

Comparing benjamin franklin to mary rowlandson assignment

[History](#)



A shift from faith to deism was occurring. The Puritans of this time were escaping the Church of England. Their hope was to return to the more primitive Ways, to reject the churches hierarchy and ritual. Mary Rowland, a puritan in Lancaster, Massachusetts was seized by Indians, along with three of her children in 1676. In her narrative she recounts the story of her survival in the wilderness for a period of three months. She is taken away from her home and husband, " all was gone (except my life); and I knew not but the next moment what might go too.

Benjamin Franklins The Autobiography is an account of his life and begins with his boyhood in Boston. He later flees to Philadelphia to escape his brother's rule over him. He relates how he was " dirty", " fatigued", and " Want of Rest". In these depictions we can see a similarity. Both individuals are removed from their homes and families. Although Benjamin Franklins removal was of his own free will. They each suffered as they no longer had the comforts of which they were comfortable. Rowland's faith was amazing considering all that she endured.

Throughout the narrative she must rely on her faith in God. She includes numerous verses from the Bible to offer explanations for all that she has suffered, " Wait on the Lord: be of good rage, and he shall strengthen thin heart: wait, say on the Lord". It is also noted that she was able to use her trade to survive, " knitting a pair of white cotton stockings for my mistress". This is also a parallel to Franklin in that he also used his trade to survive. But one must ask what is moving Rowland? Is she writing for posterity or is she simply egocentric?

Rowland has portrayed herself as the ultimate Puritan. Was the glory to God or to herself? She also relates here “ how many Sabbath I had lost and misspent”. It is fascinating to note that toward the end of the narrative she begins to see that ere fate is in God’s hands, “ When thou passes through the waters, will be with thee”. At the end she recounts her old ways, “ I have seen the extreme vanity Of this world”. Franklin, States, “ I had been religiously educated”, I rarely attended any Public Worship”.

Some of the doctrine he described as “ unintelligible”, “ others doubtful”. He saw a need to center authority for our lives not in God but in oneself. He also noted “ My conduct may be blamable, but I leave it without attempting farther to excuse it”. Franklin is explaining his behavior but not making apologies. It is also noted that he reveals that he had undertaken “ the bold and arduous Project of arriving at moral perfection He had also written a “ Form of Prayer for my own private use”. In Franklins “ Thirteen Names of Virtues”, He lists the qualities he deems “ Desirable”.

Originally there were only 12 but “ a Quaker friend kindly informed me that I was generally thought proud”. The last virtue is humility, and his statement “ imitate Jesus and Socrates”, reflect deism. Although Franklin does state that he was not able to achieve this virtue, he reveals, “ I had a good deal with regard to the Appearance of it”. Franklin also had a “ Memorandum Book”, in which he kept track of his virtues. The book was lined in red ink and his faults were marked in black, “ chick marks I could easily wipe out with a wet sponge”.

Could this possibly be an analogy to God? Franklin is establishing his own destiny in relation with his deist beliefs. The ideas he projects are decency, justice and belief that happiness may be found in secular values. Near the end Franklin journals his "Scheme" and communicates it "was not wholly without Religion" but it did not necessarily reflect any "particular sect". An illusion of the America to come? A new world which offered religious redeem? This America in its infancy was establishing an identity free from the mother land.

Breaking the tie that binds is never easy. In his Autobiography Franklin was seeking to establish a new identity for the new world. This parallels Rowland in that she at the end of her captivity has evolved into a new person. Although Rowland has placed her fate more in the hands of her God. Franklin suggests that man controls his own destiny but also makes reference throughout to God. He must deal with his excessive pride, even as Mary Rowland has dealt with her own vanity. Hence the preternatural (God) did help to shape our country to what it is today.

Our beliefs reflect what our purpose is, what our identity is. Mary Rowland and Benjamin Franklin were setting the standards for Americans to aspire to be. Mary Rowland contributes to a young American nation searching for its identity the power of survival without conforming to the behaviors and acts of others. Her faith and trust in God sustained her from becoming like the savagely, as she first perceived, people who took her by force into captivity. At the end of her journey dependence on the grace and providence of God was splayed.

In my opinion this is a great contribution to any nation seeking its identity. Benjamin Franklin contributions were/are remarkable. He advocated personal responsibility, intellectual curiosity, honesty, persistence, and prudence?? principles that have helped people everywhere lift themselves up. He encouraged an entrepreneurial culture which creates opportunity and hope through peaceful cooperation. He affirmed that by improving yourself and helping your neighbors you can make a free society succeed. His most glorious invention was?? and is?? the American dream.