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A REPURPOSED NARRATIVE: MARY ROWLANDSON'S *NARRATIVE* AND PRE-REVOLUTIONARY SENTIMENT

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MARY ROWLANDSON'S *NARRATIVE* AND
PRE-REVOLUTIONARY SENTIMENT

THESIS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the
College of Arts and Sciences
at the University of Kentucky

By

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2019

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

A REPURPOSED NARRATIVE: MARY ROWLANDSON'S *NARRATIVE* AND PRE-REVOLUTIONARY SENTIMENT

Leading into the American Revolution, Puritan captivity narratives gained a resurgent popularity as nationalized sentiment burned towards political upheaval. Mary Rowlandson's *Narrative* (1682) was reprinted six times between 1770-1776, signifying an incredible interest in Puritan stories that seemed to antithetically inspire a progressive and radical revolution against England. *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God or A True History of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* enhanced an already fervent revolutionary sentiment, transforming a seemingly straightforward captivity narrative into a totem meant to represent the oppressive struggle between England and her most coveted colony.

Such a literary revival taps into an early American sentiment that understood and valued captivity for its power both to define American freedom and elicit revolutionary action. By examining the original 1682 text and numerous supplementary and critical articles and works, this thesis unveils how and why Mary Rowlandson inspired a seemingly unrelated insurgency nearly 100 years after her captivity. By aligning Mary Rowlandson's iconic mythology alongside contemporary depictions of captivity and bondage, eighteenth-century propagandists appropriated her image and story to meet their revolutionary rhetorical requirements.

KEYWORDS: Rowlandson, Captivity, Revolution, Propaganda, Puritan, Appropriation

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It takes a village to raise a child. Updating the age-old adage to my current academic position, it took a lot of people to finish this thesis. Although an independent project, my thesis could not have been completed to any degree of competence without the insightful input of my committee – Professors Andy Doolen and Michelle Sizemore, and my chair, Professor Marion Rust. Their collective experience, brilliance, and mastery of Early American Literature expanded my conceptual understanding, helped to clarify my often loosely constructed arguments, provided a sounding board to test my half-formed ideas, and over the course of the past two years, they have each honed my ability to effectively write in an academic environment and appreciate the complexities and beauty of early American literature.

The impetus for this thesis originated from Gregory Sieminski, a USMA scholar who examined Mary Rowlandson’s input into the American Revolution nearly 30 years ago. Without his initial inquiry into her importance outside of the seventeenth-century, I would probably still be trying to find a thesis topic. Greg has been gracious enough to support my ideas from afar and has provided a reading and feedback for this project. Experienced scholars who take the time to support subordinate academics make this profession an incredibly rewarding endeavor.

As drafting concluded, my fellow graduate students graciously gave me their time and red ink. The insights and feedback provided by Jessica Van Gilder, Matt Wentz, Tanner Underwood, and Jillian Winter helped to turn a collection of ideas into a sharply polished paper. This project proved a daunting task, but through the involvement of many, it evolved into the most rewarding academic experience in my life.

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INTRODUCTION

Leading into the late eighteenth century, Puritan captivity narratives gained an immense popularity as nationalized sentiment burned towards political revolution. Mary Rowlandson's *Narrative* (1682) was reprinted six times between 1770-1776, signifying a renewed interest in Puritan stories that seemed to antithetically inspire a progressive and radical revolution against England. Somehow, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God or A True History of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* enhanced an already fervent revolutionary sentiment, transforming a seemingly straightforward captivity narrative into a totem meant to represent the oppressive struggle between England and her most coveted colony.

The thesis is divided into four sections, which trace Mary Rowlandson's *Narrative* from 1682 to its six republications printed between 1770-1776. Distilled to its most basic argument, Mary Rowlandson played an important role in pre-revolutionary rhetoric, inspiring an unrelated insurgency nearly 100 years after her captivity.

Eighteenth-century propagandists capitalized on her narrative, appropriating her image and story to meet their revolutionary rhetorical requirements. The first section, labeled "The Sovereignty of Mary Rowlandson's *Narrative*," examines Rowlandson's subversive and outright revolutionary actions within the text itself. Through a close reading analyzing her actions throughout each remove, I expose Mary Rowlandson's independent agency and present her defiant character in the original 1682 edition as a precursor for later revolutionary repurposed prints.

Section Two, "Mary Rowlandson's Republished Rhetoric," provides an overview of propagandists' appropriation of her image and captivity's overall place in

revolutionary rhetoric. By examining Rowlandson's reprinted versions and aligning them alongside contemporary propaganda, I situate Rowlandson's *Narrative* within a greater rhetorical framework. The third section, "Inspiring Action: Stimulating Revolutionary Sentiment," begins to answer how and why her story affected American conceptions of race, freedom, liberty, and ultimately, revolution against England. By appealing to an intense national sentiment familiar with themes of bondage, revolutionary propagandists utilized images of captivity to inspire national rebellion, define notions of individual and national liberty, and embolden an American public belief that England represented an oppressive political captor.

The final section, titled "Rowlandson's Rewritten Myth," brings my arguments under one all-encompassing concept – national mythology. I place Mary Rowlandson alongside literary and historical heroes who played an important role in shaping our national character. By labeling Mary Rowlandson as a mythic hero, her literal story begins to fade as her mythic character gains a more prominent position.

Consequently, *A True History of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* holds an authoritative place in our colonial canon. It serves as not only one of the most influential works of the seventeenth-century, but also as one of the most read, most referenced, most studied, and most written about stories in modern collegiate English classrooms. Within this already impressive array of academic attention, I hope to add yet another layer of necessary critical analysis. Couched in my own intensive historical analysis, this essay seeks to illuminate Mary Rowlandson's subverted and repurposed revolutionary role as an American mythological hero.

CHAPTER 1. THE SOVEREIGNTY OF MARY ROWLANDSON'S *NARRATIVE*

You are a passive victim, captured and threatened by a racial enemy until God's providence (later a human hero) can effect your deliverance. You must shelter the masculine covenant as lost lady and lofty idol. You will water the American venture with your tears. "And my knees trembled under me, And I was walking through the valley of the Shadow of Death." The truth is what you are worth.

- Susan Howe, *The Birth-mark* (97).

In the *Narrative*'s first extant edition,¹ Mary Rowlandson's actions provide a counternarrative to the submissiveness described in the text's introductory pages.² On its surface, her story reflects a Puritanical "Narrative of the wonderfully awful, wise, holy, powerful, and gracious providence of God" (8) described by the author of the introduction – an undeniable "instance of the Sovereignty [sic] of God" (11). Even within the text itself, Rowlandson hardly moves without attributing glory to God, whether through her own admission, or a carefully inserted Bible quotation by her own hand or those of her ministerial influencers. The primary purpose of this first section is to assert Rowlandson's resistance against submission and lay the foundation for later pre-revolutionary appropriations of her story. Undeniably, the mediated intent for the original publication was to further Calvinist doctrine, removing individual agency and placing it all in God's hands. Paradoxically, in its first few pages, Rowlandson claims this story as her own instead of solely attributing her actions to God's Providence. She declares her intent to tell "what happened to me during that grievous captivity" as a testament to her own survival (14). As I will demonstrate through a sequential close reading of Rowlandson's actions and purposeful descriptive language within the text, hidden within

¹ The original edition no longer exists, and we rely solely on its second reprinting in 1682. The edition printed in Derounian-Stodola's collection is a version derived from its fourth printing, also produced in 1682. All quotations of Rowlandson's *Narrative*, unless noted otherwise, come from Stodola's edition.

² Throughout this section and the rest of the essay, for brevity's sake, I use *Narrative* as an encompassing title for Rowlandson's text, whether referencing *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* (1682) or *The Narrative of the Removes and Sufferings of Mary Rowlandson* (1770, 1771, 1773) or *The Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (1720).

the blatant themes of Puritanical submission, Rowlandson not only survives – she thrives.³

Before moving into the textual analysis, it seems necessary to address the question surrounding the authenticity of Mary Rowlandson’s seemingly honest account. In Katheryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola’s 1988 article aptly titled “The Publication, Promotion, and Distribution of Mary Rowlandson’s Indian Captivity Narrative in the Seventeenth Century,” Stodola claims that Increase Mather not only authored the preface signed “Per Amicum” but also influenced its content during and after Rowlandson’s writing process. Her view joins numerous early American scholars and Mather’s mediation of the text, at whatever level, is one that I attribute to him without equivocation throughout the essay.⁴

To distinguish my introductory analysis from an already inundated critical chorus, I turn to two critics who most closely align with my own reading of Mary Rowlandson’s revolutionary character – Michelle Burnham and Christopher Castiglia. Following a brief description of their primary arguments that dialogically align Rowlandson’s self-presentation as both a passive victim and a victorious survivor, I introduce specific textual instances that illuminate my primary claim that Rowlandson demonstrates not only an amazing will to survive, but also a subversiveness that pre-revolutionary propagandists later utilized to refashion her into an American Daughter of Liberty.

³ This seems a bold statement and in no way do I argue that her captivity (or any captivity) was a pleasant experience. The initial description of the attack in Lancaster is enough to give anyone nightmares (Rowlandson 12). My intent rests far more on stepping outside of an established narrative that portrays Rowlandson as the quintessential Puritan woman – submissive, thankful, and a puppet for her ministerial mediators. Denise MacNeil reflects the closest critical alignment to my own position, a view that aligns Rowlandson against Joseph Campbell’s monomythic heroic attributes.

⁴ As Gordon Sayre describes in his introduction to the *Narrative*: “perhaps the most salient critical debate over the text concerns the degree to which Rowlandson’s writing may have been influenced, coerced, or edited by the powerful Puritan ministers who managed and interpreted the war effort” (130).

Michelle Burnham's *Captivity and Sentiment* highlights Rowlandson's cultural appropriation throughout her captivity, identifying instances where Rowlandson begins to question her perception of "Indians as savage and cruel," while also providing contradictory descriptions of "individual Indians who are kind and sympathetic" (17). At the end of Rowlandson's captivity, Rowlandson must reckon with this newfound racial parity. In the end, she views her captors negatively – as murderous heathens – but even within that judgment, she begins to see the humanity of individual American Indians. Burnham diagnoses Rowlandson's dual identity as a survival symptom that results from her prolonged captivity and eventual return to English society – a unique twist on the Stockholm Syndrome. She states that Rowlandson must constantly "sustain her ties to English culture" while simultaneously developing "relations with the Algonquin community" (45). And, when redeemed from captivity, she must contend with both realities. Mary Rowlandson is not solely a victim or archetype for a gripping conversion narrative. She becomes something far more nuanced and complicated.

In an earlier article, Burnham even more directly challenges Rowlandson's Puritanical conversion narrative as one that focuses solely on the initial captivity and ultimate redemption and instead focuses on the arduous journey in between ("Journey" 60), lauding Rowlandson's self-preservation and survival throughout. I both agree with and extend Burnham's notion of Rowlandson's dual identity, whether as racially bifurcated or as a submissive survivalist, to one who is also subversive in the face of adversity. And more importantly, for the scope of this study, Rowlandson consistently presents a character ripe for repurposing as a revolutionary heroine. As demonstrated

through this section, Rowlandson establishes character attributes contrary to the submissive character advertised in Increase Mather's introduction.

Along similar lines, Christopher Castiglia rightly asserts that Rowlandson's narrative "challenges several central assumptions of her home culture," leading to a completely new understanding and appreciation of Indian culture – one that humanizes her captors "as more than stock characters of her religious salvation" (46). Progressing through each remove, Rowlandson blurs the Puritanical black-and-white binary disproven by Castiglia in *Bound and Determined*. As a result, she redefines her own agency. Mary Rowlandson becomes a character who not only survives but actively resists oppression by her Algonquin captors.

In addition to identifying Rowlandson's challenge to Puritanical identity, Castiglia notes two essential elements of Rowlandson's growth while in captivity – economic labor and gender norms. Castiglia argues that racial identity "seems closely related to her changed notion of acceptable gender activities" and ultimately leads her to assume an "economic position in the community" (51). Rowlandson depicts an economic independence unknown in her position as a minister's wife and, according to Castiglia, herein lies the pivotal moment that transforms Rowlandson from a passive victim to an assertive survivor in charge of her fate. Castiglia's analysis aligns similarly with my own, but I emphasize Rowlandson's autonomy beyond economics. Through the examples highlighted within this section, I contend that Rowlandson displays agency even before she meets King Philip and enters the Indian economy as a seamstress. The textual references I examine throughout this first section position Mary Rowlandson as one who extends and enhances the descriptions offered by both Castiglia and Burnham.

Conversely, critics who emphasize Rowlandson as the “prototype of woman as victim” (Stodola xxi) noted by Kathryn Derounian-Stodola in the introduction to *Women’s Indian Captivity Narratives* or those who paint Rowlandson as simply an archetypal extension of the Puritan conversion narrative such as Richard Slotkin in *Regeneration through Violence* may closely align with early Puritan intentions,⁵ but I believe they misidentify Rowlandson’s “paradoxically defiant yet submissive female voice” (Lepore 126).⁶ Rather, alongside Susan Howe, Christopher Castiglia, and Michelle Burnham, I conclude that Rowlandson subverts the status quo. The remainder of this first section demonstrates Rowlandson’s resolve.

1.1 Mary Rowlandson – An Active Resistance

In 1676 Narraganset Indians captured Mary Rowlandson, the wife of prominent Puritan minister, Joseph Rowlandson, in Lancaster, Massachusetts and held her captive for eleven-and-a-half weeks. In 1682, through the mediation of ministers Increase Mather and her husband,⁷ she published an account of her captivity, initially titling it *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*. As the title implies, much of the text focuses on

⁵ In *Regeneration through Violence*, Richard Slotkin attributes the creation of an American genre (the captivity narrative) to Rowlandson, a view I wholeheartedly endorse. Her position as an archetypal Puritan (102-108) works within the construct Slotkin identifies, but as this paper demonstrates, my argument arrives at a more subversive rendering.

⁶ David Minter’s “By Dens of Lions: Notes on Stylization in Early Puritan Captivity Narratives” also provides an overview of Roy Harvey Pearce’s dated treatment of Puritan narratives as stories that solidified Puritan theology, gender dynamics, and their relation to conversion narratives of the period.

⁷ In its seventeenth-century editions, an accompanying sermon was published that advocated for religious fasting. Much like Mather, it is commonly assumed Joseph affected his wife’s account, assisting with edits, Biblical quotations, and providing ministerial and domestic guidance about how her story ought to read. I purposely avoid specifics surrounding mediation (since it is nearly impossible to prove something like that), but instead accept that there was indeed mediation (to whatever degree). Stodola’s introduction to the *Narrative* also notes the irony of advocating for purposely starving yourself versus the very real starvation that Rowlandson faced in the first several days of her captivity.

Rowlandson's reliance on God and her ability to outlast the inequities of this world due solely to God's grace and goodness.

Mary Rowlandson's story captures both the fear and ultimate redemption felt by many in colonial New England. It reinforces two very prominent Puritan teachings – God's sovereignty and the necessity to suffer inequities in order to test a believer's resolve and selection as a member of God's elect. At any time, "heathen" Indians could attack and disrupt colonial civilization. As a Puritan settlement based on God's promise, this posed both a theological and physical conundrum. In addition to a persistent physical threat, the fight between the indigenous population and Puritan colonists subsequently assumed an overwhelming religious tone. Thus, Rowlandson's version of King Philip's War steeped in religious rhetorical zeal is not particularly surprising. As a Puritan, she deliberately frames the narrative within a very apparent Calvinist doctrine and describes her captors in deliberate good-vs-evil terminology. As stated by Jill Lepore in *The Name of War*, Rowlandson was not only "redeemed from captivity, but captivity also redeemed her" (127).

Throughout her story (and her life), Rowlandson remains bound by Puritanical conventions of both submissive religiosity and her diminished position as a woman in an entirely patriarchal Puritan hierarchy. In the introduction, Mather gives accolades to God for "preserving, supporting, and carrying through so many such extream [sic] hazards, unspeakable difficulties and disconsolateness, and at last delivering her out of them all" (8). Mather reinforces not only Calvinist doctrine but also Rowlandson's place as a woman in Puritan society by stripping her of her own ability to save herself. Her redemption is not achieved through Rowlandson's ingenuity, agency, and independent

action, but through her innate devotion and “gratitude unto God” (9). Mather claims that Rowlandson’s rescue came only from God’s Providence and that her suffering was something to be celebrated, claiming that captivity was “good for her, yea better than she hath been, than she should not have been, thus afflicted” (11). By highlighting his introduction, it is not my intention to openly criticize Calvinist doctrine. Rather, Rowlandson’s *Narrative* was initially presented as an example of Godly submission and on the surface, reinforces a relatively rigid stereotype. Surviving an ordeal such as Rowlandson's captivity ought to inspire a thankful heart, yet Rowlandson also demonstrates far more ingenuity, resistance, and agency than Mather gives her credit in his introduction.

Separated into removes tracing her movement throughout the wilderness, Mary Rowlandson’s story begins with the attack on her home in Lancaster, Massachusetts on February 10, 1675. As the text continues, Rowlandson presents herself as a complicated character who is both submissive at times and resistant throughout her captivity. Injured in the attack and surrounded by indescribable death and destruction, Rowlandson confronts two very real possibilities: survive or die. Recalling the attack, Rowlandson describes a sad scene (13):

Now is that dreadful Hour come, that I have often heard off... but now mine Eyes see it. Some in our House were fighting for their Lives, others wallowing in their Blood; the House on fire over our Heads, and the bloody Heathen ready to knock us on the Head if we stirred out.

At this point, Rowlandson had been shot through her abdomen, and her unnamed sister appeared as the only other survivor. Confronted with hopelessness, her sister sees no other option than conceding defeat and exclaims “Lord, let me die” when facing her attackers (13). Immediately thereafter, Rowlandson’s sister is shot and dies. Conversely,

Rowlandson chooses life.⁸ Much has been critically said about her willingness "to go along with those ravenous bears" (14), but when described in this scene through life (survival) and death (concession), it becomes a much more nuanced decision. Lepore questions Rowlandson's curious admission that she is "willing to go along with them" (14), claiming "true, she was wounded and terrified, and had clearly been threatened; still, captives were not supposed to be "willing" (Lepore 128). My view, however, arrives at a far more supportive position towards Rowlandson's intentions. Her choice to willingly go with her captors signifies a purposeful and necessary decision.

Much like Susan Howe who claims that "Mrs. Rowlandson was eager and able to save herself" (92), Mary Rowlandson was not, as Stodola describes in her introduction, simply the "prototype of woman as victim" (xxi). Rowlandson's decision seems an ambitious choice that sets the tone for the rest of her captivity. Mary Rowlandson is a survivor. Moreover, as described by Howe, she manages to "subvert her own orthodoxy" (100) by claiming her own path.

Within these first few pages of Rowlandson's *Narrative*, she details the attack, carefully identifying each part of her world that was torn apart on that fateful night. Not only does Rowlandson lose her freedom, but she also loses all material possessions and familial attachments. Those charged with the protection of her home – friends and relatives – fell immediately. Describing the mayhem, she notes that "quickly they wounded one Man among us, then another, and then a third" (12). Throughout it all, her

⁸ Uninjured and hopeless, Rowlandson's sister succumbs to hopelessness and gladly accepts death. Injured and facing the same desperate scenario, Mary Rowlandson opts for survival, even if it means a temporary submission to an enemy who just murdered her entire family and livelihood. Rowlandson's will to live bleeds through the rest of her captivity.

husband is also absent “in the Bay” (15), adding to Mary’s solitude.⁹ Her brother-in-law died an emasculating and horrible death, falling victim to his attackers who stripped him naked after brutally killing him.¹⁰ Her final male protector dies an embarrassing death, leaving Mary Rowlandson to fend for herself. In the end, she makes a comprehensive list of her losses: “All was gone, my Husband... my Children... my Relations and Friends... our house and home... our comforts” (15). Mary Rowlandson is alone, broken, and nearly beaten.

In this final statement before she leaves with her captors, Rowlandson’s intense sorrow is evident. She complains. She laments. She cries out to the unfairness of it all. Nevertheless, she resolves to *survive*. She admits to having “no Christian friend near” (16) and at this moment, decides to depend on herself (and admittedly her relationship with God) for her own survival. The road ahead is rough, but this is the literary launch point for Mary Rowlandson’s journey toward independence. So many outside forces have aligned against her – the Indian attack itself, the absence of any Christian friends, the death of her family, and eleven weeks of moving through the woods on foot – but somehow, she exceeds all expectations.

Grievously injured in her initial capture, by the third remove, Mary Rowlandson’s wound had festered and become nearly unbearable as the group moves towards the “Indian Town called Wenimesset, Northward of Quabaug” (16) for an extended

⁹ Historical records now reveal that he was pleading with the Massachusetts governor (John Winthrop) to get more military protection in Lancaster (Slotkin *Dreadful* 303), so I can't be too hard on Joseph for not being there.

¹⁰ Increase Mather utilizes the language of nakedness in his 1675 sermon titled “The Wicked Man’s Portion,” a litany of offenses committed against God. He describes nearly every imaginable sin, but in the end, describes clothing as a metaphor for sin and exhorts his parishioners that their “naked souls must appear before God the judge of all” (Mather *Wicked* 21). Read through his theological language, Rowlandson’s brother’s sin is exposed, and his soul then matches his outward appearance. A second example of such language appears a second time in Rowlandson’s *Narrative*, as an “English-man stript naked and lying dead upon the ground” (Rowlandson 36).

encampment. Throughout these first few movements, death seems a genuine possibility. In addition to her own critical abdominal wound, she carries her dying child, remaining utterly powerless to do anything to alleviate her suffering or even prevent her death. Then she meets Robert Pepper. A captive familiar with “savage medicine” far better than the Anglo-English (16), Pepper instructs Rowlandson how she ought to care for her wound to enhance her chances for survival by placing a pressure dressing composed of oak leaves on the wound. Rowlandson heeds his advice, taking “Oaken leaves... and with the blessing of God,” (17) Rowlandson’s wound miraculously heals. Mary’s child may have died, but through this small (yet incredibly meaningful) interaction with Robert Pepper, Mary gains a self-reliance that resonates throughout the rest of her captivity. It may be overselling this exchange as the pivotal moment in Rowlandson's independent development, but herein lies the first example that Mary Rowlandson begins to act on her own volition. Expectation requires Mary to submit to God and her male protectors. Necessity requires her to survive, and in doing so, Rowlandson displays a willingness to rebel against her captivity.¹¹

Food plays an immensely important role throughout the entirety of Rowlandson’s captivity. Hunger and thirst dominate many of her thoughts during the beginning stages of her captivity and later, once she begins to describe her captors in more favorable terms, she marvels at Indian ingenuity and their ability to feed everyone even in the most austere environments. Following the seventh Remove, Rowlandson relates that “after a restless and hungry night” (23) spent in a swamp, her hunger is finally satisfied. She

¹¹ Stemming from Rowlandson’s initial decision to survive at Lancaster, she seeks her own medical treatment. Ostensibly, she proved far more valuable alive than dead, but her captors could not (and did not) attend to Mary’s festering abdominal wound. By her own actions, she ensures her survival. Her Algonquian captors could have assisted her healing, but they did not. After seeking instruction from Robert Pepper, she alone acts on her own behalf.

gladly receives two ears of Indian Corn and a piece of horse liver. After Rowlandson loses one of her ears of corn and half of her liver to a hungry thief, she hastily devours the uncooked and bloody liver, admitting against her internal inclination that it was not only satisfying but a "savory bit" (23). Albeit an amusing anecdote that shows Rowlandson's willingness to do what it takes, this example identifies another facet of Rowlandson's evolution within her captivity. When necessary, Rowlandson possesses the capacity to adopt Indian practices and act a little "savage." Later in the narrative, she does not even bat an eye when presented with the opportunity to eat bear meat (27). By that time, Rowlandson is a changed woman.¹²

Perhaps the most poignant example of Rowlandson's reformed character lies in her interaction with King Philip. Before meeting him after the eighth remove, Rowlandson collapses and openly weeps in front of King Philip's men. She legitimately fears for her life. Painted as the enemy of colonial New England, King Philip represents the stereotype of a "bloodthirsty heathen" and the literal force behind Rowlandson's captivity.¹³ Yet, when she meets with King Philip, nothing bad happens. In fact, he defies

¹² Mary Rowlandson's exposure to new foods and her ability to overcome preconceived notions surrounding indigenous appetites has been written about ad nauseum. Denise Macneil argues that these broadening experiences, Rowlandson develops "endurance, courage, pragmatism, and cultural flexibility" (641). She establishes Rowlandson as the sort of cross-cultural character described by Michelle Burnham's notion of her bifurcated identity at the end of Rowlandson's captivity. By participating in both Native food practices and an established economy, she argues that Rowlandson helps to establish character traits popular in nineteenth and twentieth-century frontier novels and "cowboy-and-Indian" movies. Quoting her conclusion in its entirety, "Rowlandson's hero demonstrates successful integration of stereotypically feminine traits, operating within a feminine persona, into the basic archetype, providing the foundation from which the unique American frontier hero will ultimately blossom" (652).

¹³ Akin to Rowlandson's imagined identity explored in Section 2, colonists define King Philip as a caricatured reason for settler colonialism to occur in Northeastern New England. Motivated by Puritan theology, settlers depicted King Philip as the moral opposition to Christianity. Richard Slotkin introduces *So Dreadful a Judgement* by stating that accounts (such as Rowlandson's *Narrative*) "were mainly apologetic, seeking to justify Puritan actions toward the Indians and to paint Philip as motivated less by reason or policy than by pure malice – either inspired by the Devil or by some innate Indian unreasonableness" (18). Additionally, Jill Lepore details the questionable assertions preceding King Philip's War in *The Name of War*, highlighting the conspiracy surrounding John Sassamon's death – the

her stereotypes and Rowlandson agrees to make a "shirt for his Boy... for which he gave [her] a shilling" (25). She enters the meeting fearful for her life and leaves as an entrepreneur more in control of her own future. Working within her captivity, Rowlandson seeks ways to survive that define her character as one who does not submit. She becomes a diplomat, a businesswoman, a power-broker, and ultimately, a survivor.

Across numerous examples, Rowlandson reveals qualities consistent with a leader amongst captives. She advises Goodwife Joslin to remain in place (19). She comforts and instructs Thomas Read, and advocates on his behalf for his captors to save his life (30). She cares for John Gilberd, telling him to "go and get some fire" (31) as he lays naked on the ground. These three characters prove incapable of saving themselves without Rowlandson's intervention. In other words, she not only adapts to what is required for her survival but extends her protection to other captives.

Rowlandson demonstrates an unusual resistance when King Philip's maid seeks a piece of Rowlandson's apron. The maid requests a portion of Rowlandson's apron, to which she vehemently disagrees: "With that, my Mistress rises up and takes up a stick big enough to have killed me and struck at me with it" (31). Rowlandson stands her ground. Only when threatened with further violence does she concede and turn over the apron to Philip's maid. Even in an event as innocuous as this, Rowlandson demonstrates a steadfast resolve to resist her captors.

Mary Rowlandson's openly critical attitude towards the military provides yet another element of her unsubmitive revolutionary attitude. Rowlandson subversively critiques the English army. She and her captors capably cross the river numerous times

supposed start of the war itself. In short, colonists wanted a war so that they could legally encroach on already occupied land.

while stalwart soldiers cannot. Rowlandson pulls no punches. She airs disappointment in their failure, offering her observations, "which [she] took special notice of in [her] afflicted time" (43). She admires the enemy, even praising God for "preserving the Heathen for farther affliction to our poor Country" (44), noting "how the Indians derided the slowness and dullness of the English Army" (44). She admires the Indians for their endurance, ingenuity, and strength, deriding the English military for its inability to redeem her, noting "I thought of the English Army, and hoped for their coming, and being retaken by them, but that failed" (30). Although a captive, Rowlandson finds her captors admirable and even takes time in the closing pages of her narrative to praise them for treating her well, stating that "not one of them ever offered the least abuse of unchastity to me, in word or action" (46).¹⁴

Redeemed after nearly twelve weeks for a paltry twenty pounds and some tobacco, Rowlandson spends the final pages giving thanks to God for rescuing her from "that horrible pit" (49). She reassumes her position as a minister's wife and Puritan woman and claims that "it is good for me that I have been afflicted" (51). Yet within these final few paragraphs, Rowlandson does not seem content. As a result, she tosses and turns every night she lays down to sleep (50):

I can remember the time, when I used to sleep quietly without workings in my thoughts, whole nights together: but now it is otherwise with me. When all are fast about me, and no eye open, but his who ever waketh, my thoughts are upon things past, upon the awful dispensations of the Lord towards us... I have seen the extream [sic] of this World: one hour I have been in health, and wealth, wanting nothing: but the next hour in sickness and wounds, and death, having nothing but sorrow and affliction...

¹⁴ Make no mistake. Rowlandson does not like her Indian captors. She appreciates and even admires them at times, but her racism remains strong throughout. Following are a few quotes to support her unchanged heart: "There was a vast difference between the lovely faces of Christians and the foul looks of the Heathens" (35) or "There is not one of them that makes the least conscience of speaking the truth" (29) or her hateful desire to "turn all those curses upon our Enemies" (19).

If these concluding pages intend to attribute all glory to God, why would Rowlandson include any inkling to the contrary? Asked another way, if God rescued her from bondage, ought she not celebrate victory by rejoicing in her captivity? After all, Increase Mather certainly does.

It seems a significant literary jump from Rowlandson's original account to the republished revolutionary depictions 100 years later, but through these examples, it is evident that Mary Rowlandson's character begins to resemble the gun-toting revolutionary woodcuts seen in 1770-1776. Many critics have identified her veiled subversion throughout captivity, but through these examples, I extend their arguments and contend that Rowlandson displays brazenly defiant behavior that paves the way for her persona to play a pivotal role in fueling revolutionary fervor prior to the American Revolution. In section two, I move forward 100 years and examine how pre-revolutionary colonists repurposed both Mary Rowlandson and her narrative into revolutionary rhetoric as colonial Americans bolstered their resolve to revolt against an English monarchy.

CHAPTER 2. MARY ROWLANDSON'S REPUBLISHED RHETORIC

The study of history is very pleasant. There are very few, who have not some curiosity to look back into past time and make themselves acquainted with what was done before they were born. And people in general are peculiarly entertained with the history of their own country; they are fond of knowing their own origin and pleased to be informed of every little incident which befell their own progenitors.
- Reverend Robert Breck, "Past Dispensations of Providence" (12).

Republished seven times throughout the eighteenth-century, Mary Rowlandson's *Narrative* became immensely popular as colonial propagandists sought to inspire revolutionary sentiment against the English monarchy. Unlike the original version published in 1682 that promoted Puritan ideals, pre-revolutionary printers instead repurposed her story as one encouraging outright resistance against an oppressive English enemy. The first section of this thesis provides textual evidence that Rowlandson presents a far more nuanced and complicated character than initially offered by her ministerial mediators. By actively seeking survival, she surpasses the submissive Puritan praised in Increase Mather's introduction or even the quintessential womanly victim described in Kathryn Derounian-Stodola's introduction to the text. Arguably, her character contains elements of independence otherwise forgotten if readers stop at a surface reading of her captivity. By examining depictions within Mary Rowlandson's publication history, supplementary references to King Philip and captivity in revolutionary rhetoric, and providing a synthesis between the two, this second section seeks to provide the analysis necessary to confirm her story as an essential best-selling revolutionary text.

Popular in its initial publication, Mary Rowlandson's *Narrative* sold more than 1,000 copies and encompassed four editions in 1682 alone.¹⁵ Throughout the next nearly ninety years, however, Rowlandson's narrative was printed only once (Vail 331) in 1720.

¹⁵ Kathryn Derounian-Stodola's "The Publication, Promotion, and Distribution of Mary Rowlandson's Indian Captivity Narrative in the Seventeenth Century" covers these publications in incredible detail.

As a more modern societal secularization began to secede from seventeenth-century Puritanism, stories such as Rowlandson's *Narrative* fell out of favor. Yet, between 1770 and 1776, her story once again gained a prominence unseen since 1682. Indicative of its enormous popularity, Rowlandson's account was reprinted seven times – once in 1720, three times in 1770, once in 1771, and twice more in 1773 (Sieminski 37).¹⁶ As identified by Greg Sieminski, in the immediate pre-revolutionary period encapsulating six of the seven printings, “captivity narratives became a useful metaphor to effect political ends” (36). Such a strong resurgence in its publication leading into the American Revolution indicates its innate revolutionary importance.

Central to my argument is the notion that Mary Rowlandson's *Narrative* transforms from a typical colonial captivity narrative to an immeasurably powerful piece of propaganda couched within a grander scheme of revolutionary rhetoric. Simply stated, before the American Revolution, Whig sympathizers repurposed her story and her image to accommodate their political goals. Rowlandson became an effigy for a revolutionary sentiment that aimed to inspire resistance against England.

Much like modern-day advertising attempts to do in the marketplace, eighteenth-century citizens were bombarded with insurrectionary attempts to inspire an active resistance against England. Propaganda, as defined by Philip Davidson, seems to be a relatively straightforward concept. He explains it as "an attempt to control the actions of people indirectly by controlling their attitudes" (xi). At churches, schools, clubs, pulpits, public squares, and meeting houses and through oratory, demonstrations, songs, plays, pamphlets, broadsides, newspapers, and books, Whig reformers attempted to shape public

¹⁶ In his extensive bibliographic reference, *The Voice of the Old Frontier*, H.W.G. Vail details each of these printings as well (604-6, 609, and 620). Additionally, Gordon Sayre (127), Christopher Castiglia (137), and Michelle Burnham (63) reference their bibliographic research to varying degrees.

attitudes to support war against England. As a political party, Whigs represented an underwhelming minority, and Loyalist opinions of transnational cooperation and conciliation proved far more popular across the colonies than establishing an independent nation. Thus, propagandists needed to excite enough emotion to support a position against an enemy towards whom most people did not harbor any real resentment. The propagandists needed an identifiable enemy¹⁷ and one that caused even the most moderate colonist to demand revolution.

Colonial Americans needed something to align them together in a common cause. Propagandists attempted to provide such inspiration. In *Propaganda and the American Revolution*, Philip Davidson states that “the most important motive in war psychosis is not reason or justice, or even self-interest, but hate. “An unreasoning hatred”, he writes “a blind disgust, is aroused not against policies but against people” (139). Emotional vitriol matters far more than any modicum of common sense and reason if the intent is to inspire action toward a common purpose.

Albeit an entirely dated book (originally published in 1941) discussing an even more dated period, Davidson's dissection of hate remains relevant today. Before the invasion of Iraq in 2003, President Bush sought support from not only Congress but all U.S. citizens. Without entering an intensive debate on the merits of modern war, reason and justice (and even self-interest) might have inspired immediate action towards deposing Saddam Hussein. He openly oppressed the Kurds, committed terrible acts of horror against his own people, and possessed incredible oil reserves that would have

¹⁷ Philip Davidson's *Propaganda and the American Revolution* provides a brilliant overview of these concepts, but in addition to the sources listed in the bibliography, more populist mediums such as David McCullough's *1776* and the History Channel's 2005 miniseries “The American Revolution: One Nation's Rise to Independence” have also indelibly shaped my overall understanding of the period.

made the United States rich if that was our sole objective. Reason, justice, and self-interest dictated that a war against Iraq might be not only logical, but necessary. Yet, President Bush did not move ahead on those three reasons alone. Instead, he needed American hate. Weapons of Mass Destruction became the catchphrase that launched Americans into one of the longest protracted wars we have ever seen. By intimating that Saddam Hussein not only possessed these weapons but the will and desire to use them, he created an enemy that Americans could openly hate and (at least for a time) support the war effort in Iraq.

Moreover, such a political move is not entirely different than those of our revolutionary forefathers. Through the many different modes listed a few paragraphs above, propagandists created an enemy that the masses could openly hate. Reason, justice, and self-interest necessitated some sort of action. The British taxed without representation, limited freedoms, and enforced laws from thousands of miles away. Herein lies the enduring worth of such radical texts as Mary Rowlandson's *Narrative*. Early Anglo-American settlers had already displayed an innate ability to commit outrageous atrocities against an entire indigenous race in the name of colonial expansion and exceptionalism. Without delving deeply into an historic overview, it seems safe to assume that colonists hated American Indians because they inhibited the unimpeded colonization of the continent. Thus, revolutionary propagandists possessed not only an identifiable metaphor to discuss captivity, but also an identifiable enemy (through familiar descriptions and relatable imagery) who generated intense hatred and fear.

The liberal use of emotionally inspiring (and questionably factual) rhetoric inundates American history. Colonial patriots relied on images that generated specific

visceral reactions, relying on printed materials to propagate their version of the truth and their desired outcome. Jay Fliegelman and Michelle Burnham have both examined Paul Revere's print of the Boston Massacre in great detail, each arriving at similar conclusions. Revere's imprint¹⁸ – arguably one of the most famous pieces of revolutionary propaganda – completely misconstrues the actual events and places British troops in direct conflict with Bostonians, igniting the opposition of Americans against the British. Fliegelman describes that such an imagined and outright incorrect depiction allows a more accurate representation of colonial sentiment than what actually occurred on the streets of Boston on March 5, 1770. Revere conceived an organized and deliberately oppositional English enemy who massacred defenseless and blameless Bostonians. The parallel between Revere's image and Rowlandson's imagined persona (a connection drawn by Burnham) prove comically apparent. Each represents a fictitious situation meant to inspire action based on fantasy – and each proves entirely successful.

Rowlandson's image, appropriated by propagandists, served to encourage ideals reminiscent of a Daughter of Liberty. Rowlandson appears a steadfast defender of her home, confronting her Indian attackers and as long as readers stopped reading at the title page, the penultimate example of an American revolutionary woman. Propagandists unashamedly relied on images of a combatant and supportive female – examples such as Molly Pitcher, Lucy Knox, Martha Washington, and Sybil Ludington readily come to mind – to advertise colonial resistance. In *Declaring Independence*, Fliegelman arrives at another such anecdote described in Ezra Gleason's *New England Almanac* printed in 1775. The woman he describes fits within the persona represented by Rowlandson's

¹⁸ For a far more detailed dissection, Jay Fliegelman's analysis describes Revere's misrepresentation and its effect on stoking sentiment in *Declaring Independence* (76).

repurposed revolutionary persona. Interestingly, however, Fliegelman does not connect her story to Fowle’s identical image printed in his 1770 depiction of Mary Rowlandson.¹⁹

The following image will soon look alarmingly familiar (Fliegelman 156/Gleason 18):



Figure 2.1: Portrait of Hannah Snell from Gleason’s 1775 *New England Almanac*

The text tells the unfortunate story of Hannah Snell, a woman imprisoned by her abusive husband. “All his promises of friendship proved instances of the highest perfidy, and he turned out the worst and most unnatural of husbands” (Gleason 18). Following the stillborn death of her child, she flees and sets herself “free from all the ties arising from nature and consanguinity” (19) and joins the American resistance against England, becoming the “Female Soldier” that titles this almanac entry. Fliegelman posits that Snell’s image presents a figure who embodies the natural order of revolutionary sentiment (Fliegelman 159) – a story of adversity, struggle, survival, and revolutionary

¹⁹ An important oversight and one that begs the question which is the ‘real’ image? Snell or Rowlandson?

action. Her story involves prolonged suffering (an abusive captor – her husband), physical and emotional pain (a stillborn child), and ultimately, an independent agency that demanded immediate freedom (becoming a soldier and fighting against English oppression). She embodies an American image who actively struggles against captivity and claims freedom for herself.

Unlike Snell, whose wartime biography became a contemporary call to action, Mary Rowlandson's contributions to the American Revolution reside primarily in the images associated with its republication in 1770 and 1773. The woodcuts published in the 1770 and 1773 editions of Rowlandson's *Narrative* (below) provide a significantly different imagining than that presented in 1682. Not only does each image refashion her as an aggressive American Daughter of Liberty, but her Algonquin aggressors appear incredibly English. Through these images alone, the republished accounts instantly discard the submissive Puritan ideal and transform her into a heroine clothed in revolutionary rhetoric fighting an imagined enemy whom colonists could comprehend and rally against.²⁰ Below are Fowle's 1770 and Boyle's 1773 representations of a reborn revolutionary Mary Rowlandson:

²⁰ Greg Sieminski's groundbreaking 1993 article "Puritan Captivity Narratives of the American Revolution" revolutionized critical interpretation of these images and notable critics have identified their importance (and his contribution) such as Jill Lepore's eighth chapter in *In the Name of War* identify, Michelle Burnham's third chapter in *Captivity and Sentiment*, and Christopher Castiglia's fifth chapter in *Bound and Determined*. Sieminski (then a military instructor at West Point) began a movement investigating Rowlandson's worth as a political protagonist, and it is upon his initial inquiry that I glean the most inspiration.



Figure 2.2: Woodcut for 1770 edition of Rowlandson's Narrative



Figure 2.3: Woodcut for 1773 edition of Rowlandson's Narrative

In these enormously powerful images, Mary Rowlandson represents active resistance against her English/Indian attackers. In the seemingly docile 1770 image (Figure 2.2), Rowlandson resembles a revolutionary warrior, donning a tri-corner hat (a later symbol of the revolution) with a larger-than-life musket in her right hand. The rifle stands as tall as Rowlandson herself, yet she holds it with ease. Her left hand holds a powder horn, signifying her readiness to fight in a prolonged battle. She rises above (presumably) her home in Lancaster, standing guard over the estate in a way utterly contrary to the text's

depictions. She presents a sentry ready to wage battle against anyone who trespasses on her home. Unlike Rowlandson's *Narrative* that reveals a decisive military loss during the initial attack on her home in its opening pages, the 1773 image presents a rebellious woman not only ready to defend her home but also actively engaged in its defense. As she stands alone, her rifle is raised against overwhelming odds. Outnumbered and outgunned four to one, Rowlandson presents a character fighting against attackers encroaching on her home. Contrary to the text where she cowers in fear inside of her home, Rowlandson exits the interior safety of her house and meets the enemy on the battlefield.

For her narrative to bolster any revolutionary sentiment, Mary Rowlandson could no longer be viewed as a passive victim such as was imagined by Increase Mather. To advertise propagandistic power, publishers needed a violently independent character who very visibly stood up against oppression – thus emerges Mary Rowlandson as a repurposed revolutionary Daughter of Liberty.

Propagandists preyed on the preexisting hatred felt towards American Indians and transposed that sentiment onto the English, creating an enemy whom colonists could passionately hate. As the 1773 woodcut shows, John Boyle unequivocally conflates Indian and English images, purposely tapping into the emotional baggage attached to colonists' contentious relationship with their indigenous neighbors. The print attempts to confuse the lines between King Philip and King George, capitalizing on a pre-existing sentiment towards Indian aggressors. By substituting an English doppelgänger on top of an already existing Indian enemy, propagandists did not need to create an entirely new enemy – they already had one.

Philip Deloria's *Playing Indian* provides the necessary key to unlock the apparent dichotomy between caricatured, repurposed Indian identity and the reality of indigenous communities within a greater revolutionary framework. He positions Indians against an identity Americans hoped to create, paradoxically serving as both a representative of freedom and as an "oppositional figure against whom one might imagine a civilized national self" (3).²¹ The Indian was both noble and savage, simultaneously representing two very different visions of Indianhood, neither of which reflected reality. As colonial Americans "fixated on defining themselves as a nation" (5), they relied on known images, comparing themselves against an already understood iconography. In other words, based on a national history of gruesome genocide, colonists already understood Indians as enemies.

Conversely, the English looked and acted like their friends, families, and neighbors. In fact, many colonists still considered themselves wholly English. Thus, by appropriating a negative image that reminded colonists of the inherent hatred felt for Indians,²² propagandists proved capable of altering American sentiment. No longer were the English seen as civilized. They became savage.

Leading into the American Revolution, as colonial Americans strove to create an independent national identity (exhaustively examined in Section Three), they began to view themselves as opposed against England instead of their domestic Indian enemies.

²¹ Taking a more historical approach focusing on an indigenous perspective (giving voice to the appropriated image discussed in this paper), Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz's *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* echoes many of Deloria's sentiments in her first five chapters discussing colonial genocide leading into the birth of a new nation. Throughout the thesis, I attempt to align my own use of "indigenous, Native, Indian, and American Indian" in concert with the explication she gives in her own introduction. In short, "Indian" appears predominantly throughout because of its powerful use that conjures fictitious, stereotypical, and often derogatory images.

²² A multitude of historical examples rang loudly in colonial minds – the Pequot War (1636-1638), King Philip's War (1675-1678), and more recently, the French and Indian War (1754-1763).

As a result, colonists “began to transform exterior, noble savage Others into symbolic figures that could be rhetorically interior to the society they sought to inaugurate” (22). Deloria's statement deserves a deeper analysis. American's conceived of a national identity inextricably tied to their relationship with American Indians. As he states, “Indian Others represented not only us, but also them” (37).

Deloria examines imagined Indian identities that colonists appropriated for their use, donning stereotypical Indian costumery to not only mask the identity of the malpracticer, but also to represent either savage or noble Indianness. Neither imagined identity accurately reflects American Indians' reality in colonial America, but these two false narratives pervaded early American discourse. In concert with numerous other supporting publications, Mary Rowlandson's repurposed *Narrative* adds an essential third category to Deloria's groundbreaking work. An imagined Indian also served as a stand-in for England. More specifically for the scope of this thesis, King Philip served as a stand-in for King George. Thus, in an effort to enhance *Playing Indian's* key points, I contend that Indian iconography proved simultaneously representative of American revolution, English oppression, and American civility.

Throughout the years preceding the American Revolution, Whig political propaganda reached its height as America hovered on the brink of war. Patriot propagandists utilized preconditioned angst against colonists' historical adversaries, capitalizing on a preexisting Indian enemy to define the new English one. By slightly extending his argument, Deloria's phrase “playing Indian” helps describe this phenomenon. Revolutionary propagandists appropriated an imaginary Indian identity to create an English enemy whom colonists could truly despise, an enemy they could truly

hate. The final portion of this section unearths contemporary rhetoric utilized in the period surrounding the republication of Mary Rowlandson's *Narrative*.

2.1 King Philip's War – A Rewritten History

King Philip's War inspired numerous historical accounts printed in its immediate aftermath, penned by such notable authors as Increase Mather, Benjamin Church, and William Hubbard. In 1775, John Boyle reprinted Hubbard's *A Narrative of the Indian Wars*, covering battles fought between 1607 and 1677 (the end of King Philip's War) in New England. Like the images added to Rowlandson's republished narratives, Boyle included an introduction that was not published in Hubbard's original history. On the surface, his preface begins innocently enough. Boyle extols the dexterity of early settlers, contrasting their civility with "the Indians in New-England, a very numerous and barbarous people, dispersed through the wilderness in every part of the land" (Hubbard iii). He sets the stage for a story of good against evil. He describes King Philip's War as a righteous victory, one that "had not the Lord been on our side, when men thus rose up against us, they had quickly swallowed us up" (vii). Much like Mary Rowlandson's praise of affliction, Boyle states the following (vii):

Our Fathers, indeed, had come out of great tribulation, into this wilderness, which under Providence was a means of improving them in faith, fortitude, and patience, to endure hardships beyond a parallel, 'till they obtained deliverance: And some of the first adventurers lived to see the wilderness become a fruitful field.

John Boyle then takes a detour from directly relating a history of King Philip's War. He claims that simply enduring adversity was not their only intended aim. He states that "they had sublimer views" and instead sought "another and better country" (Hubbard vii). He continues (viii):

We of this province, with inconsiderable intermissions, from that early period, at unknown expence and loss, have been called to defend our lives and properties against the incursions of more distant savages. Our trust hath been in the name of the Lord, our father God and Deliverer; and hitherto he hath delivered us... We are now, under the smiles of divine Providence, increased to a multitude of people... And yet, having the wormwood and the gall still in remembrance, no more ardently wish and pray, that Wars may forever cease, and peace on earth, and good will among men, universally prevail.

Although a small section hidden within a nearly 300-page historical reprinting, this paragraph subversively conflates Indian aggressors described in the text with "more distant savages." Boyle charges readers to remember the fortitude of our forefathers and to enact their dream of building "another and better country." Once again tapping into a preexisting negative sentiment towards Indians in America, Boyle describes outward English aggression in interior terms colonists understand.

Taking these appropriations even further, on December 31, 1775, Reverend Nathan Fiske delivered a fiery sermon in Brookfield Massachusetts, focusing not on the revolutionary struggle between Whigs and Tories, but a war that happened 100 years ago.²³ Commemorating the centennial anniversary of King Philip's War, Fiske gives an "account of the first settling of the town in the Year 1660 and its Desolation by the Indians in Philip's War" (4). Fiske lauds God's Providence for delivering the Puritans from the hands of King Philip, giving thanks that New England was, as Jill Lepore describes, "no longer in a state of unimproved chaos" (186). Through such commemorations of King Philip, Philip's memory came alive, but unlike his gruesome

²³ Other colonial religious propagandistic orators took a different approach than the fire-and-brimstone approach endorsed by Reverend Fiske. Isaac Skillman's sermon entitled "An Oration on the Beauties of Liberty" spoken in Hartford in 1774 takes a different tact, albeit along a similar thread. He uses religious rhetoric to frame American liberty against the captivity experienced in early Biblical times and instead of relying on fear and hate, focuses on the positive influences of liberty and freedom. These themes will be further explored in Section 3, but Rowlandson's story plays into Skillman's intent as well. Captivity, whether experienced in King Philip's War or Biblical Egypt, helps define freedom.

death in a Rhode Island swamp, King Philip's War was appropriated for an entirely new purpose. Reverend Fiske, a radical preacher who proselytized revolution from the pulpit whenever afforded the opportunity, concludes his tribute with the following (28):

But what do I say? Are the deceased tribes of Indians risen out of their graves with their hatchet, and bows? Or has any other nation of a fierce countenance, a hard language, and harder hearts, invaded our territories?... And at the conclusion of the last war, which seemed to put an end to our fears of any molestation from the Savages for time to come, who could have thought that the same nation that assisted us in conquering them, would ever have laid such a plan, and taken so much pains to instigate those Savages to renew their cruelties, to ravage our western borderes [sic], to murder women and children, and if possible to desolate the country? Who would have thought that Britons would practice what the uncultivated tribes of Indians have refused to do?

His sermon, in part memorializing King Philip,²⁴ also serves to transform Indian "redskins" to British "redcoats."²⁵ Boyle brazenly aligns English and Indian aggression, encouraging Puritan sentiment to transfer their feelings of hatred for the Indians and transplant it upon the English. The rhetoric espoused by Fiske and Boyle transforms those four intruders encroaching on Mary Rowlandson's property into a far more familiar enemy. Fiske capitalized on an already accepted stereotype of Indian savagery to encourage his audience to stand firm against another foreign oppressor – the British.

²⁴ Judah Champion preached a sermon titled "A Brief View of the Distresses, Hardship, and Dangers Our Ancestors Encountered, In Settling New England" in 1770, detailing not only the physical hardships but also the Indian aggression experienced by the founders of New England. At least in this example, he is far from a pulpit propagandist, but instead reminds congregants that they ought to morally reflect on how much their Puritan forefathers suffered. His sentiments bolster more revolutionary rhetoric used by Fiske and Boyle – colonists ought to remember the war between the savage and civilized.

²⁵ I do not seek to refute Deloria's application of appropriation and instead extend it to cover how colonial propagandists described their English enemy. In his first chapter titled "Patriotic Identities and Identities of Revolution," Deloria details such instances whereby dissenters assumed an Indian caricatured identity for their own benefit. Confusing the Indian even further, revolutionaries tapped into hateful American sentiment and cast the English as an Indian enemy while simultaneously enjoying their natural and carefree freedom-loving image for their own purposes. A third layer lies in indigenous allegiances to England throughout the revolutionary period as well, whereby several tribes and communities aligned with the English and became enemy combatants against the revolutionaries.

These three examples – Rowlandson’s republished narrative, Hubbard’s history, and Fiske’s sermon – utilize an entirely unrelated war to inspire and encourage revolutionary sentiment. Insurrectionary propagandists capitalized on King Philip’s legacy and repurposed the associated angst and anger in an apparent attempt to stoke revolutionary flames. Through the first and second sections of this paper, I have grounded my argument in both close textual analysis and historical examples of Rowlandson’s repurposed rhetoric. It proves undeniable that Mary Rowlandson’s *Narrative* presented a character who demonstrated revolutionary power in both the invented gun-toting images and her actual story within the text. The third section, titled “Inspiring Action: Stimulating Revolutionary Sentiment” delves deeper into why and how her 100-year-old story encouraged colonial Americans to rebel.

CHAPTER 3. INSPIRING ACTION: STIMULATING REVOLUTIONARY SENTIMENT

The fundamental assessment of modernity, the thread that has run through Western civilization since the sixteenth century, is that the social unit of society is not the group, the guild, the tribe, or the city, but the person. The Western ideal was the autonomous man who, in becoming self-determining, would achieve freedom.

– Daniel Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (quoted in Laclau 16).

Through its republication, Rowlandson's *Narrative* helped to propagate an American identity that encouraged revolution against England. Building on the historical base established within the first two sections, "Inspiring Action: Stimulating Revolutionary Sentiment" reads Rowlandson's resurgence through a purposeful social-political lens to explore why her story augmented an already inflamed political climate. The first section presents Mary Rowlandson in an entirely new light, minimizing the gap between the superficially submissive 1682 edition and the audacious woodcuts published in 1770 and 1773. Section Two examines the republished accounts during the pre-revolutionary period and aligns them against contemporary pulpit propaganda, establishing Rowlandson's story as an intentionally present and important political publication. This third section provides critical reasons why Rowlandson's *Narrative* skillfully substitutes an Indian for an English enemy, fitting within a preexisting system of effective patriot propaganda meant to inspire action and invigorate nationalized revolutionary sentiment. Finally, Section Four advocates for Mary Rowlandson's nostalgic appeal as a national myth in 1776 and beyond.

Admittedly, beyond its recorded publication history between 1770-1776, very little concrete evidence exists to specifically support Rowlandson's rhetorical utility leading into the American Revolution. As might be expected, political pundits – Samuel Adams, Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson – simply do not provide verifiable evidence

stating whether or not Mary Rowlandson aided, impeded, or otherwise affected their revolutionary ambitions.²⁶ Alongside such scholars as Greg Sieminski, Jill Lepore, and Michelle Burnham, I rely instead on peripheral texts that prove thematically similar and thus bolster Rowlandson's role in revolutionary propaganda. I first take a definitional approach, defining colonial notions of race, liberty, and freedom, through captivity and themes of bondage. Once freedom is understood, and revolution justified, I identify the need for a distinct national and individual identity, further separating colonists from England. By establishing non-negotiable binaries meant to separate the United States from England,²⁷ pre-revolutionary propagandists constructed a specific identity that encouraged and outright demanded rebellion. The second half of this section focuses predominantly on delineations present in Rowlandson's *Narrative* that helped to exacerbate the divide between England and her revolting American colony because of an independent racial identity.

3.1 A Separated Captive

Throughout her captivity, Rowlandson continuously separates herself from her captors by drawing distinctions that clearly classify her as a God-fearing Puritan English woman and her captors as something *other* than her – un-Christian, heathen, Indian, wild,

²⁶ Greg Sieminski's article "The Puritan Captivity Narrative and the Politics of the American Revolution" comes the closest to arriving at the conclusion that captivity narratives (specifically Rowlandson and John Williams' account) played a key role in inspiring action. However, his examples are as circumstantial as my citations are throughout the paper. He asserts that Joseph Warren's description of the Boston Massacre (5 March 1770) uncannily resembles Rowlandson's initial description of her destroyed home in Lancaster. By tracing sentiment that "the colonists saw the Boston Massacre as evidence they were the captives of savages" (39) he claims it as additional evidence to suggest renewed interest and importance of Rowlandson's narrative. He and Michelle Burnham compare the woodcuts against typical propagandist prints of the day and assert their rhetoric worth based on the precedence established by more popular images. Despite their circumstantial nature, these are both incredibly astute observations.

²⁷ What I later describe as American Exceptionalism.

savages.²⁸ She prides herself on retaining her Englishness and enduring her horrific ordeal without sacrificing her personal faith, Puritan identity, or even her chastity.²⁹ By extension, such a polarizing mindset lends itself to the pre-revolutionary prints examined throughout this thesis. To effectively rebel against England, American colonists needed to start seeing themselves as something other than British subjects. The religious divisions drawn by Rowlandson against her Indian captors in the seventeenth-century transitioned to a racial division constructed in the eighteenth, helping to form an American identity that viewed itself as not only separate from the indigenous population, but also as independent from its own English heritage. In the *Narrative*'s original publication, Rowlandson defined herself as wholly English. By the eighteenth-century, however, her repurposed story necessitated she become an American.

This section posits why such a powerful literary racial transformation took place, surrounding her *Narrative* with contemporary conceptions of freedom and liberty, conflated racial delineations between Indian, English, and American identities, infectious attitudes of winning, and an overtly religious discourse that enhanced colonial nationalized revolutionary sentiment. In short, the revolutionary appropriation of Rowlandson's *Narrative* exploited the original text's early forms of racialization to fit revolutionary desires for an independent American racial identity.

²⁸ All adjectives used throughout Rowlandson's *Narrative*.

²⁹ Michelle Burnham likely challenges this statement, citing her bifurcated identity present on Rowlandson's closing pages of her *Narrative*. Nonetheless, whether Rowlandson accepted her muted transculturated identity or not is relatively moot. Within the text, she continuously stresses her English/Puritan actions against those of her captors, drawing distinctions that caused the reader to see Rowlandson as English and her captors as Indian.

3.2 A Definitional Approach – Race and Liberty

The Preamble to the Declaration of Independence reads that “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.” Historically, Liberty contains a multitude of nuanced definitions dating to the thirteenth century. As a term, it connotes freedom from bondage – whether physical, theological, autocratic, or social. Its most encompassing definition found in the *Oxford English Dictionary* reads, “the condition of being able to act or function without hindrance or restraint.” In other words, liberty requires an absence of restraint – whether physical, theological, autocratic, or social.

Semantically, it does not pose an insurmountable leap to assert that definitionally, liberty necessitates captivity. Without its opposite, it loses its worth. After all, what is poverty without wealth? Or strength without weakness? Or familiar without foreign? By framing the contentious relationship with England in terms of freedom and forced servitude, political rhetoricians crafted a self-fulfilling syllogism that inevitably required revolt. It was a simple pragmatic formula, but one that led to the establishment of an American political and racial identity separate from England. To possess freedom, colonists must no longer be held captive by England. Claiming liberty as not only an unalienable right (one that cannot be denied) and a self-evident truth (one that cannot be questioned), the Founders created a self-fulfilling rhetoric that required immediate revolution against North America’s English captor.³⁰

³⁰ African Americans and Indigenous Americans, as is clearly and painfully evident, are systematically forgotten in such abolitionary rhetoric. Servitude, slavery, and genocide result from our Founders’ failure to recognize Liberty as an unalienable right for all inhabitants of a newly formed United States.

Racial identity plays an immensely important role in Mary Rowlandson's rhetorical value to a revolting nation. Without a firm understanding that both Puritan and pre-revolutionary rhetoric exploited racial differences, it is hard to move forward with any other supplementary reasons for why Rowlandson's *Narrative* affected public revolutionary sentiment and played a larger part in political propaganda. Ideas of race changed dramatically between 1682 and those understood throughout the pre-revolutionary period.³¹ A multitude of notable critics have already traced these racial connections between the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries, connecting the dots between ever-changing and malleable definitions of race. Todd Romero's *Making War and Minting Christians* examines the intense religious differences between Puritan evangelists (such as John Eliot) and indigenous Americans. Jill Lepore's *In the Name of War* describes the differences between Indian savagery and Puritan civility, attributing King Philip's War as a struggle to enforce order in a chaotic world. Ezra Tawil inserts racial sentiment as a differentiation and Michelle Burnham and Chris Castiglia synthesize it all, describing the transition from religious to racial language as literature evolved throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Each of these critics has shaped my own understanding, arriving at the conclusion that whatever the intent or descriptive language – Puritan or pre-revolutionary – both periods sought to separate themselves from something other than themselves, defining their Puritanism, Americanness, and Englishness in opposition to something else – something *other* than themselves. When

³¹ Other captivity narratives sought to define race throughout the eighteenth- and nineteenth centuries (and beyond). Catherine Maria Sedgwick's 1827 *Hope Leslie* confuses nineteenth-century ideas of race even more through the character Faith, a completely transculturated white woman. She does not speak English, identifies wholeheartedly as a Pequot, and even though white in skin tone, no longer sees herself as such. She represents the antithesis of Mary Rowlandson – one who has turned her back on her Englishness. Tawil considers Mary Jemison's 1824 *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison* a revisioning on Rowlandson's paradigm by both allowing transculturation and redefining race in terms of whiteness.

Rowlandson penned her original history in 1682, her captors appeared un-English because of their religious affiliation. When patriot propagandists repurposed her story, however, Rowlandson's captors (Indian or English) appeared un-American because of their national identity.³²

Mary Rowlandson describes her Indian captors in very specific religious language, labeling them in terms familiar to her Puritan understanding – heathens, murderous dogs, and devils. She consistently compares her own religiosity against their apparent un-Christianity, drawing intense distinctions consistent with her own Calvinist theology. In other words, she was a member of God's Elect and they were not. In Rowlandson's narrow view of a strictly Puritan world, the indigenous population seemed little more to her than an unconverted abomination.³³

Supplementary examples of Puritan religious binaries abound, but perhaps one of the most telling instances lies in Cotton Mather's seven-volume treatise *Magnalia Christi Americana* published in 1702. In its first sentence, Mather begins his history by giving glory to God for "His Divine Providence" that "irradicated [sic] an Indian Wilderness" (c). From the onset, he diametrically sets colonists against Indians, positing that a Christian civilization simply cannot exist without first removing an Indian wilderness. Puritan colonists, as noted by Richard Bailey, "relied on theological convictions to make religious sense of social realities" (1), separating themselves from others who differed from them physically, spiritually, and culturally. In Puritan terms, seventeenth-century

³² Annotated throughout this section, the term "race" covers both conceptions of identity. Tawil prefers "human variety" to describe early attempts to classify racial differences, but along with Katy Chiles, I use "race" to encompass contemporary understandings (and language used by writers of the time). The main point of any of these differentiations, whether termed human variety or race, is to delineate one group of people from another.

³³ A view that undoubtedly expands after her captivity – a notion explored by Michelle Burnham in *Captivity and Sentiment*.

colonists racially identified as Anglo-American Christians and categorized unconverted American Indians as racially un-Christian.³⁴

Throughout the next 100 years, however, collective attitudes towards a unified racial identity shifted dramatically. No longer were rigid religious affiliations the only way to define racial differences. As colonists began to secularize, spread out, wage war, and inhabit the thirteen colonies (and beyond), a nationalized vision of a cohesive racial identity became far more complicated. Dissimilar to seventeenth-century conceptions that viewed identity as inextricably tied to religion, eighteenth-century conceptions of race relied more on outward appearance and social standing.³⁵ Katy Chiles describes an eighteenth-century racial ideology as one steeped in external appearance (10) as a racial signifier of both environmental and social standing. In other words, eighteenth-century race represented an outward sign of peoples' place in the world – figuratively and literally. Writing in 1775, the vicar of Greenwich, England succinctly sums up the racial disunity of a nation on the verge of independence (quoted in Parkinson 3-4):

Fire and water are not more heterogenous than the different colonies in North America... In short, such is the difference of character, of manners, of religion, of interest, of the different colonies, that I think were they left to themselves there would soon be a civil war.

³⁴ In her narrative, Mary Rowlandson's interaction with "praying Indians" is sparse at best (limited to a single meeting with James the Printer), but Lisa Brooks provides a useful analysis in *A New History of King Philip's War*, tracing Printer's movements as an integral part of Anglo/Indian relations and King Philip's War writ large.

³⁵ Ezra Tawil opposes the use of race as description unless specifically meaning biologically essentialized notions and instead prefers to use *human variety* to describe pre-biological conceptions of race. Albeit eighteenth-century ideas of race appearing "maddeningly inconsistent" (Nicholas Hudson quoted in Chiles 10), I nonetheless use *race* as it was understood in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries – religious and socially derived. Only in the nineteenth century did inward appearance trump outward and environmental delineators utilized in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Katy Chiles' analysis surrounding eighteenth-century examples of vitiligo (7-9) describe an eighteenth-century that could not identify what race really meant, other than something that wasn't like the Anglo-Americans who sought to define it.

Although he never directly uses the term race, the vicar nonetheless identifies differentiations that separate the United States from England. Unlike seventeenth-century colonists who gathered solely under an overtly religious banner, religion (although still a prevalent force) did not automatically define or unite an American racial identity. Instead, race began to become a far more nuanced and complicated idea that differentiated national identity.

3.3 A Common Cause

In order to effectively inspire enough popular support to rebel against an English tyrant, colonial propagandists required what Robert Parkinson calls a “common cause” that might unify an immensely disparate group of people under a united national racial identity.³⁶ Propagandists required a unifying ideal that situated Americans directly against their English aggressors – thus arises a uniquely American racial identity. Pre-revolutionary patriots, as identified in *The Common Cause*,³⁷ printed numerous real and imagined stories about “slaves or Indians taking up arms in defense of the king” (188) to rile up revolutionary sentiment that positioned colonial interests against foreign (and

³⁶ Parkinson directly refutes one of Michelle Burnham’s central claims that an engaged reading public discussed and propagated ideas of revolution. He instead points to readers who quickly turn to the back page of periodicals to look at images and advertisements. Much like today, inflammatory headlines and captions often trump content. Thus, reading the woodcuts through Parkinson’s critique, their overall impact on ‘literate’ intellectuals may have been muted by the textual content within the narrative, but for those who scroll through Facebook to receive their national news – the people to whom Parkinson attributes most of the revolutionary action – it provides another argument why Rowlandson’s repurposed image might have played a bigger role. People didn’t actually read the narrative itself. I fall somewhere in between the deep intellectualism described by Burnham and Parkinson’s pessimistic view, but I think there is certainly something to be said about the inflammatory efficacy of an altered title page (discussed on page 45) and image while the rest of the text remains unedited.

³⁷ Throughout his study, Parkinson uses the phrase that “newspapers were weapons as valuable as cannonballs” (Parkinson 188), a statement that (if slightly altered) describes the force of Mary Rowlandson’s place in pre-revolutionary rhetoricians’ tool kit. Her story (her image) became more powerful than a cannonball on the battlefield because it encouraged Americans to see themselves as something other than a British citizen.

domestic) aggression. Parkinson speculates that “if enough people believed that British agents sponsored these groups, the patriots could malign their enemies and demarcate their cultural cousins as aliens by associating them with resistant slaves, hostile Indians, and rapacious foreign mercenaries” (20). By purposely confusing Englishness with very real and distinct racial differences (indigenous, slave, and foreign fighters), colonial propagandists proved able to define an emerging American racial identity by describing exactly what it was not – not Indian, not slave, not foreign, and definitely not British.

Herein lies the necessary racial definitional distinction that guides the remainder of this analysis. In both the seventeenth and eighteenth-century versions, Mary Rowlandson’s *Narrative* relies on specific racial differences to describe an inherent incompatibility with her Indian captors. Racial definitions certainly changed between the two centuries,³⁸ but the connecting element between both versions resides in Rowlandson’s separation from her captors – religiously and racially. Separative racial themes are present in the text itself, but as described in the second section, her Indian attackers come to serve as pictorial proxies for the English. Mary Rowlandson stands in contrast to her captors, representing an incompatible differentiation present in pre-revolutionary conceptions of race.

Colonial racial attitudes asserted a dominance firstly over the entire indigenous population, and secondly, over the slaves brought to the colonies from Africa.³⁹ Initially,

³⁸ And continue to evolve. An American racial identity is a term that I am hesitant to use (and don’t think I am able to succinctly define in 2019), but I’d argue that finding and defining a unified racial identity became a guiding national principle in the eighteenth century and one that inspired not only political revolution but slavery, indigenous genocide and erasure, and settler colonialism.

³⁹ Margaret Ellen Newell’s *Brethren by Nature* traces indigenous slavery and servitude from the early seventeenth-century to eighteenth-century national discourse. At the turn of the eighteenth-century, colonists fervently sought to define race in order to justify both African and Indian slavery. She notes that before, “slavery had been about warfare, nationality, and religion; now race increasingly defined it” (245). In other words, earlier (seventeenth-century) racial definitions were not such a polarizing political

an assumed religious superiority justified colonists' deplorable actions, but as slavery cemented its place in colonial antebellum society and indigenous genocide became *necessary* for settler expansion throughout the eighteenth-century, notions of race and liberty became even more intimately intertwined. White racial supremacy demanded a definition of liberty that utilized radical racial distinctions as a core principle of understanding. Whereas seventeenth-century racial delineations derived validation from its Calvinist religious heritage, eighteenth-century racial attitudes transitioned to a more nationalistic discourse that viewed racial superiority and separation as an *American* ideal necessary to define their own liberty – a concept found in the foundational national documents.

Such language was not lost on revolutionary writers. By recognizing freedom and liberty as a necessary opposite to captivity, rhetoricians benefitted from an already established conceptual understanding of religious and racial differentiations to encourage estrangement from England.⁴⁰ An unnamed Bostonian minister lauded the notion of national liberty in “Beauties of Liberty, or the Essential Rights of the Americans,” published in 1774. Establishing a Biblical basis stemming from Israel’s escape from bondage described in Second Chronicles of the Old Testament, he describes Judah’s position as a captive suffering at the hands of an oppressive captor (Skillman 3):

Hence it was that the Prophet [Judah], like a Son of Liberty in the day of adversity told the oppressors of the people, that the rest of them was as a brier, and the most upright of them sharper than a thorn hedge. By this figure the Prophet makes the

difference. Only when people of color needed to legally become property did race need to include the color of one’s skin. Her research bolsters my own argument that the racial differences posited by Rowlandson’s woodcut are even more insidious than it might appear on its surface. By intimating racial supremacy over Indians and Africans alike and conflating them with England, it establishes a modern toxic definition of American exceptionalism (Americans are innately better than everyone).

⁴⁰ The 27 Grievances levied against King George all stem from the same sentiment – King George cannot own (or govern) that which is not his to own.

people feel as well as hear that those Princes, Rulers, and Judges who destroyed the Rights of the subjects were as great a curse to the state, and likewise to the people as briars and thorns are to the earth. Behold with what majesty and command the Prophet speaks!

The speaker, consistent with revolutionary rhetoricians, attempts to persuade his listeners to physically conflate Biblical pain and oppression with the contemporary political situation. Like a “Son of Liberty,” Judah suffers at the hands of his oppressors, naturally rises to claim freedom, and addresses his oppressors in a similar vein as revolutionary documents railing against English oppression. As noted in Fliegelman’s analysis of Jefferson’s revolutionary rhetoric in *Declaring Independence*, an orator’s primary obligation “was to display persuasively and spontaneously the experiencing of [entirely new revolutionary] thoughts and feelings,” (2). Fliegelman argues that eighteenth-century rhetoric established a uniquely American language that created a corollary between freedom and natural law and one “that would permit universal recognition and understanding” (1). Just as the Israelites sought their independence from Egypt, so must early Americans revolt against England.⁴¹

3.4 Racial Delineations

By appropriating Rowlandson’s *Narrative* for a specific political agenda, revolutionary propagandists simultaneously appropriated the racial relations described within its text. The divisions described by Rowlandson utilize overtly religious language, identifying her captors as “merciless Heathen” (13) and comparing her own “lovely Face” to the “foul looks of those Heathens” (35). Throughout the text, Rowlandson refers

⁴¹ Again, the point is not lost on me that freedom and liberty align with “natural law,” but slavery (or indigenous genocide) does not seem to pose an issue. Captivity (as a concept) bolstered America’s resolve against English oppression but did little to affect their own shame.

to her Algonquin captors as heathens an amazing twelve times, distinguishing her own Christian English identity against their “heathen” otherness. Rowlandson, although held captive and eventually accepted into their society, considers herself utterly separate from their Native identity. Paradoxically, Rowlandson enters the community economy when she begins to cook and sew for her own profit and survival (25) and, she begrudgingly acknowledges that her captors, although still her professed enemy, sometimes exceed her own expectations and in some instances, even become friendly (28). Nonetheless, in her mind, she is civilized, and they are savage. Such a seemingly common-sense analysis can often be overlooked, but this point is pivotal for arguing that the racial differences described in Rowlandson’s *Narrative* serve the political ambitions during its republishing.

Although my views differ somewhat from Ezra Tawil’s claim that Rowlandson “differentiated herself from them, not by means of ‘race’ per se, but primarily in terms of national and religious identity” (145-146), his insertion of racial sentiment enhances my argument explicating Rowlandson’s appeal to pre-revolutionary propagandists. He defines racial sentiment as “members of different races [feeling] different things, and [feeling] things differently” (Tawil 2), and aligned against Rowlandson’s experience, I expand his definition to include what’s happening in Rowlandson’s mind throughout her captivity. Restated, she perceives and processes things far differently than American Indians. Even the way she thinks is different from her captors. As propagandists adopted Rowlandson’s story, along came her separative racialized attitudes towards her oppressors. Repurposed for revolutionary political ends, the conflated Indian/English

image displayed in Boyle's 1773 woodcut (discussed on page 24) presents two distinct identities who are incompatible in all ways – Mary Rowlandson and her attackers.

Underneath one unifying racial umbrella, Mary Rowlandson separates herself from her captors. She resists transculturation and therefore survives her captivity racially unscathed.⁴² Not only is Rowlandson separated from King Philip's men by religion and Englishness, but she also feels and thinks in a different way than her Nipmuc captors. Nearly every remove presents Rowlandson with another opportunity to marvel at the differences between the two, whether it is ingeniously crossing a river or scrounging for food so that no one goes hungry.

But how do these racial divisions transfer to its revolutionary republishings? By utilizing American Indians as an effigy for the English monarchy, Rowlandson's racial binary extends to a racial opposition against English colonialism. Unlike Rowlandson's 1682 differentiation that separated her own racial identity from a very un-English Indian identity described above, Rowlandson's pre-revolutionary *Narrative* separates the English from a uniquely American identity. Rowlandson, a repurposed colonial captive of England, is no longer English and her identity is racially different than her captors. She becomes an American.

By no means is the racial divide an all-inclusive reason why Rowlandson's *Narrative* resonated with revolutionary propagandists, but it begins to extend its effectiveness beyond the woodcuts examined in the second section. Further intensifying the racial divides located within the text, I return to a comparative analysis of

⁴² Rowlandson is haunted by her traumatizing captivity. "I can remember the time, when I used to sleep quietly without workings in my thoughts, whole nights together: but now it is otherwise with me" (50). Within my intentionally narrow argument, her racial identity remains intact even if every other aspect does not.

Rowlandson's 1682 and pre-revolutionary editions. In the woodcuts referenced and examined in Section 2, Rowlandson's Nipmuc attackers appear less Indian and far more like trespassing British troops. The Indian savagery depicted in 1682 began to disappear so that an encroaching English identity could take its place. Rowlandson is presented as an active combatant in both images, carrying a musket and confronting her attackers.⁴³ In each edition published between 1770-1776, in addition to the woodcut amendments, the title of the narrative itself illuminates yet another aspect of the story's utility in revolutionary rhetoric. Below are the two title pages from 1682 (Figure 3.1) and 1770 (Figure 3.2):

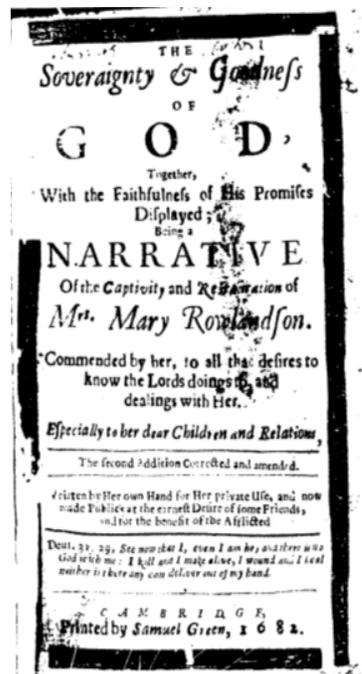


Figure 3.1: Title Page of 1682 edition of Rowlandson's *Narrative*

⁴³ Michelle Burnham states that “this illustration is, of course, consistent, neither with the details nor the agenda of the text itself, since the captive left her burning home with a child, not a gun, in her arms and is more easily imagined reading a Bible or sewing a shirt than shooting a rifle at her captors” (63). I tend to agree with her analysis, but the text matters little as Rowlandson's image has already been appropriated and has become mythologized.

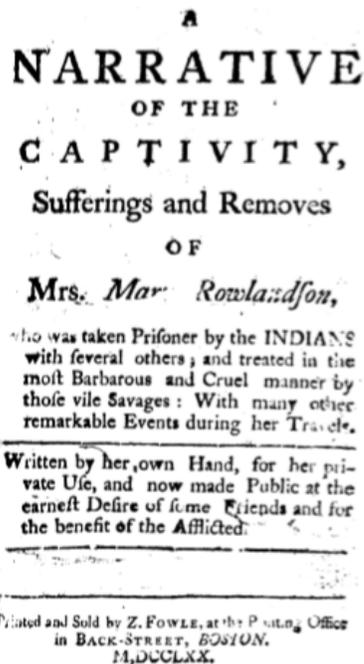


Figure 3.2: Title Page of 1770 edition of Rowlandson's *Narrative*

In 1682, the full title reads *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God, together with the Faithfulness of His Promises Displayed, Being a Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*. The subtitle again advertises God's Providence, stating that this narrative is "Commended by her, to all the desires to know the Lord's doings to and dealings with Her. Especially to her dear Children and Relations." In 1770, however, the title is altered to read *A Narrative of the Captivity, Sufferings and Removes, of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* with the subtitle relating an entirely different focus, stating "who was taken Prisoner by the Indians, with several others, and treated in the most Barbarous and Cruel manner by those vile Savages: With many other remarkable Events during her Travels." Michelle Burnham asserts that the difference illustrates an overt abandonment of the "religious emphasis of the original" (63) and instead establishes Rowlandson as the redeeming agent. Her analysis aligns with the armed Rowlandson in the woodcuts. Mary Rowlandson becomes the center of her *Narrative* and through the

title, the focus shifts from God's dealings to and with Rowlandson to Rowlandson's active participation in the "remarkable Events during her Travels."

Michelle Burnham's analysis highlights Rowlandson's revolutionary character, but by examining why it matters in a propagandist context, an additional layer hidden within the title page becomes clear. As discussed above, the racial differences between Rowlandson and her captors are religious, national, and affectual. By retitling the narrative, pre-revolutionary printers not only enhanced Rowlandson's position as posited by Burnham, but they also deepened the divide between Rowlandson and her captors. No longer is her story a tale of God's restoration. It is now a tale of Rowlandson's suffering at the hands of "INDIAN savages."⁴⁴ The religious language falls away, and the updated title utilizes language that further divides Rowlandson and her captors along racial lines. They are "Barbarous and Cruel... vile Savages" and she is their Prisoner. Synthesizing Burnham and Tawil's work (and inserting a bit of my own), the retitling of Rowlandson's *Narrative* positions Rowlandson in direct racial opposition against her oppressors.

3.5 An Attitude of Winning

Creating these racial binaries between different groups inevitably necessitated an imposed power dynamic between parties so that one group might gain an advantage over another. Settler colonists elevated their position over the indigenous population as a motivation for colonial expansion and genocide. Reconstructing such a transplanted racialized relationship between English and American identities, however, becomes a

⁴⁴ "Savages" appears only twice in the story itself (compared to "heathen" that appears twelve times). Textually, Rowlandson utilizes a multitude of dehumanizing insults against the Indians – murderous heathens, ravenous bears, savages, etc. – but a predominance of the language focuses on religious differences between Christian and "heathen." Each separative description enhances the racial divide, and this title page brings such an argument to the forefront.

more difficult task when most of the colonial population still view themselves as English. Yet, Rowlandson's republished *Narrative* again holds the key to explain why those power dynamics may have shifted so dramatically.

King Philip's War represents a massive and decisive colonial victory against a skilled, organized, and incredibly large Algonquin enemy. In the end, English colonists all but decimated an Algonquian coalition, taking their property and claiming a moral victory. Described by Jill Lepore in *The Name of War*, for Puritan leaders, "King Philip's War was a holy war [and] a war against barbarism" (175) and as a result, justified complete colonial religious and hegemonic authority.⁴⁵ In King Philip's death on August 12, 1676, colonists marked a real moment and a literal body to display colonial power and a decisive Puritan victory. Puritan historians such as Increase Mather and William Hubbard vividly document and celebrate Philip's death as the symbolic end to King Philip's War and justification for future triumph over an Indian Wilderness. For the intimate details of his death, I turn to Benjamin Church, the military commander responsible for seeking out King Philip and his followers.⁴⁶

Briefly summarized, Captain Church established a deliberate ambush, positioning soldiers around a swamp near Mount Hope, Rhode Island. To definitively end a protracted battle that had already dragged on for two long years, Church issued orders to

⁴⁵ Metacom (King Philip) united several Algonquin tribes – Narraganset, Wampanoag, Abenaki (Penobscots), Nipmuc, and at times the Mohegans (among others). Numerous historians (Lepore, Brooks, Church, and even Mather) attribute his ultimate defeat to the disillusionment of alliances and various tribes vying for land and power.

⁴⁶ Church records his commission from Governor Joseph Winslow in his memoirs (Church 50-51): "Captain Benjamin Church, you are hereby nominated, ordered, commissioned, and empowered to raise a company of volunteers of about 200 men, English, and Indians; the English not exceeding the number of 60, of which company, or so many of them as you can obtain, or shall see cause at present to improve, you are to take the command and conduct, and to lead them forth now and hereafter, at such time, and unto such places within this colony, or elsewhere, within the confederate colonies, as you shall think fit; to discover, pursue, fight, surprise, destroy, or subdue our Indian enemies, or any part or parties of them that by the providence of God you may meet with."

overwhelm Philip's forces with intense firepower once the ambush was set. Utilizing the element of surprise, Church set his ambush around Philip's encampment, rousing Philip's men with a volley of fire while many of his men were sleeping. Church notes that Captain Goulding prematurely initiated fire, but once the firing started, it did not end until all enemy movement had ceased.⁴⁷ He identifies King Philip – a revered fighter – who “catch'd up his gun, and ran as fast as he could scamper” (72) straight into the line of fire to fight and defend his people. Church's “Indian Peter” Alderman fatally shoots Philip, after which Church declares a decisive victory, strips him naked, brutally quarters his limbs, and curses King Philip by stating “that forasmuch as he had caused many an Englishman's body to be unburied, and to rot above ground, that not one of his bones should be buried” (73). King Philip had been killed. Colonists hailed his death as a righteous victory and a sign of God's Providence that supported English authority over “heathen, savage, and barbarous” enemy tribes.

Aside from an informative historical essay on proper military strategy, Church's *The Entertaining History of King Philip's War* provides an element necessary for Rowlandson's *Narrative* to achieve rhetorical resonance throughout the pre-revolutionary period. Captain Church (who retired and wrote his memoirs as a Colonel) establishes an overall attitude of winning. King Philip – a seemingly insurmountable obstacle – had been killed. The war was over – sort of – although no longer named after Philip, the war continued to rage for nearly two more years. Jill Lepore notes that “no peace treaty was signed... and in many ways, the fighting simply became less intense, less organized, and... more distant” (177). Nonetheless, colonists claimed victory because an overall

⁴⁷ Goulding thought that an “Indian looked right at him” (Church 72), to which Church responds, “though it was probably to his conceit” (Church 72). Either way, Goulding initiated fire and began the decimation of King Philip's sleeping encampment.

attitude of winning the war justified and bolstered future aggression based on the certainty of success.⁴⁸

King Philip's demise indicates a possibility that aggression against King George III was not only possible but signified a guaranteed victory. Stated another way, by establishing a precedent of winning and then conflating Rowlandson's *Narrative* with English colonial captivity, the propaganda suggests that British colonial rule would inevitably perish just as Philip died in the swamp. Captain Church provided specific details outlining his victory over an Indian menace. Years later, Cotton Mather (referenced earlier) gave credit for conquering an Indian Wilderness, using such victories as those against King Philip as an inspiration and justification for future conflict and assured success. King Philip served as the most notorious single military leader – an icon of indigenous resistance.⁴⁹

Revolutionary propagandists capitalized on King Philip's defeat, using Rowlandson's story as a reminder of pre-American exceptionalism. Militarily, it is the same reason that we continue to utilize nostalgic unit designations, call signs, uniforms, flags and symbols, and even such innocuous things as street names, weapon nomenclature, and mission titles. By associating one conflict with another *successful*

⁴⁸ Just the other day, I was at the gym and noticed a strong young man wearing a tank top with a muscular caricature of Uncle Sam flexing on its front. Beneath Uncle Sam's bulging "Guns of Glory," the text read "Two Time World War Champion." Patriotic humor at its finest. Even in its seemingly innocent jest, such a trivial shirt thematizes an expectation of stereotypical American exceptionalism. Forgetting past wars that embarrassingly ended in stalemate or even defeat, that young man's shirt stands for one simple principle – we cannot lose. No matter the situation and no matter the enemy, because the United States "won" WWI and WWII, by extension, we will undoubtedly succeed in any future conflict.

⁴⁹ By demonizing an individual – King Philip – it mirrors the Founders' singling out of King George in the 27 Grievances, addressing each of them directly to an individual instead of the country. King Philip was an individual enemy, but in no ways the only Algonquian (or many other nations) warrior who fought against the colonists, yet he served as a useful representative of the entire struggle. By killing King Philip, his "monarchy" fell, just as patriots hoped that attacking King George directly would ensure a symbolic victory against his own monarchy.

battle, the implied assumption is that the current fight will end the same way as the first. King Philip was killed, quartered, and displayed. His coalition was disbanded, defeated, and disappeared. Mary Rowlandson's utility extended to substitute one villain for another, adding yet another layer of value for her story to resonate with an unrelated American insurgency.

3.6 Revolutionary Religion

Perhaps the most commonly assumed transference of Rowlandson's revolutionary political efficacy rests in its overtly religious rhetoric. Through her suffering, redemption, and survival, it is often argued that Mary Rowlandson establishes God's favor and her own salvation as one of God's chosen people – a coveted member of the Elect. Even more clearly, at the end of the narrative, she instructs her readers with Moses' words spoken in Exodus: "Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord" (51). Tara Fitzpatrick describes it in another way,⁵⁰ stating that "God had tested her faith through suffering, delivered her from her captors, and led her to the final stage of a Puritan conversion, assurance" (1). Mary Rowlandson's captivity *Narrative* serves as a testament to her spiritual victory. As discussed above, the original 1682 title implies that God's sovereignty saves Rowlandson. Consequently, she must be one of God's chosen people. Thus, by extension, if she represents a captive nation held by an English captor, then the

⁵⁰ David Minter's "By Dens of Lions" dissects Rowlandson's narrative in terms of a religious conversion narrative as well. A rather lengthy quote, but the following succinctly sums up his article: "Drawing on an established conception of history and established doctrinal traditions, the Indian captivity narratives of the Puritans place a familiar story (of providential deliverance) in a new setting (the American Indian frontier)... But behind the narratives lie two traditions: a providential theory of history that interpreted the design and action of God as ruling even 'the most unruly'; and a doctrine of afflictions that welcomed suffering and adversity by defining them as corrective, instructive, and profitable" (337).

United States must also arrive at the same conclusion – a chosen people destined for deliverance.⁵¹

However, unlike seventeenth-century Puritanical settlements whereby religion dominated public and private life, eighteenth-century Anglo-America preferred secularism over religiosity. As noted by Jon Butler, approximately a quarter of adults throughout the colonies participated in organized “worship or claimed formal church membership” (18) in the mid to late eighteenth-century. Comparatively, according to the Pew Research Center, modern regular religious attendance hovers between 35-50%⁵². Additionally, as colonists declared war against England, more than half the Anglican priests serving in the colonies “honored their solemn oaths to the British crown” (Marini 194), resigning their appointments and returning to England. Simply stated, in the pre-revolutionary period when Rowlandson’s account could have capitalized on religious sentiment, early America was far less religious than outward appearances might have suggested.⁵³

Yet, as identified in earlier sections of this paper, pre-revolutionary propaganda benefited immensely from a religious language such as that found in Rowlandson’s *Narrative*. The sovereignty proselytized in its original publication did not directly transfer with its republication. Yet, publishers still benefited from the religious undertones surrounding Puritan captivity. Ronald Hoffman describes the following in his introduction to *Religion in a Revolutionary Age* (ix):

⁵¹ To be honest, this was also my initial assumption too – Rowlandson’s theology extends to revolutionary rhetoric. Yet, such an interpretation falls short of a far more nuanced analysis of her story’s propagandistic utility. Just as strictly Puritanical captivity and conversion framework fails to capture Rowlandson’s story, so does a simplistic rendering of Rowlandson’s account that focuses solely on providence and religion.

⁵² Arguably a wide margin and one that can be explained through modern looser definitions of religion and spirituality (and even church membership and attendance).

⁵³ And modern memories might also suggest...

While the Founders may not have necessarily believed that Americans were God's chosen people, they were not averse to using Old Testament language in their public pronouncements to define their cause within the context of the Israelites.

Although it would be a stretch to argue that Puritanical religious concepts profoundly influenced the *Narrative*'s place within a larger propagandist framework, revolutionary printers benefited from its theological implications nonetheless. Rowlandson's story is undoubtedly one that places her among "God's chosen people" by the end, but even more importantly, it labels her a victorious survivor of an intense captivity. As noted in the second section of this thesis, political zealots utilized familiar religious language to encourage revolutionary sentiment, describing foreign concepts such as liberty and freedom through familiar tropes such as captivity – whether Indian or as in the abovementioned quotation, Biblical captivity.

3.7 A Separate American Identity

It seems an unlikely conclusion, but through each of these examples demonstrating Mary Rowlandson's utility in propagandist discourse, I cannot help but surmise that the facts just don't matter. The original text, although containing elements of an independent actor, reflects an entirely different character than those presented in the woodcuts and title pages printed by political agitators such as John Boyle. Yet, somehow, versions of her story printed between 1770-1776 contain a counter-history that repurposes Mary Rowlandson as an ambitious, independent, and resistant revolutionary heroine.⁵⁴ Ultimately, revolutionary propagandists employed Mary Rowlandson's

⁵⁴ Ann Douglas offers an incredibly useful description of an imagined counter-history, one that "protests against a peculiar definition of American history" (Douglas 185). Unlike Rowlandson's revolutionary appropriation "rewritten" by eighteenth-century propagandists, Douglas writes predominantly about female

Narrative to construct an American exceptionalism – a separation from England – that inspired action. Her story, however groundbreaking in its original publication, became something even more than Increase Mather might have intended. Rowlandson became a national myth.

Using Richard Slotkin’s description of a national mythology, the fourth and final section encompasses a coda meant to capture Mary Rowlandson’s inspiration as a national icon that extends beyond Puritanical expectations, religious rhetoric, and even the revolutionary uses explored throughout the essay. In contrast with a Jungian myth, Rowlandson becomes an instrument meant to “reconcile and unite individualities to a collective identity” (8). As the culminating section of the thesis, I hope to explore her impact on an ever-changing American identity and justify why I find Mary Rowlandson so incredibly enchanting.

authors who revise accepted versions of history. Her notion of an edited history – whether factual or imagined – lends itself to cross-literary use and one that I think helps to bridge the gap between Rowlandson’s reality and the image advertised by revolutionary propagandists. Thus, I unashamedly repurpose her term “counter-history” in this context.

CHAPTER 4. CODA: ROWLANDSON'S REWRITTEN MYTH

Mythology creates a secret opening through which the inexhaustible energies of the cosmos pour into human cultural manifestations.

– Joseph Campbell, *Hero with a Thousand Faces* (3).

As one in the academy who arrived after many years in the “outside world” I continuously search for the utility and “real-world” application of everything I study. I can’t help it. In other words, why does Mary Rowlandson’s *Narrative* matter? I think back to a conversation I had with Professor Matt Sewell at Minnesota State University a few short years ago. As I debated taking a detour from a very straightforward military career by pursuing an advanced degree in English, I asked him, “Why do you teach?” I am usually not one to remember intimate details from a ten-minute conversation, but his candid answer not only inspired me to apply for a teaching position, but it also helps to answer why Mary Rowlandson’s story retains as much rhetoric relevance in 2019 as it did in 1776 or 1682. He told me that as a teacher, his job is relatively straightforward. He seeks to sincerely engage with texts, with people, and with the world. By synthesizing those three elements, people cannot help but be affected. Rowlandson’s *Narrative* is powerful.

4.1 American Mythology

There are all sorts of theories and ideas about what constitutes an American myth.⁵⁵ Admittedly, the term encompasses a rather complicated and broad definition.

⁵⁵ I rely solely on the literal definition of *myth* utilized by MacNeil and Slotkin, avoiding the psychological and philosophical implications described by Jungian mythology. For a comprehensive overview, see Kelly Bulkeley and Clodagh Weldon’s *Teaching Jung* and more specifically, Robert Segal’s sixth chapter titled “Jung on Myth.” Slotkin’s definition states that “mythology is a complex of narratives that dramatizes the world vision and historical sense of a people or culture, reducing centuries of experience into a constellation of compelling metaphors” (6).

Individual examples of mythological heroes – John Henry, Paul Bunyan, Daniel Boone, Natty Bumppo⁵⁶ – readily come to mind, but nailing down a precise definition seems a rather daunting task. What makes each of these men mythological? Or heroic? Ought these heroes to have actually lived? Are they invented folklore or something more concrete? What place do they hold in our history? Why do so many American myths innately connote insanely masculine male characters? Are they even real? Do they need to be?

Perhaps this introductory barrage of questions appears a bridge entirely too far, but my intent in this final section is to argue for Mary Rowlandson's place amongst such American mythological heroes as those listed above. Slightly refining Richard Slotkin's description of national mythology, this section captures Mary Rowlandson's inspiration as a national icon that extends beyond Puritanical expectations, religious rhetoric, and even the revolutionary uses discussed throughout earlier parts of the essay. As the culminating argument, I hope to highlight her impact on an ever-changing American identity.

When I first encountered Mary Rowlandson nearly two years ago, her story captivated my attention. Granted, my unconventional undergraduate education took ten years and covered three universities, but I had never heard of Mary Rowlandson's *Narrative*. Without belaboring my own academic inexperience, her story rocked my

⁵⁶ Richard Slotkin posits that frontier heroes such as Boone and Bumppo represent the antithesis to early captivity narratives (Slotkin 21). I agree with his overall assessment, but I think it deserves a more nuanced analysis. Mary Rowlandson's pre-revolutionary image represents a Daughter of Liberty who refuses transculturation and places herself in complete opposition to "savage" invasion. The frontier heroes he cites celebrate indigenous nobility (even when they fight against them). The submissive stereotype or outright transculturation (Eunice Williams, Mary Jemison) may appear a direct contrast, but again, I concede that the intent of Rowlandson's *Narrative* works as a counterexample to Daniel Boone, but her appropriated mythology most certainly does not.

world. Never had I encountered something so seemingly obscure⁵⁷ that spoke so loudly to both historical and contemporary issues. Consequently, I figure that if her story caused me to examine my own ideas of an American identity, then she must have had the same effect on others throughout history. Boy was I right.

Stories not only serve to describe and define, but also to shape and change.⁵⁸ Within so many of those stories, mythic figures emerge. And, for those who believe in them, as described by Slotkin, myths are generated “by the historical experiences of a people and thus constitute part of that inner reality which the work of the artist draws on, illuminates, and explains” (*Regeneration* 4).⁵⁹ Paraphrasing Jung’s basic premise, humans innately make myths to describe their existence.

Myths need heroes. Joseph Campbell’s *Hero with a Thousand Faces*⁶⁰ presents a comprehensive narrative study, documenting character and content attributes that remain relatively constant throughout the thousands of stories and myths examined by Campbell. Campbell coins the term *monomyth*, an archetypal heroic character representative of all heroic stories.⁶¹ Distilled, his heroic protagonist requires the following:

1. The hero receives a specific call to adventure (49).

⁵⁷ To me at least.

⁵⁸ A broad stroked statement, and one I intentionally choose not to qualify. Some stories are indeed more powerful, useful, and effective than others.

⁵⁹ Belief becomes a significant equivocation – the necessity to believe in the power of characters, stories, and myths – whether subconsciously accepted or in the open. A careful distinction raised by Richard Slotkin in *Regeneration through Violence*.

⁶⁰ Because this has seemingly become a nostalgic and far more personally inclined portion of the essay than the rest, I should note that Campbell’s book is one of but a few texts that remains from my initial foray into college nearly 18 years ago. It has survived multiple moves (13 of them) and remains one of my favorite critical works, useful in almost every academic context.

⁶¹ Campbell uses dated pronouns (originally published in 1949 after all) throughout his study and largely ignores women in general and assumes the heroic monomyth ostensibly must appear male. In my own paraphrastic version of Campbell’s heroic tenets, I expand pronoun usage to “they” since I fully endorse the notion that heroic archetypes were, are, and will not be confined by gender. I arrive alongside Denise MacNeil who expands “the gender designation of the hero to encompass both masculine and feminine protagonists” (626).

2. The hero possesses extraordinary gifts or traits that enable them to endure the adventure they have been called to conduct (196-207, 245-251).
3. The hero encounters a guide or mentor – even a supernatural aid – who leads them across a threshold, marking the point of departure towards the adventure (69-77, 77-89).
4. After facing trials, temptation, and/or challenges, the hero receives a reward of some sort (97-109).
5. The changed hero returns to their former ordinary world, applying what they have learned or brought back from their adventure (217-228, 229-237).⁶²

Denise MacNeil usefully aligns Campbell's monomyth archetype against Rowlandson's removes by conducting a close reading through each of these principles. Ultimately, she concludes that Rowlandson's *Narrative* asserts necessary cultural importance and literary influence on later (and more prominent) frontier American heroes such as those I mentioned in the opening paragraph. From Rowlandson's call to adventure (the Algonquin attack on her Lancaster home) to her application of what she learned (the publishing of her *Narrative*), MacNeil connects eighteenth and nineteenth-century heroic literary figures to Rowlandson's seventeenth-century story. Mary Rowlandson is an American hero.

Extended even further, Rowlandson represents an American myth – a character who transcends her initial literary ambitions.⁶³ Her story inspired contemporary imitations as well as stories spread across the past 337 years.⁶⁴ Originally an account that transformed what Hilary Wyss calls her "lived trauma" into a mass-marketed "metaphor

⁶² Campbell labels this the "application of the boon" (172).

⁶³ And arguably those of her mediators, who would undoubtedly roll in their graves at the thought of revolting against England.

⁶⁴ Brenda Boyle examines modern captivity narratives established on accounts such as Rowlandson's in "Rescuing Masculinity: Captivity, Rescue and Gender in American War Narratives." She focuses predominantly on the male-dominated rescuer stereotype (such as America's sympathy extended to wartime captive Jessica Lynch), but her analysis nonetheless indicates Rowlandson's impact on modern literary discourse.

for religious experience” (66), her story reanimated the captivity narrative.⁶⁵

Consequently, captivity began to define the American experience. And, as shown in Section Two, pre-revolutionary propagandists employed themes of bondage to rile up revolutionary sentiment.

Returning to the original text (the last time, I swear), the first line of her story provides insight into Rowlandson’s character as a heroic myth. The first line of her story establishes what Stephen King calls a "crucial sense of voice" (King 28), recognizing thematic elements that permeate the rest of the narrative. The first line of Rowlandson’s *Narrative* reads as follows (13):

The sovereignty and goodness of God, together with the faithfulness of his promises displayed, being a narrative of the captivity and restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson, commended by her, to all that desires to know the Lord's doings to, and dealings with her.

She claims the story as her own – described, experienced, and recorded by her own hand.

In other words, Rowlandson’s *Narrative* is a story of individual experience. Slotkin argues that mythology tells the story of an individual participant, “but its function is to reconcile and unite these individualities to a collective identity (*Regeneration* 8). By telling her story, Rowlandson creates a record that affects not only literary history but also the American culture of which that history forms a part.

Throughout the first three sections of my thesis, I focused almost exclusively on Campbell’s second heroic principle, requiring Rowlandson to possess extraordinary character traits that enabled her to withstand her great “adventure.” MacNeil identifies

⁶⁵ Andrew Newman’s “Captive on the Literacy Frontier” argues that Rowlandson’s *Narrative* (among others) positions literacy against an illiterate “savage” wilderness. He identifies three places where literacy plays a vital role in shaping the narrative – Rowlandson’s reliance on the Bible, the transaction for her release, and the final publication of her *Narrative*. By exploiting literacy against a seemingly illiterate enemy, Anglo-American interests prevail.

Rowlandson's uncanny ability to remain calm and collected throughout her captivity while others did not (628), casting Rowlandson as an intentional actor in her own story. Like my own rebellion against Increase Mather's characterization of Rowlandson as a submissive Puritan, MacNeil's description of Rowlandson as a mythic hero reinforces my own analysis of her pre-revolutionary appropriations.

This final section arrives at the conclusion that Mary Rowlandson's worth rests in her place amongst American literary and heroic mythology. In fact, by becoming a mythic hero, she changes our own conceptions of heroism. It may seem an obvious conclusion, but I think that it is one that requires emphasis. So often, our American heroes are stereotypically culled from nineteenth-century frontier stories or twentieth-century World War military heroes. Even as a relatively well-read student scholar, when I considered my own images of an American mythologic hero, the first names that came to my mind (after Mary Rowlandson of course) were those mentioned in the first paragraph.

Yet, Mary Rowlandson deserves a place at the table. The pre-revolutionary appropriated images examined throughout this thesis build upon a pre-existing mythologic character created in its initial 1682 publication and subsequent imitations hoping to capitalize on captivity's popularity and success. Rowlandson's *Narrative* experienced a nearly 100-year publishing hiatus between 1682 and 1770, yet her character remained relevant while others attempted to recreate her story. When it returned in 1770, pre-revolutionary Americans hungry for revolution already had an American hero in their literary arsenal – Mary Rowlandson.

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Steven F. Thomas

Graduating Cum Laude in 2010, Steven F Thomas received a B.A. in English Literature from Minnesota State University in Mankato, Minnesota. Following graduation, he attended the U.S. Army Field Artillery Officer Basic Course at Fort Sill, OK and was then stationed at Camp Casey, Korea and later Fort Carson, CO, serving numerous positions as an Artillery lieutenant. Following the Field Artillery Captain's Career Course in 2014, Steven was sent to Fort Campbell, KY, commanding Charlie Battery, 3-320th Field Artillery. He has completed multiple tours in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Korea throughout the past 15 years and has served in a multitude of professional positions, earning the Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, and the Combat Infantryman's Badge.

In addition to his extensive military experience, Steven has published two technical white papers through the Field Artillery School ("Solving Precision Fires for Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Database System" in 2015 and "Workarounds for First Generation Excalibur" in 2017) and two articles ("Artillery Fires in Non-Combat Operations published in *FIRES Magazine* in 2015 and "Fire Support Under Operation Resolute Support" in *INFANTRY Magazine* in 2016). Steven is currently composing a series of essays titled "Staying In" for routestep.com, a public service website dedicated to assisting transitioning soldiers struggling with PTSD and telling their stories and will soon teach introductory composition and literature at the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York.