

EXTRA CAPTIVITAS NULLA SALUS: THE SECULARIZATION OF SPACE IN THE EARLY AMERICAN BARBARY CAPTIVITY NARRATIVE

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Abstract

A number of American female writers devised their textual narratives for the mere purpose of emancipating their sex from the unjustifiable domination of their male compatriots. This paper compares Mary Rowlandson's factual narrative account of Indian captivity with Susanna Haswell Rowson's fictional narrative of barbary captivity in a bid to fathom the power of religion, as a societal drive, in shaping the structure of the Puritan family/society, and further ascertain how that power was later challenged, by some female writers, by creating a narrative space devoid of any theological shackles that would restrict their participation in the intellectual and political life of the nation. To argue that Rowson's project of secularizing the American landscape was successful, to a fair extent, this paper will draw upon the theoretical insights of the secularization thesis; mainly in the works of Peter L. Berger and Steve Bruce; as well as Doreen Massey's seminal contributions to the relationships between identity and geographical space.

Keywords: Barbary captivity, Indian captivity, Mary Rowlandson, Puritanism, Secularization, Space, Susanna Haswell Rowson.

1. Introduction

The original maxim in Latin reads "extra ecclesiam nulla salus," that is; "outside the Church [there is] no salvation." If taken, by virtue of formal logic, as a philosophical conclusion, the maxim's constituent premises should then be as such: (1) "salvation is to be attained inside the Church." (2) "There is no salvation in the profane world." It therefore follows that salvation must be sought only within the enclosures of a particular spatial context—that of the Church. The title of this paper replaced the Church, which is a metonym for the macrocosmic world of the deities, with "captivity" which will be used in the context of this paper as a meronym for a zone of contact in the microcosmic world of man. Metonymy is to be justified by the fact that the Church as a religious edifice makes only one of the many figures that can designate the world of the Divine, along with myths, rituals, religious texts and so forth. In the case of captivity, however, meronymy is to be found in our reading of the captivity narrative as capable of establishing a metaphysical space, not detachable from the microcosmic universe, where a plethora of social interrelationships take place. Thus, while comparing the nature and function(s) of space in Mary Rowlandson's Indian captivity account, *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (1682) with that of Susanna Haswell Rowson's play, *Slaves in Algiers* (1794), I shall argue that Rowson constructed a metaphysical space, different from that of Rowlandson, in order to achieve secular salvation from the patriarchal captivity of man instead of remaining unjustifiably faithful to Rowlandson's traditional spiritual-salvation plot. I shall accordingly contend that the salvation project of post-Revolutionary American women from the intellectual shackles of their male compatriots could not have been executed more effectively outside the captivity trope, as the title aptly suggests.

The captivity trope has been employed by many American writers throughout the post-Revolutionary period of the American history to achieve emancipatory ends. However, the authorial hands appropriating the captivity trope have had divergent intentions for the deployment of their captivity plots. A great number of these plots revolved around domestic issues of utmost importance in the American consciousness, ranging from the interpretation conundrums seeking to establish a de-genderized and de-racialized understanding of the statement heading the Declaration of Independence: ‘all men are created equal,’ to even more specialized topics regarding the morality of the slave enterprise; the status of women in the American society; and the gender politics of the public sphere, to name just a few. Indeed, many Barbary captivity narratives were especially penned for these as well as other miscellaneous ends: Susanna Haswell Rowson’s *Slaves in Algiers* (1794); Royall T aylor’s *The Algerine Captive: or, The Life and Adventures of Doctor Updike Underhill* (1797); Jonathan Cowdery’s *Journal in Miniature Kept during his late captivity in Tripoli* (1806); Maria Martin’s *History of the Captivity and Suffering of Mrs. Maria Martin* (1807); William Ray’s *Horrors of Slavery, or the American Tars in Tripoli* (1808); and Eliza Bradley’s *An Authentic Narrative of the Shipwreck and Sufferings of Mrs. Eliza Bradley* (1820), to name the ones that appear mostly in the anthologies of American captivity literature. Among these, Rowson’s play has been selected to be the main focus of this analysis for the following reasons: (1) the fact that Rowson wrote a play, which by definition requires the spatiality of the stage where the plot unfolds for a watchful audience, qualifies Rowson’s account for a study mainly preoccupied with the politics of space. (2) the play is feminist par excellence, so less efforts will be labored to unearth its overtly stated cause. Rowson’s feminist cause will thus be assuredly taken for granted. (3) Rowson managed to address American domestic issues in a foreign setting, which, again, qualifies the play to the probing of the function of space in the dialectics of gender between men and women in the context of post-Revolutionary America. (4) Be it space, setting or stage, Rowson did not bestow upon any of these spatial dimensions a macrocosmic character. Thus, her play would make a perfect fit for a comparative study with Rowlandson’s captivity narrative, whose setting(s)/removes provide a tropic representation of the macrocosmic world’s interposition with the immediate experiences of the captive.

Secularization is an indispensable tool in the study of captivity narratives because it does not only reflect the diachronic evolution of the American consciousness vis-à-vis its pragmatic understanding of religion, but it also casts light upon a feminine tendency toward contriving secularized plots to thwart the gendered theo-political ideologies of the American man inherent in the Puritan legacy. The word ‘legacy’ in this context does not necessarily imply the absolute waning of Puritanism from the American landscape, but it is definitely insinuating doubts into the trusting minds. In other words, the Puritan America of John Winthrop (1588-1649), Cotton Mather (1663-1728) and Increase Mather (1681-1701) may no longer retain that puritanical identity by the time we reach the post-Revolutionary period. If not completely so, at least the beginnings of the waning crescent can be easily discerned from the secularized space of the North African captivity narrative. Despite the huge disparity between Rowlandson’s appropriation of religion in her narrative and the replacement thereof by a secular weltanschauung in Rowson’s, the sociological exploration of the place and function of religion in the identity politics of both periods still occupies a blank slate in the research on the captivity literature. As far as I am thus far aware, the only scholarly research that addressed the theme of secularization in the captivity genre was Andrew S. Gross’s paper *Commerce and Sentiment in Tales of Barbary Encounter: Cathcart, Barlow, Markoe, Tyler, and Rowson*. In his paper, Gross (2014) suggested that the Barbary crises of the eighteenth century, instead of calling for an alliance based on religious affiliation and antagonism toward Islam, encouraged “international bonds of commerce and common sympathy” (p. 2). Put differently, American captives penned down narratives that called for conversion to democratic sentiments and free trade as showcased through Markoe’s *Mehemet*, in lieu of the traditional Christian conversion plot portraying Rowlandson’s *Praying Indians*, for instance. Given that, Gross (2014) imagined and read the five accounts of Barbary encounter as “secular conversion narratives” (p. 2). However, Gross’s contribution to the secularization thesis in the captivity tale bypassed several

foundational secularization themes that might have paved the way for his master-narrative of secular conversion. I therefore suggest that Gross's thesis could not have gotten off the ground had secularization not lifted America's sacred canopy off its spatial and temporal dimensions at least some time before Rowson committed her ideas to paper. Indeed, without the secularization of space and time, it could not have been possible for captives to structure their plots in desacralized settings. This analysis will therefore have to explore, imagine and understand the epistemological bearings of Rowlandson's and Rowson's tales of captivity by means of Peter L. Berger's secularization thesis undergirded by his sociological conceptualization of the microcosmic and macrocosmic worldviews. Steve Bruce's theoretical insights on secularization and Doreen Massey's contributions to the tight links between identity and geographical space should also find their way to the very fabric of our contentions. For the scope of this paper is limited, I shall only restrict my analysis to the secularization of space, hoping that this research will further inspire a series of potential papers on the secularization of time, language and ethics.

2. Socio-historical Context: The American Sacred Canopy

When the Church was not yet to be separated from the state, the unfamiliar interpretations that shook the precarious ground of man's theological systems, were likewise considered threatening to the stability of the state. The risks seemed to be more perilous as the religious views happened to emanate from female thinkers, or better known as 'dissenters'. In the summer of 1637, under the thatched-roof of the General Court of Massachusetts, Mrs. Anne Hutchinson (1591-1643) was summoned before the chief prosecutor and the chief judge, Governor John Winthrop. Mrs. Hutchinson was challenged for her aberrant religious views and the meetings she used to hold for her own defiant cause. Put in perspective, Mrs. Hutchinson, according to the Puritan social precepts, challenged the established order of the Puritan society by assuming a social position reserved only for man. Her deeds were interpreted as attempts to breach the nomic order of the deity while allowing herself to act as "a Husband than a Wife, and a preacher than a Hearer; and a Magistrate than a Subject [...]" (Adams, 1894, p. 329). Eventually, the trial resulted in her conviction for troubling the peace of the colonial commonwealth and the churches. Mistress Anne Hopkins (c.1613-1698), another case in study, though was not officially convicted, her allegedly unjustified love for reading and writing books about theological matters earned her Winthrop's oft-quoted scathing criticism:

Her husband [the Connecticut Governor], being very loving and tender of her, was loath to grieve her; but he saw his errors, when it was too late. For if she had attended her household affairs, and such things as belong to women, and not gone out of her way and calling to meddle in such things as are proper for men, whose minds are stronger, etc., she had kept her wits, and might have improved them usefully and honorably in the place God had set her. (Winthrop, 1645, as cited in Morgan, 1966)

The world, as envisaged by Winthrop and his American male contemporaries, was founded upon the dichotomous functional separation of the masculine and feminine characters in the American society. Women were enclosed in the household territory, where only specific roles were allowed to them. Men, on the other hand, were endowed with a boundaryless space, where power relations could be effectively maintained both inside and outside the household territory. The societal dualism imposed on the public sphere was not arbitrary; its existence was rather undergirded by religious legitimations. In the last statement of the preceding passage, Winthrop acknowledges the availability of such a peculiar space for women, delineated and approved by the deity of the macrocosmic world. Of course, what distinguishes the feminine space from its masculine counterpart is the latter's capacity to check and balance the former's, whenever necessary and required. The methods by which the patriarchal appropriation of religion to serve socio-political ends had been practiced, seems to be as significant for the eventual secularization of narrative space as to the maintaining of sacralized power relations in the nascent nation.

One may rightly ponder whether religion was an indispensable tool in the creation of the domestic and public spheres in colonial America. A cursory probing into the literature of the period should be quite telling that without the agency of religion it could have been invariably impossible to tame the shrews of the colonial societies such as Hutchinson and Hopkins. In a new world replete with material opportunities unheard of before as well as dangers and perils unknown of at the time, the colonial American man needed to create a sacred world, bigger than himself and more encapsulating than life itself, where all the potential unexpected could be reduced to mere phenomena in the social nomos. By encapsulating the world of human activity in the transcendent cosmos of the deities, the nomic order attains meaningfulness and stability against precariousness and disorder. Accordingly, what colonial American man feared the most, in the light of these masculinity crises, was not only the feminine daring attempt to subjugate religious thoughts to the power of their alienated intellect; their defiant reaction, as demonstrated in Winthrop's misogynistic rhetoric, is also revealing of a sociological necessity inherent in all human societies, and the religious ones in particular: maintaining social stability. In this regard, Berger argues that religion is a successful and effective instrument of legitimation because it capitalizes its efforts on the precariousness of the world and tenuousness of reality. It therefore offers an alternative promising narrative of ultimate reality and unwavering stability. On the relationship between religion and legitimation, Berger (1966) concludes that "it [the relationship] can be described simply by saying that religion has been the historically most widespread and effective instrumentality of legitimation" (p. 43) He even goes further to argue that "religion legitimates so effectively because it relates the precarious reality constructions of empirical societies with ultimate reality" (Berger, 1966, p. 43) In this sense, we can see that belligerent women were resisted because they disturbed the allegedly original order of things. The threat, in this case, was rather cosmic rather than merely societal. Nonetheless, century and a half later, American women, such as Rowson, transferred the fight of masculinity crises against the transgressing female compatriots into a secularized zone of contact characterized by its intellectual character.

In 1805, and after thirty years of relentless work, Mercy Otis Warren was able to complete and publish her three-volume *History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution*. While Mercy's chronological narrative contribution was hailed by Thomas Jefferson as it "will furnish a more instructive lesson to mankind than any equal period known in history," (Jefferson, 1805, as cited in King, 2011); John Adams's reaction echoed that of Winthrop in tone and exasperation, yet his was devoid of any theological admonitions. After years of encouragements and mentoring, which set Warren on the course to chronicle the war, upon reading her work, Adams immediately discredited her historical resources and disparaged her capacities as a historian. Regardless of the personal and political reasons leading to the disintegration of a long and amiable relationship, these two moments of justifiable ambivalence are captured in their later correspondences. In a letter sent to Warren on April 16th, 1776, Adams acknowledges the fact that "[I] ladies [...] are the greatest Politicians" (Adams, 1776). The beleaguered Adams writes again in August 19th, 1807, apparently after the publication of Warren's *History*, expressing so much displeasure and discontent. In response to her criticism of his ambitious and anti-Republican plans for the nascent government, Adams wrote:

If by "ambition" you mean a love of power or a desire of public offices, I answer, I never solicited a vote in my life for any public office. I never swerved from any principle, I never professed any opinion. I never concealed even any speculative opinion, to obtain a vote. I never sacrificed a friend or betrayed a trust. I never hired scribblers to defame my rivals. I never wrote a line of slander against my bitterest enemy, not encouraged it in any other. (Adams, 1807, as cited in King, 2011)

With the disappearance, at the intellectual level, of the dichotomous worldview of the two separate spheres, the sacred canopy was lifted off the identity relationships between American men and women. As Winthrop's condescending theological discourse metamorphized into Adams's intellectual dialogue over political issues, the latter was conversely informed by the identity politics of the time to support his rebuttals

against Warren's defamatory allegations by virtue of intellectual reasoning rather than the common gendered dogmatism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which was mostly based on theological assumptions and readings of the religious texts. Consequently, he postponed the completion of his autobiographical project, which he began in 1802, in order to launch a series of 137 articles published in the *Boston Patriot* between April 1809 and May 1812 in defense of his administration policies and wartime contributions. The absence of the divine in such arguments gave rise to secular dialectics between men and women on their social roles based on intellectual meritocracy rather than theological inequality. Between the macrocosmic view of Winthrop's colonial America and the microcosmic worldview of post-Revolutionary America, there exists a long socio-historical narrative of gender politics.

In their attempt to avoid the anomic terror chronicled in the cosmogonic myths of creation, particularly the Original Sin, the Puritans architected their societies on both panoptic and synoptic grounds. Indeed, the Puritan consciousness tailored societal gender relationships based on a well-nigh invincible misogynist narrative of condemnation and damnation. In the beginning, while seeking legitimacy for their horrible deeds the Puritans of New England sought to establish historical links between their existence on the properties of the American Indians and the macrocosmic ontological narration of Abraham's family. The fact that Abraham's family was only inclusive of the Israelites, the Puritans deemed themselves the heirs of the Hebrews as God's next elect nation. On this account, the nexus between the Puritan's diachronic perception of their existence and the fifth commandment of the biblical tradition reflects the paramount significance of the 'family' concept in the building and maintenance of their theological societies. The importance thereof lies in the fact that the first society to be established after the Fall was represented by Abraham's family. Within the boundaries of this small cosmic building block, or what Edmund S. Morgan calls "Mother Hive", both the church and state exited collectively. The functions of the father and the mother within this societal structure were essentially defined by the first roles assigned to Adam and Eve: the domination of Adam and subordination of Eve defined the power relations between the Puritans and the 'state'. Likewise, Adam's and Eve's love and adoration for God was representative of the 'Church'. In addition to affording an ontological explanation about the rise of the Christian society from its Hebraic precedent, the Puritan family was also accorded utmost importance in the maintenance of the society by means of peculiar surveillance methods designed to ensure the continuous stability of the various societal structures. The fifth commandment posits that honoring one's parents is the only shield from the anomic terror of disintegration and discontinuity. Therefore, in a textual culture such as that of the Puritans, a religious text can fitly assume the panoptic role of Jeremy Bentham's watchtower supervisor. Though the commandment speaks of a didactic obligation for the children to show obedience to their parents; when read in the light of Exodus 21:17 the commandment basically lays the foundational power relations of subordination and domination inherent in the whole Puritan society. In Foucauldian terms, the textual supervisor, as being represented and promulgated in the Puritan discourse, imposes on the individual children of each family an "axial visibility" (Foucault, 1995, p. 200). This means that the Puritan child develops a consciousness similar to that of the modern man/woman with an awareness of a surveillance camera being incessantly watchful of them. The child, in this case, is being accessed as an object of information, whereby visibility, though textual in nature, is practiced by all the members of the Puritan society. What is of utmost importance in the maintenance of the Mother Hive is the psychological fear that Puritan children must develop in order to be kept on a short leash even in the absence of parental control. Such an effect had to be taken care of by the Puritan pulpit on different occasions and in specific contexts. In an essay devoted to this purpose, the Puritan minister Cotton Mather structured a terrifying essay meant to strengthen the power of the panoptic supervisor and weaken the whims of the rebellious ungodly Puritans:

A third curse of God upon undutiful children is death, and not rare one for their being so. It is the tenor of the precept, "Honor they father and they mother, that they days be long upon the land." Mind it, children, your days are not likely to be long upon the land if you set light by your father or mother.

[...] Stand still, O my children, and look with horror upon the grave of Absalom. Read there and see the curse of God upon the undutiful. Children who cast contempt on the parents, who have been the instruments of giving them life, thereby do what but make forfeitures of their life? (Mather, p. 28-29) [italics are mine]

When Morgan explored the Massachusetts Laws of 1648 and Connecticut Laws of 1673 to ascertain the extent to which capital punishment was effectuated on disobedient children, he found that considering the fact that the children's conduct is inexcusable by the divine law, yet due to the severity of the punishment, the Puritan laws resolved to punish the children by separating them from their parents by placing them under the command of a master to serve until they reach the age twenty-one. At the microcosmic level, the pitfalls of either parents or their children must be spotted and corrected immediately so that the chaotic effect of one family does not befall on the rest of the society. At the macrocosmic level, the salvation of the Mother Hive becomes contingent on the spatial removal of the children from a contaminated space into one where redemption can be attained in the presence of different parental relationships—the new master and his wife. However, we should not be misled to thinking that 'removal' is by default a mechanism of punishment in the Puritan society, simply because it is not. In fact, the idea of spatial removal was a common custom in the life of the New Englanders. While distrusting their skills in bringing up godly children, who will not distress the foundation of their societies in the future, Puritan parents sought to remove their children from the family at the age thirteen to place them in the custody of a foreign family. It could be true that parents entrusted the disciplinary function at this age to another family out of love for their children while simultaneously distrusting their parental disciplinary abilities. It could also be true, considering Mather's intimidating discourse, that parents looked forward to their children's salvation without the interposition of the horrendous disciplinary mechanisms of the Puritan panoptic machine. Lastly, at the panoptic level, suffice it to say that the resulting interconnectedness of the Puritan families induces in each of them "a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power," (Foucault, 1995, p. 201) within the family and society, alike.

Furthermore, the Puritan society exercises a panoptic influence on its inhabitants by means of the unverifiability of the power relations at play. Since the family was a sacred institution insofar as it bridged the gap between the world below and the world above in the narrative of God's first utopian family, "stray bachelors and maids" as Morgan (1966) observed were not allowed to live alone (p. 145). Instead, they were either deployed to service or to perform any other type of work that would require them to stay under the disciplinary influence of a Puritan family. The laws were issued by the courts of each colony and any objections to them were met with severe punishments amounting to imprisonment in a house of correction. Thus, such enforcements created a wider network of surveillance relations between the "family government" and the "civil government". Living in the middle of these two institutions of surveillance, the individual bachelor remained helpless as to when s/he is being spied upon and who is his/her secret supervisor(s). Hence, the major effect of the Puritan panopticon lies in its ability to make its inhabitants trade their individuality and privacy for a bigger macrocosmic cause inherent in the Puritan's conception of salvation. The eventual success of the salvation scheme is heavily contingent on the transformation of the victims of the mechanisms of observation into harbingers of facticity about their locus in God's scheme of work.

Despite the family's agency in the expansion of the colonial settlements, the prosperity of their economic endeavors and the attainment of their spiritual salvation, the Puritans never imposed Church membership on any family. The Puritans viewed faith in Christ as the preliminary condition a person should fulfill, without which no salvation could be attained even under government imposition; and that positive social conduct is a clear divine indicator of God's favor with and sanctity of the individual. Based on the foregoing theological perspective, for the Puritan mind, it is axiomatic to first pursue "justification" in order to eventually achieve "sanctification". "Translated into less technical terms, [...]" Morgan (1966) explains, "good social conduct [is] the result of salvation rather than the cause of it" (p. 3). In the light of this understanding, we can now

appreciate the religious ideation underlying the Puritan's mechanisms of observation and the conceptions informing their removal policies and horrific punishments. We can similarly fathom the absence of coercive measures appertaining to forcing non-believers to accept Christ as their savior, though by law everyone was expected to turn up for Sunday worship. Despite the fact that this measure is less imposing, in passing it, the government would achieve three effects: (1) the continuity of the panoptic effect on the non-affiliated individuals in case they missed any of those Sunday meetings. (2) the inclusivity of all the members of society in the Puritan's family structure and its networks of observation so as to enfeeble the germination of any other contending groups or ideologies. (3) the absolution of the Puritan society of any liability resulting from a person's misconduct or transgression against God; hence jeopardizing the whole society's salvation, in case these violations passed unnoticed by the mechanisms of observation.

To the modern reader, Winthrop's commentary on Hopkins's belligerency and her husband's ineffectiveness in thwarting the allegedly abominable intellectual transgressions of his wife, would appear to be quite of an impingement upon family private matters. However, as soon as we apprehend the Puritan's view of the family as the indispensable foundation of the nomic order and the spouses' roles, inside and outside the family, as mere mimetic reiterations of the cosmic objectivated realities for which they are supposed to stand; we acquire the necessary images to inform our understanding of Winthrop's backlash. Thus, we can safely subscribe to the claim that the cosmogonic myths, which informed the Puritan conception of family and its significance for the salvation plan, contributed greatly again in the hierarchical distribution of roles within the family—particularly those of Eve's descendants. "Women are Creatures without which there is no comfortable Living for man," maintains John Cotton "[t]hey are a sort of Blasphemers then who despise [sic] and decry them, and call them a necessary Evil" (Cotton, 1699, as cited in Morgan, 1966). Cotton's admonishing of the "blasphemers" who think that women are a necessary evil is telling of a positive shift toward re-humanizing the perception of women in the Puritan mind. Nevertheless, his first declarative statement betrays the traditional subordinating pattern of conceptualizing the female sex as "a necessary Good," (Morgan, p. 29) or less deviously, an object available for male's service. In demarcating the female's unforbidden societal territory, the Puritans relied on three pertinent biblical premises: firstly, they emphasized the indispensability of the female as the male's object of pleasure and the divine acknowledgement that Adam could not do without a woman (King James Version, 1982, Gen 2:18). Secondly, the Puritans legitimated their misogynist views while capitalizing on Eve's disorderliness and precariousness when she succumbed to the Serpent's temptations. Thirdly, though the Puritans did not hold Eve accountable for Adam's sin, as they believed that both sexes were equally culpable, they placed more responsibility and liability on Adam's transgression rather than merely Eve's. In so doing, they further accentuated the male's superiority and underscored the female's inferiority, especially in matters that had to do with reasoning, intellectuality and decision making. This should account for why Puritan women were trusted on household economy and their husbands' "secular avocations" as Morgan corroborated, but not on intellectual matters, particularly those of a theological nature. Regardless of the number of premises one might be able to extrapolate from the Puritan literature on the status of man and woman in the family, the fact remains that the Creation myth established the two main backdrops against which the Puritans structured and maintained their microcosmic world: hierarchy and order.

To illustrate, the historical significance of puritanical employment of the religious canopy to legitimate their social gender roles is explicable in terms of the unique capacity of their religious worldview to "locate human phenomena within a cosmic frame of reference" (Berger, 1966, p.46). Put simply, religion takes the objectivated reality as conceived by the Puritan collectivity and then displaces it in the macrocosmic order. The image of the woman in the Puritan literature, for instance, is composed of an unlimited number of "connoted" or "symbolic" messages due to the latter's textual nature. The biblical texts that were employed to reinforce the subordination of woman were not appropriated all at once. Rather, the Puritan literature subordinated its textual legacy to different interpretations and extrapolations depending on the social

problems that threatened the stability of their numinous order. With the same account from the book of Genesis, Puritan ministers could argue for the spiritual equality of man and woman, as well as articulate woman's lasciviousness and capriciousness in the face of temptations. As women were needed to take care of their husbands' "secular avocations" to spare them more time for spiritual growth, the female's territory expanded fairly large enough to make of her a necessity in the master-narrative of salvation. Consequently, the religious image of the woman had to be revisited and corrected to prove rather than disprove her morality. When proving his wife's possession of a noble soul, one English minister argued that "souls have no sexes...in the better part, they are both men" (as cited in Morgan, 1966). Conversely, John Cotton capitalizes on Eve's giving in to temptations to revise the English minister's view that spiritual equality does not necessarily entail equality at all levels, for the woman who had once failed to achieve the main purpose of her creation, was not to be condemned for eternity, as this "should [rather] make [her] the more wary for the future" (Morgan, p. 172). Thus, Cotton tottered the female's previously acquired confidence of ever being spiritually equal to man by drawing a symbolic picture of her present historical existence/Being based on available data grounded in what Berger (1966) calls "the sacred realissimum" (p. 43).

As the Puritanical image of woman became stained with male's fear of losing his social status to a subordinate, some Puritans drew on the story of creation to devise a conceptual distance, hoping it would be difficult for women to breach. In fact, what the interpretation of verses eight through twenty-five from the book of Genesis can achieve in the gender politics of a theological society, such as that of the Puritans, outweighs to a large extent what the secular laws of few politicians and statesmen can do. While the latter can be questioned, resisted and even refuted, the religiously legitimated realities of the former are to be taken for granted, simply because their legitimacy belongs to an agency alien to the world of mortals. In their totality, the biblical verses suggest that God created everything in an order that would fit the role of Adam, surely not Eve, in the whole cosmos. Once the first phase of creation has been completed, Adam came to the world solo, and with that the second phase began. All that had been caused to exist thus far was dependent on Adam's needs. Eve, as an idea, existed later in the deity's mind, propelled by a moment of realization, when God thought that "there was not found a helper comparable to [Adam]" (King James Version, 1982, Gen 2:20). On the one hand, the Puritan mind capitalized on the temporal vacuity between the existence of everything and the creation of Eve to argue for the priority of man in his covenant with God and as the head of the household, whose role can be read as a mimetic representation of God the father. On another hand, Puritans utilized the same narrative account to prove the woman's inferiority and her dependency on the male agent in all walks of life, not only religious matters. All in all, the main purpose of these cosmogonic myths was to set the tone for as well as rationalize the gender politics of the Puritan society by placing man and woman in their rightful position, hence maintaining the order necessary for the continuity of the Puritan society.

Under the canopy of Puritanism, American women were to re-discover themselves as marginal actors in a dramatic play on the macrocosmic stage of the deity, where their true identity has been denuded of all elements of femininity. Indeed, in this puritanical order, femininity became largely contingent on what masculinity is and is not. Otherwise, in the absence of this negation, American man would only exist as Adam's replica in a solo mode. When examining Rowson's fictitious play and Rowlandson's factitious captivity narrative, there are three intersecting themes, among many others, that emphasize the influence of cosmogonic myths on the dialectics of gender roles in the American landscape: sexuality, household economy and theological interpretation (intellectuality). The coming section will take the burden of analyzing these themes as they appear in both captivity narratives in the light of the sociological theory of secularization. Before I wind up this subsection, it is worth mentioning that not all Christian denominations, inhabiting North America, were following the Puritans' leads. The Quakers have arguably established better relations between men and women—at least their gender politics were not as cumbersome as witnessed in

the Puritan societies. However, the focus was given precisely to the Puritans' worldview, simply because neither Rowlandson's nor Rowson's narratives are reflective of a Quaker mindset.

3. Dispersing America's Sacred Spatial Canopy

The title of this subsection suggests that there are two different canopies covering the American landscape: spatial and temporal. Though such a division is erroneously misleading both in theory and practice, for time and space function dichotomously simultaneously, so much so that the absence of one automatically nullifies the existence of the other (Massey, 1994, p. 11-12); because the treatment of spatiality and temporality in a limited scope, such as of this paper, would do injustice to both concepts. Additionally, due to the fact that the theories of geographical feminism that will inform the contentions of this discussion are spatially-oriented, I resorted to this conceptual division motivated merely by argumentative possibility rather than deconstructivist plausibility, in the literal non-Derridean sense. While this section will try to pull out a few threads about the relation between space, as a socially constructed dimension, and the marginal role of religion in this creation, in the context of the Barbary captivity narrative, my arguments will focus on the creation of space as a cultural construct inherent in the social relations and interactions of human agents with an explicit intent to evaluate Rowson's successful attempt in the creation of a secular space, out of new forms of gender relations made possible by the then-notorious geographical setting of Barbary (North Africa), that broke open the sealed gates of the public sphere to the American woman.

The first thread is to be pulled out by Rowlandson's captivity narrative, which echoes the captive's pressing need to maintain the objectivated reality of the nomic order against the anomic character of the captivity setting. In this sense, what Rowlandson was trying to achieve through her many forced removes was to restore order and stability to "the city upon hill", which had been increasingly disturbed by the ungodly Indians. Though, in so doing, Rowlandson gave herself the right to step into a territory exclusive to Puritan man only, perhaps the most important motif in Rowlandson's spatial dynamism is that it was instrumentalized to reproduce, in captivity, a world that would still integrate her into the macrocosmic world of the deity and protect her from metaphysical alienation. Indeed, had she failed to abide by the Puritan precepts of her society, even in times of severe adversity, Rowlandson would have risked being either excommunicated, or being altogether cast out of the Kingdom of God. The first sanction is inflicted via a social compact, or a canonical Magna Charta, to which the transgressor has long given his/her consent and allegiance. Whereas, the second one is dictated by the sinner's religious conscience—an authority even more despotic due to its being powered by the panoptic character of the former. Maintaining the microcosmic order was hence heavily contingent on the captive's success in keeping, what Berger (1966) dubs, "plausibility structure" (p. 58) intact.

The coming of the Indians upon Lancaster signaled the beginning of a series of chaotic events that would materialize throughout the captivity experience: "hearing the noise of some guns, we looked out; several houses were burning, and the smoke ascending to heaven" (Rowlandson, 1773, p. 3). Both the title of the narrative as well as Rowlandson's depiction of the spatiality of Lancaster at the time of the Indian's raid testify to the significance of space in the writing of the autochthonous History of the land. Importantly, the metaphorical connotations of space become more apparent as she begins to describe more precisely how the Indians approached her house:

At length they came and beset our house, and quickly it was the dolefullest day that mine eyes saw. The house stood upon the edge of a hill; some of the Indians got behind the hill, others into the barn, and other behind any thing that would shelter them; from all which places they shot against the house, so that the bullets seemed to fly like hail [...]. (1773,p. 4-5)

Despite the suspicions lurking around the connotations one can draw from Rowlandson's use of the words "house", "hill" and the locality of the house itself, which links into Winthrop's oft-quoted phrase "city upon

hill”, we remain cognizant of the fact that Rowlandson is quite aware of the semantic disparities lodging in the words ‘house’ and ‘home’. After the Indians completed their attack, Rowlandson (1773) moanfully counts the things herself and her people have lost: “my children gone, my relations and friends gone, our house and home” (p. 12). In the thirteenth remove, she juxtaposes the terms one against the other, which makes the distinction even clearer. While reminiscing about her people’s Sabbatical practices, she “look[s] upon the sun, and think[s] how people were going to the house of God to have their souls refresh’d, and then home and their bodies also [...]” (p. 69). It is neither an exaggeration of the family’s role nor an understatement of the Church’s position to say that the world of the Christian starts from home. The family, as we have seen in the previous section, played a crucial role in providing the stability that the fledgling Puritan societies needed for their rise and flourishing. The Puritan home has extended its didactic role of educating posterity in religion to being an indispensable tool in the surveillance matrix of the Puritan neighborhood by “induc[ing] in the inmate [in our case the adjacent houses of the same neighborhood] a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assured the automatic functioning of power” (Foucault, 1995, p. 201). Given that, it is hardly coincidental that, at the beginning of their narrative, Rowlandson as well as Rowson cause the abrupt disintegration of the family. However, while the achieved effect in the former is to prove God’s underlying favor in the reunion of the Puritan family; Rowson deploys her disintegration plot in an effort to compartmentalize the social relations of one American family as its members interact in an alien geographical space. Compartmentalization, in this context, serves both the author and the reader. From one hand, the author assumes the role of the biologist, who isolates a cell from an organism to be scrutinized under the microscope. The limited view of the microscope frees the scientist from the confusion of observing the cell as interacting with the other cells within the organismic whole. Instead, the scientist will be able to zoom in so as to only see the cell’s organelles in action. However, because social relations are a familiar concept in human interactions, Rowson first managed to disorient her readers as regards the ‘family’ concept by deconstructing the familial to be eventually re-constructed in accord with the male-female relations informing the gender politics of the narrative proper. On the other hand, the effect of compartmentalization on the reader is similar to that experienced by a biologist, who resolves to the impediment of some biological activities in order to account for the existence of other latent processes or bioagents, whose workings were overshadowed by the preeminent presence of the former. Thus was Rowson’s design when she decreed that her audience would rather witness a dispersed and fragmented version of an American family “in bondage languishing their lives away,” (Kritzer, 1995, p.94) with particularly its male subjects either cast between the walls of the Dey’s dungeon or utterly disregarded for their helplessness, as Rebecca’s husband and child had disgracefully demonstrated throughout the narrative. The dungeon was Rowson’s first “social space” outside of which all forms of human interaction ought to be supportive of a feminist masterplan.

In her discussion of the relationship between space and identity, the British social scientist and geographer Doreen Massey (1994) defined social space as “the vast complexity of the interlocking and articulating nets of social relations” (p. 168). Accordingly, space transcends the static dimensional delineations to incorporate the dynamic interactions between its human inhabitants. Therefore, Rowson’s sociological genius lies in her ability to deploy social space in such a dexterous way, while allowing for her play’s feminist agenda to get off the ground, develop and materialize before the theater’s unsacred canopy separates her “liberal” audience from the secularized stage. Though the Dey’s dungeon incarcerated ‘slaves’ as everyone seems to call them, albeit we remain oblivious to their diverse identities throughout the course of the play, the same prison house was instrumentalized by Rowson to lock up Rebecca’s husband for as long as the toppling of the tyrannical regime would take. We only learn of the Constant’s story after his heroic wife had successfully righted all the wrongs in the city of Algiers. The deliberate castration of the husband-and-father Constant disclosed not only Rowson’s intentions to develop a heroic female character, but also betrayed her masterplan of accomplishing supreme dominion for her sex. Indeed, it is by virtue of the Constant’s confinement that Rebecca came to be an influential matriarch, whose Colombian liberal ideas incited and moved the brave

Moriscan girl, Fetnah. Those very ideals made Rebecca stand up against the Dey requesting the emancipation of all the slaves in Algiers. In the presence of a heroic male character, all the play's females could have been reduced to the submissive and complacent character, Selima. One may rightly object that the anthologies of Indian captivity especially, abound with narratives whereby the captive's husband had to be separated from his wife and children. True that Rowson's plot lacks in originality in this regard, however allowing Rebecca to be the ultimate rescuer of all the slaves, including her husband, should strike a chord about how Rowson has ingeniously overturned Rowlandson's as well as Elizabeth Hanson's tradition of leaving the husband behind to arrange the ransom. Nevertheless, I believe that Rowson has rather acknowledged the efficient power of patriarchy as much as she has condemned it; for in order to develop her feminist plot, she had to rid the theatrical social space of all the American characters that could jeopardize her feminist mission as well as rendered all the other non-Colombian male characters helplessly useless.

Drawing upon Massey's conception of social relations as encapsulating both a spatial form and a spatial content, (Massey, 1994, p. 11-12) it might be safe to contend that within the enclosures of every single place of the different spaces where the events of the play materialized and evolved, Rowson managed to either mock or eradicate the phallic overweening pride of the male characters. In some sense, explicit mockery played a great role in bringing the laughter effect to the stage not only due to the presence of an object of laughter (i.e., the male), but also because the latter entrenches Rowson's dichotomous worldview as well as galvanizes her feminist discourse, particularly during the simultaneous theatrical presence of the male and female compatriots, who would both participate in the hilarity attached. For instance, as the play opens in the city of Algiers, the audience is goaded to a secluded apartment in the Dey's palace, where Selima and Fetnah entertain a philosophical discussion, resembling those Socratic dialogues in their simplicity of language and profundity of meaning, about the material affordances of the palace and the inalienable rights of Being. To this effect, Fetnah subordinated the Dey's aesthetic deformity of face to his gawky habits when making love, which she surprisingly muses "if it was not for the fear of his huge scimitar, I should burst out a laughing in his face" (Rowson, 2000, p. 59). The laughter that informed Fetnah's wishful thinking was meant for its teasing qualities; to rather upset, provoke and at best impede the phallic ambitions of the Algerine tyrant. With the same token, Rowson deployed mockery hoping to awaken the wits of the American men to the unexploited capacities of their female compatriots during a critical period in the history of their land. By bringing laughter to a scene where life and death could at any moment intersect, Rowson attempted to push her feminist character to the limits of Being, to an encounter with the specter of death in the name of "liberty" and "freedom" for all human kind, in order to demonstrate that the limited boundaries of the household would always fail to subjugate the boundaryless aspirations of the American woman. In so doing, and as the play progresses, the reader/spectator will have a chance to trace those ideals to their original source in the discourse of the most rebellious lady in the whole play: Rebecca Constant. This outstanding female character utilizes theatrical space, which is apparently quite different from that of Rowlandson, to perform myriads of societal functions.

While Rowlandson was intent on preserving the cosmic order by remaining submissive and complacent to the workings of God during her captivity, Rebecca perceived in chaos the rearrangement of societal roles and the bringing of justice to those whose right of liberty had been taken away from them. Indeed, Rowson's female characters provided a number of counterparts to Rowlandson's spirit of defeatism vis-à-vis Providence. None of the female captives seems to interpret their hardships as a test from God and on the basis of which wait for their redemption to be effectuated by Providence in order to prove His care for His chosen people. In fact, what Rowson has attempted to do with her play is emblematic of a social and cultural shift sweeping the whole nation toward "the displacement of religion from the center of the human life" (Bruce, 2011, p. 1). Instead, Rowson cast God out of the theatrical stage, who is immediately replaced by the power of reason and rationality. Even evil does not seem to be resulting from some phantomic Satanic temptations, for the tyranny of the Dey and the mischievousness of Ben Hassan personify the dreary side of

morality with utmost deftness. As a result, a world free from and devoid of the whimsical manipulations of Providence, entertained by the biased patriarchal Puritan mind, is definitely replete with liable beings holding themselves and their race accountable for the wellbeing of all humanity. With a stroke of the pen, Rowson called for the chaos that would dismantle the American family to be recalled back again to a better being as the play closes. While assuming the role of the symbolic father, Rebecca's actions seem to be what truly holds the whole narrative together, from beginning to end. True that Ben Hassan's house confined her body and restricted her movements, yet Rebecca's love of "liberty" and unwavering belief that all men are truly created equal spawned a series of chaotic events in her life starting from challenging her un-heavenly father for opposing her marriage to a British officer, to confronting the panoptic machinery of the Puritan society decreed and blessed by the patriarchal deity. All of these changes were made possible only through her power of intellect, as demonstrated by the impact of her lessons on Ben Hassan's daughter, as well as that of rationality as testified to by Rebecca's reasoning with Ben Hassan, the Dey and even her countrymen when they sought the enslavement of the ousted Dey: "[I]et us assert our own prerogative, be free ourselves, but let us not throw on another's neck the chains we scorn to wear" (Rowson, 2000, p. 73).

The relationships between the dramatic characters of Rowlandson's narrative are relatively unchanging due to the fact that the space encapsulating them as well as their interaction is a fixed space. It is a biblical space, where Rowlandson encounters some historical characters so as to be able to impose a particular theological meaning on her eventful captivity experience. Perhaps, the most compelling difference between Rowlandson's and Rowson's configurations of narrative space is that the latter's is dynamic enough to allow for the incorporation of new virtues, the development of characters vis-à-vis the real world not the theological one, and the plausibility of the narrativity of the captive's experience and its resultant outcomes. So, rather than waiting for Godot to effectuate a miracle to redeem his servants, Rowson deploys human characters with so much sense of responsibility toward themselves and their fellow humans to execute a salvation plan. The space, where salvation ought to take place in the narrative, is supposed to be the city of Algiers. However, we are often reminded throughout the narrative, and more particularly in the epilogue, that the playwright's main aim is to render salvation from all forms of slavery, whether gendered or ethnic, a universal value. For this reason, Rowson managed to transform the word "Christian" and "the land of Christianity" into its more secular signifiers: "America" and "the Americans". For instance, it is not the Christian religion that Fetnah fancies the most, but rather the hypothetical liberty that American women enjoy:

I do wish some dear, sweet, Christian man would fall in love with me, break open the garden gates, and carry me off. [...] And take me to that charming place where there are no bolts and bard, no mutes and guards, no bowstrings and scimitars. Oh, it must be a dear, delightful country, where women do just what they please! (Rowson, 2000, p. 39)

The audience watching the events of the play as they unfold one after the other was quite aware of the fact that what Rowson's play had thus far achieved was merely to represent the unconsciousness of the many American women, who were not less desperate than Fetnah. The concept of the "Republican Mother" defined the contours of the eighteenth-century American female: women were rather expected to perform their duty toward the republic by educating their children on the proper morals of America. Olivia's upbringing seems to be the best example of that, yet through Rebecca, Rowson endeavored to reconfigure the duties of the republican mother to incorporate her undeniable roles in the politics of the country. Furthermore, even the idea of negotiating the American slaves' ransom was merely the byproduct of sheer wishful thinking for two main reasons: Rowson penned down her play during a period when the stand-off between the United States government and the Supreme Magistrate of Algiers, Dey Hassan Bashaw reached its peak. Also, as William Cobbet irritatingly remarked regarding the play's ending, that during that time it was just impossible for American seamen to escape from the land of captivity (Rowson, 2000, p. xviii). It therefore follows that in the absence of a rigid space such as that treaded by Rowlandson's feet, social

interactions find more room to develop and materialize in a profane world under secular systems of thought toward secular outcomes. To illustrate, the captivity space gave Rebecca an opportunity to turn over the experience of captivity to her own best advantage. The dynamics of space allowed her to use the palace, which was previously used as the forbidden place where the Dey's Harem are hidden from the rest of the world, to launch her scathing criticism and topple the power of Muley Moloc. All in all, Rebecca rose as a matriarch; as "a woman unused to forms of state, despising titles," (Rowson, 2000, p. 68) yet wild enough to run the extra mile to defeat a tyrant ruler or even a despotic compatriot, if necessary.

4. Conclusions

To return to the title of this paper, I can now confidently claim that Susanna Haswell Rowson's *Slaves in Algiers* marked the death of God on the stage of captivity. It is through the trope of captivity that Rowlandson's theological framework has been challenged and discarded. Though the experience seems to be the same, it is believed that the remoteness of the setting, where the Barbary captivity experience took place, furnished American women with space as a metaphysical tool to rival the metaphysics of the Puritan mind. The fact that American captives had been transformed into a land different from theirs spawned a series of other non-spatial transformations too. Along with experiencing the dire circumstances of captivity, these American slaves had to cope with cultural, political and even moral systems different from theirs. Eventually, these affordances furnished the first building blocks for the dynamicity of the captivity space. To put it differently, being able to experience the world of Barbary firsthand allowed for further social interrelations, out of which space/stage became replete with human interactions, where Providence exists only as a linguistic currency.

In order to secularize space, Rowson did not only have to rid the stage of any conceptions of the deity, but had rather to create alternative selves that could stand in lieu of God. She thus capitalized on secularization as "the decline in the social significance of religion," (Bruce, 2011, p. 2) in order to develop her female characters in a world where the panoptic machine of the Christian religion is at bay. She had first to silence the representatives of patriarchy to suppress the theological despotism resultant from the misconceptions of the male counterpart. In so doing, Rowson allowed males to interact in very limited contexts so as to give credibility to her narrative plot. Consequently, the female characters were endowed with more space whereby their actions and interactions to immediate and remote circumstances in a far-fledged land on the Barbary coast showcased their equal dexterity in public matters of international concern. Yet, we should forever remain mindful of the fact that Rowson did not only capitalize on the traditional trope of captivity to pass her feminist agenda, but she also subordinated that to her own version of captivity as a result of which all the male characters in the play seemed to be useless, hapless and helpless; or rather castrated.

In fine, Olivia's concluding statement that the themes of the play were all built on the notion of freedom for all could be interpreted as an attempt toward what I would call 'expansionist secularism'. Freedom, not only for those Christians enduring the woes of a Barbary captivity, but also for those enduring incarceration under the yoke of their despotic ruler, who are languishing in the presence of a "lordly tyrant man" (Rowson, 2000, p. 77). With such a secular plot, Rowson has successfully been able to end America's long expansionist tradition, which was primarily based on otherness as informed by religious antagonism. Secularity replaced the old belligerent tradition with a futuristic image of America as the utopia of universal morality for all. The America of ideals, according to Rowson's narrative, can do without the power of violence. While concurring with this form of humanism, Rowson's epilogue accentuated the fact that the American female's fight for her freedom from the shackles of the domestic sphere could be broken down with the power of silence and peace by "[...] pursuing nature's gentle plan, we hold in silken chains the lordly tyrant man" (p. 77). The secularization of space proved to be the best fit for Rowson's non-violent plan due to its discreet and non-confrontational nature. Moreover, the subjugation of Muley Moloc and his

conversion to the American secular ideals of freedom and liberty betray Rowson's expansionist masterplan as plainly articulated by Olivia: "[m]ay freedom spread her benign influence through every nation, till the bright Eagle, mixed with the dove and olive branch, waves high, the acknowledged standard of the world" (p. 75). Nevertheless, unlike the conversion pattern of the Indian captivity narrative, none of the characters was expected to convert to Christianity, as a result.

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