

Ryan Xu

Ms. Cho

OE010

November 14th, 2025

Although the main perspective in *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*, by Mary Rowlandson, seems to be her passive, pious Puritan voice, it is joined by an alternate active survival perspective that is in tension with it because []; ultimately, the impact of these two clashing voices is [].

Mary Rowlandson's passive Puritan voice is characterized throughout her captivity narrative by her reliance on God and her inability to act boldly. Her dependence on God recurs several times through her narrative, even for the smallest things, such as "[His] wonderful mercy... in sending [Rowlandson] a Bible" (Rowlandson 146). Her gratitude to God for these small actions shows how deeply rooted Rowlandson is in her Puritan faith and her tendency to connect good things to God. "Sending" implies that the Bible she received was a gift from God, not the Indians who physically gave her the Bible. By thanking God's mercy, she suggests that she is indebted to him, demonstrating her inclination not to take credit for the good actions that occur in her captivity, instead referring them to providence. Her religion also contributes to her passivity--she describes herself and another pregnant Puritan woman captive as "feeble [and] with poor and coarse entertainment" (146). Rowlandson implies that she not only does not want to escape but is physically incapable of escaping. Rowlandson conforms to what a good Puritan woman should be: meek and confined to her house to take care of children, and thus, these requirements make it emotionally impossible for Rowlandson to consider escape; this notion is

further accentuated by describing themselves as “feeble.” From the Oxford English Dictionary, one definition of “feeble” is an extreme degree of weakness in one's limbs (“feeble” *adj & n*, 1), suggesting that this is a physical difficulty conformed by her religious beliefs of what a pious Puritan woman should be. Rowlandson’s devout religious beliefs and her Puritan societal expectations on how a woman should act contribute to Rowlandson’s passive voice and thus, her inability to or act boldly.

[second paragraph analyzing active survivor voice]

[third paragraph analyzing the impact of these two clashing voices]

Works Cited

“Feeble, Adj. & N.” Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford UP, September 2025,

<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1002632274>.

Rowlandson, Mary. “A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson,”

*The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, Shorter Tenth Edition, Vol. 1: Beginnings to 1865, edited by Robert S. Levine *et al*, 2023, pp. 140-159