

Compare one of the  
two indian captivity  
narratives, of either  
mary rowlandson  
or ...



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Assimilation versus Acculturation Mary Jemison's narrative explores her acculturation to the Seneca tribe in the event of her captivity. The events of the captivity are parallel to Mary Rowlandson's kidnapping, but while Jemison submerged into the Indian-American culture, Rowlandson resisted that very society. The combination of Jemison and Rowlandson's experiences offers readers varied angles on how both captives view their Indian-American captors. Upon exploration of the narratives following the captures, the writing styles, sentiments towards God, and reactions towards the captivity provide insights towards the differences between the two women's individual situations. The story begins when the Jemison was kidnapped from outside her home in Pennsylvania. She did not speak for several days, and the first time she uttered a word, she said " I want to die" (Jemison 13). After arriving at Fort Duquesne, she again spoke only to tell her captors her name (Jemison 21). However, in the course of her silence, Jemison slowly began to accept the Seneca culture. She began speaking in Seneca language and comforted two sisters who lost their brother in a combat against the English (Jemison 25-6). The two small events started her immersion in the tribe's culture, and it was even furthered by her marriage to a Delaware member, Sheninjee. She built a family with her spouse, and even before her son Thomas was born, she is almost completely immersed in the Indian-American culture (Jemison 31). She felt contented with her life there, and even when she was widowed, she pursued a second marriage within the tribe, even proclaiming to an escaped slave that she is " one of the Indians and she is a Seneca" (Jemison 44). Jemison's acceptance of her new life and culture denotes an unprejudiced, perceptive, and courageous character that is willing to

acculturate into a way of life that is almost contrasting to her own

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(Derounian-Stodola 118-208). Contrary to this, Rowlandson's captivity resulted in a different reaction from the woman. Rowlandson mentions in her narrative how she thought before that she would rather die than be captured by Indian-Americans (Rowlandson 70). However, when the tribes arrived in great numbers, Rowlandson changed her mind and decided, although hesitantly, to go along with the captors (Rowlandson 70-1). This demonstrates the great difference between her reaction and Jemison's. Rowlandson can be viewed as a frightened captive child, while Jemison showed courage and calm demeanor despite her situation. She is alternately treated nicely and harshly by her owner and other tribe members, and while she was given and was allowed to read the Bible, she did this to remain a Christian while temporarily adapting to the tribe's culture (Rowlandson 79). She did not aggressively try to escape; instead, she assimilated herself into the tribe and considered herself a temporary member until the opportunity to escape her situation arrives (Rowlandson 82). When she was ransomed for twenty pounds, many tribe members showed sadness in letting her go, even offering gifts and mementos of her stay with them (Rowlandson 107). Rowlandson's reaction to her captivity and her stubborn refusal to accept the Indian-American culture is a demonstration of her unwillingness to permanently involve herself in a culture that is not her own, as she decided to stay within the boundaries of her Christian beliefs (Derounian-Stodola 3-50). Although contrasting, Jemison and Rowlandson offer unique tales of lives that were drastically altered by the Indian-American raids during their era. Their perspectives give fascinating insights into their own reasons and methods of survival. Works Cited Derounian-Stodola, Kathryn Z. *Women's Indian Captivity Narratives*. New York: Penguin Books, 1998. Print. Jemison, <https://assignbuster.com/compare-one-of-the-two-indian-captivity-narratives-of-either-mary-rowlandson-or-mary-jemison-with-the-film-the-searchers/>

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