AML 3286: Early American Women's Words
Study Guide for Hannah Dustan & The Panther Captivity

Primary Sources:
A Notable Exploit; wherein, Dux Faemina Facti from Magnalia Christi Americana

and

A surprising account of the Discovery of a Lady who was taken by the Indians in the year 1777, and after making her escape, she retired to a lonely Cave, where she lived nine years

[both primary sources are taken from Women's Indian Captivity Narratives]

Definitions:

**Discourse:** “Following Michel Foucault, the term has also been used to indicate language in use. That is, for Foucault, discourses are coherent, self-referential bodies of statements that produce an account of reality by generating ‘knowledge’ about particular objects or concepts, and also by shaping the rules of what can be said and known about those entities. Thus, one can speak of ‘legal discourse,’ ‘aesthetic discourse,’ ‘medical discourse,’ etc. These groups of statements and rules exist historically and change as the material conditions for their possibility also change…Foucault also argues that discourse in this sense is not defined by an exchange between individuals, but exists at a level of anonymity” (*Columbia Dictionary* 84).

**Dux Faemina Facti:** “literally, a woman leader in the deed; in other words, a heroic woman” (*Women’s Indian Captivity Narratives* 343)

**Historiography:** “The writing of history; written history” (*OED*)

**Rhetorical drag:** This term was absent from both *Oxford English Dictionary* and *The Columbia Dictionary*, so I decided to turn to the source itself, Carroll’s book, *Rhetorical Drag*.

“The ‘tricky’ practice exposed and examined in these texts is authorial gender impersonation, an act of imposture that begins with the male writer assuming the fame captive’s voice. This imposture encompasses an array of discursive practices that reflect and inflect contemporaneous gender regimes. Because the impersonation exceeds merely the appropriate of the ‘I’ and depends for its success on ascriptions of gendered language and diverse rhetorical practices, I refer to this phenomenon as rhetorical drag. This term represents a deliberate invitation to readers to consider how we might use queer theory as well as archival research and feminist inquiry to think about the practices of authorial impersonation and its cultural effects. The analyses and interpretation here rely on a reading of rhetorical drag as a complex linguistic enactment, one analogous to Judith Butler’s view of drag as a performance predicated on dynamic and elusive (and, therefore, allusive) gender constructs. ‘Is drag the imitation of gender, or does it dramatize the signifying gestures through which gender itself is established?’ Butler asks (*Gender Trouble* x)” (Carroll 1-2).
Ventriloquism: “The art or practice of speaking or producing sounds in such a manner that the voice appears to proceed from some person or object other than the speaker, and usually at some distance from him” (*OED*)

**Common Themes in Panther & Dustan:**
- Fantasy building in literature
- Woman as fact and fictive, simultaneously
- Female body as a site of manipulation (literary, physical, spiritual)
- Dustan statues = substitute body, additional sites of reading
- Lady as Lady Columbia
- What is masculine? What is feminine?

In what specific ways do Dustan and the Lady violate modes of female propriety? Does Dustan’s husband, Thomas, violate male gender regulations, or is he acting in obedience? Do the two male hunters violate male gender regulations? Is violence an appropriate reaction to violation of the female body (Dustan and her Indian captors, the Lady and the giant)?

**On Rhetorical Drag:**
“That is, even within their own historical context, as each of the captivity narratives demonstrates what a female experience should sound or look like, each produces an explicitly gendered style; each performs gender” (Carroll 3).

“The displacement most often emerges from an epistemological crisis: does the woman’s empirical experience of captivity support or supplant the interpretive authority of the male historian? The problem of how to use the experiences of conventionally marginalized persons – marginalized by their gender, and often by their class status as well as by their suspect culture-crossing – lies at the heart of rhetorical drag” (Carroll 4).

**On Kolodny’s article [Panther Captivity]:**
What is the thesis?

Article is divided into two sections: the historical context, and addressing the manipulation of gender for symbolic purposes.

Is the story of the Panther captivity complete fantasy or does Kolodny effectively argue for its grounding in historical context (the birth of the nation)?

The author of the Panther captivity is unknown and therefore could be male or female; however, the narrator is Abraham Panther, a male figure. Does the narrator, in addition to the Lady, function as a hybrid of fact and fictive?

“As such, her first-person narrative, embedded within the Panther letter and thereby interrupting the masculine hunting story which it would otherwise recount, suggests a subtle readjustment in Americans’ imaginative vision of the place and person of the white woman in the wilderness” (Kolodny 333).
The unruliness of the text itself: “Even so cursory a summary should alert readers to the disparate generic sources underpinning ‘The Panther Captivity’ – these include the male adventure narrative, the captivity narrative, the sentimental romance, and Indian fertility myths. In the course of the letter, however, the original meaning or intent of each of these is either quietly subverted or altogether superseded” (Kolodny 335).

“the white woman’s intrusion into the wilderness paradise of the male – is also the very structure of the narrative…And ‘the Western wilderness’ that Panther and Camber had ‘imagined totally unfrequented’ has become, instead, a white woman’s cultivated garden” (Kolodny 341).

“Male figures of greed and violence thus repeatedly breach, or attempt to breach, the precincts of the lady’s various Dream Gardens, her romantic trysting place, her son, and at the last, her wilderness abode” (Kolodny 343).

On Carroll’s article [Hannah Dustan]:
What is the thesis?

What is the focus and function of Dustan for each of these male authors? Is it Dustan acting unruly, or do they act unruly by performing rhetorical drag? What is revealed about the anxiety of these male authors by looking closely at the function of their representation of Dustan? Are there historical contexts which must be considered? Do the male authors ignore or embellish upon historical fact and create a literary fantasy? Can the reader easily distinguish between the factual and fictive Dustan? Are these male interpretations of Dustan a violation or attack upon her body?

1. Cotton Mather’s Dustan
   Function: political and spiritual; double instrumentality; manipulates modes of female propriety (by a male author).

   1st Mather text, Humiliations Follow’d with Deliverances (a sermon): Dustan is at the sermon, a physical object. Mather is both judge and executor (legal terms). Double instrumentality: providential avenger and victim.

   Focus: piety.
   Function: as an object lesson, requiring disciplinary interpretation; Dustan is a bad mother and bad neighbor.

   2nd Mather text, A Notable Exploit: Part of a 10 year history, English = good, French/Indian = evil.

   Focus: personal qualities linked to survival.
   Function: moral triumph over the evil Indians.
2. Parallels between Dustan and Anne Hutchinson

   How are they alike? How are they different? How does Hutchinson’s religious and “fatherly defiance” stand against Dustan’s act of physical violence?

   “Dux Faemina Facta” = linguistically, a heretic (Hutchinson)
   “Dux Faemina Facti” = linguistically, a heroine (Dustan)

3. Thomas Hutchinson’s Dustan
   Function: attempt to rehabilitate his ancestor, Anne Hutchinson.

4. Nathaniel Saltonstall’s Dustan
   Function: establish Dustan as a regional legend; illuminates direction her story will take in the new century.

5. Timothy Dwight’s Dustan
   Function: historiography that is genealogical, and metaphorically familial; fantasy of a cohesive and homogenous origin of America.

6. B. L. Mirick’s Dustan
   Function: to correct the previous Dustan histories.

7. John Greenleaf Whittier’s Dustan
   Function: to prove Dustan’s act was one of temporary insanity.

8. Nathaniel Hawthorne’s Dustan
   Function: a fable of patriarchal ascendency.

9. Henry David Thoreau’s Dustan

On Scalping:
Although the article I found, “Scalping During the French and Indian War” describes the practice of scalping during the French and Indian War (1754-1760), which predates Dustan by 57 years, the general information provided should be helpful to us.

A French soldier, known by his initials J.C.B., recounts the method of scalping:

   When a war party has captured one or more prisoners that cannot be taken away, it is the usual custom to kill them by breaking their heads with the blows of a tomahawk . . .
   When he has struck two or three blows, the savage quickly seizes his knife, and makes an incision around the hair from the upper part of the forehead to the back of the neck. Then he puts his foot on the shoulder of the victim, whom he has turned over face down, and pulls the hair off with both hands, from back to front . . . This hasty operation is no sooner finished than the savage fastens the scalp to his belt and goes on his way. This
method is only used when the prisoner cannot follow his captor; or when the Indian is pursued . . . He quickly takes the scalp, gives the deathcry, and flees at top speed. Savages always announce their valor by a deathcry, when they have taken a scalp . . . When a savage has taken a scalp, and is not afraid he is being pursued, he stops and scrapes the skin to remove the blood and fibres on it. He makes a hoop of green wood, stretches the skin over it like a tambourine, and puts it in the sun to dry a little. The skin is painted red, and the hair on the outside combed. When prepared, the scalp is fastened to the end of a long stick, and carried on his shoulder in triumph to the village or place where he wants to put it. But as he nears each place on his way, he gives as many cries as he has scalps to announce his arrival and show his bravery. Sometimes as many as 15 scalps are fastened on the same stick. When there are too many for one stick, they decorate several sticks with the scalps. (Bray)

In her own words:
Hannah Duston's Conversion Statement to the Haverhill Congregation, 1724. (Nathaniel Hawthorne in Salem)

Full text of Hannah Duston’s conversion statement available here:
http://www.hawthorneinsalem.org/Literature/NativeAmericans&Blacks/HannahDuston/MMD2097.html
Can the two statues of Hannah Dustan act as a substitute for her physical body? If so, can we consider them additional sites of reading? In what way do these statues interpret and/or manipulate the story of Dustan?

First, pictures of the Dustan statue at Haverhill, MA. (Nathaniel Hawthorne in Salem)
These are the four panels on the base of the statue. Can we find evidence from the various texts to support these miniature stories?
Second, pictures of the Dustan statue Contoocook Island, Penacook, New Hampshire. (Nathaniel Hawthorne in Salem)

“The 35 foot granite monument and statue of Hannah Duston was placed at the site of the escape in 1874. The front, or Westerly side of the monument, is inscribed with the following: "Heroum Gesta Fides-Justitia. Hannah Duston Mary Neff, Samuel Leonardson March 30, 1697, Midnight." (Nathaniel Hawthorne in Salem)

“The monument was erected in 1874 on the site of the escape. On the easterly side of the monument, facing the river, the following comment is inscribed: March 15 1697 30. The War-Whoops-Tomahawks-Fagot and Infanticides were at Haverhill, the ashes of the camp-fires at night and ten of the tribe are here.” (Nathaniel Hawthorne in Salem)

“Southerly side:
Statua 1874
Know ye that we with many plant it;
In trust to the state we give and grant it,
That the tide of time may never can’t it
Nor mar, nor sever;
That Pilgrims here may heed the Mothers,
That truth and faith and all the others
With Banners high in glorious colors,
May stand forever
Graces.”
(Jill’s World of Research, Reaction and Millinery)
The original title and second page of Cotton Mather’s *Magnalia Christi Americana: Or, the Ecclesiastical History of New-England* from the 1702 printing. *(ACLS Humanities E-Book)*

Images of Lady Columbia, as mentioned in the Kolodny article. This is a woodcarving, but I picked it because the image is more Native American in appearance. How do you imagine the physical appearance of the Lady? *(Eagles of the 1800's)*
Image of Lady Columbia from an 1863 Thanksgiving poster – note the sheathed sword and shield. (Atlas Shrugs)
Recommended readings:


Jennifer “Jay Jay” Stroup
[http://www.jayjaystroup.com/teaching/teaching-methodology/study-guide-hannah-duston/]


I have not included dissertations within the recommended readings/MLA bibliography due to space constraints. However, they are valuable to a researcher because as I learned in graduate school, the works cited page of a dissertation can be a gold mine for the reader. At least ten popped up in my search for captivity narratives in the MLA database (and that was just searching through the first two hundred hits); this leads me to believe that some of those dissertations will be expanded into journal articles or books within the near future. For example, Lorrayne Carroll’s dissertation, titled "'Taken from Her Own Mouth': Women's Captivity Narratives and the Uses of Female Authorship.” One can infer the subject matter has been much expanded in her book, *Rhetorical Drag*.

Works Cited


