²¹ Mather, "Narrative of the Captivity and Sufferings of Miss Sarah Gerish," 70-71; and Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty & Goodness of God*, 62.

Portsmouth among them, which would have been a damage to the town and land.” Heard was therefore was not acting rebelliously; rather, her primary concern was the survival of her community, at least according to Mather. Mather depicted Heard as fulfilling a community need, an act that was most certainly deemed appropriate by her Puritan community.¹²²

Hannah Dustan and Mary Neff escaped captivity in a much more violent fashion. Cotton Mather similarly justified their actions and framed their stories as appropriate models of female behavior. Hannah Dustan urged her fellow captives, including her midwife, Mary Neff, to murder and scalp the Indians that had taken them captive. Cotton Mather made it clear from the introduction that Dustan’s husband fled without her and that she personally witnessed the brutal murder of two of her children by raiders. Mather justified her violent response through an assertion that the escape was the result of the combination of her unusual situation as a captive and the protectiveness that a mother felt for her child. Cotton Mather stated that “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.” He stressed the notion that Indians had killed her children and that her violent actions were only in retaliation. She did not kill the Indians to save herself; rather, she killed them because she was immensely upset about her dead children and acted for revenge. Although Puritans did not consider revenge a feminine virtue, they viewed motherhood and care-giving as characteristics intrinsic to women. Cotton Mather thus

¹²² Mather, *Decennium luctuosum*, 71-72.

claimed that Dustan was acting on behalf of her family, not overstepping the norms for female behavior, which was similar to the justification for Elizabeth Heard's actions.¹²³

Interestingly, the narratives of Hannah Dustan and Elizabeth Heard were significantly shorter than other narratives written by Cotton Mather. His narratives typically stressed more submissive and obedient characteristics. While he still made examples out of Dustan and Heard, emphasized through length the narratives of women that depict more "lady-like" actions.¹²⁴

In order to further define appropriate modes of behavior for white women, authors of captivity narratives drew stark contrasts between English and indigenous women. Authors cast Native peoples as "the Other," emphasizing a strict division between Puritan and Native cultures. Elizabeth Hanson, for instance referred to her captors as "barbarous salvages" that were "all naked." In the description of Hannah Dustan's captivity, Cotton Mather asserted that "the salvages would presently bury their hatchets in their [the children's] brains, and leave their carcasses on the ground for birds and beasts to feed upon." Most of the women's narratives feature images of the slaughter of infants by Indians, which displayed the ultimate act of savagery. This type of rhetoric and imagery served to reinforce the distinctions between "good" and "bad" female behavior.¹²⁵

¹²³ Cotton Mather, *A Notable Exploit; wherein, Dux Faemina Facti*, in *Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702) in *Women's Indian Captivity Narratives*, ed. Katheryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), 53-60; and Cotton Mather, *Decennium luctuosum. An history of remarkable occurrences, in the long war, which New-England hath had with the Indian salvages, from the year, 1688. To the year 1698. Faithfully composed and improved*, (Boston: B. Green and J. Allen for S. Phillips, 1699) in *Indian Captivities*, 71-72.

¹²⁴ Mather, *A Notable Exploit*, 53-60.

¹²⁵ Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty & Goodness of God*, 1; *God's Mercy Surmounting Man's Cruelty, Exemplified in the Captivity and Redemption of Elizabeth Hanson* (Keimer: Philadelphia, 1728), 113-126; and Mather, *A Notable Exploit*, 59.

In addition to emphasizing proper modes of female conduct, most captivity narratives criticized the actions and characteristics of Native American women. Many of the habits that authors critiqued did not align with Puritan conceptualizations of femininity and womanhood. In her narrative, Mary Rowlandson engaged in a particularly long interaction with an Indian woman and wife of her master, Weetamoo. Rowlandson consistently expressed a sense of superiority over Weetamoo. This behavior directly resulted from her identity as a woman and Puritan. She described Weetamoo in detail:

“[She was] a severe and proud dame...bestowing every day in dressing herself near[ly] as much time as any gentry of the land, powdering her hair and painting her face, going with necklaces, with jewels in her hair and bracelets upon her hands. When she dressed herself, her work was to make girdles of wampum and beads.”¹²⁶

While the Abenaki gendered division of labor was compatible with Rowlandson's notions of femininity, her lavish dress and jewelry did not meet modest Puritan standards. Furthermore, the words “severe” and “gentry” indicated to New England readers that Weetamoo was dressed in a fashion that was interpreted by Puritans as masculine rather than feminine.¹²⁷

Rowlandson conformed to all of the criteria that her own culture placed on womanhood and appeared to be a model example; Weetamoo, obviously, did not meet the criteria of Rowlandson's Puritan culture. Rowlandson repeatedly emphasized her own role as a mother, her role as a seamstress, or the act of creating a particularly feminine product, and her consistently submissive position. For instance, in one of her interactions with Weetamoo, Rowlandson stated, “I carried by knitting work and two quarts of parched meal,” while Weetamoo carried food and refused to share it with the captive. Rowlandson asserted that

¹²⁶ Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty & Goodness of God*, 60.

¹²⁷ Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty & Goodness of God*, 59-60.

Weetamoo later “found me sitting and reading my Bible; she snatched it hastily out of my hands, and threw it out of doors.” This act reiterated Weetamoo’s “savage” nature to colonial readers. Furthermore, Rowlandson also verbally criticized Weetamoo in regard to her role as a mother. Within these interactions, Rowlandson emphasized the areas in which Weetamoo failed to meet English standards of femininity. Through the repetition of this theme throughout the Rowlandson narrative, Increase Mather injected anti-Indian sentiments into the narrative and simultaneously contrasted proper modes of female behavior with ones deemed “savage” or “barbaric.”¹²⁸

While none of the other narratives presented a female Native American as a significant character, criticisms of Indian women and a juxtaposition of their behaviors with those of ideal Puritan women were still quite evident. Susanna Johnson, for instance, explained the difficulty of learning the customs of Indian females due to their foreignness;

¹²⁸ Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty & Goodness of God*, 18, 36, 59. Tiffany Potter argues that the rhetoric that Rowlandson used to describe Weetamoo was masculine and therefore suggested that Native American women were not feminine. Devout Puritan women, like Rowlandson, were meant to be emulated by colonial readers, whereas indigenous females were described as “heathens” and exhibited behaviors that were foils to the prescriptions laid out by Increase Mather in the Rowlandson text. See Tiffany Potter, “Writing Indigenous Femininity: Mary Rowlandson’s Narrative of Captivity,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 36 no. 2 (2003): 156-164. For an overview of eastern Native American history during the British colonial period, see Richter, *Facing East From Indian Country*, 5, 55-57. Since hundreds of different indigenous nations existed, each with their own distinct views of proper roles for men and women, it is impossible to offer an exact definition of “masculine” and “feminine” that would hold true for each group. In some nations, women were responsible for all agricultural activities, while men hunted. In some migratory societies, women were typically responsible for fishing, gathering, and the processing and distribution of food. This role in governing food, as well as flexible policies regarding marriage, divorce, and gendered responsibilities, created a relatively egalitarian society in which both men and women wielded a degree of power; however, this was not true for all indigenous societies. In most north eastern societies, women were responsible for farming, and female kin groups controlled the fields, the foods they produced, and the homes. Men were responsible for hunting and therefore spent a great deal away from the village during hunting and fishing seasons. Although women of European descent were responsible for food preparation and tending to small gardens, they typically did not participate in more laborious agricultural activities. New England societies were also patrilineal, whereas many northern indigenous societies, including the Abenaki, Narragansett, and Wampanoag nations that were described in many captivity narratives, were matrilineal.

she wrote that “the squaws first fall upon their knees, and then sit back upon their heels. This was a posture I could not imitate.” Johnson further looked down upon her new home and the cooking utensils that she had to use. Elizabeth Hanson similarly criticized the way in which Indians stored their food, which was an area that English women customarily maintained. The Abenaki women helped Hanson take care of her sick child, and for that she expressed sincere gratitude; however, she asserted that the women displayed poor household managerial skills. Such descriptions drew distinct barriers between appropriate white female behavior and the behavior of “savages.”¹²⁹

Male narrators and editors also heavily criticized polygamy within the narratives. Since Puritans emphasized sexual purity, captive women quickly noted any actions that violated their ideals. Rowlandson, for instance, felt superior to her master and his multiple wives because of their polygamous relationship. She wrote, “My master had three squaws, living sometimes with one and sometimes with another one.” Rowlandson then described each of the women and stressed the peculiar nature of their living situation. Furthermore, other captive women took great care to ensure that their children did not enter into marriages with Natives. For instance, Jemima Howe urged a Frenchman to stop her daughter from marrying an Indian man. Howe further expressed her distaste for interracial relationships when her master and his son attempted to woo her. She stated that she was “greatly embarrassed” and “perplexed, hardly knowing many times how to behave in such a manner

¹²⁹ Susanna Johnson, “A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Johnson,” in *North Country Captives: Selected Narratives of Indian Captivity from Vermont and New Hampshire* ed. Colin G. Calloway (Hanover and London: University of New England Press, 1992), 67; and *God’s Mercy Surmounting Man’s Cruelty*, 113-126.

at to secure my own virtue.” Likewise, Elizabeth Hanson’s husband died in an attempt to “save” their daughter from matrimony with an indigenous man.

These attitudes conveyed to readers the taboo nature sexual relations between whites and Natives and emphasized the sexual purity of white women. Men injected this warning into captivity narratives out of fear that white women would defy their authority and marry Indian men. Intercultural marriage undermined the power of Puritan men as providers and challenged the legitimacy of land claims in the “New World.”¹³⁰

Seventeenth and early-eighteenth century captivity narratives thus outlined modes of appropriate behavior for Puritan females. By casting the white women as submissive characters and juxtaposing their actions with those of Native American females, male authors and editors delineated the boundaries between “good” and “bad” behavior by making those terms synonymous with “white” and “indigenous,” respectively. Men sought to make this clear distinction both as a mode of control and an expression of their anxiety regarding Indian affairs.

The prescriptive elements found in the captivity narratives of women between 1675 and 1724 sought to dictate female behavior during a period in which women performed a great deal of duties within the home and beyond. However, Puritan women during this period did not collectively form a movement to overthrow patriarchal authority, or even hint at this goal on a smaller scale. Rather, men used these narratives as a means to assert authority and express fear regarding anxieties over Indian warfare, land availability, colonial authority.

¹³⁰ Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty & Goodness of God*, 47; *God’s Cruelty Surmounting Man’s Cruelty*, 113-126; and Potter, “Writing Indigenous Femininity,” 157.

Through a juxtaposition of Puritan and indigenous women, narratives highlighted ideal gender roles, stressed subordination, expressed control, and reinforced the supposed superiority of “civilization.” Male authors and editors injected their own prescriptions, fears, and ideals into the narratives as a means of control in a world where their authority was challenged.

CHAPTER THREE: NARRATIVE MOTIFS, STYLIZATION, AND READER RESPONSES

In the preface to Mary Rowlandson's captivity narrative, Increase Mather frequently addresses the reader:

"...none can imagine, what it is to be captivated, and enslaved to such Atheistical, proud, wild, cruel, barbarous, brutish, diabolical creatures as these, the worst of the heathen; nor what difficulties, hardships, hazards, sorrows, anxieties, and perplexities, do unavoidably wait upon such a condition, but those have tried it."¹³¹

By engaging with the reader, Mather sought to inject his own interpretation into the story and promote his own agenda. Beyond that, the words in which Mather employed in the preface framed the story in a particular manner that had direct implications for readers' responses to the narrative. Words such as "barbarous" and "heathen" clearly present the indigenous captors as the story's villains, while words like "hardships," "hazards," and "anxieties" highlighted the position of the helpless Rowlandson, and, by extension, all European settlers. Colonial readers entered the narrative with particular expectations and a framework for their own interpretations. More broadly, male authors and editors shaped captivity narratives in a manner that was both prescriptive and allowed men to explore their own anxieties regarding colonialism, their relationship with England, and life in a frontier environment. The way in which these men framed the narratives affected the ways that readers interpreted them and provided a literature through which they could explore their own gender identities and anxieties.

¹³¹ Increase Mather, preface to *The Sovereignty & Goodness of God, Together, with the Faithfulness of his Promises Displayed; Being a Narrative of the Captivity and Restauration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson. Commended by her, to All that Desires to Know the Lords Doings to, and Dealings with her. Especially to her Dear Children and Relations, 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*, by Mary White Rowlandson (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Samuel Green, 1682), i-ii.

The prescription of behavior allowed men to carefully regulate their families when they could not completely regulate larger aspects of society—the church, government, and economy during times of political struggles within the empire and with indigenous nations. Since little evidence suggests that women and children during this period rebelled against the authority of their husbands and fathers on a large scale, the reinforcement of proper modes of behavior must have been in response to something else. The framing of captivity narratives within advertisements, titles, prefaces, and stylization provided a mental outlet for their anxieties that men experienced due to Native warfare, a loss of colonial autonomy during the reign of James II, the encroachment of Catholicism into the Puritan periphery, and challenges to basic survival. An assessment of captivity narratives in terms of the subject and titles, marriage, sexuality, chastity, restraint, diet, death, familial separation, theft, and the figure of the female warrior reveal motifs that readers at the time would have recognized and cues that guided them in their understandings of the texts. By injecting themselves into the narratives via female protagonists, men questioned and confronted their shortcomings without threatening the rigid, patriarchal hierarchy of Puritan society.

Captivity narratives reached many people through means other than the official narrative. The history of Mary Rowlandson's narrative highlights the transmission of it and other stories of captivity. During Rowlandson's captivity, her husband, prominent minister Joseph Rowlandson, urged Increase Mather to "intercede with the council to redeem his wife and children." Both Joseph Rowlandson and Mather transmitted the story orally in an effort to redeem Mrs. Rowlandson. In 1676, after Rowlandson's redemption, Mather provided his

own version of the captivity in *A Brief History of the War with the Indians in New England*. Similarly, William Hubbard composed a 1677 history of Anglo-indigenous warfare, *The Present State of New-England* that included an account of Rowlandson's captivity. Colonists passed along most information orally, and often spread it quite rapidly. Similarly, stories of captivity were disseminated quickly through extensive Indian trading networks, from the mouths of captors and witnesses themselves onto English colonists. Furthermore, Rowlandson originally wrote down her tale to pass along to friends and relatives before others, including Increase Mather, persuaded her to publish. Increase Mather had ties to publishers in Boston who had published his own works, and although Puritan society banned women from publishing, Rowlandson was an exception because her narrative served as a religious model and because Mather endorsed and prefaced it. Even though Joseph Rowlandson had already died, his wife's captivity narrative appeared alongside his final sermon, which is why Mary Rowlandson, remarried, was not credited with her new last name, Talcott.¹³²

¹³² Kathryn Zabelle Derounian, "The Publication, Promotion, and Distribution of Mary Rowlandson's Indian Captivity Narrative in the Seventeenth Century," *Early American Literature* 23.3 (1988): 241-243; Mather, preface to *The Sovereignty & Goodness of God*, i-ii; Increase Mather, *A Brief History of the War With the Indians in New-England, From June 24, 1675 (When the First Englishman was Murdered by the Indians) to August 12, 1676, when Philip, Alias Metacomet, the Principal Author and Beginner of the War, was Slain: Wherein the Grounds, Beginning, and Progress of the War is Summarily Expressed: Together with a Serious-Exhortation to the Inhabitants of that Land* (London: Printed for Richard Chiswell, 1676); William Hubbard, *The Present State of New-England: Being a Narrative of the Troubles with the Indians in New-England, from the First Planting thereof in the Year 1607, to this Present Year 1677, but Chiefly of the Late Troubles in the Two Last Years 1675, and 1676: To Which is Added a Discourse About the War with the Pequods in the Year 1637* (London: Printed for T. Parkhurst, 1677); and Matt Cohen, *The Networked Wilderness: Communicating in Early New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010); Cohen examines the history of the book in New England as a multimedia endeavor. He argues that historians have erroneously connected "print culture" and with Europeans "oral culture" with indigenous peoples during the early colonial period. Both groups used a variety of oral and visual techniques to communicate within their own communities and beyond. He further asserts that works printed in the colonies targeted both Anglo-American and indigenous audiences. See also D.F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). McKenzie argues that "texts" include verbal, visual, oral,

The details of the Rowlandson publication are better known than those of other captivity narratives because of the large number of copies sold and the fact that the Rowlandsons were acquaintances with prominent families like the Mathers and the Sewalls. Since Rowlandson's narrative served as a model for subsequent Indian captivity narratives, publications like Elizabeth Hanson's fared similarly in terms of production and distribution. Hanson's narrative was one of the most frequently reprinted and rewritten eighteenth-century captivities and stayed in print largely because a group of influential male Quakers, who controlled all British and American imprints from the Society of Friends, authorized it.¹³³

Due to the nature of the book trade, publishers intended the London edition for an audience on both sides of the Atlantic. Colonists preferred the prestige of imported books and considered local publications provincial. While captivity narratives maintained an extensive American readership, finances limited ownership of the works. For the most part, only the wealthy and professionals—elite men like John Cotton, Samuel Sewall, and Thomas Prince—had the means to purchase books often. However, many others owned, read, borrowed, stole, or heard the narratives.¹³⁴

and numeric data, in the forms of maps, print, and music, as well as films, videos, and computer-created information.

¹³³ Steven Neuwirth, "Her Master's Voice: Gender, Speech, and Gendered Speech in the Narrative of the Captivity of Mary White Rowlandson," in *Sex and Sexuality in Early America*, edited by Merrill D. Smith, 55-86 (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 56; and Katheryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola, *Women's Indian Captivity Narratives* (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), 63. Of the twenty-four settlers taken hostage during the Indian raid on Lancaster, Mary Rowlandson is the only one who left a record. The exceptionality of Rowlandson's chronicle needs to be underscored, for our perception of the Indian raid on Lancaster, as well as Rowlandson's own captivity experience comes to us filtered through the experience of one and only one chronicler, who was the wife of the town's Puritan minister, Lancaster's highest-ranking and wealthiest citizen.

¹³⁴ Derounian, "The Publication, Promotion, and Distribution of Mary Rowlandson's Indian Captivity Narrative in the Seventeenth Century," 251, 255-256; Hellmut Lehmann-Haupt, *The Book in America: A History of the Making and Selling of Books in the United States* (New York: Bowker, 1952), 49; and Darnton, "What is the History of Books?" 45-46.

The constructions of the book, stylization, frames, and advertisements that shaped readers' reactions to and relationships with the books reveals some information regarding their interpretations. Book promotion further sheds light on the preconceived notions that readers maintained when beginning to read the narratives. When Samuel Green first published Rowlandson's book, no newspapers existed in New England to advertise it. Instead, advertisements within other works and those from England illustrate the ways that publishers sought to frame and sell these works.¹³⁵

An entry in *The Term Catalogues*, a British publication, reads:

The History of the Captivity of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson, a Minister's Wife in *New England*; with her cruel and inhumane Usage amongst the Heathens for eleven Weeks, and her Deliverance from them. Written by her own Hand, and now made publick: with a Sermon annexed, of the possibility of God's forsaking his Children. Quarto. Both printed for T. Parkhurst at the Bible and Three Crowns in the *Poultry*.¹³⁶

This advertisement depicted indigenous peoples as "heathen" and established Rowlandson as God's child. British publications were popular in the colonies; thus, although not printed in colonial presses, this type of advertisement still reached colonial readers.

Furthermore, ads also appeared in other books. Samuel Green, Jr., an imminent colonial publisher, included an ad for Rowlandson's narrative in his popular pressing of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. The advertisement provides both basic information about the publication, but also employs rhetoric that sought to allure perspective readers. According to Green, the narrative provided the readers with the "particular circumstances" of Rowlandson's

¹³⁵ Derounian, "The Publication, Promotion, and Distribution of Mary Rowlandson's Indian Captivity Narrative in the Seventeenth Century," 250.

¹³⁶ "Advertisement for Mary Rowlandson's Captivity Narrative," in *The Term Catalogues, 1668-1709 A.D.; With a Number for Easter Term, 1711 A.D. A Contemporary Bibliography of English Literature in the Reigns of Charles II, James II, William and Mary, and Anne, Volume I: 1668-1682*, edited by Edward Arber, (London: Privately Published, 1903), 507.

experiences, emphasizing how she and her children struggled to survive. Green stressed that Rowlandson “pathetically” wrote the account, and evoked an emotional interest in the narrative to drive sales. *The Pilgrim’s Progress* itself a bestselling work, ensured the ad reached a plethora of readers. While increasing sales, these ads also served as the potential reader’s first interaction with the story, laying out a path upon which the reader would interpret and understand the works.¹³⁷

Book titles themselves framed readers reactions to the captivity narratives. Many titles, like that of Mary Rowlandson, deemphasized the gender of the protagonist:

*The Sovereignty & Goodness of God, Together With the Faithfulness of His Promises Displayed; Being a Narrative Of the Captivity and Restauration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson. Commended by her to all that Desire to Know the Lord’s Doings to, and Dealings with Her. Especially to Her Dear Children and Relations. Written by Her Own Hand for Her Private Use, and Now Made Public at the Earnest of Some Friends, and for the Benefit of the Afflicted. Deut. 32.[3]9. See Now that I, Even I am He, and There is No God with Me; I Kill and I Make Alive, I Wound and I Heal, Neither Is There Any [who] Can Deliver Out of My Hand.*¹³⁸

The wording of the title to the Rowlandson narrative, downplayed the gender of the female author through the subordinate position of her name. Instead, the title emphasized God, both in the first phrase, “the Sovereignty and Goodness of God” and in the closing biblical quotation. This conveyed to readers that the narrative was primarily about God, not Rowlandson. Furthermore, the syntax of the phrase opening sentence further deemphasized

¹³⁷ Derounian, “The Publication, Promotion, and Distribution of Mary Rowlandson’s Indian Captivity Narrative in the Seventeenth Century” 249; John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim’s Progress From This World to That Which is to Come: Delivered Under the Similitude of a Dream Wherein is Discovered the Manner of his Setting Out, his Dangerous Journey, and Safe Arrival at the Desired Countrey*, (Boston: Printed by Samuel Green, 1681); and Charles Mish, “Best Sellers in Seventeenth-Century Fiction,” *The Publications of the Bibliographical Society of America* 47 (1953): 258. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, “pathetically” meant “movingly” or “earnestly” during the late seventeenth century.

¹³⁸ Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty & Goodness of God*, title page.

the importance of Rowlandson; the portion containing her name—“Being A Narrative of the Captivity and Restauration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson”—only served to modify the introductory clause. The subject of the title, therefore, is God—not Rowlandson.

Furthermore, Mather did not even mention the captors in the title. This conveyed to readers that the narrative was as much about the redemption of Rowlandson’s soul as it was her physical body. Since Mather framed the narrative in this fashion, male readers could inject themselves into the narrative through Rowlandson and explore their own sins and failures.¹³⁹

The title of Elizabeth Hanson’s narrative similarly embodied the significance of God to the narrative rather than the captive herself:

*God’s Mercy Surmounting Man’s Cruelty; Exemplified in the Captivity and Redemption of Elizabeth Hanson, Wife of John Hanson, of Knoxmarch at Kecheachy, in Dover Township, Who Was Taken Captive With Her Children and Maid Servant, by the Indians in New-England, in the Year 1724; in Which We are Inserted, Sundry Remarkable Preservations, Deliverances, and Marks of the Care and Kindness of Providence Over Her and Her Children, Worthy to be Remembered. The Substance of Which Was Taken from Her Own Mouth, and Published for General Service.*¹⁴⁰

“God’s Mercy” was the subject of the title to Hanson’s narrative. While stories of captivities thrilled readers with tales of danger and adventure, the first clause of the title suggested a more divine purpose to readers beyond mere entertainment. This framed the narrative as a spiritual story; Hanson served only as an example of this larger purpose, which was clear in the second clause of the title: “Exemplified in the Captivity and Redemption of Elizabeth

¹³⁹ Neuwirth, “Her Master’s Voice,” 60.

¹⁴⁰ Elizabeth Hanson, *God’s Mercy Surmounting Man’s Cruelty: Exemplified in the Captivity and Redemption of Elizabeth Hanson, Wife of John Hanson, of Knoxmarsh at Keacheachy, in Dover Township, who was Taken Captive with her Children, and Maid-Servant, by the Indians in New-England, in the Year 1724. : In which are Inserted, Sundry Remarkable Preservations, Deliverances, and Marks of the Care and Lindness of Providence over her and her Children, Worthy to be Remembered* (Philadelphia: To be sold by Samuel Keimer in Philadelphia; and by W. Heurtin in New-York, 1728), title page.

Hanson.” The title further states, “in Which We are Inserted.” This invited readers into the story and called on them to ponder their own lives, fears, and relationships with God. The title planted this notion in the minds of readers before they even picked up the book.

Titles of women’s narratives differed from those of men. The popular narrative of John Williams, whose success was rivaled only by Rowlandson’s tale, features a different naming construction:

“The Redeemed Captive Returning from Zion; or, A Faithful History of Remarkable Occurrences in the Captivity and Deliverance of Mr. John Williams, Drawn Up by Himself, to which is Added a Bibliographical Memoir of the Reverend, with An Appendix and Notes, by Stephen W. Williams.”¹⁴¹

Unlike the titles of Hanson’s and Rowlandson’s narratives, Williams’s title places the captive as the subject in the first clause. This use of Williams as a subject was acceptable because he was a man. As a man, Williams could publish, write, and actively fight for his own redemption. The narrative focused on Williams rather than a divine act and did not urge readers to inject themselves into the narrative as a means to explore their own anxieties.

Introductory sections in books functioned as framing devices in a similar fashion to that of titles. In the preface to the Rowlandson narrative, Increase Mather offered readers insight into the circumstances behind its publication:

“Though this gentlewoman’s modesty would not thrust it into the press, yet her gratitude unto God made her not hardly persuadable to let it pass, that God might have his due glory, and others benefit by it as well as herself. I hope by this time none will cast any reflection upon this gentlewoman, on the score of this publication of her affliction and deliverance...No serious spirit then can imagine but that the vows of

¹⁴¹ John Williams, *The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion; or, A Faithful History of Remarkable Occurrences in the Captivity and Deliverance of Mr. John Williams, Drawn up by Himself, to which is Added a Biographical Memoir of the Reverend Author, with an Appendix and Notes, by Stephen W. Williams*, 6th ed, 1795, reprint (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1966), title page.

God are upon her. Excuse her then if she come thus into public, to pay those vows, come and hear what she hath to say.”¹⁴²

Mather used the preface to both introduce the narrative and justify its publication. He noted that Rowlandson must publish in order to fulfill promises made with God. Her husband’s prominent status within both the community and the church further warranted and legitimized the publication of a narrative penned by a woman. Mather’s preface affected readers’ notions of the book before they ever got past the introduction. Furthermore, Mather’s villainization of Native Americans drew clear cut distinctions between “good” and “evil,” “savage” and “civilized,” and “Puritan” and “Indian.”¹⁴³

Cotton Mather also framed readers’ reactions to stories through prefaces. His introduction to the narratives of Mary Plaisted and Mary Ferguson set a tone of violence, hardship, and warfare:

“In fine, when the *children* of the English captives cried at any time, so that they were not presently quieted, the manner of the Indians was to dash out their brains against a tree. And very often, when the Indians were on or near the water, they took the small children, and held them under water till they had near drowned them, and then gave them unto their distressed mothers to quiet ‘em. And the Indians in their frolicks would whip and beat the small children, until they set ‘em into grievous outcries, and then throw ‘em to their amazed mothers for them to quiet ‘em again as well as they could.”¹⁴⁴

Mather’s introduction stressed the cruelty of Indians rather than the female captives themselves. The reiteration of the image of Indians as the enemy reinforced the connection between captivity narratives and acts of war. Natives took captives because of Puritan men’s inability to protect their families, and Mather’s preface placed that failure at the forefront.

¹⁴² Mather, preface to *The Sovereignty & Goodness of God*, i-ii.

¹⁴³ Mather, preface to *The Sovereignty & Goodness of God*, i-ii.

¹⁴⁴ Cotton Mather, “New Assaults from the Indians, With Some Remarkables of Captives Taken During Those Assaults” in *Magnalia Christi Americana*, 1702, reprint, (New York: Russell and Russell, 1967), 595-600.

Elizabeth Hanson's preface had little to do with her. Instead, the author expressed the religious significance of the text:

“Remarkable and many are the providences of God towards his people for their deliverance in a time of trouble, by which we may behold, as in lively characters, the truth of that saying, That he is a God near at hand, and always ready to help assist those that fear him, and put confidence in him.”¹⁴⁵

The preface continued through an argument that characterized captivity narratives as sacred texts akin to the Biblical works of Job, David, Daniel, Paul, Silas, and others. This invited readers to examine the texts in intellectual and spiritual manners. The author's connection of Hanson's narrative to Biblical heroes rather than heroines further defined the stories as relevant to male readers and as a means through which they could explore their own anxieties.¹⁴⁶

Indeed, male readers used captivity narratives to explore behaviors, ideas, and relationships that were beyond the bounds of acceptable modes of gender ideologies in colonial New England. During this tumultuous period, Catholic threats, indigenous warfare, and hardships relating to basic survival threatened the position of Puritan male authority in the New England colonies. Colonial men lacked the political and physical authority to control all of these threats. Instead, men reinforced their patriarchal control of society and the household through prescriptive texts. Furthermore, men's inability to protect their families suggests their failure as patriarchs as well. Wives ran away, and daughters taken into captivity in colonial warfare sometimes became baptized Catholics, married French or Indian men, and refused to return to New England. Through captivity narratives, male readers

¹⁴⁵ Hanson, *God's Mercy Surmounting Man's Cruelty*, 2.

¹⁴⁶ Hanson, *God's Mercy Surmounting Man's Cruelty*, 2.

examined the failures of colonialism, scrutinized disorder in society, critiqued their relationship with England, and explored the possibility of military failure. Male readers injected themselves into the narratives through the female protagonists, which allowed men a means of questioning these issues without challenging their conceptions of masculinity.¹⁴⁷

Although the term “masculinity” was not coined until 1748, Puritan males in colonial New England maintained particular standards of manhood well before that. Important aspects of gender performance of male masculine identity in colonial New England include caution, discipline, and disinterest. The reading of captivity narratives served a variety of purposes for men in colonial New England. For Anglo-American men, such texts allowed them an opportunity to ponder the unruly and ungovernable. Through the female protagonists in the stories, men could explore unrestrained impulses, fear, and failure—things they could not fully admit in real life without compromising their masculinity.¹⁴⁸

Men struggled with fears regarding possible loss of power—both within the colony and their own homes. Marriage was a crucial aspect of the European social order. English, French, Dutch, and Spanish colonists brought European conceptualizations of marriage with them and framed their notions of female and male relationships within this ideology. Although indigenous peoples in the Americas had male-female relationships prior to colonization, these relationships differed in many ways from European notions of matrimony. For many Native peoples, kinship and clan relations reigned supreme, society

¹⁴⁷ Ann M. Little, *Abraham in Arms: War and Gender in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 2.

¹⁴⁸ Mary Beth Norton, “Preface,” in *New Men: Manliness in Early America*, edited by Thomas A Foster, ix-x (New York: New York University Press, 2011), ix-x; and Ann Marie Plane, “Indian and English Dreams: Colonial Hierarchy and Manly Restraint in Seventeenth-Century New England,” in *New Men*, 32.

encouraged sexual experimentation, and marriages could easily be dissolved. The notions of marriage that European colonists brought with them shaped new racial and ethnic identities in this frontier environment, reinscribed European gender roles, affected religious practices, and changes in colonial legal orders and customary laws. The state, governed by Puritan ideals, defined and constituted marriage. Colonial laws and authority thus individually shaped the husband and wife, and all those who would eventually get married. Such anxieties regarding loss of status and sexual prospects thus pertained to both young and old men. In particular, the death of Elizabeth Hanson's husband his pursuit to stop her from marrying an Indian men exemplified such anxieties within the domain of captivity narratives. John Hanson failed to stop the marriage and ultimately died before he could return home—a scenario that directly mirrored fears of the English colonists. Puritans feared that marriage between Protestants and “barbarians” would turn God against them and ultimately leave their society in ruin.¹⁴⁹

Despite the intimate nature of marriage, the laws and social codes of marriage that developed in the “New World” both mirrored and transformed aspects of the colonial society, particularly in regard to the relations between European colonizers and the indigenous peoples that they sought to colonize. Ultimately, English marriage served sexual, procreative, and productive agendas. It dictated means of property transmission, codes and meaning behind gender relations, and ensured society would remain orderly. In a sense, the highly regulated institution of marriage functioned as an extension of English colonialism and

¹⁴⁹ Ann Marie Place, *Colonial Intimacies: Indian Marriage in Early New England* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2000), 5-7, 94; *God's Mercy Surmounting Man's Cruelty*, 125-126; and Plane, “Indian and English Dreams,” 42.

reflected the structure of the settlement project. Marriage, both between Europeans and interracial couples, ultimately helped the Europeans in their project of colonial dominance and had an affect on the cultures of all involved.¹⁵⁰

Through captivity narratives, male readers investigated taboo expressions of sexuality. While the North American French colonies to the west encouraged interracial sex and matrimony, Puritans viewed indigenous people as “infidels” and discouraged intimate relationships. Although sexual experimentation between the cultures certainly occurred, English society frowned upon it. In order to ensure the perpetuation of Puritan ideals, men had to control the reproductive function of the female body. After all, ethnically-mixed children with an aboriginal father and an English mother presented a challenge to the well-ordered patriarchal society. The most popular captivity narratives therefore featured female protagonists that proclaimed their chastity. The obsession with female purity portrayed in these narratives allowed men to consider their control over women’s bodies and the sanctity of the Puritan household. For example, readers encountered pointed images of chastity in Elizabeth Hanson’s narratives. Although she noted the hot temper of her master, she stated, “The Indians being very civil toward their captive women, not offering any incivility by any incident carriage (unless they be much overgone in liquor, which is commendable in them so far).” While Hanson did not specifically mention sexual behavior, her emphasis on captive women and “civility,” or order, imply that Hanson remained—or at the very least, wanted to

¹⁵⁰ Plane, *Colonial Intimacies*, 4, 11-12, 178-179.

convince readers—faithful to her husband and Puritan notions of appropriate marital behavior.¹⁵¹

Mary Rowlandson similarly emphasized chastity throughout her narrative. While Rowlandson presented herself as the exemplar of Puritan womanhood, some ambiguities suggested other possible interpretations to readers. Rowlandson directly argued that her chastity remained in tact while in captivity. She stated, “And I cannot but admire at the wonderful power and goodness of God to me, in that, though I was gone from home, and met with all sorts of Indians, and those I had no knowledge of, and there being no Christian soul near me; yet not one of them offered the least imaginable miscarriage to me.” During this period, “miscarriage” referred to “misconduct” or “misbehavior.” Readers would have thus realized the sexual nature of the word usage.¹⁵²

Rowlandson later noted, “I have been in the midst of those roaring lions, and savage bears, that feared neither God, nor man, nor the devil, by night and day, alone and in company: sleeping all sorts together, yet none of them offered me the least abuse of unchastity.” This passage portrayed Natives as indigenous beasts with little restraint, yet by the grace of God, Rowlandson’s purity remained in tact. Furthermore, in the preface, Mather recreated a popular image of Indians as savagely unrestrained people. This highlighted the connection between “misconduct” and “savage” lust and lack of restraint in the minds of the readers:

“God is indeed the supreme Lord of the world, ruling the most unruly, weakening the most cruel and savage, granting His people mercy in the sight of the unmerciful,

¹⁵¹ Hanson, *God’s Mercy Surmounting Man’s Cruelty*, 35.

¹⁵² Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty & Goodness of God*, 27.

curbing the lusts of the most filthy, holding the hands of the violent, delivering the prey from the mighty, and gathering the outcasts of Israel.”¹⁵³

The contradictory image of indigenous men as both “savage” and respectful of Rowlandson’s chastity simultaneously reinforced images of Puritan control—both over the female body and within their well-ordered society.¹⁵⁴

Fears surrounding interracial sex highlighted the possibility of “going Native.” While English colonists worked to convert indigenous peoples to Christianity and instill English values of “civilization” through Praying Towns, captivity and warfare threatened their success. Interracial sex and marriage further threatened English order and hierarchy, particularly since many Native societies practiced matrilineality. Colonial men feared that they would become “savage,” lose favor with God, and destroy their English heritage. This posed a direct threat to their identities as Puritan men.¹⁵⁵

In order to counter this possibility, captivity narratives highlighted the “savagery” of Native peoples. While these descriptions functioned as modes of propaganda against indigenous peoples and tools of colonial legitimization, such characterizations also illustrated colonial ideals of masculinity and gave male readers an opportunity to explore the possibility of “going Native.” In her narrative, Elizabeth Hanson noted, “For these kind of people, when they have plenty, spend it as freely as they get it; spending in gluttony and drunkenness in two days time, as much, with prudent management might serve a week.” European manhood was predicated upon ideas of responsibility and rationality in an effort to suppress common

¹⁵³ Mather, preface to *The Sovereignty & Goodness of God*, i-ii.

¹⁵⁴ Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty & Goodness of God*, 66.

¹⁵⁵ Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession: Europe’s Conquest of the New World, 1492-1640* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 16-40; and Jean M. O’Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees: Indian Land and Identity in Natick, Massachusetts, 1650-1790* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 13-90.

popular behaviors in early modern England—those that were rowdy, disorderly, and often violent. She further noted that her master had “naturally a hot and passionate temper, throwing sticks, stones, or whatever lay in his way, on every slight occasion.” Hanson’s depiction of Native men portrayed the antithesis of English colonial masculinity—or what colonial society could become with the loss of proper order, patriarchal authority, and restraint.¹⁵⁶

The exercise of restraint served as a primary duty of patriarchs. The disorder of captivity narratives and indigenous peoples’ use of control within them contrasted with this ideal. During this period of rigid social hierarchy, Puritan men concerned themselves with the attainment, proper exercise, possible loss of dominance, and the exertion of control over their own emotions, as well as society. The inability of men to exercise both public and self-control could lead to damage to their reputations, which had financial and social implications. Reading therefore allowed men an opportunity to explore notions outside of their ideal. However, most captivity narratives—although not all—end in the redemption of the captives. This represented the triumph of orderly colonial society over the “disorder” of aboriginal cultures and therefore reinforced English ideals of masculine restraint and order.¹⁵⁷

The sin of pride also held a major place in Puritan culture. The struggle that men felt in terms of their superiority and inferiority appeared in many aspects of Puritan society. For

¹⁵⁶ Hanson, *God’s Mercy Surmounting Man’s Cruelty*, 22-23; Anne S. Lombard, *Making Manhood: Growing Up Male in Colonial New England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 15; and Plane, “Indian and English Dreams,” 33.

¹⁵⁷ Lombard, *Making Manhood*, 63; Lisa Wilson, *Ye Heart of a Man: The Domestic Life of Men in Colonial New England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 6; Plane, “Indian and English Dreams,” 32-33; and Thomas A. Foster, *Sex and the Eighteenth-Century Man: Massachusetts and the History of Sexuality in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006), 78-79.

instance, sumptuary laws regulated dress and demeanor, criminalizing things like an “intolerable pride in clothes and hair.” These laws sought to shape the overly proud by banning extravagance. There was thus a struggle in maintaining the proper amount of pride—enough to maintain proper order in society without threatening their religious values. The proper ordering of society relied on the proper governance of the individual. As patriarchs, men sought to use their authority without displaying arrogance. This balance rested on the exercise of self-control, self-sacrifice, and duty.¹⁵⁸

As “the Other,” Indian men naturally failed to meet English criteria of masculinity. Many early travel narratives argued that Indians failed to properly improve the land and that “the country wanteth only industrious men.” English observers also feminized American Indian men in early travel narratives. In one early conflict with the Indians, Myles Standish demanded that a Sachem “come out and fight like a man, showing how base and woman-like he was in tongueing it [parleying] as he did.” Similar rhetorical constructions of indigenous

¹⁵⁸ Perry Miller, “Solomon Stoddard, 1643-1729,” *The Harvard Theological Review* 34.4 (October 1941): 281-282; Plane, “Indian and English Dreams,” 38; and Plane, *Colonial Intimacies*, 18, 36-39, 132-133, 151. See also Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991). While English ideology certainly had an affect on indigenous men and women, it did not drastically alter their conceptualizations of gender roles or change their practices in their daily domestic life. Although this discussion of differences between the marital philosophies of Indians and English depict the nations as almost entirely separate, in practice they did not divide so easily. Sexual “middle grounds” did exist. For instance, French fur traders in the Ohio Valley region often sought female partners of indigenous descent. Since the French expedition in the valley aimed towards empire-building rather than a settler-colonial agenda, at least initially, French women mostly did not accompany men to the Americas. Fur traders thus sought out indigenous women as their sexual and romantic partners. Not all marriages conformed to European standards either; in fact, colonial society tolerated a wide variety of unions, both legal and extralegal, among Indians, Africans, and others who were poor or unfree. Many different approaches to Native matrimony thrived during this period, many of which were influenced by missionary teachings, slavery, servitude, intermarriage, growing colonial inequities, indigenous tradition. As a result, marital practices looked different in different regions. While marriage between white women and Indian men occurred less frequently and was heavily discouraged, it did occur. Many female captives, like Eunice Williams, married into their captor’s nation and established families.

men prevailed in all captivity narratives during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.¹⁵⁹

Captivity narratives allowed male readers an opportunity to reflect on their own failures and inability to live up to rigid Puritan constructions of manhood. Through a consideration of these images, male readers expressed internal anxieties relating to the possibility of failing to provide their families with inadequate foodstuffs. Nearly all stories of female captivity include a critique of the provisions provided by the captors. Elizabeth Hanson noted that her captors often caught beavers. However, her captors denied Hanson and her children meat. Instead, they consumed the remnants, or the “guts and garbage.” Hanson further claimed that she ate dung and guts. Under ordinary circumstances, she never would have consumed such items; however, her captivity forced her to do so: “Thus I consider’d,

¹⁵⁹ Jill Lepore, *The Name of War*, 16; Plane, “Indian and English Dreams,” 16-17, 39; *Mourt’s Relation: A Journal of the Pilgrims at Plymouth*, edited by Dwight B. Heath (Bedford, Massachusetts: Apple Wood Books, 1963.), 84; Edward Winslow, *Good News From New England, or a True Relation of Things Very Remarkable at the Plantation of Plimoth in New England* (Bedford, Massachusetts: Apple Wood Books, n.d.), 49; and Katheleen M. Brown, “Brave New Worlds: Women’s and Gender History,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 50 (April 1993): 311-328. Descriptions of Indian rituals within captivity narratives further sought to align indigenous peoples with Satan and reinforce the lack of restraint presumed to be shown by these cultures. European images feminized Natives. The close association between women and the devil comprised a prominent aspect of Puritan life in New England, epitomized in the Salem Witch Trials. It is through these connections that the colonial gender frontier continued to be inscribed as a key feature of the encounter between British colonists and Amerindians. Brown maintains that gender frontiers, or places where different conceptions of gender clash and are negotiated, manifest in larger conflicts or processes; within these multicultural areas, an understanding of how gender functions is central to colonial exchanges and struggles for power. Furthermore, gendered roles and relations proved a formidable ally of colonization because of their ability to make unequal relationships between the colonists and Indians seem “natural.” A gendered relationship existed between colonist (masculine) and land (feminine); or, as Ann Marie Plane put it, “a marriage between a groom (the English, the dynamic colonial project) who longs to penetrate his virginal bride (bounty, Indians, rich lands).” Many captivity narratives employed this rhetoric and perpetuated these ideas of gender and legitimacy in colonial New England. For more on gender and the Salem Witch Trials, see Elizabeth Reis, *Damned Women: Sinners and Witches in Puritan New England* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1997); John M. Murrin, “Coming to Terms with the Salem Witch Trials,” *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, vol. 110 (2000), 309-47, and Carol F. Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1987).

none knows what they can undergo, till they are tried; for what I had thought in my own family, not fit for food, would have here been a dainty-dish and a sweet morsel.” Captivity both allowed and forced women to engage in acts that were otherwise deemed impermissible. Similarly, the colonial experience required that men performs acts—like the physical protection of their families from indigenous warfare—that had little relevance back in England. To readers, these images justified some deviation from English norms.¹⁶⁰

Like Hanson, Hannah Swarton described her sustenance as a captive and detailed her consumption of maggot-filled moose bladder, and later, moose liver:

“We had no corn, or bread, but sometimes groundnuts, acorns, purslain, hogweed, weeds, roots, and sometimes dog flesh, but not sufficient to satisfy hunger with these; having little but a time. We had no success at hunting; save that one bear was killed, which I had part of; and a very small part of a turtle I had another time, and once an Indian gave me a piece of mooses liver, which was a sweet morsel to me; and fish, if we could catch it.”¹⁶¹

Swarton’s juxtaposition of her foodstuffs in captivity with typical English edibles further highlighted the distinction between “savage” and “civilized.” To readers, the captives’ hunting failure reflected their own concerns with providing adequate food for their families and living up to New England standards of masculinity.

Swarton’s narrative was unique in that she also described the consumption of pleasing food while in captivity. She stated, “One of them gave me a roasted eel, which I ate, and it seemed unto me, the most savoury food I ever tasted before. Sometimes we lived on wottle berries; sometimes on a kind of wild cherry which grew on bushes.” Interestingly, she

¹⁶⁰ Hanson, *God’s Mercy Surmounting Man’s Cruelty*, 13, 241; and Cotton Mather, *Humiliations Follow’d With Deliverances* (1697; repr., New York: Garland Publishing, 1977), 56.

¹⁶¹ Mather, *Humiliations Follow’d With Deliverances*, 56.

obtained the only foods described in her narrative as “savoury” from female Indians or through her own gathering. Indian men were thus not depicted as providers in the same fashion as men of European origin.¹⁶²

Mary Rowlandson included a scene in her narrative in which she vigorously ate Indian fare:

“There came an Indian...with a basket of horse liver. I asked him to give me a piece, which he did, and I laid it on the coals to roast; before it was half ready they got half of it away from me, so that I was fain to take the rest and eat it as it was, with the blood about my mouth, and yet a savoury bit it was for me: for the hungry soul, every bitter thing was sweet.”¹⁶³

Through the reference to Proverbs 27:7 (“for the hungry soul, every bitter thing is sweet”) Rowlandson justified her consumption of the “savage” meal. Rowlandson failed to explain the great vigor with which she ate the horse liver, which pointed to the possibility of “going Native.” Without her husband or other Puritan figures of patriarchy, Rowlandson momentarily succumbed to the disorder of Algonquian society. Such depictions fed into male anxieties regarding their inability to provide material goods and food for their families. Without the provisions of English men, women—as the supposed “weaker sex”—briefly adopted elements of indigenous living. Captivity narratives gave men a glimpse of failure, and allowed them to explore the possibility of “going Native” as an alternative without actually challenging their notions of masculinity and the society that their patriarchal values upheld.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² Mather, *Humiliations Follow'd With Deliverances*, 58.

¹⁶³ Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty & Goodness of God*, 22.

¹⁶⁴ Neuwirth, “Her Master’s Voice,” 64-66. Neuwirth takes a Freudian perspective on this passage, insisting that the image of blood is charged with sexual energy. He asserts that a connection existed between Rowlandson’s insistence on her chastity and her ravenous appetite for food. He notes that in Freudian psychology a link exists between illicit sex and the eating of forbidden food. Rowlandson repeatedly eats

Images of death in captivity narratives allowed men to explore the ramifications of failing to protect their families from military threats, starvation, and disease. The short narratives of Mary Plaisted and Mary Ferguson—each only one paragraph in length—focused solely on death. Indians scalped Ferguson shortly into her captivity, while Plaisted’s captors killed her small child. The length of these narratives suggests that the images of these deaths served important purposes for readers.¹⁶⁵

Death of women and children by the hands of Indian captors represented the ultimate failure of men to protect their families. The high prevalence of infant and childhood deaths within the narratives also represented fears regarding the potential failure of Puritan society in New England. Just as the wild subsumed these innocents, the vast North American continent threatened to kill the infant Puritan society of New England.

Hannah Dustan stated that in the initial raid on her town, her captors “dash’d out the brains of the infant against the tree...the salvages would presently bury their hatchets in their brains, and leave their carcasses on the ground for birds and beasts to feed upon.” This tragic scene villainized indigenous peoples while also creating for the reader a sense of sympathy for the captive. The narrative of Mehetable Goodwin also provided graphic scene:

“[Her captor] violently snatched the babe out of it’s mother’s arms, and before her face knocked out its brains; and having stripped it of its few rags it had hitherto enjoyed, ordered the mother to go and wash them of the blood wherewith they were stained! Returning from this sad and melancholy task, she found the infant hanging by the neck in a forked bough of a tree.”¹⁶⁶

“filthy trash,” including a fawn fetus, moldy bread, deer blood, and rotten corn. Her insistence on her chastity—of the conquering of her sexual appetite—eased her guilt for eating the “savage” cuisine.

¹⁶⁵ Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana; or The Ecclesiastical History of New-England from its First Planting in the Year 1620 unto the Year of our Lord 1698, in Seven Books* (London: Printed for Thomas Parkhurst, 1702), 595-600.

These brutal and violent outbursts conflicted with Puritan conceptions of manhood and further painted indigenous men as “the Other.” Puritans prized rationality and considered such passionate outbursts as incompatible with ideal manhood. The extreme violence and repeated prevalence of infant mortality in the narratives highlighted the “savagery” of indigenous men and justified military action against them for the sake of the physical safety of their families.¹⁶⁷

Captivity narratives provided readers with an opportunity to reflect on the relationship between New England and its mother country. Male anxieties in New England in the latter portion of the seventeenth century also arose from political struggles with the England that challenged their authority within the colonies. The restriction of colonial autonomy through King Charles’s revocation of the Massachusetts Bay Charter in 1684 signified one threat to the authority of men in the colonies. Puritans based their notions of manhood during this period on both independence and the ability to make rational decisions. Men thus felt that the dissolution of the charter threatened their masculinity since Charles gave them no chance to rationally defend or make decisions about it. Furthermore, James II’s consolidation of the New England colonies, New York, and New Jersey into one entity—the Dominion of New England—further stripped colonial men of autonomy and independence,

¹⁶⁶ Cotton Mather, “Three Narratives of Excessive Distress of Persons Taken at the Destruction of Salmon Falls, in the State of New Hampshire, on the Twenty-Seventh of March, 1690; viz., the Cruel Torture of Robert Rodgers, the Five Years’ Captivity of Mehetable Goodwin, and the Fortunate Escape of Thomas Toogood,” in *Indian Captivities or Life in the Wigwam; Being True Narratives of Captives Who Have Been Carried Away by the Indians, from the Frontier Settlements of the United States, from the Earliest Period to the Present Time*, ed. Samuel G. Drake (Auburn: Derby and Miller, 1851), 111.

¹⁶⁷ Little, *Abraham in Arms*, 7; and Lombard, *Making Manhood*, 11.

although the men reclaimed some authority through the Boston revolt and similar movements in other colonies. Such turmoil marked the colonies and the “mother country” as divided.¹⁶⁸

Familial separation served as a key theme in many captivity narratives, and this revealed anxieties relating to the tumultuous relationship between New England and England. Just as captives endured separation from families, colonists metaphorically experienced separation from Mother England. Hannah Swarton assessed such separation in her narrative:

“I was now left a widow, and as bereaved of my children; though, I had them alive, yet it was very seldome that I could see them, and I had not liberty to discourse with them, without danger either of my own life, or theirs; for our condoling each others condition, and shewing natural affection, was so displeasing to our Indian rules, unto

¹⁶⁸ Alan Taylor, *American Colonies: The Settling of North America* (New York: Penguin Books, 2002), 80, 276; Nathaniel Bifield, *An Account of the Late Revolution in New-England. Together with the Declaration of the Gentlemen, Merchants, and Inhabitants of Boston, and the Country Adjacent. April 18, 1689* (London: Rose and Crown, 1689), 8; and Lombard, *Making Manhood*, 11. Taylor, *American Colonies*, 276; and Lombard, *Making Manhood*, 178-179. Following the death of King Charles II in 1685, his brother, James, became the king of England. Colonists saw James II as a threat to New England colonists not only because he openly practiced Catholicism, but also because he sought to rule the royal colonies more authoritatively. For instance, he appointed military men to colonial office and ordered them to forcefully control any amount of colonial protest or action that contradicted the king's objectives. Bifield, *An Account of the Late Revolution in New England*; and Taylor, *American Colonies*, 280-283. King James II appointed military officer Sir Edmund Andros as governor of the Dominion of New England. Andros stripped Puritan officials of their roles in the court and as militia leaders, instead appointing Anglicans to power within the super colony. Andros posed a dire threat to Puritan leaders, as the governor banned the practice of taxes paying out clerical salaries and reserved one Boston meetinghouse for Anglican services. Furthermore, Andros stripped some Puritans of land titles, restricted town meetings, and levied new taxes to pay his lavish salary and fund the new military presence that he established in the colonies. Colonists further disliked Andros because he enforced the Navigation Acts, which weakened the port's business. This economic hardship, combined with the high taxes, caused serious financial woes for many New Englanders and therefore challenged their abilities to provide for their families. Many colonists rebelled against the measures taken by Governor Andros. On April 18, 1689, a mob of provincial militia and citizens revolted against Andros. While there were no casualties, Puritans took Anglicans into custody, including Andros himself. According to the “The Declaration of the Gentlemen, Merchants, and Inhabitants of Boston, and the Country Adjacent, April 18, 1689,” protesting colonists fumed over the new taxes, the dissolution of their charter, and the promotion of unpopular men in the militia. Furthermore, New England colonists expressed anxieties relating to the dual threats of the French and Catholicism. The author of this declaration asserted that the French's treatment of the English in the colonies was worse than “Turkish cruelties.”

use share we fell, that they would threaten to kill us, if we cryed each to other, or discoursed much together.”¹⁶⁹

While no physical boundary kept Swarton from her children, her captivity disrupted the relationship she normally maintained with them.

Other captives endured physical separation. Elizabeth Heard fainted during the raid on her town. Her children found it impossible to carry her with them and left her behind. An Indian captured Heard and she spent her captivity away from her family. This period of separation continued for a period of many years for some captives. For example, Mehetable Goodwin lived in Indian captivity for approximately a year. Her captors then sold her to the French and she remained with them for five additional years before her redemption and arrival in New England. This separation mirrored the separation of colonists from their relatives back in England, and allowed male readers to contemplate their place with England¹⁷⁰

Some narratives evoked memories of initial encounters between indigenous peoples and colonists for readers. However, in the narratives, Indians typically maintained control, both in their possession of sophisticated weaponry and use of Anglo-American foodstuffs. Cotton Mather described Elizabeth Heard’s encounter with a potential captor:

“She had not been here long before an Indian came towards her, with a pistol in hand. The fellow came up to her and stared her in the face, but said nothing to her, nor she

¹⁶⁹ Mather, *Humiliations Follow'd With Deliverances*, 51.

¹⁷⁰ Cotton Mather, “Of the Remarkable Escape of Widow Elizabeth Heard, also Taken at the Destruction of Major Waldron’s Garrison at Dover, as communicated to Doctor Cotton Mather, by the Rev. John Pike, Minister of the Place,” in *Indian Captivities or Life in the Wigwam; Being True Narratives of Captives Who Have Been Carried Away by the Indians, from the Frontier Settlements of the United States, from the Earliest Period to the Present Time*, ed. Samuel G. Drake (Auburn: Derby and Miller, 1851), 71; and Mather, “Three Narratives,” 111.

to him. He went a little way back, and came again, and stared upon her as before, but said nothing; whereupon she asked him what he would have.”¹⁷¹

Images like these allowed men to explore their roles as colonizers and the possibility of failure. The image of the Indian with the pistol and the helpless white female colonists epitomized this relationship. Women in the narratives suffered from vulnerability in their “native” land, while Indian men with guns and axes violently attacked and took over their land claims. Through this, men explored their own actions, justified them, and pondered the feasibility of success.

Elizabeth Hanson described yet another reversal of roles—Indians stealing corn from the English. Hanson stated, “Some of the younger Indians went back, and brought some corn from the English inhabitants, the harvest not being gathered.” This role reversal also signified an inability of men to provide—the theft of foodstuffs posed the threat of starvation. Despite this reversal of roles, captivity narratives quickly restored the “proper” order. Yet Hanson then noted that the Indian “still said nothing, but went away whooping, and returned unto her no more.” The “whooping” once again characterized the Native as “savage.” Role reversal allowed for the exploration of a world where English men no longer reigned supreme—where patriarchy and order cease to exist. Captivity narratives gave men a safe way to ponder this alternative through the female protagonists. If colonial men were to actually fail in their political and militaristic endeavors within the Atlantic world, this alternative world would become reality.¹⁷²

¹⁷¹ Mather, “Of the Remarkable Escape of Widow Elizabeth Heard,” 72.

¹⁷² Hanson, *God’s Mercy Surmounting Man’s Cruelty*, 13.

Captivity narratives also allowed readers to confront anxieties concerning military failure. Many captivity narratives included scenes—typically within the exposition—that depicted women in hiding. For instance, after her initial contact with Indian raiders, Sarah Gerish fled into hiding:

“She was always very fearful of the Indians; but fear may we think now surprised her, when they fiercely bid her to go into a certain chamber and call the people out! She obeyed, but finding only a little child in bed in the room, she got into bed with it, and hid herself in the clothes as well as she could.”¹⁷³

Men served as the protectors of the family; thus within the Puritan order, hiding was impermissible with their conceptions of manhood. But as readers, men could express and explore fear vicariously through these female protagonists. Similarly, Elizabeth Heard, at first crippled by fear, hid once she regained her composure:

“Her children, finding it impossible to carry her with them, with heavy hearts forsook her. Immediately after, however, she beginning to recover from her fright, was able to fly, and hide herself in a bunch of barberry bushes, in the garden; and then hastening from thence, because the daylight advanced, she sheltered herself, though seen by two of the Indians, in a thicket of other bushes, about thirty rods from the house.”¹⁷⁴

Heard hid in the garden. Readers would have recognized this cultivated space as an emblem of civilization. However, the confines of civilization did not protect Heard; instead, “savages” captured her from within this safe space. By inserting themselves into the narrative through the female character, male readers explored the vulnerabilities of small villages and

¹⁷³ Cotton Mather, “Of the Captivity and Sufferings of Miss Sarah Gerish, who was Taken at the Sacking of Dover, in the Year 1689 by the Indians; as Communicated to Doctor Cotton Mather, by the Rev. John Pike, Minister of the Place,” in *Indian Captivities or Life in the Wigwam*, 70.

¹⁷⁴ Cotton Mather, “Of the Remarkable Escape of Widow Elizabeth Heard,” 71.

towns to attacks and confronted their inability to protect their families and uphold the patriarchal order.¹⁷⁵

Not all captivity narratives dealt with the defeat of Englishmen. Hannah Dustan, along with fellow captive and servant, Mary Corlis Neff, violently slaughtered nine indigenous peoples in order to flee captivity. Such violent behavior fell beyond Puritan conceptions of femininity and was not meant to be emulated. Mather made clear to readers that, due to the peculiarity of the captives' circumstances, they could take on certain roles that they would be unable to in the presence of a white male authority.¹⁷⁶

According to Puritan belief, God used Dustan as an instrument to kill Indians. He further allowed her to withstand the Indians' pressure on her to adopt Catholicism. While initially victimized by the raid, Mather fashioned Dustan as a model of a different type of captive woman—a victor. She proved herself physically, intellectually, and spiritually superior by killing, outwitting, and exemplifying Puritanism's power over Indians. Narratives like that of Dustan reinforced notions of European superiority.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ Lepore, *The Name of War*, 76-87; Michael S. Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 1-11; John Locke, *The Second Treatise on Government*, (1690; reprint Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 1986); Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession*, 16-40; and "Town of Lancaster, Petition to the Governor and Council of Massachusetts, March 11, 1675" in Henry S. Nourse, ed. *The Narrative Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (Lancaster, Massachusetts: J. Wilson and Son, 1903), 80-81. Ideologies in the New England colonies grounded white manhood in landownership, so the colonists found loss of homes and property that resulted from Metacom's War particularly devastating. Property existed as a crucial element in the foundation of culture for seventeenth century Englishmen. Only men who owned homes and acted as heads of families attained full manhood status. In adherence to Puritan gender constructions, husbands acted as providers, procreators, and masters. Economic competency and marriage defined notions of manliness. Property in particular gave men a greater sense of self. As colonists saw their homes burned and their family members murdered, their senses of identity, civility, and safety were simultaneously challenged.

¹⁷⁶ Cotton Mather, *A Notable Exploit, wherein, Dux Faemina Facti*, in *Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702) in *Women's Indian Captivity Narratives*, ed. Katheryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), 56.

¹⁷⁷ Derounian-Stodola, *Women's Indian Captivity Narratives*, 56; June Namias, *White Captives*, 10-15. Namias organized her book around three key ideas of white womanhood that Indian captivity narratives reveal:

Colonial readers navigated and deciphered narratives of captivity through the lens created by advertisements, titles, prefaces, and stylization. Authors' portrayal of marriage, sexuality, restraint, diet, death, familial separation, theft, and submissiveness not only worked to reinscribe behavioral norms for female readers, but also provided male readers with a means to explore their own anxieties. By injecting themselves into captivity narratives through female protagonists, male readers explored the possibility of their own defeat in regard to Native warfare, political struggles within the England empire, Catholicism, and their patriarchal duties of providing protection, provisions, and comfort to their families.

survivors, amazons, and frail flowers. These categories are based both on the content and chronology of these narratives. Rowlandson epitomizes the survivor trope, while Swarton exemplifies the amazon.

CONCLUSION

This paper has dealt with captivity narratives as texts. Authors and editors manipulated them in order to alleviate anxieties relating to larger colonial threats, including Catholicism, warfare with natives, and difficulties in providing provisions and protection to family members. Furthermore, male readers injected themselves into the texts through the female protagonists in order to explore anxieties of their own. This study provides greater insight into how authors, editors, and readers utilized texts for their own benefit. By examining these interactions between people and texts, both at the production level and as readers, we can better understand how colonists coped with the hardships the colonial endeavor in New England and how they strived to retain order and authority.

While the narratives themselves provided men with a way to relieve anxieties, the phenomenon of captivity itself intensified fear. Perhaps the most evident harbinger of fear lies within the stories of captives that never returned. While the stories of these captives remain largely unwritten and unknown, they exemplified the lack of control then men wielded in aspects of the colonial scheme and a failure of men to protect women, perpetuate Protestantism, and jeopardized the trajectory of “civilization.”¹⁷⁸

“Unredeemed captives” did not necessarily meet a grim fate. Many women chose to remain with their captors, either because of marriage, religion, newly-formed family relationships, or supportive female networks. For instance, an English man described Eunice William’s reluctance to return to her former home: “As to Mr. Williams Daughter, our spies

¹⁷⁸ Ann M. Little, *Abraham in Arms: War and Gender in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 126.

which we sent to Canada are Returned, who as they were hunting, saw Mr. Williams Daughter with ye Indian who ownes her, she is in good health but seemes unwilling to Returne...” To white male patriarchs, this choice was unfathomable. It equaled failure.¹⁷⁹

Likewise, Elizabeth Hanson’s daughter, Sarah, also failed to return home—she married a French man and became Catholic instead. Following Elizabeth Hanson’s redemption, her husband spent the rest of life in pursuit of their daughter. During his final attempt to redeem her, in February 1727, he fell ill and died. Sarah Hanson’s actions epitomize what colonial English men feared most—their own failure as patriarchs. Just as Sarah Hanson’s decision led to the death of her own father, men perceived that a larger loss of authority and failure to defend their families would result in the end of their civilization as they knew it.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ Peter Schuyler to Samuel Patridge, 18 February 1707, quoted in John Demos, *The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 85; and Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750* (New York: Vintage Books, 1982), 208.

¹⁸⁰ *God’s Mercy Surmounting Man’s Cruelty, Exemplified in the Captivity and Redemption of Elizabeth Hanson* (Keimer: Philadelphia, 1728), 38-39.

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