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culture can spark such ardent curiosity about the past. The professional reader will be reminded that this is what archaeology can be, when it is constituted with soul and with gender.

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White Captives: Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier. By June Namais. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1993. 378 pages. \$39.95 cloth; \$16.95 paper.

White Captives: Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier, by June Namais, is a detailed, thought-provoking study of narratives of white women and men taken captive by Indians in the colonial and early American periods. It spans a history from the seventeenth through the mid-nineteenth century. The book is divided into two sections. The first provides analyses of the issues of gender and ethnicity in the context of the growth and expansion of the United States. The second is devoted to three case studies of female captives in three different historical periods: Jane McCrea (1777), Mary Jemison (1758), and Sarah Wakefield (1862).

Although the book describes the experiences of the white captives before, during, and after their captivity, Namais focuses on the ways that the captives' plights were told by American writers, journalists, and politicians of their eras. Her analysis points out the numerous exaggerations conveyed to a contemporaneous American public eager to be moved to sympathy for the captives and hatred for their captors. Namais shows how the captives' stories were used to create and reinforce prevailing stereotypes of cultural, gender, and ethnic differences. As she says, "Materials about white captives, especially those about white female captives, provide a window on North American society by showing us the anxieties of Euro-Americans of an earlier day under the threat or power of a 'savage' and unknown enemy" (p. 11).

Namais uses careful documentation from the writings of the captives and/or their biographers to show the development of the changing concepts and motifs exploited in this literature. She supports her arguments with insightful analyses of illustrations in the early books and of paintings depicting the captives and their captors.

Throughout this excellent, well-documented, and thorough study, Namais emphasizes several important themes. In discussing narratives of female captives, she draws distinctions between the ways that the captives were portrayed, depending on the salient stereotypes of women prevalent at the time. She writes of the early captives portrayed as "Survivors" and "American Amazons." In stories of women such as Mary Rowlandson (1675-76) and Hannah Dustan (1697), the captives are shown to be courageous, unafraid, independent, and resourceful, bravely surmounting the dangers of their experience. Some supposedly showed almost superhuman strength and ingenuity in escaping their captors. For example, Dustan was reported to have taken a hatchet and slain ten of the twelve Indian men leading her to their village.

This image of womanhood was supplanted in the early nineteenth century by what Namais calls the "Frail Flower." Narratives of this sort portrayed the female captives as depressed, fearful, and shaken by their experience. These women were unable to defend themselves and seemingly unable to cope with their grief and terror. Namais shows how this changed image of the captives was motivated by Euro-American attitudes toward women and the Euro-American stereotype of the "True Woman," who was emotional and helpless. The image also added fuel to the fire of American hatred toward Indians. Finally, the stereotype of white women as "Frail Flowers" became predominant in concert with the mass marketing of cheap literature to a consuming and increasingly literate American public.

The contrasting portrayals of women as "Amazons" and "Frail Flowers" were highlighted by illustrations and paintings of the period. For example, "Amazons" were shown wielding weapons to defend themselves and their homes. "Frail Flowers" were depicted in near faints, in the clutches of their captors. Their beauty and especially their pallor were emphasized and contrasted with the darkness and gleaming war paint of the stereotypical Indian men who led them into captivity.

Portrayals of white men taken captive were of an entirely different sort. These men were shown in what Namais calls the "Heroic Mode." They never flinched in defending themselves and particularly in defending their cause, which was either religious, as in the case of missionary Isaac Joques (1646), or imperial, as in the cases of John Smith (1607) and Daniel Boone (1769). As Namais says, "This literature served as nation-building propaganda" (p. 81).

An additional type of white male captive was the "White Indian." These were males who often had been taken captive in childhood, had been raised by Indians, and had learned the skills of Indian men. But not only did these men successfully adapt to their new lives, they excelled as Indians. The portrayals of them confirmed Euro-American beliefs about the superiority of whites.

Namais offers a careful discussion of the issue of sexuality as it was expressed in narratives concerning white women captives. Here Americans' fears and fascinations with the possibilities of sexual relations across racial boundaries were conveyed.

The captives' narratives demonstrate the changing attitudes toward Indians consistent with the changing needs of national policies and the growth of American military and political power. Possibilities of coexistence and sympathy toward Indians, as expressed by such captives as Mary Jemison, were quickly supplanted by the needs of Americans to dominate and control native peoples.

In all, the stories of women and men were interpreted and reconstructed in ways that supported the needs of American political and social orders. They justified the territorial expansion of the United States and the domination and, in many cases, extermination of Indian peoples. White captives were portrayed as heroes and heroines in the struggle against Indians. The moral superiority of whites always emerged regardless of the outcome of the captives' ordeals. Even, or perhaps especially, in their suffering and death (as in the cases of Jogues and McCrea), their Christian courage never failed. And even in the stories of those whites who preferred Indian culture (e.g., Mary Jemison) or defended their Indian protectors (e.g., Sarah Wakefield), the themes of the moral superiority and even-handedness of whites were stressed.

In addition to the analyses of the narrative literature, Namais provides pertinent discussions of the historical and cultural contexts in which the events took place and in which the captives' tales were told. Namais describes the cultural background of Indian societies as well as the specific details of the relevant American history of the period.

In sum, then, *White Captives* well explores a myriad of issues expressed through the captives' narratives and especially through the ways that their experiences were reconstructed and exploited to further the goals of American political and social propaganda.

Nancy Bonvillain