

## **“Imagining the Place of Home: Mary Rowlandson's Captivity and Restoration.”**

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### **PAPER SYNOPSIS:**

This paper, part of a larger project on the idea of home, uses a focus on Rowlandson's captivity narrative as a way of examining the significance of home as an affective category as well as a specific location. I interpret Rowlandson's account of her captivity and restoration as a text in which complex negotiations between different and sometimes competing understandings of home are constantly taking place.

Home as being both 'a place, a site in which we live' and 'a spatial imaginary: a set of intersecting and variable ideas and feelings, which are related to context, and which construct places, extend across spaces and scales, and connect places' (Blunt and Dowling). As a term, home is also expansive, encompassing what it means to be comfortable "at home" as well as what it means to feel unsettled or uncomfortable "not at home". This is at the heart of Freud's celebrated formulation in his essay on the uncanny as well as being a central assumption of Gaston Bachelard's theorising in *The Poetics of Space* (1958).

As an abstract noun home encompasses not only material ideas, represented by dwelling places and physical structures, but also ideas of belonging usually shaped by factors such as religion, culture, and ethnicity. In some cases these coalesce and are given political shape through the formation of a nation state. By definition, home also circumscribes conditions of non-belonging and 'exclusions' at local (even familial) and national or international levels.

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