

“WITH A PUBLICK SPIRIT”:
COMMUNITY AND COMMITMENT IN NEW ENGLAND, 1630-1689

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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“With a Publick Spirit”: Community and Commitment in New England, 1630-1689 engages in a critical analysis of the core principles of New England’s civic identity from its founding through roughly the first two and a half generations of political development. It explores the complex relationship between the problem of sustaining revolutionary founding commitments and the concept of civic education as character formation in seventeenth century New England. The subject presents the opportunity to study the critical intersection of theory and practice and argues that these early decades were crucial for the establishment of a particularly American concept of civic formation, and thus, for the development of American political thought on the nature of citizenship.

At the heart of the project is a reflection on the civic virtues necessary for founding and maintaining a political society, the ways that they can be encouraged through civic institutions such as schools and legal systems, and the potential dangers when such virtues are either deficient or carried to excess by the citizenry. I argue that the April Revolution in Boston of 1689 demonstrates that the Puritans were successful in transferring their founding commitments to subsequent generations, and that this success

stemmed from their utilization of an approach to civic formation that emphasized the importance of civic knowledge and virtue as prerequisite to civic engagement.

The problem of Puritan New England is very much an American problem, and in the conclusion, I argue that the Puritan approach to civic formation recurs in the history of American political thought in ways that have proven particularly useful when the nation's founding principles seemed most threatened. In contrast, I point to the inadequacies of two major strains of the thought within the American tradition that diverge from the Puritan model of civic formation to successfully perpetuate the commitments of the national founding. Finally, I suggest some of the ways in which an adaptation of the Puritan mode of civic education may be useful for shaping present-day debates about civic education.

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INTRODUCTION: CITIZENS ON A HILL

As he prepared to lead a group of Puritan migrants from England to North America in 1630, John Winthrop reflected on the scriptural and philosophical foundations that would underlie the Massachusetts Bay Colony in a text now known as *A Model of Christian Charity*.¹ The speech utilizes the traditional Christian ideal of unity realized through diversity in order to offer a vision of a new political community based on the radical application of the principles of “brotherly affection” and the pursuit of “the glory of his Creator and the common good of the creature, man.”² Such a community must, Winthrop argued, be guided by the twin “rules” of justice and mercy, and if so, would serve as an exemplar to the rest of the world, a veritable “city on a hill” worthy of not only admiration but emulation.

That Winthrop was in a position to offer such an aspirational statement at all was the direct result of the colonists’ decision to break with their previous political

¹ Despite its status in the canon of American political thought, the origins of the *Model* are murky and its attribution to Winthrop and the claim to shipboard composition and delivery based on only slim evidence; the earliest reference to the text appears in a letter to John Winthrop, Jr. from a correspondent who asks him to send a copy of “the Model of Charity” back to London. The rhetorical style of the *Model* is consistent with Winthrop’s, however, and no other attribution has been seriously suggested to date; what seems to trouble scholars more than the authorship of the *Model* is its date of composition and delivery. Yet whether it was delivered onboard the *Arbella* while at sea, or just prior to the fleet’s departure from England, the consensus is that the address was given before the colonists’ arrival in Massachusetts Bay. As such, it stands as a clear statement of the aspirational goals of the colony’s lay leadership in anticipation of the actual founding of their new political community. See Henry Jacie to John Winthrop, Jr., ca. February 1634/35 in Mitchell, Stewart, Allyn Bailey Forbes, and Malcolm Freiberg, eds., *Winthrop Papers* (5 Vols. Boston: The Massachusetts Historical Society. 1929-1947), 3:188. For a “traditionalist” reading of the text that also situates it in the broader conventions of the time, see: Edmund S. Morgan, “John Winthrop’s ‘Modell of Christian Charity’ in a Wider Context,” *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (Spring, 1987), pp. 145-151. Hugh J. Dawson argues that the speech was more than likely delivered on English soil just prior to departure: see “John Winthrop’s Rite of Passage: The Origins of the ‘Christian Charitie’ Discourse,” *Early American Literature*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (1991), pp. 219-231.

² Although the “Model” is sometimes identified as a sermon, labeling it as such obscures more than it reveals. For the Puritans, a sermon required the careful ‘opening’ of a particular scripture passage, including the derivation of doctrine and points of ‘use’ or application. Winthrop’s address, despite its rich theological content, lacks these essential qualities, given that he was speaking as layman, in his capacity as the political leader of the soon-to-be-settled colony.

community over questions of church and societal reform. New England was founded in dissent from an established order and so represents a revolutionary moment. The founders of the colony consciously rejected one set of ideals and norms (the hierarchical structure and governance of the Church of England, along with the idea of parish-based church membership) about the proper way of ordering civil society in order to experiment with untested principles in a community with others of like-mind. Those who joined the Massachusetts Bay Company at this Exodus moment all renounced their past civic associations in order to commit to the difficult task of establishing a new society in a relatively unknown land, already peopled with potentially hostile inhabitants. Perhaps most importantly, they joined with the conviction that the founding principles of the new community were worth the risks associated with bringing it into existence. These ‘citizens on a hill’ would attempt to turn Winthrop’s aspirational vision into a reality, creating an England made “New” on the foundation of a shared commitment to three essential principles: the moral equality of persons, the importance of industry as a personal and public virtue, and a deep and abiding sense of civic love, or communion.

Taken together, these principles represent the merger of an appreciation for and encouragement of the individual as a free and thus, responsible agent in society, with a strong communal ethos that emphasized group unity. On the side of individualism, Puritan theology nurtured a strong sense of the individual through its foundational commitment to the moral equality of persons (by which I mean the ability of individuals to enjoy a direct, unmediated relationship with their God) and this logically led New Englanders to incorporate the principle of government by individual consent into the institutional structures they were creating in both the church and in the commonwealth.

The Puritans also adopted the Reformed sanctification of ordinary (i.e., non-religious) labor through the idea of a personal calling: drawing on 1 Corinthians 7:20 (“Let every man abide in the same vocation wherein he was called”) as well as the doctrine of predestination, Reformed theologians taught not only that all types of honest work were worthy of pursuit, but that each individual was specifically gifted and guided by the divine for a particular vocation.³ The doctrine of vocation not only made a virtue of industry as the proper stewardship of one’s talents, it also gave New Englanders a relatively robust vision of personal liberties, particularly those related to property ownership.

Thus, individual property was worthy of respect and protection—but so too, were other liberties derived from the individualism inherent in both the aspirational commitment of equality and the notion of particular vocations. As it would turn out, seventeenth century New Englanders, particularly those who had been persecuted for their dissent from the religious establishment in England, did not stop exerting their individual claims of conscience simply because they were now living in a (relatively) homogenous community of opinion.⁴ Rather, they applied themselves to the project of working out their individual understandings on political and religious questions through both internal reflection and external dialogue. Whether in the form of personal journals

³ See "calling, n.". OED Online. June 2015. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/Entry/26439?rskey=sLDe3E&result=1> (accessed June 11, 2015). On this point, see also chapter 13 of Charles Taylor’s *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992). Taylor contrasts the Protestant version of the doctrine (which he describes as “the Affirmation of Ordinary Life”) with the hierarchical Catholic view that elevated religious vocations above all others.

⁴ The relative heterogeneity of opinion in Puritan Massachusetts has been well documented: see Richard Archer, *Fissures in the Rock: New England in the Seventeenth Century* (Hanover: University of New Hampshire Press/University Press of New England, 2001) and Janice Knight, *Orthodoxies in Massachusetts: Rereading American Puritanism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994).

and ‘thought gathering’ essays, private correspondence, small group gatherings for prayer and discussion, petitions to the General Court, the distribution of manuscripts, or public debate in the context of the court, church or town meeting, seventeenth century New Englanders were an expressive people who remained committed to their right (some even referred to it as a duty) to think things through for themselves. Such freedoms were not unbounded, of course—as a community, they were committed to the limiting frameworks of both reason and righteousness—but neither were New Englanders as restrictive of diversity as they have often been accused.

Indeed, on one level, the Puritan understanding of the relationship between the individual and the larger society required diversity. As each individual practiced their specific calling, they contributed to the diversity and vitality of their society, while also benefiting from the gifts of those around them. For New Englanders, this was far more than a simple economic exchange; it represented the intertwining of lives in a network of mutuality. The concept of personal calling at its best both elevated the dignity of the individual and created a sense of communion, of a society held together by Christian charity, or love.⁵ Love, which “shall cover the multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8) was the

⁵ Although Winthrop does not use the word in the *Model*, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries the term “communion” was used to describe relationships the level of intimacy and mutuality of which was so great as to make them all-but inseparable once joined, yet in which each individual part still retained its distinctive nature. The marriage relationship is so described, for example, as is the relationship between various parts of the body to one another, as well as the relationship between the members of the trinity, or the members of the church to Christ, or with one another. Communion is thus much more intense than mere community, and I use it in this study to convey the sense of a society of individuals joined together by a bond derived from their commitment to a shared set of principles, that are volitional, deeply felt, and yet mutually demanding. My use of the word stands in contrast to that of Herman Schmalenbach, who argued that bonds of “communion” required a loss of individuality. See “communion, n.”. OED Online. June 2015. Oxford University Press.
<http://www.oed.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/Entry/37318?redirectedFrom=communion> (accessed June 11, 2015) and Schmalenbach, “The Sociological Category of Communion,” in *Theories of Society: Foundations of Modern Sociological Theory*, edited by T. Parsons, E. Shils, K. Naegle, and J. Pitts (New York: Free Press, 1961), 331-347.

aspirational impulse behind the Puritan vision of community life, which envisioned civil society as a communion of persons willing to sacrifice and serve for one another, as well as the greater good. This led to the development of a view of representative government that emphasized the subordination of individual interests to the public welfare: representatives, once elected were the servants of the public but not their agents. In as much as they were to use their power and authority to advance public (and not private) goods, magistrates and deputies were the servants of the people, who retained the ultimate authority to recall their leaders for bad behavior at the next election. In between elections, however, the magistrates and deputies were (within the bounds of reason and righteousness, and later, the *Laws and Liberties*) free to act with discretion. That is, they were not to consider themselves subject in any kind of ongoing way to their constituents, but were to exercise the wisdom, judgement, and care of the public good for which they had presumably been chosen.

All three of these aspirational elements (moral equality, personal calling, and communion) are demonstrably present in Winthrop's "Model," and each of them would be incorporated into the founding of New England. This project spans roughly the first seventy years of the American Puritan experience, a period over which culturally and through their institutions, New Englanders worked to create a civic identity firmly rooted in their shared founding commitments, not only as abstract principles, but as part of their regular practice of political life. For them, the political manifestation of a commitment to the moral equality of persons was government by consent; the idealization of a personal calling and the virtue of industry led to a heightened respect for property (including the intangible property of individual rights, such as the right of conscience); and the goal of

civic communion manifested itself in the development of a certain view of representative government in which individual voters were expected to make their choices “with a publick spirit” and were thus ‘represented’ only insofar as they were beneficiaries of the common good.⁶

A community that owes its existence and institutions to the revolutionary ethos and enthusiasm of a founding generation, however, must inevitably face the difficult challenge of channeling those same passions and proclivities in directions that will enable them to become stabilizing rather than disruptive forces. From the start, therefore, New Englanders worked to ensure not only that their institutions manifested their founding commitments, but also that they preserved and instilled them in future generations. I thus explore not only the measures intended to foster the aspirations incorporated into the revolutionary moment, but also the differing generational experiences and expectations which threatened their preservation.

One of the goals of this project is to demonstrate both the democratic and the dialogical aspects of Puritan concerns about civic formation. That is, first, I argue that Puritanism’s emphasis on the need for self-reformation and self-government made the internal cultivation of particular character qualities an issue of nearly universal interest. Second, I illustrate that this educational process did not occur in an exclusively top-down way, with elite political and religious leaders pronouncing ‘the way’ to civic formation, but was rather a dialogical process also shaped by the needs and concerns of non-elites.⁷

⁶ The phrase comes from John Cotton’s farewell sermon to the first wave of Massachusetts’ settlers, which I address in greater detail in Chapter 2. See Cotton, *God’s Promise to His Plantation* (London: 1630), 19.

⁷ The terms ‘elite’ and ‘non-elite’ are relative of course: New England was demographically very homogeneous, such that the extent of the difference between those at the top and those at the bottom of the social hierarchy was much less extreme than that which existed in other parts of the British empire of the seventeenth century, a point I develop in looking at the English context for the colonial experiment in Chapter 2.

While New England was certainly not an egalitarian society, regardless of their social or economic status, seventeenth century New Englanders were an overwhelmingly literate people who left substantive evidence of their engagement with the ideas of the day through their participation as speakers in church or town meetings, petitions to the General Court, and similar activities.⁸ Using a diversity of source material, this project seeks a fuller understanding of not only the idealized or theoretical framework within which New Englanders hoped their community would operate, but also the shortcomings or adjustments required of that framework in the course of practice.⁹

This project focuses on the ways in which the core political principles of the first generation were preserved and modified by the second and third generations of New Englanders. It is therefore, eminently concerned with the historical context within which these principles were framed, tested, adapted or abandoned. Ideas cannot be abstracted from the real political issues and particular historical circumstances in which the author expressing them lived, and whatever else political theory may be, it is necessarily a historical endeavor, for the texts we study are, in some sense, artifacts of a previous political society. In structuring the project, therefore, I have generally taken a chronological approach, attempting to balance a respect for the “placing [of] politics in

⁸ Rates of reading literacy were higher than rates of writing literacy, as the latter was considered more of a tool than an essential skill. See E. Jennifer Monaghan, “Literacy Instruction and Gender in Colonial New England,” *American Quarterly*, 40 (March 1988), 18-41, as well as her *Learning to Read and Write in Colonial America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2005).

⁹ On the importance of this sort of inquiry into non-canonical texts, see Quentin Skinner, “Motives, Intentions, and the Interpretation of Texts,” in *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics*, James Tully, ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 68-78. See also Louis Gottschalk, “Where Does Historical Information Come From?” in *Understanding History: A Primer on Historical Method 2nd Edition* (New York, Knopf: 1969), 41-61.

time,” with the need to omit or gloss over certain historical episodes in order to maintain my focus on the theoretical and philosophical questions that inform the project.¹⁰

Of course the story of civic formation and founding principles in New England is hardly confined to the seventeenth century: many of these same blended political commitments to self and society would become part of American identity more broadly following the Revolution of 1776-1783. While the importance of New England in shaping the political and cultural development of the nation as a whole can and has been overstated, it nevertheless remains true that—at least for some eighteenth century New Englanders—their own colonial founding and the fight for independence from Great Britain were conceptually linked. America, according to John Adams, began as “a resolution formed by a sensible people—I mean the Puritans” who, despairing over the relative lack of both civil and religious freedom in England, fled to what was then a “wilderness” in order to start anew.¹¹

These “men of sense and learning” had come to the New World not merely as refugees or even as colonists, but as founders intent on establishing a new society.¹² In doing so, they relied upon “wise, humane, and benevolent principles,” consistent with both rational and revealed wisdom, and always utterly opposed to “tyranny in every form,

¹⁰ Paul Pierson, “Not Just What, but *When*: Timing and Sequence in Political Processes,” *Studies in American Political Development*, Volume 14 (Spring 2001): 72-92.

¹¹ John Adams, *A Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law* (1765) in *The Revolutionary Writings of John Adams*, C. Bradley Thompson, ed. (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2000), 23-24. Adams makes the rhetorical leap from the founding of Massachusetts to that of the America: “It was this great struggle [the Reformation] that peopled America. It was not religion alone, as is commonly supposed; but it was a love of universal liberty, and a hatred, a dread, a horror, of the infernal confederacy before described, that projected, conducted, and accomplished the settlement of America.”

¹² Contra Adams, James Ceaser argues (following Tocqueville) that the Puritans were not founders in this intentional sense at all, but represent rather some form of organic continuity with the broader Anglo political tradition; see James W. Ceaser, “Alexis de Tocqueville and the Two-Founding Thesis,” *Review Of Politics* 73, no. 2 (March 2011): 219-243.

shape, or appearance.” To this end, “they saw clearly that popular powers must be placed as a guard, a control, a balance, to the powers of the monarch and the priest, in every government, or else it would soon become ... a great and detestable system of fraud, violence and usurpation.” To avoid such a lamentable fate, the Puritan founders sought “to establish a government of the church more consistent with the Scriptures, and a government of the state more agreeable to the dignity of human nature, than any they had seen in Europe, and to transmit such a government down to their posterity, with the means of securing and preserving it forever.”¹³ His American audience in 1765, Adams argued—the lucky beneficiaries of this Puritan inheritance—were tasked with its preservation against a new assault from the forces of tyranny.

The Americanization of the Puritan Experience

Adams’ rhetorical justification for the political dissent that would eventually culminate in the extended national founding “moment” of 1776-1789—placing it within the context of perpetuating the colonial founding of Massachusetts—allowed him to present his appeal as less radical and therefore, less objectionable, than it might otherwise have appeared. Adams placed himself and his fellow colonists in the midst of an ongoing story, one that illustrates the perennial political problem of preserving political institutions and principles. The task at hand was not simply a solitary act in defense of political liberty against the encroachments of the British crown; it was part of a much larger tradition of political dissent in the name of liberty. At what is commonly identified as the crisis moment leading to the American national founding, Adams turned to the Puritan colonial founding to provide a sense of civic identity and purpose, recalling for

¹³ Adams, *Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law*, 24-25. Emphasis added.

his audience the principles of their forefathers and urging them to embrace the application of those principles to their current political situation, thereby preserving and continuing the work of the founding generation.¹⁴

Inasmuch as Adams was correct to look back to the Puritan period for insight into America's civic identity, studying the Puritan approach to civic formation can offer a perspective on questions of community and the maintenance of founding commitments that bridges the gaps between the liberal or republican/communitarian readings of the American political tradition often favored by contemporary political theorists.¹⁵ My study thus begins at Adams' rhetorical departure from the Puritans and engages in a critical analysis of civic formation in New England from its founding through roughly the first two and a half generations of political development.¹⁶ I end the study in 1689 in order to emphasize the work of the founders and the preservation of that work by their immediate successors in the second generation, and to show the Puritan origins of a distinctively American tradition of political thought, rooted in the relatively autonomous political existence enjoyed by the Massachusetts Bay Colony during most of the seventeenth century.

¹⁴ Adams is not alone in linking the energetic dissent of the revolutionary generation to the colonial foundings: in his *Summary View of the Rights of British America* (1774), Jefferson states that the earliest colonists exercised a natural freedom in emigrating to the New World and retained their links to the British monarch only as a matter of their own political choice.

¹⁵ On this debate generally, see Ronald J. Terchek, *Republican Paradoxes and Liberal Anxieties: Retrieving Neglected Fragments of Political Theory* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1996), esp. Chapter 2. Ronald Dworkin's *Taking Rights Seriously* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978) although focused on the law, suggests some of the more radical implications of certain liberal theories for citizenship; Michael J. Sandel, *Democracy's Discontent: America in Search of a Public Philosophy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998) offers a communitarian critique of many of the same issues.

¹⁶ Harry Stout explains the breakdown of Puritan generations thusly: "The term generation is a shorthand device to distinguish groups of ministers according to the date of their graduation from college—the meaning colonial ministers themselves attached to the term." In this study, I am concerned primarily with the First and Second Generations (1600-1640 and 1642-1675, respectively), and secondarily with the early years of the Third Generation (1676-1709). See Stout, *New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 5.

The English experiences of the first generation of migrants set up a political crisis over civic virtue and individual liberty from which the *Arbella* passengers and their contemporaries were escaping, and to which they responded in their political theorizing and practice. This crisis culminated in the 1688 Revolution when English liberties on both sides of the Atlantic (and the Massachusetts charter) were restored under a Protestant and limited monarchy. Additionally, the Glorious Revolution marked a significant turning point in Crown policy concerning the colonies (towards a consolidation of administration), and the subsequent end of a period of relative social and political autonomy. Ultimately, I argue that New Englanders' resistance to the Andros regime in 1689 represents the successful transference of the aspirations of the founding generation to posterity, and the solidification of a uniquely New English civic identity that would itself become an element in America's later, national founding.

While the Puritan experience played a significant role in defining the character of American society and politics, political scientists have largely been content to leave the study of the Puritans to historians and theologians, neglecting this crucial moment in the history of American political thought. This oversight may be attributable in part to the tendency of political theorists to see American political thought as primarily derivative of canonical European thinkers.¹⁷ Even those scholars who appreciate American political thought as a tradition separable from Europe often tend to write as if it began in the

¹⁷ To name just a few: Louis Hartz in *The Liberal Tradition in America*, (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1955) argues that the story of American political thought is essentially Locke, Locke, and more Locke. Michael P. Zuckert in *Natural Rights and the New Republicanism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004) suggests that it is instead Locke and some synthesis of the English Whig version of republicanism. Samuel H. Beer, *To Make a Nation: The Rediscovery of American Federalism* (Cambridge: Belknap, 1993) points to the influence of Milton, Harrington, Burke, and Montesquieu.

eighteenth century with the writings related to the Revolution of 1776.¹⁸ Judith Shklar's 'redemption' of American political thought as a field is typical of this strain in that it depends upon what she sees as the continual expansion of the democratic impulse after the ratification of the Constitution.¹⁹ And while Craig Yurish's recent study of the "roots" of American political theory is admirable in its attempt to both consider American political thought as a field of its own, and to explore the pre-revolutionary period, he nevertheless ignores almost the totality of the seventeenth century, beginning only in 1675.²⁰

Indeed, very few political theorists have bothered to look closely at the first decades of the Puritan experiment in Massachusetts Bay. Wilson Carey McWilliams began his magisterial *The Idea of Fraternity in America* with a study of Puritan covenanting and its political implications, arguing that any proper understanding of America must grapple with the reality that Puritanism "was here first."²¹ John Schaar was similarly interested in the intersection between theology, political theory, and political practice in his study of the tension between the political values of liberty, authority, and

¹⁸ Consider, for example, that the only major American texts to be regularly included in the canon of political theory are *The Federalist Papers*, *Common Sense*, and the (much later) works of John Dewey. Even a recent textbook on *American Political Rhetoric* begins with the Declaration of Independence as if it appeared *sui generis*; see *American Political Rhetoric: Essential Speeches and Writings on Founding Principles and Contemporary Controversies*, Peter Augustine Lawler and Robert Martin Schaefer, eds., Sixth Edition (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield: 2010). As Wilson Carey McWilliams pointed out, however positive the scholarly attention given to Revolutionary and Early Republican periods has been, it has had the unfortunate consequence of emphasizing the application of theory (what McWilliams called "philosophic statecraft") "to the neglect of more purely theoretical American thinkers," such as the Puritans and later New Englanders, Emerson and Thoreau. See McWilliams, "Leo Strauss and the Dignity of American Political Thought," *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 60, No. 2 (Spring, 1998), 236.

¹⁹ Judith Shklar, "Redeeming American Political Theory," *American Political Science Review* 85 (1991): 1-16.

²⁰ Craig Yurish, *Settlers, Liberty, and Empire: The Roots of Early American Political Theory, 1675-1775*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

²¹ Wilson Carey McWilliams, *The Idea of Fraternity in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 113. See chapters 5-7 for McWilliams' full treatment of the Puritans.

community in Winthrop's political writings.²² Andrew R. Murphy has discussed the Puritans in his work on the concept of toleration in the early modern period, as well as in relation to the jeremiad as form of political rhetoric, both topics that take seriously the theoretical aspects of Puritanism and their resonances in the development of the American political tradition.²³ Matthew Holland argues that Winthrop's "Model" encapsulates a particular view of the proper relationship between members of the political community that became central to solidifying the American understanding of Union.²⁴ George McKenna also locates in Puritan New England the origins of an ongoing strain of American political thought—albeit more darkly. McKenna focuses on the missional aspects of Puritanism, and the use of those aspects to create both a sense of identity and alienation that he argues infused later American nativism.²⁵ Other recent studies of Puritan political thought by Glenn Moots and Joshua Miller have focused on institutions and processes rather than philosophical principles or theory. Both of these scholars have directed attention to Puritan procedures related to covenant and membership in order to illuminate their potential influence on later American political development.²⁶

²² John Schaar, "Liberty/Authority/Community in the Political Thought of John Winthrop," *Political Theory* XIX (1991): 493-518.

²³ See Murphy, *Conscience and Community: Revisiting Toleration and Religious Dissent in Early Modern England and America* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003) and "New Israel in New England: The American Jeremiad and the Hebrew Scriptures," *Hebraic Political Studies* 4: 2 (2009): 128-156.

²⁴ Matthew Holland, *Bonds of Affection: Civic Charity and the Making of America—Winthrop, Jefferson, and Lincoln* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2007). Holland is primarily interested in the quality of charity itself as a factor in political life, and I am primarily interested in what the speech tells us about the other virtues and the institutional supports for their cultivation that one might derive from charity. Moreover, Holland presents Winthrop as the singular voice of Puritan political theorizing, whereas I argue that he is best understood as part of a much larger conversation about the nature and meaning of civil society in early New England.

²⁵ George McKenna, *The Puritan Origins of American Patriotism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

²⁶ Moots, *Politics Reformed: The Anglo-American Tradition of Covenant Theology* (University of Missouri Press, 2010) and Miller, "Direct Democracy and the Puritan Theory of Membership," *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 53, No. 1 (Feb., 1991), pp. 57-74. Similarly, Michael P. Winship has written about the institutional development of Massachusetts' Congregational church order as precursor to other forms of

In their diversity of emphases and approaches, each of these scholars suggests the complex interaction of individual and society that lies at the heart of the New English understanding of civic formation. Yet none of them have paid systematic attention to the Puritan colonial experiment as an example of a political founding or to the Puritan solution to the perennial problem of sustaining founding commitments. In their theorizing and actual practice of creating a “new” England in Massachusetts Bay, seventeenth century Puritans engaged in a self-conscious reflection on the qualities of soul necessary for founding and maintaining a political society, which, as Adams’ essay reminds us, would have recurring significance in American history. As founders, Puritan leaders John Cotton, John Winthrop, and their colleagues in both ministry and magistracy embraced the concept of character formation as a form of civic education, a useful stay against the potential for political declension. Moreover, they explicitly provided for both public and private institutions designed to help perpetuate the founding principles and ideology.

These factors, overly simplified by Adams’ account, are worthy of more intense scholarly attention for what they can tell us about the theoretical and practical problem of sustaining founding commitments. Although the project is historical in scope, the questions of civic education and the perpetuation of the principles of a founding moment are not locked in the seventeenth century but have always been of central concern to political theorists. My project thus engages with the broader discipline of political theory on both the issue of the difficulties of sustaining founding commitments over time, and on the important role of a variety of educational institutions (both public and private) in fostering commitment to the community and its core political principles.

representative government; his focus, however, is not on anything political per se. See *Godly Republicanism: Puritans, Pilgrims, and a City on a Hill* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012).

Definitions

Three key terms to be used throughout the study are defined below.

Puritanism

Originally used as a pejorative, and then gradually adopted by those inside the movement, the term “Puritanism” is widely used but notoriously difficult to define.²⁷ The issue comes up regularly in the scholarly literature, often centered on the question of whether to constrict its meaning to the realm of religion, or to embrace a definition inclusive of other areas of life and culture—including politics.²⁸ The editors of the *Cambridge Companion to Puritanism* define it broadly: “Puritanism was a distinctive and particularly intense variety of early modern Reformed Protestantism which originated within the Church of England but spilled out beyond it”—and then spend several pages ‘unpacking’ the various dimensions of that definition.²⁹ In this study, I use it to mean those persons who adhered to a doctrinally rigorous and introspective version of Reformed Christianity, one which called upon the individual to ‘purify’ both himself and the culture around him.³⁰ It is this emphasis on cultural transformation through the work

²⁷ For contemporary uses of the term, see Lawrence A. Sasek, *Images of English Puritanism: A Collection of Contemporary Sources, 1589-1646* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989).

²⁸ Two useful essays summarizing the debates are: Basil Hall, “Puritanism: the Problem of Definition,” in *Studies in Church History*, G. J. Cuming, ed., (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson, 1965), 283-96; and Peter Lake, “Defining Puritanism: Again?” in *Puritanism: Trans-Atlantic Perspectives on a Seventeenth-Century Anglo-American Faith*, Francis J. Bremer, ed., (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1993), 3-29. A good example of a ‘narrow’ definition can be found in Darrett B. Rutman, *American Puritanism: Faith and Practice* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1970) while a strong case for a ‘broad’ understanding of the term is made by George Selement in *Keepers of the Vineyard: Puritan Ministry and Collective Culture in Colonial New England* (University Press of America, 1984) as well as David D. Hall, *A Reforming People: Puritanism and the Transformation of Public Life in New England* (Knopf, 2011).

²⁹ John Coffey and Paul C. H. Lim, eds., Introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1-7.

³⁰ I focus on the mainstream element of Massachusetts’ Puritanism, marked (after 1648) by at least formal adherence to the Cambridge Platform of Church Discipline, and largely exclude what are sometimes classified as “radical” branches of the Puritan movement such as the spiritists, Baptists, antinomians, and Quakers (to name only a few identifiable groups). On the history of the Cambridge Platform, see Henry Wilder Foote, “The Significance and Influence of the Cambridge Platform of 1648,” *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* Third Series, Vol. 69 (Oct., 1947 - May, 1950), pp. 81-101. On the

of the ‘godly’ or ‘elect’ (both individually and collectively) that generally distinguished the Puritans from other Anglo-American Protestants of the time. While this study focuses on the experience and thought of Puritans in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, I agree with Stephen Foster that Anglo-American Puritanism is best understood as a continuum and dialogue, rather than as an opportunity for comparative analysis.³¹

Citizen

While others have examined Puritan beliefs about the characteristics necessary for godly leadership, I intend to focus on the virtues requisite of a godly people, or what today might be termed questions of citizenship.³² “Citizenship,” in the way I use it here, is something of an anachronism: early modern authors tended to use citizen as a technical term (i.e., to describe a class of membership in specific ‘free’ towns or cities), and to use the terms “people,” “community,” or “subjects” to describe those under the authority of others, even of their own choosing.³³ Through the study, I use the word “citizen” interchangeably with these other terms, unless doing so is clearly at odds with the original meaning of the passage being interpreted.

While there is certainly some conceptual overlap between the two questions (godly rulers, after all, were citizens first and foremost), the manifestation of the founding aspirations in practice could and did look different depending on which role one was fulfilling at any given time. Moreover, because Puritan intellectual history has generally

radical groups, see Philip F. Gura, *A Glimpse of Sion's Glory: Puritan Radicalism in New England, 1620-1660* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1984).

³¹ Stephen Foster, *The Long Argument: English Puritanism and the Shaping of New England Culture, 1570-1700* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

³² Most notably, T. H. Breen in *The Character of the Good Ruler: A Study of Puritan Political Ideas, 1630-1730* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970).

³³ "citizen, n.," *The Oxford English Dictionary* OED Online. March 2013. Oxford University Press. Accessed June 06, 2013.

been focused on elite textual production, my study fills a gap in the literature by exploring the ways in which non-elites lived out the aspirational commitments of the regime to moral equality, personal calling, and communion in their capacity as ‘the people’ participating in New England’s institutions of civic life. In this study, I utilize not only printed texts (such as sermons, laws, and pamphlets) but also manuscript sermons, auditor notes, the minutes of church and town meetings, correspondence, poetry, public petitions, and personal journals.

These latter types of sources are too often overlooked by political theorists whose tendency to focus on “public” and “formal” works of theory has also meant they largely focus on printed, elite texts and less on the conversation around such texts or the informal types of political theorizing carried on by ordinary citizens in their reflections on their political communities. Such reflections, are, admittedly, perhaps more likely to occur in times of political extremis such as founding moments, and are often recorded in only ephemeral or tangential ways that make them difficult to access. Nevertheless, where it is within our capacity to study them, I argue that doing so will provide a more complete understanding of whether and how and to what extent elite political theorizing actually mattered to the lived political experience of the ordinary citizen.

Civic Formation

As Sydney Ahlstrom wrote, the study of American political thought can rather naturally be divided into three related concerns: aspirations, institutions, and “the total sense of civic responsibility and moral concern which must be felt by the leaders and citizens of the body politic if the ideals embodied in the structures are to be vital,

enduring, or efficacious.”³⁴ The founding aspirations of the Massachusetts Bay Colony were a commitment to the moral equality of persons; elevation of personal industry through the doctrine of a ‘calling’ or vocation; and communion, or the radical idea of love as the appropriate bond between citizens. These aspirations had political consequences: the Puritans designed their civic institutions to reflect, apply, and nourish these philosophic principles in the life of the community. That nourishment, the ongoing and “total sense of civic responsibility and moral concern” as Ahlstrom put it, involves the combination of virtue, knowledge, and engagement that I have described as civic formation. The three elements of civic formation are clearly conceptually interrelated, and indeed, in practical terms, difficult to deal with separately; however in this study, I emphasize the primacy of virtue and knowledge as prerequisite for the proper types of engagement. The personal character development and philosophical commitments of the citizenry provide the essential foundation for more explicitly political or civic activities such as voting or otherwise participating in the institutions of civil society.³⁵

This approach is faithful to seventeenth century New Englanders, who envisioned the institutions and practices of their community as external manifestations of the internal commitments of the regime. The Puritan concept of civic formation was both privately

³⁴ Ahlstrom, “Thomas Hooker: Puritanism and Democratic Citizenship: A Preliminary Inquiry into Some Relationships of Religion and American Civic Responsibility.” *Church History* 32.4 (1963): 421.

³⁵ See Stephen Carter’s books *Civility: Manners, Morals, And The Etiquette Of Democracy* (New York: Basic Books, 1998) and *Integrity* (New York: Basic Books, 1996) for examples of the ways in which personal character and philosophical commitments can shape political life. On the primacy of this sort of pre-political character formation and the overall development of citizens more generally, see: Anne Colby et al., *Educating Citizens: Preparing America’s Undergraduates for Lives of Moral and Civic Responsibility* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010); Roger Soder, John I. Goodlad, and Timothy J. McMannon, eds., *Developing Democratic Character in the Young* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001); Bradley C. S. Watson, *Civic Education and Culture* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books 2005); Patricia White, *Civic Virtues and Public Schooling: Educating Citizens for a Democratic Society* (Teachers College Press, 1996); and the 1997 report by the National Council for the Social Studies, *Fostering Civic Virtue: Character Education in the Social Studies (NCSS)*, online: <http://www.socialstudies.org/positions/character>.

and publically oriented, in keeping with their understanding of social reform as a result of individual reformation: it depended upon the internalization of the aspirations underlying the actual institutions and practices.³⁶ This was necessary because, as has often been observed, the political manifestations of the abstract values of equality and individualism, as well as individualism and community, are, in many respects, in tension with one another. Left unresolved, this tension can destroy a political community as factions attempt to elevate one value over the other; carefully designed civic formation however, can mitigate the worst effects of the tension by focusing on the abstract foundations and their value to the individual, who will hopefully then see the value in balancing their application throughout the larger society.³⁷ On this basis alone can a regime founded on such grounds hope to endure.

Political Theory and the Problem of Foundings

Founding and origin stories hold a natural fascination for political theorists.³⁸ As purposeful—and not merely developmental—moments in the life of a community, foundings focus our attention on the discretely political choices that are made by human

³⁶ In this, of course, the Puritans are hardly unique: Plato and Aristotle were deeply concerned with the influence of individual character and personal beliefs on the nature and quality of political life. The classical political philosophers had agreed that the “the goal of political life is virtue” and directed their efforts toward discovering and defending the regime most appropriate for its pursuit. The republican theorists of the Renaissance and early modern periods adopted the rhetoric of civic virtue to suit their own visions of the best political society in which liberty was paramount. On the role of virtue in the political theory of the ancients, see Leo Strauss, “What is Political Philosophy?” in *What is Political Philosophy? And Other Studies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 9-55. On virtue in early modern political thought, see Quentin Skinner, *Liberty Before Liberalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

³⁷ On the development of ‘Christian republicanism’ in American political thought, see also Mark A. Noll, *America’s God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford, 2002).

³⁸ See Joanne H. Wright’s *Origin Stories in Political Thought: Discourses on Gender, Power, and Citizenship* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004). Theoretical use of the motif is powerful, however, only because it appeals to a natural human desire to understand and connect to one’s roots. Even modern filmmakers desperate for the next summer blockbuster cannot resist the allure of a good founding narrative: see Lasse Thomassen’s review of *Gladiator*: “‘Gladiator,’ Violence, and the Founding of a Republic,” *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (Jan., 2009), pp. 145-148.

actors in forming a new society. Political theorists—ancients, medieval, and moderns—have embraced the study of foundings as a way of understanding not only political change, but also political identity. As scholars, we learn from founders what the members of the regime had in common at the start, what it was that set them apart from others, what challenges they faced, the virtues and principles they meant to convey to posterity, and so forth. Inasmuch as those qualities are adopted or adapted by future members of a regime, they highlight the related problem of passing on political identity and ideals from generation to generation.³⁹

In Plato's *Republic*, much of what Socrates does is related to the tension between the attributes necessary for founding a new regime and those required for maintaining it. Socrates appears well aware that most of the work of any regime is not that of the *founder*, but of the *sustainer*. Socrates is primarily concerned with foundings because he is really worried about how processes of political renewal take place, and how the type of founding plays out in both the sustaining and renewing phases of politics. It is one thing, he demonstrates through the creation of the city in speech, to channel the spiritedness of young men in the activities of founding and statesmanship, but it is quite another to moderate these same qualities so that successive generations will actually continue to live according to the principles that structured the founding of the city.⁴⁰

Plato is not alone among the ancients in this concern: Arlene Saxonhouse argues that much of Greek tragedy was intended to direct attention to the limits of human constitutive capacities by focusing on “beginnings” that are nebulous either in their

³⁹ Robert V. Edington, “The Ancient Idea of Founding & the Contemporary Study of Political Change,” *Polity*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Winter, 1974), pp. 163-179.

⁴⁰ See for example, Allen Bloom, trans., *The Republic of Plato*, second edition (New York: Basic Books, 1968), especially Books 2-3 and Books 8-9 on the dangers of democracy.

historicity or their dependence upon human agency. Saxonhouse claims the overarching aim of the ancient dramatists was to foster the sort of humility that would result in an appreciation of the extant *polis*: if not contentment, then at least resignation with the political status quo.⁴¹ Aristotle, with less poetry but more clarity than his teacher, while interested in foundings in the abstract, also argues that what really matters is the preservation of a regime already established. In his work, the connection between such political activity and the character of individual citizens is extremely strong, so much so that the *Ethics* has been commonly regarded as a necessary precursor to understanding the *Politics*.⁴²

If, from the ancients, we learn that societies with good founding principles, good leaders, and good citizens are more likely to endure, modern political philosophy makes us all too aware of the limitations of these protections. For his ability to highlight these issues, Quentin Skinner has argued that Niccolò Machiavelli is one of “the greatest representatives” of that strand of civic humanism focused on examining the reasons why republics are vulnerable and ways to remediate those vulnerabilities, either by perfecting the institutions of the polity, or the virtue of the citizenry.⁴³ Whatever safeguards are put

⁴¹ Arlene W. Saxonhouse, “Foundings vs. Constitutions: Ancient Tragedy and the Origins of Political Community,” in Stephen Salkever (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Greek Political Thought* pp. 42-64. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Available from: Cambridge Companions Online <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CCOL9780521867535.003>> [Accessed 11 August 2014]. See also Peter Euben, *The Tragedy of Political Theory: The Road Not Taken* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990) which explores the role of tragedy as a genre of “reflection” for democratic societies both in Ancient Greece and in post-modern America.

⁴² See Aristotle, Book 3, Chapter 4, 1277b; Book 4, Chapter 1, 1288b; Book 5, Chapters 8-9; and Book 6, Chapter 4, 1318b in *Politics*.

⁴³ Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought, Vol. 1: The Renaissance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 42, 44, 45; see also 73, 75, 82-88, 94-95 on the continuance and subtle modification of these conventions through later writers. The use of history is central to this argument, with the Roman Republic presented as an ideal of active civic involvement, as is a particularly optimistic conception of man as *vir virtutis* with the capacity to shape the world around him. Like other humanists, Machiavelli tended to see fortune as something to be overcome by the forceful expression of *virtu*. On the

around the principles of the regime, individuals pursuing differing interests and ends inevitably tend toward conflict with one another and perhaps even with the laws of the regime. It is for this reason that Machiavelli draws attention to the importance of periodically returning to founding principles of a regime in order to ensure that they have not been corrupted or replaced by other principles that would weaken the body politic. Savvy political leaders will make regular and purposeful use of historical narratives—a task Machiavelli not only advocates, but models in the *Discourses*. The loyalties generated by such shared histories—especially when they coincide with the civil religion of the regime—are among the primary means by which civil order and peacefulness can be maintained.⁴⁴

In the work of the quintessential social contract theorists—Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau—we see an attempt to harness the potentially detrimental elements of such individual interests in order to constructively use them to preserve the regime. Each of these theorists shares a conviction that man is, in his natural state, free, and in his freedom (variously defined), is equal to all other men. Moreover, they agree that this freedom and equality are alterable only by mutual consent. In their theorizing, they thus construct imagined histories of man's move from nature to society in order to derive normative propositions about the nature and ends of politics. Each of them grounds his theory in an account of a hypothetical “founding” moment in which previously free and equal men consent to varying degrees of restraint and inequality in exercise of political power and authority. And, in their own ways, each of them is also deeply concerned

influence of Machiavelli, see J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

⁴⁴ Machiavelli, *Discourses*, Book III, Chapter 1.

about the preservation of the regime types they imagine, not only through institutional design, but also through the education and character of citizens.⁴⁵

As the inheritors of this long tradition of theorizing about the founding and preservation of republican governments, the leaders of the American national founding of 1776-1789 were able to synthesize multiple traditions in constructing their own political institutions.⁴⁶ They were acutely aware of the potential for political communities to move away from their founding commitments and attempted to limit such tendencies through constitutionalism.⁴⁷ The reliance on legal restraints is reflective of an understanding of human nature which recognizes that men, while possessed of natural rights and reason, are prone to passion, pride, self-interest and a whole host of other attributes destructive of political community.⁴⁸ James V. Schall argues that in its realism, the American founding

⁴⁵ Hobbes' entire project is, to a certain extent, an educational exercise led by the sovereign. See Teresa M. Bejan, "Teaching the "Leviathan": Thomas Hobbes on Education," *Oxford Review of Education*, Vol. 36, No. 5, Political and Philosophical Perspectives on Education. Part 1 (October 2010), pp. 607-626. On Locke, see: Steven Forde, "What Does Locke Expect Us to Know?" *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 68, No. 2 (Spring, 2006), pp. 232-258, as well as Ruth W. Grant, "John Locke on Custom's Power and Reason's Authority," *The Review of Politics* Vol. 74, No. 4 (FALL 2012) (pp. 607-629). On Rousseau, see: Henry J. Perkinson, "Rousseau's Emile: Political Theory and Education," *History of Education Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Jun., 1965), pp. 81-96. Mark E. Button has addressed the civic educational tendency of the social contract tradition in *Contract, Culture, and Citizenship: Transformative Liberalism from Hobbes to Rawls* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008).

⁴⁶ There are ongoing scholarly debates about the extent to which the United States is (or was, or was ever intended to be) either republican or liberal—and a whole separate subset of debates that center around what exactly, is meant by either republican or liberal. My point here is that regardless of how one comes down on the "republican/liberal" issue, it is undeniable that the American founders were deeply steeped in the literatures of both traditions, and were well aware of the nature and scope of their political endeavour. These debates are usefully summarized in Alan Gibson *Interpreting the Founding: Guide to the Enduring Debates over the Origins and Foundations of the American Republic* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas: 2006).

⁴⁷ On the native tradition of political self-definition and its relationship to constitutionalism, see Donald Lutz, *The Origins of American Constitutionalism* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988) as well as his introduction and annotations in *Colonial Origins of the American Constitution: A Documentary History*, ed. Donald S. Lutz (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1998).

⁴⁸ While debate around this theme continues throughout the early period of American political development, the broad contours are captured in the debates surrounding ratification of the Constitution: see *Federalist Papers* but also the writings collected in *The Essential Anti-Federalist*, William Allen and Gordon Lloyd, eds. (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), as well as in *Liberty and Order: The First American Party Struggle*, Lance Banning, ed. (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2004). See also Jason

represents a culmination of sorts, of the quest of classical political philosophy for the best regime – rather, it is a settlement for the “second best” or “middle class” regime. This regime is attainable in life, and mixes respect for individual rights such as liberty and equality with a moderate restraint through law and political custom.⁴⁹

This same theme is developed further by Abraham Lincoln in both his Temperance and Lyceum Addresses. Lincoln reiterates the idea that the preservation of the Union depended upon the ability of its leaders to teach the people to rely on reason, rather than passion, in making political decisions. If the people were to misconstrue their role as the “source of all legitimate power,” if they failed to “respect what they had asserted” in the Declaration of Independence, then Lincoln feared they would begin to engage in simple majoritarianism, unbounded by the internal restraints presupposed by the natural rights philosophy at the heart of the nation’s founding.⁵⁰

The use of popular sovereignty on the national level to justify the extension of a practice as incompatible with the fundamental principles of the Union as slavery was as dangerous as mobocracy on the local level, Lincoln argued. During the course of their debates, Lincoln accused Douglas of being an “evil genius,” who led “very many good men to doubt there being any advantage in virtue over vice” with his “false

Frank, “Publius and Political Imagination,” in *Political Theory*, February 2009 37: 69-98 for a modern interpretation of this debate and what it means for American political thought.

⁴⁹ James V. Schall, “The Best Form of Government: A Perspective on the Continuity of Political Theory,” *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (Jan., 1978), pp. 97-123.

⁵⁰ Abraham Lincoln, “Temperance Address Delivered Before the Springfield Washington Temperance Society” (February 22, 1842), in Roy P. Basler, ed. *Abraham Lincoln: His Speeches and Writings*, Second Edition (New York: De Capo Press, 2001), 133-34; see also Harry V. Jaffa, *Crisis of the House Divided: An Interpretation of the Issues in the Lincoln-Douglas Debates* (reprint, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 248; Abraham Lincoln, “The Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions: Address Before the Young Men’s Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois” (January 27, 1838), in *Speeches and Writings*, 84-85; and again, see Jaffa, *Crisis*, 223-225.

statesmanship.” True statesmanship, on the other hand, would encourage and help the people hold fast to the teachings of their political founding.⁵¹

In short, although founders of all kinds (statesmen, intellectuals and theorists) are terribly important in helping to provide inspiration for political communities by drawing attention to the enduring truths about human nature, they are not, on their own, enough. Men cannot govern themselves using abstractions alone—those are useful only for inciting the passions of the public through the shouts of revolutionary leaders—but must learn to govern themselves through the daily, often tedious practice of local politics and the work of building a robust civil society.⁵² The problem of political foundings, therefore, leads naturally to a consideration of the problem of citizen formation, or civic education.

Civic Education as a Political Problem

While in the previous section, I discussed the role of political foundings in the canonical thinkers of Western political thought more broadly, in this section I turn specifically to the question of civic education in America for it is here that the Puritan experience has been most influential. From the earliest laws requiring the education of children as a public good in New England to contemporary calls for the renewal of civic

⁵¹ Lincoln, “Repeal of the Missouri Compromise” in *Speeches and Writings*, 303-304, 315; Lincoln, “Speech at Edwardsville” in *Speeches and Writings*, 471, 473; Lincoln and Douglas, 58, 72, 324; *Ibid*, 55; and Lincoln, “A House Divided,” in *Speeches and Writings*, 378-379; Lincoln, “Address to the Senate of New Jersey” (February 21, 1861). On the compatibility of Lincoln’s actions to preserve the founding during the Civil War and the principles of the founders (especially James Madison), see Drew R. McCoy, “Lincoln and the Founding Fathers: A Reconsideration,” *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Winter, 1995), pp. 1-13. On the specific views of citizenship of both American “foundings” see Catherine A. Holland, *The Body Politic: Foundings, Citizenship, and Difference in the American Political Imagination* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

⁵² On the importance of civil society, see Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Harvey C. Mansfield, and Delba Winthrop, trans. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 2000).

education in light of the coming (or present) crisis of citizenship, the cultivation of the hearts as well as the minds of future republican citizens has been a subject of constant reflection, theorization, and experimentation in New England (and, later, the United States). From both a historical perspective and as an issue in contemporary debates on the role of citizens in their own government, the question “what kind of people shall we be?” has been one of enduring interest. The process of civic formation is often viewed as developing along three separate, but related axes: the cultivation of personal virtue or character in the citizenry; the transmission of specific political knowledge and traditions; and the actual engagement of citizens in the life of their community. Civic formation as a political problem is thus fundamentally an educational problem, for each of these aspects depends upon the successful passing down of political attitudes, understanding, and skill from one generation to the next.⁵³ Unsurprisingly, the study of the values, facts, and skills necessary for citizenship from childhood through young adulthood has been widely understood as one of the fundamental purposes of American schooling.⁵⁴

I have purposely chosen to use the broader term of ‘schooling’ here in order to encompass the many varieties of education that play a key role in the development of

⁵³ For political theorists interested in civic formation, see below; educational theorists include: John I. Goodlad, Timothy J. McMannon, eds. *The Public Purpose of Education and Schooling* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1997); Lorraine M. McDonnell, P. Michael Timpone, and Roger Benjamin, *Rediscovering the Democratic Purposes of Education* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000); and Diane Ravitch and Joseph P. Viteritti, eds. *Making Good Citizens: Education and Civil Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

⁵⁴ The literature on the history of education in the United States is extremely broad: representative studies include Monaghan, *Learning to Read and Write in Colonial America*; Carl Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983); Margaret A. Nash, *Women's Education in the United States, 1780-1840* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005); Tracy L. Steffes, *School, Society, and State: A New Education to Govern Modern America, 1890-1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012); Elisabeth Hansot, *Managers Of Virtue: Public School Leadership In America, 1820-1980* (New York: Basic Books, 1986); and, on the darker side, David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience 1875-1928* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997).

future citizens, ranging from homeschooling and private tutoring to parochial or other private schools to state-run public schools. This broader term also allows the consideration of the civic purposes of other types of institutions, such as churches, libraries and museums, which provide formal and informal education to members of the public at all stages of life, not just to children. To think of education as a life-long process occurring both in and out of classrooms is both historically appropriate—for the Puritans, the process of education occurred through a combination of influences, ranging from the family to the school, the church, and even the state—and timeless: the ideal of liberal learning, after all, is not enclosed by the schoolyard wall.⁵⁵

The rhetoric of civic formation has been a powerful tool in the hands of those seeking to influence American political thought and life outside the realm of government narrowly defined. Contemporary calls for renewed attention to civic formation come from a variety of sources: professional associations, advocacy groups, policy makers, and the scholarly community.

Secondary school teachers in the social studies, museum professionals, and public historians have been at the forefront of recent attempts to define and defend the civic purposes of their related fields. The primary mission of the National Council for the Social Studies, for example, is to help “social studies educators teach students the content knowledge, intellectual skills, and civic values necessary for fulfilling the duties of

⁵⁵ American educational theorists have long recognized the value of non-school settings for learning: consider John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: MacMillan, 1938); John Holt, *Instead of Education: Ways to Help People do Things Better* (New York: Dutton, 1976); and John F. Falk and Lynn D. Dierking, *Lessons Without Limit: How Free-Choice Learning is Transforming Education* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2002).

While the implications of thinking about schooling in this broader sense is, on one level, a subject far beyond the scope of this project, it raises a number of important concerns and issues for civic formation that I will address in the conclusion.

citizenship in a participatory democracy.”⁵⁶ These relatively amorphous goals are difficult to measure yet the organization remains committed to them even in an era with increased pressure on teachers to demonstrate that they are helping student achieve minimum standards of competency in the basic skills of reading, writing, and mathematics. Similarly, even as they fight for visitor, donor, and government dollars, the American Alliance of Museums (formerly the American Association of Museums) and the National Park Service (NPS) have each published reports on the central role of civic engagement in the public mission of their organizations. The NPS also maintains a dedicated website to help rangers fulfill the organization’s purpose of civic engagement.⁵⁷

Clearly, these professional organizations believe that focusing on the relatively intangible benefits that their respective professions offer in terms of shaping the hearts and minds of citizens has a rhetorical value that will translate into fiscal support from both the private and the public sectors. On the federal level alone, numerous pieces of legislation have been passed in the last two decades with the ostensible goal of improving the civic character, knowledge, and participation of American schoolchildren: for example, the Education for Democracy Act (20 USC 6711 et seq), the Teaching American History grant program (20 USC 6721) as well as a similar program to fund character education programs (20 USC 7247) were all aspects of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Other grant-making programs funded by the federal government dedicated to civic education themes include: American History and Civics Initiative

⁵⁶ This statement appears at the top of the “About the National Council for the Social Studies” section of the NCSS website; <http://www.socialstudies.org/about>; accessed June 12, 2015.

⁵⁷ *Mastering Civic Engagement: A Challenge to Museums* (Washington, DC: American Association of Museums, 2002); Jacquelyn L. Tuxill, Nora J. Mitchell, and Delia Clark, *Stronger Together: A Manual on the Principles and Practices of Civic Engagement* (Woodstock, VT: Conservation Study Institute, 2009). Current and archived NPS resources for civic engagement can be found online: <http://www.nps.gov/civic/>; accessed June 12, 2015.

(Corporation for Public Broadcasting); Museums and Libraries Engaging America's Youth (Institute of Museum and Library Services); and "We the People" (National Endowment for the Humanities).

These campaigns for public support are assisted through the efforts of dozens of non-profit organizations dedicated to advocating for and promoting civic formation. Two major groups with a national presence whose activities are primarily aimed at secondary schools are the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools (a project of the Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics of the Annenberg Public Policy Center, University of Pennsylvania) and the Center for Civic Education, an independent affiliate of the State Bar of California, which directs such national programs as *We the People* and *Project Citizen*.⁵⁸ On the university level, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities coordinates *The American Democracy Project* which is "a multi-campus initiative focused on higher education's role in preparing the next generation of informed, engaged citizens for our democracy."⁵⁹ These programs represent significant investments of both financial and social capital from a broad spectrum of sources—a testimony to the widespread sense of urgency that surrounds this topic.

Political Theorists and Civic Education

While practitioners, advocates, and policy makers have been designing, implementing, and funding civic education initiatives, political scientists have been engaged in studying these activities. The American Political Science Association has a standing Committee on Civic Education and Engagement which promotes research on the topic from both a theoretical and practical perspective, and encourages individual

⁵⁸ <http://www.civicmissionofschools.org/> and <http://new.civiced.org/>; accessed June 12, 2015.

⁵⁹ <http://www.aascu.org/programs/ADP/>; accessed June 12, 2015.

scholars within the discipline to bring their talents to bear on the issue.⁶⁰ Benjamin Barber, for example, argues that a properly designed education prepares citizens for political freedom by teaching them to first reflect on the essential questions of political life, and then to deliberate and engage with others in the shared activity of shaping their communities through service learning. Barber positions himself as attempting to walk a middle way between those who argue for a too-aristocratic conception of education (he singles out Allan Bloom) and those who seek relevance above all, making education primarily vocational at the cost of historical and cultural memory. Barber views the cultivation of civic virtue as primarily an instrumental task, in that it is largely aimed at smoothing the multiple interactions required for community life.⁶¹ Nearly twenty years before Barber, Eva T. H. Brann addressed a similar tension between the lofty premises of liberal education and the more earthy demands of democratic government in *Paradoxes of Education in a Republic*. Her conclusion, however, is that education for republican citizenship depends on recognition that the good citizen must first and foremost be a good human person. Civic education, that is, depends upon civic virtue, properly understood, and unlike Barber, Brann argues that it was the unique achievement of the American founders to resolve the apparent tension between the two.⁶²

Similarly, Lorraine Smith Pangle and Thomas L. Pangle, in *The Learning of Liberty: The Educational Ideas of the American Founders*, make civic virtue the centerpiece of their plan for civic education. Excellence in the public realm, they argue,

⁶⁰ Stephen Macedo, ed., *Democracy at Risk: How Political Choices Undermine Citizen Participation, and What We Can Do About It*, (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2005); *Teaching Civic Engagement: From Student to Active Citizen*, Alison Rios Millett McCartney, Elizabeth A. Bennion, and Dick Simpson, eds. (Washington, DC: APSA, 2013).

⁶¹ Benjamin Barber, *An Aristocracy of Everyone: The Politics of Education and the Future of America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

⁶² Eva T. H. Brann, *Paradoxes of Education in a Republic* (Chicago: University Press of Chicago, 1979).

depends upon the emulation of exceptional characters in both public and private life.⁶³ Stephen Macedo in *Diversity and Distrust: Civic Education in a Multicultural Democracy* argues for a vision of civic education that centers on the idea of liberty and reinforces certain essential liberal values—although Macedo’s argument, stemming as it does from Rawlsian premises, seems to require a greater sacrifice of individual conceptions of virtue and the good than any of the alternative theorists discussed above.⁶⁴

While Barber, Brann, the Pangles, and Macedo either tacitly or explicitly accept that their particular visions of civic education can and even should function as a cohesive force in political life, Amy Gutmann in *Democratic Education* takes quite the opposite approach: she argues for a relatively thin understanding of civic education as necessary for preserving the diversity inherent in modern democratic society..⁶⁵ As this brief survey has shown, political theorists are often divergent in their assessment of what education for republican citizenship should entail, but all agree that civic education includes character formation, as either an intrinsic or instrumental good, and thus, on the importance of cultivating some set of core aspirational commitments, however thinly or thickly defined.⁶⁶

⁶³ Lorraine Smith Pangle and Thomas L. Pangle, *The Learning of Liberty: The Educational Ideas of the American Founders* (Lawrence, KS: The University Press of Kansas, 1993). The Pangles argue that the “founders” came to appreciate the civic importance of education via the classical and Lockean traditions, as a partial remedy to the narrowly sectarian educational model of the Puritans. Yet much of what eighteenth century Americans had to say about the role of education in creating citizens was commonplace in Puritan circles, as I demonstrate in Chapter 3.

⁶⁴ Stephen Macedo, *Democracy and Distrust: Civic Education in a Multicultural Democracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).

⁶⁵ Amy Gutmann, *Democratic Education* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999). In contrast to Gutmann, see J. Budziszewski, *The Resurrection of Nature: Political Theory and Human Character* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), and *The Nearest Coast of Darkness: A Vindication of the Politics of Virtues*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988).

⁶⁶ Joel Westheimer and Joseph Kahne have recently identified three broad categories of theorizing about civic education in “Educating the “Good” Citizen: Political Choices and Pedagogical Goals,” *PS: Political Science & Politics* (2004), 241-247.

Chapter Outline and Plan of the Dissertation

Chapter 2 opens the dissertation with a discussion of the political context of England in the early Stuart period from which the Puritans were fleeing, looking at the escalating persecution of nonconformists under James and Charles I. I then provide a brief history of the formation of the Massachusetts Bay Company, before proceeding to an analysis of two key texts used to both justify and explain the founding of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630: John Cotton's benedictory sermon, *God's Promise to His Plantation*, and John Winthrop's shipboard exhortation, *A Model of Christian Charity*. Cotton and Winthrop were the foremost figures in Puritan ecclesiastical and civil society, respectively. Both men instructed their auditors to embrace a commitment to the moral equality of their fellows, and charged them to apply their particular talents with resolve and industry to the challenges at hand. Both men also stressed the importance of building a civic communion based on the ideal of Christian love, a task that would require citizen participation and mutual helpfulness.

These aspirational texts, delivered prior to the actual journey to New England, lay out the foundational principles upon which the institutions and identity of the new society would be built. In the remainder of Chapter 2, I sketch some of the early history of the settlement. To demonstrate the early ways in which the founders attempted to align their political actions with their principles, I outline the formation of the General Court, emphasizing the origins of the office of the 'deputy' or representative and the ways in which these institutional forms function as manifestations of equality and communion. Industry, which was institutionalized in the protection of property rights, was more theoretically recognized in New English attitudes towards and treatment of the native

population. In observing the culture of their neighbors, the colonists developed a sense of collective identity strongly rooted in their own pursuit of industry, which they understood in opposition to the relative sloth of native men, in particular.

From this broader view, Chapter 3 turns to the examination of two measures taken by the first generation to attempt to help convert their revolutionary commitments of equality, industry, and communion, into sustainable political principles: the establishment of public elementary schools and the founding of Harvard College (1636), and the drawn-out process leading to publication of the *Laws and Liberties of Massachusetts* (1648). I first discuss the theoretical relationship of literacy to the founding aspirations of equality and industry, the practical necessity of creating an educated citizen base in any system of consent-based politics, and the ways in which the curriculum at Harvard was designed to help prepare future generations of public leaders in both church and state.⁶⁷ I then analyze the process by which the colony developed a constitutional and representative government, beginning with a discussion of the varying theories of authority and representation which emerged in the 1640s, and their relationship to the eventual codification of a broader set of legal rights, duties, and punishments. The discourse surrounding this period of institutional experimentation and negotiation highlights the tensions inherent between the founding principles of moral equality and civic communion. The eventual legal settlement, which included robust provisions protecting the individual rights and political participation of the citizenry, demonstrates the manifestation of the principles of equality and industry in politics.

⁶⁷ On the history of education in colonial New England and its acculturative purpose, see James Axtell, *The School Upon a Hill: Education and Society in Colonial New England* (New York: Norton, 1976).

While Chapter 3 offered an analysis of some of the civic education measures put into place by the founding generation to attempt to perpetuate their political principles, Chapter 4 examines the rhetoric related to the transition from the founders to the second generation. The chapter is broken into three sections, each of which addresses the dangers to the polity from successive generations having either a defect or excess of each of the founding commitments. In the first third of the chapter, I address the negative social and civic implications of a defect or an excess of industry; here I look at incidents of church discipline, execution sermons, and Robert Keayne's post-humus *Apologia* in an attempt to help clarify Puritan attitudes about the proper, balanced approach to the pursuit of one's calling. Next, I discuss the Puritans' fear of the Quakers, whom they regarded as having gone too far in their pursuit of the founding aspirations of both equality and conscience. I focus particularly on their identification of these dissenters as a threat to not just ecclesiastical but civil order, ending with an analysis of the 1659 executions. In the final third of the chapter, I turn to the problem of church membership. New England's founders unwittingly found themselves in theological quagmire: 'pure' church membership, so desirable in contrast to the laxity of the English parish system, was less so when a large percentage of the population failed to meet the standard and thus stood apart from the formal oversight and discipline of the church. Each successive generation, therefore, was faced with potential crisis of identity – until an individual made a convincing profession of faith and became a church member, they had, in a sense, no real standing in the community. I revisit the theological tangle of the Half-Way Covenant with an eye to its civic dimensions, drawing attention to the ways in which both its proponents and detractors framed their arguments in relationship to the founding

principle of civic communion and as an attempt to stave off the dangers of apathy and formalism. I conclude the chapter with a brief account of how the colony's response to these various internal dangers effected their external relationship with the restored Stuart monarchy in the 1660s.

In Chapter 5, I focus on Increase Mather's attempts to revitalize New England's founding principles from the 1670s through the early 1680s. Although a member of the second generation, in his almost prophetic understanding of the threats to the principles of the regime from various sources—and his tireless efforts to counteract them—Mather stood out from among his contemporaries.⁶⁸ During this period, a significant number of the founding generation passed away, while at the same time, New England suffered from what seemed to be a never-ending series of threats from both internal and external sources. Here I look at works condemning failed citizens, such as execution sermons, as well as the work of the Reforming Synod of 1679 and the variety of jeremiad-style sermons Mather published both prior to and just after its meeting. Mather challenged New Englanders to renew their commitment to the ideals and identity handed down from the founders through a variety of measures aimed at eliminating vice and increasing the practice of those virtues and the bolstering of those institutions (Harvard) that were essential to the perpetuation of the founding aspirations of the colony.

Mather's most critical defense of New England's founding, however, was against the Crown in the late 1680s. The creation of the Dominion of New England and the appointment of Sir Edmund Andros as royal governor (the first non-elected governor in Massachusetts Bay history) represented an attempt by the Crown to consolidate its power

⁶⁸ In this way, Mather's relationship to the leaders of the first generation is not unlike that of Lincoln to the leaders of the American Revolution as framed in the Lyceum Speech.

over the colonies. Not surprisingly, this imposition was deeply resented by New Englanders in principle, and things only became worse after Andros proved to be corrupt and arbitrary in his management of colonial affairs. I analyze the dramatic overthrow of the Dominion of New England from within as an example of the successful transference of the revolutionary principles of the founders into a set of more sustainable civic commitments. I focus on the colonists own justifications of their actions as published in the large number of pamphlets collectively known as the *Andros Tracts*.

Although the Andros affair is often discussed as simply a practical extension of the Glorious Revolution (bringing William and Mary to the throne in England) on New England's soil, it actually looms much larger. The pamphlets published by New Englanders to defend their revolt are striking in the ways that they demonstrate how ordinary citizens and public leaders could share a sense of responsibility for the inherited civil order. These tracts represent the highpoint of New English political theorizing during the Puritan period in several respects. First, although the principles being asserted are broadly derived from the original founding principles of the colony, the rhetorical use to which they are being put has shifted from providing the justification for the creation of a new political community to the defense of an old one. As a result, the tenor of the discussion has also changed: whereas the founders were to a great extent, focused exclusively on internal political relations—the roles that citizens play toward one another—their successors in 1689 are much more outward looking. Their focus is on asserting an identity for New Englanders (collectively) against an intrusive government, and against the judgments of outsiders. One might also characterize this second rhetorical shift as a move from an emphasis on personal character as the key to civic identity to an

emphasis on the political characteristics of citizens, a change that I will argue represents the successful perpetuation of the founding principles with some modifications essential to fostering stability, understood as a genuine (non-coercive) commitment to the political community.

In the conclusion of the project, I discuss the ways in which narratives of civic identity presented as aspirational goals in 1630 changed as a result of the experiences of successive generations into something more explicitly political, and what this change might tell us about the development and formation of citizens.⁶⁹ The problem of Puritan New England is very much an American problem, and in this chapter, I address the ways in which the Puritan experience helps us appreciate not only the difficulty of sustaining revolutionary commitments over time, but also the importance of civic education delivered by a wide variety of non-governmental institutions in fostering the development of personal character upon which any abiding commitment to the political community must rest. I connect the experience of the Puritans to contemporary scholarship in public history, museum studies, and allied fields that have devoted considerable attention to both the theoretical (Whose story is being told? Why?) and practical (How can museums connect individuals to their local communities?) aspects of civic education and community engagement.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ On my interpretation, the Puritans were much more interested in personal rights than they are often portrayed: see Darren Staloff's account of a compliant community in *Making of An American Thinking Class: Intellectuals and Intelligentsia in Puritan Massachusetts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

⁷⁰ Diane Barthel, *Historic Preservation: Collective Memory and Historical Identity* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996); John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); Ivan Karp, Christine Mullen Kreamer and Steven D. Lavine, eds., *Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992); Amy K. Levin, ed., *Defining Memory: Local Museums and the Construction of History in America's Changing Communities* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2007); David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Thomas J. Schlereth, *Cultural*

Such efforts, although most common among history/heritage institutions, are also being developed in other settings aimed at a very broad audience: for example, the Animating Democracy initiative of Americans for the Arts which “inspires, informs, promotes, and connects arts and culture as potent contributors to community, civic, and social change.”⁷¹ Likewise, the Epic Theatre Ensemble in New York City was formed with the goal of using theatrical productions to “nurture citizenship by producing socially-minded plays” in tandem with events and programs meant to extend and connect the themes of each production to modern democratic society.⁷² In this chapter, I argue that such non-religious but also non-governmental initiatives can serve a function similar to the institutions designed by the Puritans to help address the problem of civic formation.

A Note on Sources, Dating, and Transcription

Because this project is concerned primarily with Puritan theorizing about civic formation and its effects, I have chosen to use a variety printed and manuscript sources, almost none of which fits the ‘classic’ definition of a political theory text. These sources range from the very personal (letters, journals or notebooks, and memoranda) to the very public (legal and institutional records, sermons, elegies, and political tracts). I have also included texts drawn from the middle-ground of scribal publication, that is, the reproduction and circulation of handwritten manuscripts as the equivalent to printed texts. Scribal publication not only permitted authors to overcome the technological and

History and Material Culture: Everyday Life, Landscapes, Museums (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1990); Patricia West, *Domesticating History: The Political Origins of America’s House Museums* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999).

⁷¹ Online <http://animatingdemocracy.org/>.

⁷² Online <http://epictheatreensemble.org/mission--history>. Of particular noteworthiness is the Epic Theatre Ensemble’s participation in the NEA funded *Shakespeare in American Communities* project, a long-standing program which links civic education to literature and cultural enrichment.

economic obstacles to the circulation of their ideas in print, but also bypassed the licensing standards, enabling the text to be directed towards that audience most likely to be appreciative of it. Winthrop's "Model" in some ways fits into this middle ground, for even though it was delivered to a public audience, it was also distributed in scribal form to supporters of the colony not present at its delivery.⁷³ So too does Cotton Mather's *Political Fables* (c. 1692) which were unprinted but circulated among Mather's allies in the aftermath of the Andros controversy.⁷⁴ Such documents, then, are public in their nature, but in a special way—they were meant to be read, circulated, and discussed, sometimes widely, but sometimes only to those who shared the author's particular position or concern.

In the context of New England, scribally published documents often seem to relate to matters upon which the Puritans recognized reasonable people could disagree. These sources therefore are particularly apt for exploring the 'working out' of civic formation, for they represent evidence of at least part of the dialogue on questions related to the application of the colony's founding principles in its developing institutions and civic culture.⁷⁵ In conjunction with sources such as journals or letters, scribal sources offer glimpses of the 'behind the scenes' moments of political life, fleshing out the

⁷³ We know this not only from the Jacie letter (supra note 1) but also from the fact that the only existing manuscript copy is not in Winthrop's hand.

⁷⁴ Details are drawn from David D. Hall, "Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century New England: An Introduction and a Checklist," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 96 (2006): 48, 65, 78.

⁷⁵ David D. Hall has done significant work identifying works published in this format, as well as in providing a preliminary assessment of their circulation and, in many cases, their eventual pathway into print. I rely heavily on his 'checklists' in the present study. David D. Hall, "Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century New England: An Introduction and a Checklist," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 96 (2006): 29–80; and "Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century New England: A Second Checklist," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 118 (2008): 267–96.

sometimes very thin references to requests by government officials for input from their constituents.

Dating: For the sake of convenience, I have given all dates in the Old Style (Julian) calendar, just as they were recorded by the original authors. However, I have observed the New Year as beginning on January 1 (not March 25) and I have not double-dated for the period of time between those two dates.

Transcription: For the purposes of readability, where I have made my own transcriptions from original manuscripts, I have used the expanded method. Where I have worked from the non-expanded transcriptions of others, I have generally chosen to silently provide the missing letters, unless to do so would involve changing a questionable word or phrase.

Provenance: the very real difficulties of founding a new society as well as the limited availability and high costs of printing in New England mean that many of the printed sources I use are technically English, rather than American.⁷⁶ The first printing press in New England did not begin operation until 1640, so for the first 10 years of the study, I rely exclusively on British imprints to supplement the available manuscript sources. Even after 1640, New England was limited to one or two licensed presses at any given time, and as a result, its publishing “industry” lagged far behind London in both speed and scope. Moreover, New England’s printers depended upon a motley combination of government sponsored projects and privately commissioned imprints, rather than market distribution for their livelihood. In light of these circumstances, it

⁷⁶ See David D. Hall, “The World of Print and Collective Mentality in Seventeenth-Century New England,” in *Cultures of Print: Essays in the History of the Book* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996).

should not be surprising that many New England authors entrusted their work(s) to publishers overseas, either for reasons of speed, quality, marketability, or to avoid censorship.⁷⁷ Likewise, New England readers relied upon the importation of titles by English authors to furnish their private libraries.⁷⁸ Throughout the study, I use British imprints by New England authors without comment, but where I use British imprints by authors other than New Englanders as sources, I alert the reader to my reasons for so doing.

⁷⁷ Hugh Amory, "Printing and Bookselling in New England, 1638-1713," in *A History of the Book in America, Vol. 1: The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World*, Hugh Amory and David D. Halls, eds. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 83-116.

⁷⁸ Amory, "Printing and Bookselling in New England," 90.

CHAPTER 2: FOUNDING ASPIRATIONS AND FIRST FASHIONINGS

The first fashioning of a politick body is a harder task than the ordering of that which is already framed; as the first erecting of a house is ever more difficult than the future keeping of it in repair.... Ill humors soon overthrow a weak body and false stones in a foundation ruin the whole building: the persons therefore chosen out for this employment ought to be willing, constant, industrious, obedient, frugal, lovers of the common good, or at least, such as may be easily wrought to this temper.⁷⁹

The Planter's Plea—published anonymously in London in 1630 as an apology for the settlement of New England, and traditionally attributed to John White, a leading nonconforming minister—suggests both the importance and the difficulty of establishing strong foundations for any new political community. These depend in critical ways, White argued, on the character of the founders: they must be more than usually committed to the public good, willing to sacrifice their own desires and labor for the benefit not only of their fellow founders, but also for the generations yet to come. And though New England was not the first region of America to which the English turned their ambitions of expansion and conquest, it was the first to benefit from even the semblance of such virtues; whereas Virginia had been brought nearly to ruin by the motley, rowdy, and individualistic “adventurers” involved, Massachusetts Bay attracted a more sedate and if not selfless, at least community-oriented, spirit. Indeed, even the contrast between the ideas of “planting” and “adventuring” suggests much about the distinctive qualities of the two colonies.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ [John White], *The Planter's Plea: or, the Grounds of Plantations Examined and the Usual Objections Answered. Together with a Manifestation of the Causes Moving Such as Have Lately Undertaken a Plantation in New-England* (London: 1630), 34-35.

⁸⁰ The colonists attracted to Virginia tended to be young, single, men without the preexisting responsibilities of a wife or family; Massachusetts' settlers generally came in family groups. The demographic distinctions had significant ramifications for the development of the two regions. The differences between the first settlers in Virginia and those in New England have been well documented; see for example, the collection of essays in T. H. Breen, *Puritans and Adventurers: Change and Persistence in Early America* (New York: Oxford, 1982).

From its inception, New England was intended to be qualitatively different from earlier colonial efforts. The leadership (and investors) of the Massachusetts Bay Company came almost exclusively from the ranks of Puritan nonconformists. They approached the founding of New England with intention and sagacity, striving to provide a sense of civic identity and purpose for those who would join them, and to design their institutions in such a way as to contribute to the perpetuation of the same. These seventeenth century Puritans engaged in a self-conscious reflection on the qualities of soul necessary for founding and maintaining a political society, which would have recurring significance in American history.

In this chapter, I identify the core commitments of the revolutionary moment in New England through a consideration of two key texts used to both justify and explain the founding of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630: John Cotton's benedictory sermon, *God's Promise to His Plantation*, and John Winthrop's shipboard exhortation, *A Model of Christian Charity*. I argue that the first generation of Puritan migration to New England is best understood as a statement of dissent and differentiation from Old England and her compromises, corruption, and errors of conscience.⁸¹ The Puritan conception of a covenanted community comprised of "visible saints" required New Englanders to engage in a revolutionary break with a previous political community in order to apply their principles to the intentional restructuring of civil society. As founders, Puritan leaders embraced the understanding that such reforms ultimately depended on the instantiation

⁸¹ While British colonization of North America is generally recognized to have been motivated by a number of different factors, arguably the majority of colonists outside of New England were not seeking a complete separation from England in the same way that Winthrop and his contemporaries were. On the diverse motivations behind seventeenth century British migration, see Bernard Bailyn, *The Barbarous Years: The Peopling of British North America – The Conflict of Civilizations, 1600-1675* (New York: Vintage Books, 2013).

and cultivation of particular elements of character within the body politic: institutional design grew out of these aspirational commitments and was intended not only to manifest them in practical ways, but also to help perpetuate them for succeeding generations of the community. In this way, character formation functioned as a form of civic education.

My goal in this chapter is to draw our attention to the core set of principles which underlay the colonists' shared revolutionary impulse in separating from Stuart England; in essence, I seek to answer the question, "what did it mean to be one of the 'New English' in the 1630s?" In order to answer this question, I first discuss the political context of England in the early Stuart period from which the Puritans were fleeing, looking at the escalating persecution of nonconformists under James and Charles I. I then provide a brief history of the formation of the Massachusetts Bay Company before proceeding to an analysis of the texts mentioned above.

The Political Context of Stuart England

The accession of James I to the throne of England in 1603 reinvigorated the religious tension that had been temporarily diminished by the relatively vague terms of the Elizabethan settlement, for although James was a committed Protestant with obvious leanings toward Calvinism, he was also deeply attuned to the political costs of a thoroughgoing reformation in both church and state.⁸² He therefore staunchly defended the established Church of England as a *via media* between the "corrupted" theology and practices of Catholicism, and the chaos of non-conformity. For James, episcopacy

⁸² For a recent and accessible history of Stuart England, see Mark Kishlansky's *A Monarchy Transformed, 1603-1714* (New York: Penguin, 1997). For the basic details of James' reign, see Jenny Wormald, 'James VI and I (1566–1625)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Sept 2014), [<http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/article/14592>, accessed 5 Oct 2014].

represented a commitment to order and social hierarchy; calls for presbyterian or congregational forms of church government threatened not only the fragile religious peace of the kingdom, but also James' personal power. As a scholar and a king, James was committed to a fully developed theory of divine right monarchy and eschewed any ecclesiastical reforms that would threaten his authority over church as well as state.⁸³ He was openly suspicious of the claims by non-conforming clergymen that the ceremonies, vestments, and rites of the church were affronts to their consciences, and implied that such claims were covert assaults on his role as the head of the church.⁸⁴

In this understanding, James was not alone—Kenneth Shipps' study of period references to "political puritanism" indicates that very often, those interested in religious reform were also interested in promoting the "liberties of the people, and [limiting] the prerogative of sovereigns."⁸⁵ The English Puritan movement connected Calvinist teachings on the limited authority of all earthly powers (whether in church or state) to bind individuals in matters of conscience with the traditions of common law constitutionalism that emphasized the liberties of Englishmen and the limited nature of the crown's authority.⁸⁶ James' refusal to embrace substantive ecclesiastical reforms was

⁸³ James' two major works on the theory and practice of kingship, *Basilikon Doron* and *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies* are reprinted in *King James VI and I: Political Writings*, Johann P. Somerville, ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995). On James' absolutist leanings in areas other than religion, see Andrew Thrush, "The Personal Rule of James I, 1611-1620," in *Politics, Religion, and Popularity in Early Stuart Britain: Essays in Honour of Conrad Russell*, Thomas Cogswell, Richard Cust, and Peter Lake, eds. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 84-102.

⁸⁴ On James' attitude toward "radical" Puritanism, see Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake, "The Ecclesiastical Policy of King James I," *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 2, Politics and Religion in the Early Seventeenth Century: New Voices (Apr., 1985), pp. 169-207.

⁸⁵ Kenneth Shipps, "The 'Political Puritan,'" *Church History*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (Jun., 1976), pp. 197.

⁸⁶ Recently, both Michael Winship and Nicholas Tyacke have written about this important confluence of ideas in sixteenth and seventeenth century English political thought; see Winship, "Freeborn (Puritan) Englishmen and Slavish Subjection: Popish Tyranny and Puritan Constitutionalism, C.1570-1606," *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 124, No. 510 (Oct., 2009), pp. 1050-1074; and Tyacke, "The Puritan Paradigm of English Politics, 1558-1642," *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (September 2010), pp. 527-550.

therefore only compounded by his insistence on the royal prerogative in civil matters, and his failure to work through proper Parliamentary channels.

Thus, in the early 1620s as foreign policy concerns forced James to consider a Catholic alliance and James' relative sympathy for Puritan concerns and his somewhat *laissez-faire* attitude towards nonconformity in the early years of his reign began to wane, Puritan dissent grew more vociferous. The antagonism only escalated when James' son, Charles, was crowned in 1625, and married to the Catholic Princess Henrietta Maria of France by proxy shortly thereafter. Compared to his father, Charles was theologically indifferent, and much less willing to tolerate nonconformity. Moreover, as his affectionate indulgence for his wife's preferences led to an increasingly overt Catholic culture at court, it was rumored that Charles had abandoned the Church of England for that of Rome.⁸⁷ Whether true or not, the taint of popery made Charles' attempts to subvert Parliament seem all the more arbitrary and egregious to English Puritans, who linked popery not only with religious but political tyranny.

Such suspicions were only deepened by Charles' appointment of William Laud as Bishop of London in 1628. Laud was known to be an Arminian and popular sentiment equated Arminianism with absolutism, if for no other reason than the close association between Calvinism and English liberties such as freedom of conscience, speech, representation and so on.⁸⁸ Thus, many Puritans saw his appointment as indicative of

⁸⁷ Mark A. Kishlansky, John Morrill, 'Charles I (1600–1649)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Oct 2008) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/article/5143>, accessed 5 Oct 2014]. See also Caroline Hibbard, *Charles I and the Popish Plot* (University of North Carolina Press, 1983).

⁸⁸ On predestination as a political—and not merely theological—issue, see David R. Como, "Predestination and Political Conflict in Laud's London," *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (Jun., 2003), pp. 263–294. See also Michael Questier, "Arminianism, Catholicism, and Puritanism in England during the 1630s," *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 49, No. 1 (Mar., 2006), pp. 53–78, for the later implications of this association during Charles' period of personal rule.

royal intent to further undo the progress of reform and to draw the Church of England back into close communion with the doctrine and practice of Rome. They also believed Laud's appointment signaled Charles' commitment to the use of arbitrary government more generally. Such fears seemed to be realized in the wake of the controversy over the 1628 Petition of Right: although Charles assented to a list of parliamentary restrictions on royal power, he explained that this in "was in no ways to entrench upon [his] prerogative."⁸⁹ On 2 March 1629, Charles dissolved Parliament, inaugurating what would in the end be over a decade of absolutism and arbitrary "personal rule."

In the midst of this fraught political environment, a group of prominent Puritans gathered themselves into a corporation for the purposes of building on the foundation of the defunct Dorchester Company and planting a colony in New England. On 18 March 1629 the Charter for the Massachusetts Bay Company was granted. In almost all ways, the terms of the Charter were unremarkable—it outlined the purposes of the colony as the glory of God and of England, laid out the physical boundaries of the colony, and established a rough structure for governing the corporation. In one critical respect, however, the Charter of 1629 was unusual: it failed to specify the location for meetings of the General Court. The so-called "missing clause" provided an opportunity for the leaders of the Massachusetts Bay Company to relocate the site of the company's meetings to New England. This decision would prove to be of critical importance to the development of a genuinely self-governing political community, able to create and promote its own

⁸⁹ Charles I, "Speech at Proagation of Parliament, June 26, 1628," in *Liberty Documents with Contemporary Exposition and Critical Comments Drawn from Various Writers*, Mabel Hill and Albert Bushnell Hart, eds. (New York: Longsmans, Green, and Co., 1921), 72.

political institutions without significant interference from absentee investors (or the crown).⁹⁰

The question of whether to transfer the government of the company to the colony was first raised at a meeting of officers on 28 July 1629. Matthew Craddock (then acting as governor) proposed “to transfer the government of the plantation to those that shall inhabit there,” on the grounds that such a move would further “the advancement of the plantation, [as well as] inducing and encouraging persons of worth and quality [to] transplant themselves and their families thither.”⁹¹ In other words, the sort of migrants viewed as most desirable by the Massachusetts Bay Company leadership—those who possessed ‘worth and quality,’ a phrase which suggests an interest in both the moral as well as social or fiscal fitness of the persons in question—were quite likely to be the very sort of people who would chafe at the prospect of life under the hand of a distant government.

On 16 October 1629, the company agreed to divide its power so that the “government of persons be held there [Massachusetts], the government of trade and merchandize to be held here [London].”⁹² An election for a new governor, deputy, and court of assistants was held on 20 October and John Winthrop, “both for his integrity and sufficiency, as being one very well fitted and accomplished,” was elected governor, and

⁹⁰ In his account of the absent clause, Ronald Dale Karr argues that the lack of specificity was more than likely a matter of accident or clerical laziness than design or intrigue, and that the matter has received undue significance because it lends an aura of providential mysticism to the founding of New England. Ronald Dale Karr, “The Missing Clause: Myth and the Massachusetts Bay Charter of 1629,” *NEQ*, Vol. 77, No. 1 (Mar., 2004): 89-107.

⁹¹ Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, ed., *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England*, 5 Volumes, (Boston: William White Printers, 1853), 1:49. [Hereafter *Records of the MBC*].

⁹² *Records of the MBC*, 1:56.

under his leadership, the final preparations for the colony proceeded speedily, allowing the colonists to depart for New England in March 1630 as planned.⁹³

The decision to transfer the authority of the charter government into the hands of those actually planning to remove to New England had significant theoretical as well as practical consequences. Even before the details of the decision were fully worked out, the members of the General Court recognized that the “whole adventure grows upon the joint confidence we have in each other’s fidelity and resolution herein, so as no man of us would have adventured it without assurance of the rest.” That is, they were jointly invested, not only in the material success of the company as a whole, but one to another, and to “others that shall join with us in this action.”⁹⁴ They expected that the promise of genuine self-government through locally elected representatives would serve as an inducement to “persons of worth and quality [to] transplant themselves and their families thither.”⁹⁵ Whatever the religious or political dissatisfactions at play in the late 1620s, the middling sorts of persons—men with moderate means, whether farmers or craftsmen—whom the Massachusetts Bay leaders hoped to attract to their commonwealth were expected to require some incentive to join. Given the context of Stuart absolutism and popular rhetoric about the usurpation of the liberties of the people, placing control of the day-to-day governance of the colony in the hands of the colonists themselves offered the best possible insurance against monarchical interference. Moreover, it signaled the commitment of the founders of Massachusetts Bay to securing the liberties of the

⁹³ *Records of the MBC*, 1:59.

⁹⁴ [Agreement of the Massachusetts Bay Company at Cambridge, England] August 26, 1629, in *Winthrop Papers* 2:151-52.

⁹⁵ *Records of the MBC*, 1:49.

people—rights that the English tradition associated with political participation and representation above all else.

A Promise and a Model as Statements of Civic Identity

In 1630 as the fleet of Puritan migrants prepared to leave England for their journey to the new world, they heard two discourses intended to prepare them spiritually, practically, and politically for the task of establishing a new political society.⁹⁶ The first, *God's Promise to His Plantation*, was preached by John Cotton as a farewell sermon and printed in London within the year; the second, *A Model of Christian Charity*, was (according to tradition) given as a lay exhortation by John Winthrop on board the *Arbella*, and possibly circulated in manuscript form, although not printed until the nineteenth century.⁹⁷ Taken together, these two documents represent the views of the colony's highest echelon of leadership in both church and state, and highlight several of the personal character traits that would be essential for founding—and maintaining—their new political community.

John Cotton (1584-1652) was among the most prominent Puritan clerics during the first third of the seventeenth century, a man with a considerable reputation not only as a preacher, but as a scholar.⁹⁸ Educated at Emmanuel College of Cambridge, Cotton went on to serve as a tutor, lecturer, and eventually dean of the college before accepting a call

⁹⁶ On the significance and nature of the sea crossing, see David Cressy, "The Vast and Furious Ocean: The Passage to Puritan New England," *NEQ*, Vol. 57, No. 4 (Dec., 1984): 511-532.

⁹⁷ One of John Winthrop, Jr's correspondents requests a copy of what he refers to as "the Model of Charitie," see *Winthrop Papers* 3:188. See also: Hugh J. Dawson, "'Christian Charitie' as Colonial Discourse: Rereading Winthrop's Sermon in Its English Context," *Early American Literature*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (1998): 117-148.

⁹⁸ See Sargent Bush, Jr., "Introduction" to *The Correspondence of John Cotton*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001); and Francis J. Bremer, 'Cotton, John (1585–1652)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edition, Sept 2013) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/article/6416>, accessed 5 Oct 2014].

as vicar of St. Botolph's Church in Boston, Lincolnshire where he introduced many Puritan-style reforms to his congregation, earning a reputation as a powerful preacher whose weekly lectures drew crowds of auditors from throughout the region. It was during this period that Cotton developed ties with Winthrop and the other members of the Massachusetts Bay Company.

A member of the gentry with the practical experience of managing his family estate, Winthrop (1588-1649) also possessed legal expertise gained from serving as a county justice and as an attorney to the king's Court of Wards and Liveries. Winthrop's account of his conversion and sanctification (written much later in life) records his youthful and painful struggles with his conscience. Winthrop was troubled by the direction of court policy under Charles, and ultimately came to the conclusion that if the godly were to enjoy any peace and security, it would have to be in a land of their own making. Using his network of connections from both religious and legal circles, Winthrop became a member of the Massachusetts Bay Company in early 1629, and was shortly thereafter elected to serve as the first governor of the colony.⁹⁹

As recognized leaders in the Puritan movement, Cotton and Winthrop took advantage of the inherent symbolism of the moment of the colonists' physical departure from English shores to frame their theoretical vision for their revolutionary endeavor. Drawing on Biblical as well as historical and common law traditions, these exhortatory addresses would function as aspirational touchstones for the community during the earliest period, delineating the broad principles and purposes which the soon-to-be-established institutions and practices of community life were intended to fulfill. In them,

⁹⁹ See Edmund Morgan, *The Puritan Dilemma: The Story of John Winthrop* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 1958).

we see the first articulation of the core principles of moral equality, personal industry and the notion of a calling, and, most radical of all, the application of the idea of Christian love to the creation of a civil communion.

Cotton was himself temporarily protected from the coercive measures being taken against non-conformists, but he was well aware of the pressures driving others from England and couched his discourse in terms meant to ease any possible scruples about abandoning the mother country. Although the Puritans were leaving behind a land afflicted with troubles in both church and state, it was, nonetheless, their homeland and thus, a source of affection and identity. To some extent, their experiences in England—indeed, their very Englishness—would profoundly shape the society they were to form in the new world.¹⁰⁰ Yet this plantation was not simply England, transplanted to a different hemisphere and recreated; it was to be “a place of their own,” England made new, with all the theological implications of the term. New England was a land chosen by God for the faithful remnant, a place not of temporary refuge, but a permanent home.

Using 2 Samuel 7:10 as his sermon text, Cotton argued that permanency was part of the divine purpose behind the proposed plantation: “Moreover, I will appoint a place for my people, Israel, and I will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own,

¹⁰⁰ The concept of “Englishness” as a category of self-identification in colonial America has garnered significant scholarly attention. In the context of the seventeenth century, I understand Englishness to encompass a commitment to personal liberty and limited government as expressed in the Common Law tradition, a commitment to Protestantism, and a commitment to the cultural inheritance of the realm. Taken together these qualities functioned to differentiate the English inhabitants of North America from both the native population and other European colonizers. See David Hackett Fischer, *Albion’s Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Jennifer Mylander, “Early Modern “How-To” Books: Impractical Manuals and the Construction of Englishness in the Atlantic World,” *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Spring - Summer, 2009), pp. 123-146; Cathy Rex, “Indians and Images: The Massachusetts Bay Colony Seal, James Printer, and the Anxiety of Colonial Identity,” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 63, No. 1 (March 2011), pp. 61-93; Jason A. Nice, “The Peculiar Place of God: Early Modern Representations of England and France,” *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 121, No. 493 (Sep., 2006), pp. 1002-1018.

and move no more.” The Israelite's possession of their land—and the colonists' of America—was to be “firm and durable,” Cotton wrote. No longer would they be captives or sojourners in the lands of others; instead, they would find “peaceable and quiet resting [where] the sons of wickedness shall afflict them no more.” Cotton indicates in a marginal note in the text that although the Israelites were often long-term residents in other nations, they were still sojourners in the important sense of “dwelling as strangers, because they neither had the sovereign government of the whole country in their own hand, nor yet did incorporate themselves into the commonwealth of the natives.”¹⁰¹

Similarly, the nonconforming Englishmen and women gathered around to hear Cotton’s sermon had become increasingly alienated from the larger society, forced to live as ‘strangers’ and outcasts on account of their religious practices. Under James, failure to observe the ceremonies of the Anglican rite and ‘sermon gadding’ (the practice of traveling to other parishes to hear ministers’ other than one’s own) carried potential civil penalties as well as serious social consequences: anti-Puritan libels accused non-conformists of disloyalty to king and country.¹⁰² Against such a background, Cotton’s

¹⁰¹ Cotton, *God's Promise*, note, pg. 5.

¹⁰² See Tim Harris, *Rebellion: Britain's First Stuart King's 1567-1642* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), especially 110-114. For examples anti-Puritan libels, see: “Withold thy fiery steeds great God of light,” c. 1622/23 or “O stay your teares yow who complaine,” January 1623, which was attributed to James and which clearly (if somewhat sarcastically) evidenced the king’s sense that Puritan attacks on the state church were attacks on his authority and prerogative as well:

God above all men kings enspires
 Hold you the publique beaten way
 Wounder at kings, and them obey
 For under God they are to chuse
 What right to take, and what refuse
 Where to if yow will not consent
 Yet hold your peace least you repent
 And be corrected for your pride
 That Kings designes darr thus decyde
 By railing rymes and vaunting verse
 Which your kings brest shall never peirce
 Religion is the right of kings
 As they best knowe what good it brings.

allusions to the Israelites' divinely sanctioned place of rest and respite would have made the opportunity to establish their own government, customs and traditions far from monarchical interference seem like a powerful promise indeed.

As we have seen above, among the earliest resolutions of the General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Company was the decision to transfer government "of persons" to the new world. In addition to upholding the biblical principles of consent and representative government commonly attributed to Israel under Moses and during the period of the judges, placing the General Court in New England was symbolically important: "durable" possession of the sort Cotton had in mind depended upon the establishment and maintenance of the institutions of community life, including local government. Apart from such institutions, the colonists could never truly own and commit to the commonwealth, but would always be merely visitors, whose true allegiance lay across the Atlantic.¹⁰³

The idea of permanence is important because it implies not only commitment in the present, but also for the future. Cotton likened the Israelites' possession of the land to that of a freeholder, a form of absolute property ownership that conveyed political as well as social status in seventeenth century England.¹⁰⁴ The concept dates to the Anglo-

Both are available online from "Early Stuart Libels: an edition of poetry from manuscript sources." Ed. Alastair Bellany and Andrew McRae. Early Modern Literary Studies Text Series I (2005). <<http://purl.oclc.org/emls/texts/libels/>>

¹⁰³ Although this was the theoretical expectation, the reality of the hardships of life in Massachusetts sometimes resulted in a less-permanent vision of settlement. Winthrop records several instances of disappointment in those who chose either to return to England or relocate to Connecticut, at one point noting that those considering leaving New England behind should examine their motivations carefully: "Ask thy conscience, if thou wouldst have plucked up thy stakes, and brought thy family 3000 miles, if thou hadst expected that all, or most, would have forsaken thee there." See: John Winthrop, *Journal*, James Savage, Richard S. Dunn, and Laetitia Yeandle, eds. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press: 1996), 126-127; 414-416. See also Andrew Delbanco, "Looking Homeward, Going Home: The Lure of England for the Founders of New England," *NEQ* Vol. 59, No. 3 (Sep., 1986): 358-386.

¹⁰⁴ Cotton, *God's Promise*, 2.

Norman period, when it was “used to denote the holding of an estate in land with the rights of a free man, as opposed to a villein.”¹⁰⁵ The contrast between being a free man or woman and one who owed “bond-service” to another was stark: villeinage proper described a form of serfdom equivalent to slavery, in which the villain was regarded as merely a human component of the manorial property.¹⁰⁶ Later, the term was used more generally to describe anyone lacking the legal and financial status to control their own destiny.¹⁰⁷

The concept of freeholding was also used figuratively as early as 1611 when the preface to the King James Bible included the observation “He that medleth with men’s Religion medleth with their custom, nay, with their freehold.”¹⁰⁸ And just as freeholders not only had the ability to utilize their property as they saw fit during their lifetimes, they also had the ability to will their property to designated heirs within certain limitations such as primogeniture. Cotton’s auditors would have understood these ancillary aspects of freeholding implicitly; freeholding was the idealized form of land ownership in seventeenth century England.¹⁰⁹ They would likewise have appreciated the comparison

¹⁰⁵ "freehold, n. and adj.". OED Online. September 2014. Oxford University Press.

<http://www.oed.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/Entry/74401> (accessed October 03, 2014). See also "frank-, tenement, n.". OED Online. September 2014. Oxford University Press.

<http://www.oed.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/Entry/74245> (accessed October 03, 2014).

¹⁰⁶ Milton makes this comparison in his *Sovereign Salve* of 1643 describing the status of French peasants; see "villeinage, n.". OED Online. September 2014. Oxford University Press.

<http://www.oed.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/Entry/223452> (accessed October 03, 2014).

¹⁰⁷ "villein, n.". OED Online. September 2014. Oxford University Press.

<http://www.oed.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/Entry/223451> (accessed October 03, 2014).

¹⁰⁸ "freehold, n. and adj.". OED Online. September 2014. Oxford University Press.

<http://www.oed.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/Entry/74401> (accessed October 03, 2014). See also "frank-, tenement, n.". OED Online. September 2014. Oxford University Press.

<http://www.oed.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/Entry/74245> (accessed October 03, 2014).

¹⁰⁹ On freeholding as an aspiration in English society during this period, and its rhetorical significance in political discourse, see Laura Brace *The Idea of Property in Seventeenth-century England: Tithes and the Individual* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998). Karen Ordahl Kupperman has argued that the success of the Bay Colony depended on the promise of freemanship, inasmuch as it offered tangible benefits to those settlers who were [eventually] disenfranchised from participating in elections for the general court. See Kupperman, “Definitions of Liberty on the Eve of the Civil War: Lord Say and Sele,

between willing property and attempting to convey intangibles such as civic commitments to one's heirs. The concept of inheritability would not transfer as readily to the intangible goods of civic identity, of course, which is part of what made the perpetuation of the founding principles such an urgent political problem. Yet, if the men and women who were about to venture across the North Atlantic would make the most of their opportunity to start anew in America, Cotton argued, then they might expect to be "planted" there.

As trees successfully planted grew "in tallness and strength," so too the successful New Englander might expect to see himself grow "to more firmness and eminency." Perhaps more importantly, such a man ought also to bear fruit in a variety of ways.¹¹⁰ First, Cotton clearly admonished his audience to pay attention to their roots, both spiritual and temporal. They must "have a care to be implanted into the ordinances" of God; if the people of New England were faithful to God's purpose in calling them out of England to establish a truly purified church, then they could duly expect to be the recipients of divine favor and protection. At the same time, Cotton urged his listeners to "be not unmindful of our Jerusalem at home" and to "forget not the womb that bore you" for although they might be fleeing a corrupted nation, they did so in part as ambassadors of repentance and reconciliation.¹¹¹ Perhaps, then, their firmness and eminency were related, for as the colony became more established and thus, more demonstrably successful in fulfilling its divine appointment, it would also increase its influence upon those left behind, pushing them towards reformation as well—the original interpretation of the 'errand into the

Lord Brooke, and the American Puritan Colonies," *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 32, No.1 (March, 1989), 17-33.

¹¹⁰ Cotton, *God's Promise*, 14.

¹¹¹ Cotton, *God's Promise*, 18. This point is made even more obvious by Winthrop; see below.

wilderness.’¹¹² Only in their commitment to ‘planting’ a permanent settlement, however, could the founders of New England cultivate the habits and institutions necessary to see their aspirations of equality, industry, and communion flourish.

Moral Equality

Winthrop opens his speech with a brief account of the material conditions of man's life—his relative wealth or poverty, as well as his social status and civil power. Such things are divinely ordained: God has “so disposed of the condition of mankind, as in all times some must be rich, some poor, some high and eminent in power and dignity; others mean and in submission.” Winthrop further clarifies what he means by rich and poor: “under the first are comprehended all such as are able to live comfortably by their own means duly improved; and all others are poor according to the former distribution.” Under such a definition, almost all but those who were servants among the New England colonists would have been classified as “rich.”¹¹³ Nevertheless, in acknowledging these material differences, to whatever degree they existed, Winthrop’s intention was not to introduce points of dissension or discord but rather, to direct his listeners’ attention beyond them to a theoretical and theological understanding of their equal moral status as human persons, creatures within a divinely instituted order.

¹¹² As the founders were soon to discover, this hope would go unrealized. See Susan Hardman Moore, *Pilgrims: New World Settlers and the Call of Home* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

¹¹³ On the predominance of the “middling sort” in early New England, see Stephen Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth: The Economic Culture of Puritan New England* (New York: Norton, 1995). See also Virginia DeJohn Anderson, “Migrants and Motives: Religion and the Settlement of New England, 1630-1640,” *NEQ*, Vol. 58, No. 3 (Sep., 1985): 339-383, and Richard Archer, “New England Mosaic: A Demographic Analysis for the Seventeenth Century,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* [hence: *WMQ*], Third Series, Vol. 47, No. 4 (Oct., 1990), pp. 477-502. Innes, Anderson, and Archer have found only minor differences between the settlers, who—for the most part—came to America not only with relatively similar economic and religious backgrounds, but also tended to settle in communities comprised largely of those hailing from the same geographic region in England, and unless they came as servants, were largely in the “family rearing” stage of life—married, responsible, stable, neither too young nor too old to take on the risks associated with such an adventure.

The twofold purpose of both wealth and temporal power is first, to display the glory of God in the world, and second, to help foster recognition of the interdependence of mankind. Diversity, Winthrop argued, glorifies God by displaying his “wisdom” as well as his “power” in the apportionment and design of such differences (which might otherwise lead to chaos and destruction) so that they work together “for the preservation and good of the whole.”¹¹⁴ Likewise, the differences between the material conditions of various men creates opportunities for them to both give and receive love (or “charity”), which in turn, fosters individual and community relationships.

Putting such an argument at the head of speech is a powerful rhetorical move that has several important implications for civic formation: it requires that individuals both reflect on and cultivate their own God-given role and abilities, while at the same time, giving them a motivation to provide for the cultivation of the roles and abilities of others. The argument for interdependence also encourages the development of other key virtues for civic life, in both elect and non-elect persons.¹¹⁵ God’s general grace works minimally in the hearts of the unredeemed. In the lives of the saints, however, God works more robustly to develop positive virtues: “in the great ones, their love, mercy, gentleness, temperance etc., and in the poor and inferior sort, their faith, patience, obedience etc.”¹¹⁶ While Winthrop attributes the mitigating effect of an appreciation of the role of diversity in community life to divine agency, it nevertheless remains true that the proper

¹¹⁴ Winthrop, *Model*, ¶2. The complete text of the *Model* can be found in the *Winthrop Papers* 2:282-295. For convenience sake, I have adopted Matthew Holland’s practice of referring to the various paragraphs of the speech by number; see his version in Appendix A of *Bonds of Affection*.

¹¹⁵ Within the reformed tradition, the terms “elect” and “non-elect” are commonly used to differentiate between those who have been predestined for (elected to) salvation, and those who have not.

¹¹⁶ Winthrop, *Model*, ¶3

understanding of this doctrine offers a justification for valuing individuals qua individuals, not merely as subjects of divine will.

Winthrop's understanding of the moral equality of persons derived from what he referred to as the "double Law," that is, the combined force of the Law of Nature (which he also refers to as the moral law) and the Law of Grace, or the specific teachings of the Christian gospel.¹¹⁷ Both branches of the double law call upon men to act with love towards one other. The Law of Nature is based upon the obligation of each man "to love his neighbor as himself" to the best of his ability. This principle enlarges the rule of mercy such that every man is not only obliged to help others in "every want or distress," but to do so "out of the same affection which makes him careful of his own goods."¹¹⁸ In essence, Winthrop argued that the core principle of the golden rule was a recognition of the moral equality of persons which precluded the use of material or circumstantial differences between individuals as measures of worth. The moral law obliges man universally to recognize his essential similitude to other men "as the same flesh and image of God," and therefore to accord his fellows worthy of a certain degree of respect and even, as we shall see, affection.

While the general principle of moral equality was derivable from nature, Winthrop also offered a specifically Christian extension of the principle. While the law of the gospel recognizes that a genuine distinction exists between those of the family of God and those yet outside of it, it also expands the application of equality in a surprising way. Because the moral law was given to man prior to the fall, Winthrop believed it could offer "no rules for dealing with enemies, for all are to be considered as friends in the state

¹¹⁷Winthrop, *Model*, ¶4

¹¹⁸Winthrop, *Model*, ¶4

of innocence.” The law of the gospel, on other hand, “commands love to an enemy,” a dramatic extension of the principle of equality (and the application of mercy derived from it) to encompass virtually all levels of human interaction: friend, foe, or neighbor.¹¹⁹

By highlighting the dispensation of mankind into various orders as within the “most holy and wise providence” of the Creator for the general good, Winthrop was able to frame his entire discourse as a relatively conventional reflection in Pauline terms on the organization of civil and church communities.¹²⁰ Yet in addressing his specific advice to the relatively homogenous group of soon-to-be founders before him, he simultaneously draws out the more radical implications of such a teaching (and of the Calvinist tradition more generally). The doctrine establishes the sort of logical framework that recognizes the dignity and relative equality of persons because of their shared nature, and offers a motivation for the creation of the sorts of social traditions and institutions that will help to cultivate those attributes which make community life more pleasant for all—rich or poor, mighty or lowly. This paved the way for a broadly representative political community grounded in the consent of the people, rather than organized in a top-down hierarchy.

¹¹⁹ This point seems to be rather strained: while Winthrop appears to be arguing that the command “love thy neighbor as thyself” was present even in Eden (“in the estate of innocence,”) and is therefore universally applicable to man *qua* man, there is no scriptural warrant for such a claim; the text appears first in Leviticus 19:18 as part of the Mosaic Law. The scriptural context of this passage is thus very far from a time of innocence, and it not difficult to imagine that the Israelites (who are also being instructed not to “hate thy brother in thy own heart” and not to “vex” those strangers who might come among them) as having relationships of enmity. For Winthrop to ignore this seems not only disingenuous but unwise inasmuch as it threatens to diminish the radical nature of the Gospel message. What has really changed is not the presence or absence of enemies (how could you love what was not there?), but rather more importantly, their inclusion in the category of “neighbor” vis-à-vis Christ’s use of a hated Samaritan as the good neighbor in the parable.

¹²⁰ See 1 Corinthians 12.

The importance of the moral equality of individuals and its political manifestation in the form of consent is also present in Cotton's *Promise*. Among the "special providences" that may be seen as justifications for the colonial project, Cotton includes the sense of personal "inclination to this or that course, for that is the spirit of man; and God is the Father of spirits" (emphasis added).¹²¹ It is in the "spirit of man" or his nature, to be make free choices about his activities: this is not only an inextricable part of what it means to be human, but it is one of the ways in which men are like their creator, for their choices shape the world around them. Cotton acknowledges that the motivations behind individual choices are not all equally good, but he never questions the capacity or legitimacy of men exercising even their "vain inclinations."¹²² In the absence of particular obligations to restrain individual choices ("when a man's calling and person is free, and not tied by parents, or Magistrates, or other people that have interest in him") all men are equal in their spirit as choice-making creatures. The best choices, however, Cotton argued, will be those driven by a man's desire to "advance the Gospel, to maintain his family, to use his Talents fruitfully, or the like good end," and so we move from the first of New England's aspirational principles to the second, the doctrine of personal vocation and the virtue of individual industry.¹²³

Industry and Calling

As Winthrop had emphasized, a commitment to moral equality did not negate the existence of differences of status or talent among the members of the society. These

¹²¹ Cotton, *God's Promise*, 11. Cotton cites not only Heb. 12:9 from which he takes the phrase "father of spirits" but also Rom. 1:11-12 and 1 Cor. 16:12, which are examples of apostles doing or not doing certain things on the basis of their individual desires. He writes: "Paul discerned his calling to go to Rome, by his τὴν πρόθυμον, his ready inclination to that voyage; and Apollos his loathness to go to Corinth, Paul accepted as a just reason of his refusal of a calling to go thither."

¹²² Cotton, *God's Promise*, 11-12.

¹²³ Cotton, *God's Promise*, 12.

differences, in fact, were the result of a divine plan in which men were equipped with the talents and inclinations to do varying types of work for the glory of God and the good of their fellowmen. This Reformed notion of work as a ‘calling’ or ‘vocation’ tended to elevate and even sacralize ordinary labor: tradesmen, farmers, midwives, and mothers no less than ministers or magistrates were called by God to their particular tasks for the purpose of bringing glory to His name. Thus, working diligently in one’s vocation was an act of obedience, stewardship, and even worship.¹²⁴

The idea of a vocation was not uncomplicated, however. If every man’s particular role in society was divinely appointed, was it not, therefore, disobedient for an individual to seek to better his circumstances? Put another way, at the very same time that the doctrine elevated the status of the individual believer by arguing that all work was equally of interest to and pleasing to God, it seemed also to convey a least a potential endorsement of existing social hierarchies and material disparities as merely the result of varying callings. The sacralization of ordinary work, in other words, was not to be used as a convenient justification for the disorderly abandonment of one’s responsibilities for mere pleasure or selfish interest.

This tension was obvious to the founding generation, and in part, served as the impetus for Cotton’s farewell sermon: “We may not rush into any place, and never say to

¹²⁴ Robert S. Michaelsen argues there was a significant evolution of the idea of a calling from the works of ‘early’ Puritans like William Perkins, William Ames, John Cotton, Thomas Hooker, and Thomas Shepherd, to those of ‘late’ Puritans like Richard Baxter and Cotton Mather. I believe he has overstated the degree of divergence, but his article is useful for outlining the general characteristics and consequences of Puritan thought on the subject. See “Changes in the Puritan Concept of Calling or Vocation,” *The New England Quarterly* [hence, *NEQ*], Vol. 26, No. 3 (Sep., 1953): 315-336. The idea of a personal (secular) calling was not uniquely Puritan but represented a broader continuity in Protestantism: C. John Sommerville has argued that this theme was even more likely to occur in Anglican literature: “The Anti-Puritan Work Ethic,” *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Spring, 1981), pp. 70-81. See also: Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, and chapter 6 of W. B. Patterson, *William Perkins and the Making of a Protestant England* (Oxford: 2014).

God, ‘By your leave’; but we must discern how God appoints us this place.”¹²⁵ In the *Promise*, therefore, Cotton worked to reassure his audience (and, through its later publication, the rest of England) that the colonial undertaking was, in fact, not only consonant with but justified by the doctrine of vocation. The validity of the colonists’ “removal” to New England could be tested on three grounds, Cotton argued. First, if there were certain “good things” to be had in one place and not the other; second, if there were “evil things” to be avoided in one place and not the other, and third, “some special providence of God,” either in the form of a personal inclination, or in response to the needs of others.¹²⁶ In all cases, Cotton urged his auditors to focus on the opportunities they would have in New England to exercise their divinely appointed gifts for their good, the good of others, and the furthering of the divine will.

Among the “good things” that might motivate migration Cotton noted the conviction that a man might “employ his Talents and gifts better elsewhere, especially when where he is, he is not bound by any special engagement.”¹²⁷ Due to the circumstances at home, Cotton argued that this justification was almost universally applicable: England—which he referred to as the “hive of the Common-wealth”—had become “so full that Tradesmen cannot live one by another, but eat up one another.”¹²⁸ Cotton’s assessment of the situation was crude, but essentially accurate: despite a period of sustained economic growth which had begun in the late sixteenth century, the English economy suffered from tremendous inflation in the early seventeenth century and poverty

¹²⁵ Cotton, *God’s Promise*, 7.

¹²⁶ Cotton, *God’s Promise*, 8.

¹²⁷ Cotton, *God’s Promise*, 9.

¹²⁸ Cotton, *God’s Promise*, 9.

was both severe and widespread.¹²⁹ Such a state of affairs was not only worrisome economically, it also deprived men of the ability to freely exercise those “talents and gifts” which God had given them, both for their own good as well as for the good of others.¹³⁰ Migration, therefore, would not only relieve some of the economic pressures in the home country, it would at the same time allow each individual to better realize their discrete gifts.¹³¹ This, in turn, would enrich the common good as individuals in positions suited to their personal calling were likely to find themselves better equipped to help others than individuals struggling in employments for which they had little aptitude or appreciation.

The doctrine of vocation and the associated emphasis on personal industry would have at least two political ramifications in early New England. At the most fundamental level, they served as powerful rhetorical tools to legitimate the colonizers in their possession of their lands. While Cotton noted that the land the colonists were about to settle formed part of the territory claimed by another people, and thus, was not, in the strictest sense, unoccupied, he nevertheless presented a justification of colonization grounded in the conversion of “vacant place[s]” into places of civil habitation. “Where there is a vacant place, there is liberty for the sons of Adam or Noah to come and inhabit, though they neither buy it, nor ask their [the native populace's] leaves.”¹³² This right, Cotton argued, did not depend upon revelation but was deducible from reason: it was “a

¹²⁹ See Keith Wrightson, *English Society: 1580-1680* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003), Chapter 5 and *Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

¹³⁰ Cotton, *God's Promise*, 9-12. See also my discussion of Winthrop on stewardship, below.

¹³¹ Cotton, perhaps, needed to include this justification to counteract British objections that colonization was bleeding the country dry. On the broader context of contested understandings of the economic impact of colonial expansion, see Andrea Finkelstein, *Harmony and the Balance: An Intellectual History of Seventeenth-Century English Economic Thought* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000).

¹³² Cotton, *God's Promise*, 4.

principle in nature, that in a vacant soil, he that taketh possession of it, and bestoweth culture and husbandry upon it, his Right it is.”¹³³ Vacant, then, can be understood to mean “unimproved” or “uncultivated”—in other words, untouched by human hands.¹³⁴ Through the application of the doctrine of vocation and personal industry, the colonists would transform these ‘vacant’ lands into places of “culture and husbandry”—that is, into orderly and communal spaces.¹³⁵ While this was, in part, a gross misunderstanding of native lifeways and land use, this justification for taking native lands not only made sense within the framework of the doctrine of vocation, but it seemed eminently reasonable to the English as the severe depopulation of New England’s native groups in the early seventeenth century made the land appear uninhabited in fact.¹³⁶

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly for the development of New English civic identity, the by-product of industry was, logically and legitimately, wealth creation: indeed, among the “good things” that might legitimately induce a man to migrate, Cotton included “merchandize and gaine-sake.”¹³⁷ This was not to be used for the exclusive use or benefit of the individual, however, but rather with an attitude of stewardship and

¹³³ Cotton, *God's Promise*, 5.

¹³⁴ Cf. Locke’s later equation of property rights with cultivation and the use of one’s labor to transform nature; see *Second Treatise on Government*, Book V, §26-27 especially.

¹³⁵ Cf. the collection of similar descriptions of Ireland by English colonizers in Chapter 5 of *Strangers to that Land: British Perceptions of Ireland from the Reformation to the Famine*, Andrew Hadfield and John McVeagh, eds. (Gerrards Cross, Nottinghamshire: Colin Smythe Limited, 1994) as well as chapter one of Audrey Horning, *Ireland in the Virginia Sea: Colonialism in the British Atlantic* (University of North Carolina Press, 2013).

¹³⁶ On the extent and nature of the disease(s) that ravaged the native population in the region, see Cristobal Silva, “Miraculous Plagues: Epidemiology on New England's Colonial Landscape,” *Early American Literature*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (2008), pp. 249-275. On the importance of understanding the “pre-Puritan” history of European colonization in New England generally, see Neal Salisbury, “The Colonizing of Indian New England,” *The Massachusetts Review*, Vol. 26, No. 2/3, New England (Summer-Autumn, 1985), pp. 447-460.

¹³⁷ Cotton, *God's Promise*, 8.

orientation towards the fulfillment of the civic communion.¹³⁸ At times when the entire community faced a shared threat, as Winthrop noted, Christians might be called to give all of their belongings or estate to the poor, or less extravagantly, to “give beyond their ability” in order to ward and serve the larger community.¹³⁹ This kind of community-oriented attitude towards the stewardship of one’s financial resources was not limited to times of emergency, however, but was a “*duty of mercy*” (emphasis added) to be carried out in the ordinary processes of “giving, lending and forgiving.”¹⁴⁰

Under normal circumstances, Winthrop urged his listeners to practice both generosity in giving to others and prudential saving strategies: they were to “give out of [their] abundance,” with an eye to the future needs of their family. In times in which the need of others was more than ordinary, however, Winthrop argued “then a man cannot likely do too much”: the provision for one’s family must give way under the exigent want of “times and occasions extraordinary.”¹⁴¹ To the imagined objection that each man ought to have enough prudence to “forecast and lay up against evil times when he or his may stand in need of all he can gather,” Winthrop replied with a pointed reminder that men held their worldly goods only as stewards of the Lord, and that He might reasonably “call

¹³⁸ The classic statement of the manifestation of the doctrine of vocation in individualistic, entrepreneurial activity is, of course, Max Weber’s *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Talcott Parsons, trans. (New York: Routledge, 1930, 2001). For some essential correctives to Weber’s thesis see, Richard L. Means, “Protestantism and Economic Institutions: Auxiliary Theories to Weber’s Protestant Ethic,” *Social Forces* Vol. 44, No. 3 (Mar., 1966), pp. 372-381, which suggests that the ‘capitalistic’ values identified by Weber are with equal reasonableness attributable to a variety of other theological sources, such as a commitment to conscience or a commitment to literacy, etc. See also David Little, “Max Weber Revisited: The ‘Protestant Ethic’ and the Puritan Experience of Order,” *The Harvard Theological Review* Vol. 59, No. 4 (Oct., 1966), pp. 415-428, which addresses Weber’s over-emphasis on the individualistic aspects of Calvinism.

¹³⁹ Winthrop, *Model*, ¶6

¹⁴⁰ Winthrop, *Model*, ¶7 For a contrary reading of this section of the “Model” as primarily a secular reflection on commercial relationships, see Scott Michaelsen, “John Winthrop’s ‘Modell’ Covenant and the Company Way,” *Early American Literature*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (1992), pp. 85-100.

¹⁴¹ Winthrop, *Model*, ¶9

for His right” at any time. Failure to appreciate this stewardship ideal, Winthrop warned, led to an overemphasis on the accumulation of material goods which had a tendency to “steal away the heart” and divert it from its true objects, love of God and love of neighbor.¹⁴²

Given the pre-departure setting and Winthrop’s understanding of and repeated emphasis on the more-than-ordinary task the colonists were about to undertake, it is unlikely that he expected a robust monetary economy to spring up immediately upon their arrival in New England. The rhetoric of investment, thrift, assistance, and so forth should not, then, be understood as limited to the exchange of goods and services, but rather, as evocative of a broad-based generosity of spirit, the sort of “public spirit” that forgives faults in others as readily as their debts.¹⁴³ One must willingly be generous and even compassionate with ones resources, not only as an act of mercy towards the neighbor, but an expression of faith and love toward God: “If thy brother be in want and thou canst help him, thou needst not make doubt of what thou shouldst do; if thou lovest God thou must help him.”¹⁴⁴ This was even more necessary in the case of a “community of peril” which called for “more enlargement towards others and less respect towards ourselves and our own right” (emphasis added).¹⁴⁵ Winthrop’s language here hints at yet another political manifestation of the doctrine of vocation, a sense of private rights derived from the elevation of individual callings. Yet he also directs our attention to the

¹⁴²Winthrop, *Model*, ¶12-¶13

¹⁴³ On Winthrop’s later attempts to encourage such generosity in political relationships, see Schaar, “Liberty/Authority/Community,” 496-499.

¹⁴⁴Winthrop, *Model*, ¶13

¹⁴⁵Winthrop, *Model*, ¶18-19

potential perils of such a political commitment, saying that it must be subordinated to the greater good of the community.¹⁴⁶

Christian Love and Civil Communion

Although the first two aspirations of the founding generation- moral equality and the doctrine of vocation – seemed to emphasize the individual, the third, a commitment to love and communion was intended to offer a strong counterbalancing concern for the community. The project of establishing a new society would obviously require constant care and mutual concern, and Cotton exhorted the adventurers “go forth, every man that goeth, with a public spirit, looking not on your own things only, but also on the things of others.”¹⁴⁷ Likewise, Winthrop utilized the traditional Christian ideal of unity realized through diversity to offer a vision of a political community based in “brotherly affection,” and oriented “for the glory of his Creator and the common good of the creature, man.”¹⁴⁸ This two-fold end will, Winthrop argued, only be met if individuals can both give and receive love (or “charity”) to one another, guided by the twin “rules” of justice and mercy. While justice is limited to “particular cases,” and thus of relatively little use in framing the broad principles of a society, mercy is the active expression of love. Winthrop therefore focused the bulk of his attention in the *Model* on laying out the dimensions and scope of an understanding of mercy that could serve as the foundation for

¹⁴⁶Winthrop, *Model*, ¶19 In this section of the *Model*, Winthrop speaks about the need to consider futurity and the ways in which the founding accomplishments can be passed on to subsequent generations. Just as the early church had responded to persecution by pooling their resources together; as the Jews rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem under Nehemiah's leadership had been liberal in caring for one another's wants in order that the greater good of the project might be more speedily completed; and even as earlier English protestants had done under the strain of royal persecution, so Winthrop urged his shipmates to consider one another as drawn together for a purpose far beyond their own financial gain or even security. In doing so, they would find themselves “highly commended to posterity,” as persons who had demonstrated sacrificial love for their community.

¹⁴⁷ Cotton, *God's Promise*, 19.

¹⁴⁸Winthrop, *Model*, ¶3

a community. Winthrop carefully defined the terms of a new commonwealth in which relationships of mutual love expressed with mercy between individuals would form the basis for all other political and social exchanges, creating a form of civic communion. This included (perhaps especially) those of “mere” justice, which Winthrop argued must always give way to the demands of mercy. The manifestation of justice between either individuals or an individual and an institution, such as the state, presupposes a certain inflexibility and impersonality that Winthrop believed was inappropriate in times of political and social upheaval such as the founding of a new colony. Upon these occasions, Winthrop argued what was necessary was not the ‘blind’ virtue of justice, but rather the ‘seeing,’ knowing, relational virtue of love.¹⁴⁹

In general, although Winthrop attempted to demonstrate “the goodness or necessity of the work” of mercy to his audience, he readily admitted that a rational assent to a doctrine was not the same as “a habit in a soul, as shall make it prompt upon all occasions” to exercise mercy. Love, however, “will as naturally bring forth [mercy], as any cause doth produce the effect,”¹⁵⁰ for it is “the bond of perfection.” Winthrop conceived of mercy—the activity of love in those relationships that might otherwise operate merely on the level of justice—as an essential element in the community he hoped to see planted in New England. Drawing on its roots in both the law of nature and the law of grace, Winthrop outlined the application of mercy in three separate, but related areas that would be critical to the success of the new community. Mercy, he argued,

¹⁴⁹ In practice, Winthrop’s understanding of the necessity to depart from blind application of the law in order to better serve his constituents led him to argue for such flexibility as a magistrate that it caused him political damage on more than one occasion, with the most serious consequences stemming from his impeachment trial on the grounds of having overstepped his authority in 1645. See Schaar, “Liberty/Authority/Community.”

¹⁵⁰ Winthrop, *Model*, ¶20

would be a force for union between disparate individuals, an incentive to generosity towards those in need, and the primary motivation for elevating public over private interests.

The law of the Gospel, Winthrop argued, attempts to recapture a sense of the familial relation originally established for mankind in Eden, and thus places an extended burden upon the redeemed to act lovingly towards one another.¹⁵¹ As Winthrop put it, “Do good to all, especially to the household of faith,”—rather in the same way that one might expect children to be kind to neighbors and even strangers, but especially so towards their siblings, who share an essential similitude with themselves and an equal standing as children of the same parents.¹⁵² The primary ramification of this attitude for the founding generation of New England was an intense inward focus: having conceived of their venture as a strategic withdrawal from the mixed and corrupted community of England, they were eager to apply the teachings of the early church on the union of believers.¹⁵³

Winthrop demonstrated this aspirational tendency when he utilized the traditional Christian metaphor of the body to define the proper relationships between community members (on the assumption that the community was made up only of the elect). As the human body is joined together with sinews, ligaments and so forth, love acts to join together the disparate parts of Christ's body, the church: “it makes each part so

¹⁵¹Winthrop, Model, ¶5. On the importance of Edenic imagery for the Puritans, see Zachary McLeod Hutchins, *Inventing Eden: Primitivism, Millennialism, and the Making of New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014) and Jesper Rosenmeier, “New England's Perfection: The Image of Adam and the Image of Christ in the Antinomian Crisis, 1634 to 1638,” *WMQ* Third Series, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Jul., 1970), pp. 435-459.

¹⁵² The scriptural basis for Winthrop's statement is Galatians 6:10—“While we have therefore time, let us do good unto all men, but especially unto them, which are of the household of faith.”

¹⁵³ See Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *To Live Ancient Lives: The Primitivist Dimension in Puritanism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).

contiguous to others as thereby they do mutually participate with each other, both in strength and infirmity, in pleasure and pain.”¹⁵⁴ As each part of the human body suffers with injury to any other part, so the individual members of the body of Christ should share in the sufferings of their fellows.¹⁵⁵ Winthrop was candid about the fact that this extreme degree of other-regarding love would be impossible for the wholly natural man, who is “born with this principle in him to love and seek himself only.” Only the regenerate, united first *with* Christ and then *through* him to each other, will be able to experience this radical love of other-as-self, which Winthrop argued manifests itself in both outward and inward forms.¹⁵⁶

Those gathered onboard the *Arbella* and those of like mind who would follow in the near future—including Cotton—did not remove themselves from England for light or transient causes, but rather with the purpose “to improve our lives to do more service to the Lord,” by ensuring a place upon the earth where the true church could be “better preserved from the common corruptions of this evil world.”¹⁵⁷ The “work and end” upon which the Massachusetts Bay colonists were about to embark was “extraordinary”; it was therefore fitting that they “not content [themselves] with usual ordinary means,” but prepare to adopt extraordinary ones.¹⁵⁸ Winthrop once again called upon his listeners to prepare themselves for the unknown hardships that would surely meet them in New England.

¹⁵⁴Winthrop, Model, ¶21

¹⁵⁵Winthrop, Model, ¶27

¹⁵⁶ 1 John 4:7—“Love cometh of God and every one that loveth is born of God, so that this love is the fruit of the new birth, and none can have it but the new creature.”

¹⁵⁷Winthrop, Model, ¶ 40.

¹⁵⁸Winthrop, Model, ¶ 41

Remember, he urged “whatsoever we did, or ought to have done, when we lived in England, the same must we do, and more also, where we go.”¹⁵⁹ New England was not only to be different from Old in locality, but also in spirit.” They were to take the hard teachings of Christianity which “most” professed but did not act upon, and “bring [them] into familiar and constant practice; as in this duty of love, we must love brotherly without dissimulation, we must love one another with a pure heart fervently. We must bear one another’s burdens. We must not look only on our own things, but also on the things of our brethren.”¹⁶⁰ Should they fall short of these lofty ambitions, Winthrop warned the colonists not to expect the Lord to suffer with them overly long, for they had “entered into covenant with Him for this work,” and the Lord would consequently “expect a strict performance of the articles contained in it.” Any failure to uphold their end of the covenant would result in an outpouring of divine wrath and vengeance through human intermediaries.¹⁶¹

To avoid such a fate both for themselves and for the generations to follow, Winthrop advised the company to “follow the counsel of Micah, to do justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with our God.”¹⁶² What this meant in practical terms was to embrace the ideal of union, if not unity: they were to be “knit together, in this work, as one man.”¹⁶³ If they were to succeed in establishing a godly community, it was imperative that each one seek the good of the whole community prior to the accomplishment of any individual good.

¹⁵⁹Winthrop, Model, ¶41

¹⁶⁰Winthrop, Model, ¶ 41

¹⁶¹Winthrop, Model, ¶ 44

¹⁶²Winthrop, Model, ¶ 45

¹⁶³Winthrop, Model, ¶ 45

We must be willing to abridge ourselves of our superfluities, for the supply of others' necessities. We must uphold a familiar commerce together in all meekness, gentleness, patience and liberality. We must delight in each other; make others' conditions our own; rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together, always having before our eyes our commission and community in the work, as members of the same body. So shall we keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.¹⁶⁴

Love, Winthrop argued, is rooted in our "apprehension of some resemblance in the things loved" to the lover.¹⁶⁵ Thus, when God displays his love to mankind in general, it is because they are His image-bearers, no matter how fallen; as for the elect, he "beholds them in His beloved son." So too, the human soul "is of a sociable nature" which inclines it to cleave to that it perceives to be like itself.¹⁶⁶

This interaction between self and other in giving and receiving goods is the model of the community of affection that Winthrop hoped to foster among New Englanders, for having proclaimed themselves to be united as a particular "company" in accepting the king's charter, they ought therefore to accept the moral burden of being "knit together by this bond of love and live in the exercise of it."¹⁶⁷ The "work" of establishing the colony, undertaken "by a mutual consent," Winthrop predicted, would require them to remember that the "care of the public must oversway all private respects." This was not only good theology, he pointed out, but also prudential politics, "for it is a true rule that particular estates cannot subsist in the ruin of the public."¹⁶⁸ Adopting such qualities as "meekness, gentleness, patience, and liberality" would allow the founding generation to come together and approach the ordinary activities of life—working, playing, laboring,

¹⁶⁴Winthrop, Model, ¶ 45

¹⁶⁵Winthrop, Model, ¶ 31

¹⁶⁶Winthrop, Model, ¶ 31 Winthrop goes on: "She sets no bounds to her affections, nor hath any thought of reward. She finds recompense enough in the exercise of her love towards it."

¹⁶⁷Winthrop, Model, ¶ 38

¹⁶⁸Winthrop, Model, ¶ 39

rejoicing—as opportunities for mutual edification and encouragement in carrying out their “Commission and Community in the work” of building a godly commonwealth.¹⁶⁹

New England’s Anti-Type: The Mission to the Indians and the Symbolism of Founding

As the preeminent civil leader in what he evidently hoped would be a communion of saints in the literal sense, Winthrop nevertheless took the time to make a claim about the proper relationship of that community to the outside world—including its potential enemies. At the same time that the law of the gospel creates categories of distinction in the application of mercy, it also requires believers to extend a more than natural expression of love to those outside of their closest affiliations, even those who threaten them in some way. For Winthrop and his auditors, the list of potential enemies was long: perhaps chiefly the native population, neighboring colonies planted by rival European powers such as the French and Dutch, but also those representatives of the persecuting regime in England from whom the colonists were attempting to flee. The greatest threat, however, would come from those inside the community: those who failed in either their commitment to or application of the founding aspirations in one way or another.¹⁷⁰ For the purposes of this project, however, these “enemies”—and even some well-intentioned, but perhaps misguided friends of the regime—are most interesting for what they reveal about the qualities the Puritans considered essential for the stability of their own civic community.

Poised at the literal edge separating the old world and the new, Cotton and Winthrop offered a shared vision of the types of citizens that would be necessary to the

¹⁶⁹Winthrop, Model, ¶ 45

¹⁷⁰ Holland develops this point very briefly in *Bonds of Affection*; see pp. 36-41.

success of such a venture. Although their discourses do not address in any great detail the practical necessities of the venture, they do offer an aspirational statement of the principles and ideals that would underlay the institutions and social structures to come in Massachusetts Bay. Both Cotton and Winthrop recognized that virtue had instrumental benefits: it contributed to the excellence of the human person as a free individual as well as to the stability and order of the community in which such persons would flourish. This observation is fully in keeping with the broader Reformed Protestant understanding of social reform as a result of individual reformation. Their discourses are best understood as hortatory exercises as they attempted to encourage the first citizens of the new colony to cultivate a set of not only privately but publically oriented virtues.

The two texts would be separated for a time as Cotton remained behind in England for several years during which the colonists grappled with unanticipated challenges, influences, and opportunities. Whatever Cotton meant by his earlier justifications for taking native lands, his closing words to those departing England were a reminder that they would not be entirely alone in their new home. Cotton exhorted the colonists to take care that they “offend not the poor Natives,” but rather deal with them faithfully and with the hope that “as you partake in their land, so make them partakers of your precious faith.”¹⁷¹ In this section, I will briefly consider some of the early history of colonial interactions with the native population, in order to highlight the contrasts New Englanders observed between their founding aspirations and the characteristics of the native population among whom they established their settlements. In contrasting themselves to the native inhabitants of the land, New Englanders affirmed their core

¹⁷¹ Cotton, *God's Promise*, 19.

aspirational principles and developed a more complete sense of their potential political manifestations.

In his final words of advice about engaging with the native population, Cotton may have simply been referencing the colony's charter, which declared the "principal end" of the Puritan's colonial effort to be the conversion of the native population to Christianity.¹⁷² By describing the two cultures as "partaking" of each other, he rhetorically alludes to the sacrament of communion in which Christians partake of the body and blood of Christ and become one not only with Him but with each other. The Apostle Paul speaks of it as a means of restoring peace and healing factions within the church—the body of Christ in the world. Inasmuch as each individual believer is a member of the body of Christ and united with him thereby, they are also spiritually united with one another.¹⁷³ If such a mutual communion between colonist and native was what Cotton imagined, it was not to be realized without a tremendous amount of suspicion and hostility on both sides, and even then, only partially.¹⁷⁴

Evangelistic overtones notwithstanding, this was eminently prudential advice, for treating the native population with respect would certainly do more to promote peaceful relations than not.¹⁷⁵ Nevertheless, Cotton reminded his auditors that they must be prepared to build "walls, and bulwarkes, and fortifications for [their] own defence"

¹⁷² Charter of Massachusetts Bay: 1629, *The Avalon Project at the Yale Law School*, available online: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/mass03.asp, accessed 2/5/2016.

¹⁷³ See 1 Corinthians 11:17-34. While Kristina Bross argues that New Englanders only began to actively evangelize the native population after the triumph of Cromwell made the other justifications offered for founding the colony no longer seem relevant, it is worth noting that Cotton at least rhetorically presumes such activity will be ongoing from the start. See Kristina Bross, *Dry Bones and Indian Sermons: Praying Indians in Colonial America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).

¹⁷⁴ On the complex realities of colonialism and conversion, see R. Todd Romero, *Making War, Minting Christians: Masculinity, Religion, and Colonialism in Early New England* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2011).

¹⁷⁵ Contrast the Puritan approach, at least on paper, with that of the Jamestown settlers, for example.

against the unspecified dangers of New England.¹⁷⁶ Cotton realized that New England was not a utopia, whatever possibilities it presented for the creation of a godly community. Indeed, his final piece of advice draws attention to the fact that Massachusetts would require a certain degree of defensiveness from its spiritual, civil, and military leaders if it were to survive the trial of the new world.

As both Cotton and Winthrop recognized, the English settlers who were soon to arrive in the New World would not be the region's only inhabitants. The colony's seal (Appendix 1) depicted an image of an Indian standing, clutching a bow in one hand and an arrow in the other, with a banner reading "Come over and help us," streaming out of his mouth.¹⁷⁷ The text was an allusion to the Apostle Paul's vision of "man of Macedonia" in Acts 16:9—

And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

The leadership of Massachusetts Bay believed that the Lord had called them to assist the native population of New England by teaching them about Christianity. The allusion suggests that they also hoped (perhaps based on reports from earlier explorations in the area) that, like the Macedonian of the vision, the Indians would welcome their aid and instruction.¹⁷⁸ Indeed, in *God's Promise*, Cotton actually uses the idea of natives asking for help as one of the justifications of the migration. This was, in some ways, as much

¹⁷⁶ Cotton, *God's Promise*, 20. See Peter N. Carroll, *Puritanism and the Wilderness: The Intellectual Significance of the New England Frontier 1629-1700* (New York: Columbia, 1969) and John Canup, *Out of the Wilderness: The Emergence of an American Identity in Colonial New England* (Middletown: Wesleyan, 1990).

¹⁷⁷ Cathy Rex has given a detailed history and interpretation of the MBC seal in "Indians and Images."

¹⁷⁸ See the collected examples of early accounts in Kelly Wisecup, ed., *"Good News from New England"* by Edward Winslow (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2014).

reflection of nationalistic as well as religious fervor, however, for New England tribes had been trading with the French for nearly a century by the time the English began to settle in Massachusetts, and yet to the Puritan mind, the native population still stood in desperate need of exposure to (Protestant and English) modes of civilization.

Ironically, Neal Salisbury has argued that it was only the literal decimation of the native population by an unidentified European disease in the first decade of the seventeenth century that allowed the English to attempt a serious colonization effort in the region. In the wake of the epidemic, however, native cultures were in turmoil: the introduction of European trade goods—cooking pots, utensils, needles, clothing, guns—as well as European diseases significantly affected traditional lifeways.¹⁷⁹ In short, the English colonists arrived at the precise moment in which the physically and culturally traumatized native population would be least able to offer significant resistance to their attempts to import European visions of ‘civility’ onto both Indian lands and souls.¹⁸⁰

Much of the recent scholarly literature on the seventeenth century mission to native tribes has focused on its meaning and effect for the native population.¹⁸¹ For the

¹⁷⁹ My description of the initial contact is drawn largely from William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003) and Neil Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans, and the Making of New England, 1500-1643* (New York: Oxford, 1984). Salisbury estimates that after the epidemic “the 50,000 or more Indians along the densely populated coastal fringe and adjacent inland areas had been reduced by about ninety percent, living in scattered villages of a few dozen, rather than a few hundred or more, each.” Neal Salisbury, “Colonizing of Indian New England,” *The Massachusetts Review* 26.2/3 (1985), 451.

¹⁸⁰ Robert James Naeher suggests that the seeming powerlessness of traditional spirituality in the face of European germs and gun in combination with a cultural habituation to shifting religious allegiances may have made the native population more receptive to Puritan missionary efforts. Note, however, the questions that this raises about the nature and validity of native ‘conversion’ from a Puritan standpoint if in claiming to worship as Christians, natives merely adhered to traditional practices of shifting allegiance from what they saw as essentially interchangeable sub-deities within a broader network of spirits, etc. See “Dialogue in the Wilderness: John Eliot and the Indian Exploration of Puritanism as a Source of Meaning, Comfort, and Ethnic Survival,” *NEQ*, Vol. 62, No. 3 (Sep., 1989), 352.

¹⁸¹ See Elise M. Brenner, “To Pray or to Be Prey: That Is the Question, Strategies for Cultural Autonomy of Massachusetts Praying Town Indians,” *Ethnohistory* 27, no. 2 (Spring 1980): 135-52; Harold W. Van Lonkhuyzen, “A Reappraisal of the Praying Indians: Acculturation, Conversion, and Identity at Natick, Massachusetts, 1646-1730,” *New England Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (September 1990): 396-428.

purposes of this study, however, I am more interested in its rhetorical value for civic formation among the New English population.¹⁸² In their interactions with the native population—in educating them, and clothing them in the garments of “civilitie” both literally and figuratively, as well as in their trade and military encounters—the English population in Massachusetts affirmed their commitment to the aspirations of moral equality, industry, and communion.

Indeed, contemporary accounts of the efforts of John Winthrop, Thomas Mayhew, Jr., John Eliot, John Cotton, Jr. and others to engage with the natives tell us almost as much about the sort of civic identity New Englanders hoped to cultivate for themselves as they do about their purported goals of ‘civilizing’ or ‘Christianizing’ the natives.¹⁸³ The native population functioned as foil for the Puritans in many ways over the course of the seventeenth century and they understood themselves and their project of establishing a new society to be in contrast not only to England, but also to native lifeways, as well as the specific aspects of civic formation they believed would be necessary to convert the native population to both Christianity and ‘civility.’

As I will show, the missionaries not only emphasized a set of principles (moral equality, industry, and union) quite similar to those at the core of New England’s founding, but also utilized two of the principle means (education and law) implemented

¹⁸² Note that in this I am also departing from those studies that have focused on explaining the motives of the colonists; see Francis Jennings, “Goals and Functions of Puritan Missions to the Indians,” *Ethnohistory* Vol. 18, No. 3 (Summer, 1971): 197-212.

¹⁸³ The father and son team of Thomas Mayhew, Jr. and Sr. began their efforts to reach the local Indian population on the island of Martha’s Vineyard in 1643. The Mayhews’ efforts were followed by those of John Cotton, Jr.; John Eliot began his more widely recognized efforts on the mainland in 1646. See David J. Silverman, “Indians, Missionaries, and Religious Translation: Creating Wampanoag Christianity in Seventeenth-Century Martha’s Vineyard,” *WMQ* Third Series, Vol. 62, No. 2 (Apr., 2005), pp. 141-174; Len Travers and John Cotton, Jr., “The Missionary Journal of John Cotton, Jr., 1666-1678,” *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, Third Series, Vol. 109 (1997), pp.52-101.

by the founders for the advancement of the same. Finally, because the missionaries' efforts and especially the conversion narratives of the praying Indians were both public and publicized in a variety of ways, they functioned as a sort of rhetorical or symbolic space within and through which New Englanders could reiterate the core aspirations of the founding of their own commonwealth.

The outreach to the native population was public in the sense that it often occurred in the midst of the larger New English culture. Native servants or apprentices in white households attending family worship and Sunday services, was presumably the most common way in which this happened, but the colonists also recorded several examples of visits from curious adults to services, lectures, and discussions of the same with private citizens. These interactions were publicized in the Eliot tracts, but also in less formal ways – personal conversations and letters— that drew attention to the aspects of civic formation the colonists perceived to be most needed by the native population.¹⁸⁴ The public promotion and discussion of the mission to the natives thus reinforced the civic aspirations of the New English community, and perhaps also functioned as a source of external motivation to those community members less than inclined to pursue these qualities for their own sake.

¹⁸⁴ As Richard Cogley points out in Chapter 1 of *John Eliot's Mission to the Indians Before King Phillip's War* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1999), Puritan theology depended upon what he calls the "affective approach" to missions, a relational model that presumed a basic level of moral equality between the New English and their native neighbors; see pp. 19-22 especially. In Winthrop's *Journal*, his non-military references to native persons are generally in the context of shared meals and other such social exchanges that would introduce English ways to the natives and thus form the foundation for further engagement at a later date. See John Winthrop, *Journal*, 47, 50, 77-78, 101, 105-106 for example. At least four further accounts of such informal exchanges, in addition to the 'fostering' of an unspecified number of native children during the first dozen or so years of settlement are recorded in *New England's First Fruits* (London: 1643), reprinted in *The Eliot Tracts with Letters from John Eliot to Thomas Thorowgood and Richard Baxter*, Michael P. Clark, ed. (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), 58-63.

New Englanders were not shy about publicizing their work among the native population and over the course of the century, would publish almost a dozen pamphlets in London.¹⁸⁵ The earliest of these, *New England's First Fruits* (1643) described the native population as “lacking any civility at all.”¹⁸⁶ In a later tract, Thomas Shepherd called the natives “the saddest spectacles of degeneracy upon Earth.”¹⁸⁷ Ward, Shepherd, Eliot and others complained of the injustice of those who portrayed New Englanders as failing in concern for the native population. “We are oft upbraided by some of our countrymen that so little good is done by our professing planters upon the hearts of natives,” they noted, yet “such men have surely more spleen than judgement and known not the vast distance of natives from common civility, almost humanity itself.”¹⁸⁸ Though this assessment sounds degrading to modern ears, what is critical is that natives are portrayed not as actually being inhuman, but only as lacking the external behaviors of ‘civility’ that (to the English) were all-but-essential indicators of human dignity.¹⁸⁹ Note that the missionaries maintained the moral equality of personhood between themselves, the rest of the colonists, and the native population: describing a conversation with a native group, Eliot observed “they and we were already all one save in two things,” religion and industry.¹⁹⁰ He further declared that if the natives were “in a settled way of civility and government

¹⁸⁵ Collectively known as “the Eliot tracts,” although written by a variety of New England ministers involved in evangelizing the native population, including Thomas Weld, Hugh Peter, Thomas Shepherd, Edward Winslow, and Henry Whitfield, these works offer a relatively full (although obvious incomplete) perspective on native/settler interactions between 1630-1671.

¹⁸⁶ *New England's First Fruits*, in *Eliot Tracts*, 58.

¹⁸⁷ Thomas Shepherd, *The Clear Sunshine of the Gospel Breaking Forth Upon The Indians in New England*, in *Eliot Tracts*, 104.

¹⁸⁸ [Thomas Shepherd?], *The Day-Breaking, if not the Sun-Rising of the Gospel with the Indians in New England*, in *Eliot Tracts*, 93.

¹⁸⁹ See “humane, adj.” Definition 1A in OED Online. March 2015. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/Entry/89264> (accessed March 24, 2015). Also cite Puritan writers on the natural law, etc.

¹⁹⁰ Eliot’s letter concerning the mission, in Thomas Shepherd, *The Clear Sunshine of the Gospel Breaking Forth Upon The Indians in New England*, in *Eliot Tracts*, 124.

cohabiting together, and I called (according to God) to live among them, I durst freely join into Church-fellowship amongst them.” Elsewhere he observed with chagrin that the Puritans “admit in charity some into our churches of our own, of whose spiritual estate I have more cause of fear than of some of them [the Natives].¹⁹¹

New Englanders believed that order and industry were the requisite foundations for civilized living, and to their eyes, it appeared that both of these elements were sorely lacking in native cultures.¹⁹² The demographic crisis which had created the opening for English colonization also created false perceptions about native land use: early descriptions of New England focus largely on the things were not there, most importantly, large agricultural settlements. Indeed, the land seemed “empty” to English eyes. What they did find surprised them almost as much as what they did not: the New English were not prepared for the great abundance of plant and animal life in their new home, and the diversity of habitats that could coexist in one reasonably small area. The seashore areas produced abundant food and the saltmarshes which provided birds and fish. Europeans tended to see this as a random and chaotic patchwork; yet to the native tribes, this diversity gave rhythm to the everyday aspects of life. Habits of subsistence and land use were intimately connected to those natural resources most readily available: native culture was therefore highly mobile, shifting from place to place as seasonal changes dictated. By using resources when they were most plentiful, and only taking

¹⁹¹ *The Glorious Progress of the Gospel amongst the Indians in New England*, in *Eliot Tracts*, 156. John Eliot and Kenneth M. Morrison, “That Art of Coyning Christians:” John Eliot and the Praying Indians of Massachusetts,” *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (Winter, 1974), 80.

¹⁹² The concern with civility as a starting point was not entirely the product of Puritan imposition, however: the native questioners in the tracts frequently display in interest in the “relationship between attitude and action.” See Naeher, “Dialogue in the Wilderness,” 353.

enough for the moment, and by moving as the land changed (rather than changing the land) the native inhabitants were able to maintain a relatively light impact on the land.

European eyes, accustomed to a much more intensive and orderly alterations of natural landscapes, were therefore struck by the seeming incongruity between the abundance of the land and the poverty of Indian culture.¹⁹³ The native “use” of the land appeared to the New English settlers as non-use, a failure to improve upon the generous providence of God. Worse, from the New English perspective, native women were the primary caretakers of the limited agricultural aspects of native life, because that meant that they were able to also perform their childcare responsibilities while men went out to hunt or fish. Indian villages were thus often most visibly inhabited by women and children, which gave them a disproportionate amount of influence in the minds of Europeans. These gender roles seemed unnatural and even abusive to the New English, for whom the ideal of masculinity emphasized industry, piety, and a willingness to defend oneself, one’s faith, or one’s family.¹⁹⁴ Puritan authors focused on these points of difference, and used them to establish a discourse of civilization which reinforced their own internal aspirations as much as it changed anything about native society.

At its most basic level, this discourse revolved around the Puritan imperative to improve the land depended upon the conception of land as a commodity: it was a thing privately, rather than publically owned. Land ownership, as mentioned above, was intimately connected with English notions of freemanship, and thus, to their civic aspirations of moral equality as well as industry. The ‘emptiness’ of the land seemed a

¹⁹³ On the difference between the perspectives of native groups and colonists, see Cronon, *Changes in the Land*.

¹⁹⁴ On the differences between Native and Puritan visions of masculinity in general, see Romero, *Making War, Minting Christians*.

symbolic invitation to colonial settlement and possession; Cotton's *Promise*, for example, suggests not only that God had prepared the way the migration but that it was in some sense a divine imperative for the Puritans to 'fill' the empty land not only literally, but also spiritually, by spreading their vision of a gospel and civic community.

The outreach to the Indian population, and the publication efforts related thereto provided an opportunity to reinforce certain key elements of civic virtue as well. Eliot, for example, observed in eulogizing a deceased native convert, that "she was industrious....[she] kept at home, kept her children to labor, making baskets to sell, etc. She quickly learned to spin well," and in general, became the model of an English-style goodwife, or housewife.¹⁹⁵ Other natives portrayed positively in the pamphlets seem to similarly embody Puritan civic aspirations. Indian converts were encouraged to cut their hair in the English manner, a practice that was associated with the virtue of modesty: "since the word hath begun to work upon their hearts, they have discerned the vanity and pride which they placed in their hair, and have therefore of their own accord (none speaking to them that we know of) cut it modestly."¹⁹⁶ Here, modesty is presented as an attribute of the New English and not one possessed inherently by the native population: it is presented also as in opposition to not only vanity but pride.

Modesty may manifest itself in outward comportment, but it is most significant for civic purposes as a form of internal restraint. The modest man is aware of his limitations – he is less likely to pursue the sort of revolutionary excess that would undermine the social order because he is less likely to believe in the righteousness of his impulses. The Indian conversion narratives as recorded by the New English almost all

¹⁹⁵ *The Glorious Progress of the Gospel amongst the Indians in New England*, in *Eliot Tracts*, 151.

¹⁹⁶ *The Day-Breaking*, in *Eliot Tracts*, 99.

focus on their sins as related to pride and excessive individualism. The association of pride and individualism starkly contrasted with the association of humility and a willingness to submit one's one desires to the greater good, or the aspiration of communion as presented in Winthrop's *Model*.

New Englanders also adopted some of the same practical methods in their missionary efforts as they instituted for their own civic formation. After a 1646 meeting with the natives, at least two Indian families requested that the missionaries take their children "to be trained up among the English" and "two lusty young men" also indentured themselves that "they might come to know Jesus Christ."¹⁹⁷ Less than a month later, "the Indians offered all their children to us to be educated amongst us, and instructed by us... for this reason there are therefore preparations made towards the schooling of them."¹⁹⁸ Schooling served as a gateway to other types of civic formation and as the native converts began to observe the benefits of New English civic institutions, they approached the General Court with a request for lands of their own. Known as praying towns, these communities were independent of both traditional native villages, as well as the surrounding New English towns.¹⁹⁹

Eliot's description of the origin of the praying towns underscores their distinctive role in the emerging political community of Massachusetts Bay: no longer entirely

¹⁹⁷ *The Day-Breaking*, in *Eliot Tracts*, 95.

¹⁹⁸ *The Day-Breaking*, in *Eliot Tracts*, 99.

¹⁹⁹ New Englanders would ultimately help the Indians to establish thirteen other praying towns scattered around southern Massachusetts, and based on the records kept by Eliot and his associate, Daniel Gookin, scholars estimate that somewhere between one-tenth and one-quarter of the native population lived in these praying communities by the outbreak of King Philip's War. A useful study of the meaning and benefits of the praying towns for native inhabitants: Van Lonkhuyzen, "Reappraisal of the Praying Indians." Careful description of native religious practice can be found in: Linford D. Fisher, "Native Americans, Conversion, and Christian Practice in Colonial New England, 1640-1730," *The Harvard Theological Review* 102.1 (Jan., 2009), 101-124.

outsiders nor yet fully integrated with the larger New English community, the occupants of the praying towns occupied an uneasy no-man's land in Massachusetts' civil society. Although the institutional structures of the towns were developed with the advice of the English, once established, they were essentially autonomous in their administration—another nod to moral equality inasmuch as it recognized the capacity of the native converts for self-government.²⁰⁰ Within the confines of these communities, the New English and their converts instituted patterns of behavior and civic practice that incorporated similar institutional designs in the form of consent-based town and church government, rights-protecting legal codes, and widespread education for both youth and adults.²⁰¹

Conclusion

After the *Arbella* landed in Massachusetts in 1630, Winthrop and his fellow magistrates operated on a largely ad hoc basis for several years, only developing a full-fledged code of laws and liberties in the early 1640s—and only then, as a response to the demands of the freemen who believed their rights would be more secure if the government's powers were more clearly defined. Likewise, after his arrival in 1633, Cotton and the other ministers in the colony would use these principles to gradually shape the emerging congregational “way,” a term that embraces the multivalent role of the clergy and their theology in influencing New England's civic identity.

As the chief spokesmen for the two most powerful institutions in Massachusetts Bay, Cotton and Winthrop shared a certain amount of privilege and authority, yet it is

²⁰⁰ *The Glorious Progress of the Gospel amongst the Indians in New England*, in *Eliot Tracts*, 152.

²⁰¹ On the full development of these communities, see Dane Morrison, *A Praying People: Massachusetts Acculturation and the Failure of the Puritan Mission, 1600-1690* (New York: Peter Lang, 1995).

important to note that they were selected for their positions of leadership by the people, from whom it was understood their authority ultimately derived.²⁰² In their roles as leaders, both men were called upon to articulate the ends and ethos of the proposed settlement. Theirs were not, however, the only statements of this sort by members of the founding generation, merely the clearest, most fully developed, and most widely known at the time. In the main, the reasons they give for removal from England, and the vision they present of what they hoped to accomplish in founding a commonwealth of their own are reflected in the less formal statements left behind by the broader group of migrants.²⁰³ It is reasonable, therefore to view them as representative voices for the community's fundamental agreements in matters of principle, whatever the possible differences on specific points of application. These broad principles—moral equality, industry, and communion—were the necessary foundation upon which the details of life in the new world would be built. Were the people of Massachusetts able to cultivate such qualities, Winthrop foresaw that they would not only achieve political and social stability, but the much greater goal of pleasing God so that He would “make us a praise and glory that men shall say of succeeding plantations, ‘may the Lord make it like that of New England’.”²⁰⁴ They were, he observed in the single most famous line of the sermon, “as a

²⁰² Winthrop was elected to the office of governor by the other members of the Massachusetts Bay Company; supra n. 16. While in England, Cotton was selected by the parish of St. Botolph's in Boston to be their minister; in New England, he was likewise ‘called’ by the congregation in Boston to be their teaching pastor; see Larzer Ziff, *The Career of John Cotton: Puritanism and the American Experience* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), Chapters 2-3.

²⁰³ See the Theodore Dwight Bozeman's survey of the surviving examples from a wide variety of first generation settlers in Chapter 3 of *To Live Ancient Lives: The Primitivist Dimension in Puritanism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988). Although Bozeman places a greater emphasis on the religious than the political aspects of these statements, his is the most complete exploration of these sources.

²⁰⁴ Winthrop, Model, ¶ 45

city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us.”²⁰⁵ Winthrop’s discourse thus functions as a model not only for those going to Massachusetts, but also for those remaining behind in England, who might yet be able to reform that nation’s troubled religious and political spirit.

Yet as the colonists quickly discovered, unity was much more easily obtained in theory than in practice: some thought the community in Massachusetts too lax, others found it uncomfortably rigid, and still others simply could not manage the rigorous demands of colonization and returned to civilization and England. Winthrop and the other initial stockholders in the Massachusetts Bay Company had quite purposefully decided to place control of the day-to-day governance of the colony in the hands of the colonists themselves. The immediate practical benefit of this transference of power was that it offered the best possible insurance that the colonists would be able to implement their ideals in both church and state without monarchical interference. On a theoretical level, more importantly, it signaled the commitment of the founders of Massachusetts Bay to securing the right of the people to active participation in their own governance.²⁰⁶ The opening of freemanship to all church members in May 1631 seemed to fulfill this implicit promise.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁵ Winthrop, *Model*, ¶ 45

²⁰⁶ *Records of the MBC*, 1:49.

²⁰⁷ *Records of the MBC*, 1:87. Studies of freemanship from various periods and places in the colony abound and are subject to the usual problems of missing records, limited sample sizes, etc. Few of them attempt to gather colony-wide data, with the notable exception of Robert Emmett Wall, Jr.’s 1970 study. Wall found that in the four counties of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1647, the percentage of adult males registered as freeman ranged from a low of roughly 35% in Norfolk and Essex (the counties with settlements at greatest distance from the colonial capitol) to a high of 54% in Suffolk and Middlesex. The expansion of the franchise beyond the initial stockholders to include even the roughly 50% of the male population accounted for by Wall’s data is a remarkable triumph for the period. See Robert Emmet Wall, Jr., “The Massachusetts Bay Colony Franchise in 1647,” *WMQ*, Third Series, Vol. 27, No. 1 (Jan., 1970), pp. 136-144.

By mid-February 1632, however, the first inklings of what would develop into a prolonged controversy about the nature of political authority and representation in the colony were made public when the leadership of the Watertown church marshaled the congregation to resist a tax levy on the grounds that “it was not safe to pay moneys after that sort [that is, imposed without representation] for fear of bringing themselves & posterity into bondage.”²⁰⁸ Winthrop records this incident with some sense of outrage: the Watertown men were clearly in the wrong from his perspective and were, “after much debate,” made to see the error of their position. Yet his journal entry also conveys a grudging sense that such complaints might be justified under certain circumstances:

the ground of their error was, for that they took this Government to be no other but as of a mayor & Aldermen, who have not power to make laws or raise taxations without the people: but understanding that this Government was rather in the nature of a Parliament, & that no assistant could be chosen but by the freemen, who had power likewise to remove the Assistants, & putt in others, & therefore at every general Court (which was to be held once every year) they had free liberty to confer & propound anything concerning the same, & to declare their grievances without being subject to Question or &c.²⁰⁹

The critical mistake of the Watertown freemen was to confuse Massachusetts Bay for a town: in “tak[ing] this Government to be no other but as of a mayor and Alderman,” the Watertown dissenters failed to appreciate the scope of political authority which the founders had claimed for themselves. The Bay Colony was not subservient to higher levels of political authority in the same way as a town was subject to a county and ultimately, to the King in Parliament. On the contrary, Winthrop presents the founders’ intention as the establishment of a genuinely sovereign commonwealth, equivalent to Parliament itself in the scope of its powers.

²⁰⁸ Winthrop, *Journal*, 63.

²⁰⁹ Winthrop, *Journal*, 63.

For Winthrop to describe the government of Massachusetts Bay as “in the nature of a Parliament” was certainly significant given the ongoing struggle between the King and that body in England, for he and perhaps the majority of his fellow migrants would have felt keenly sympathetic with the claims of Parliament to speak authoritatively for the people against the king. To liken the General Court to this body was at once a tremendous glorification of its power and independence and a nod to traditional notions of limited government vis-à-vis Parliament’s role as the protector of the rights of Englishmen and the ancient constitution. Winthrop’s attempt to portray the General Court as a type of parliament was strategic inasmuch as it allowed him to simultaneously assert a strong claim of sovereignty for the magistrates as a political body and rhetorically concede the limitation of that sovereignty by the authority of the people themselves, signified by the power of election and removal.²¹⁰

The larger theoretical issue revealed by the Watertown complaints was only temporarily resolved by this rhetorical posturing, however: on 8 May 1632, the General Court ordered that every town send two delegates to “advise with the Governor & Assistants about the raising of a public stock, so as what they should agree upon should bind all &c.”²¹¹ The creation of the office of the deputy would ultimately only delay rather than resolve the conflict over their political structure—yet the Court’s willingness to move with relative speed towards a system of tiered accountability is indicative of a general inclination to regard government as very much a public thing, in the sense of belonging to (and deriving its legitimacy from) the people themselves.

²¹⁰ See the collected examples of English pamphlets on this subject in *The Struggle for Sovereignty: Seventeenth-Century English Political Tracts*, 2 vols, ed. Joyce Lee Malcolm (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1999).

²¹¹ John Winthrop, *Journal*, 68.

These limited advisory roles were expanded in April 1634 when the deputies of the towns asked to see the colony charter for themselves. The terms of the Charter were plain: laws were to be made by the body of freemen assembled at the General Court—and the deputies justly complained to Winthrop about this egregious usurpation of power by the magistrates. Winthrop

told them...now they were grown to so great a body, as it was not possible for them to make or execute Laws, but they must Choose others for that purpose: & that howsoever it would be necessary hereafter, to have a select Company to intend that work, yet for the present they were not furnished with a sufficient number of men qualified for such a business, neither could the Common wealth bear the loss of time of so many as must intend it.²¹²

He attempted to mollify the freemen by offering them the opportunity to select a small number of representatives to serve in an advisory role to the magistrates: “to review all Laws &c...but not to make any new Laws.”²¹³ In the end, Winthrop’s reluctance to broaden the types of participation open to the freemen resulted in his removal from office and the elevation of his nemesis, Thomas Dudley (1576-1653), to the governor’s chair. With Dudley’s support, the level of involvement by the freeman increased dramatically so that the representatives of the towns were able to “assist in making Laws, disposing lands &c.”²¹⁴ Dudley’s decision to align his interests with those of the freeman briefly gave him the upper hand over Winthrop, but in the end, Winthrop learned from the event how to better manage the application of the community’s core aspirations to particular political problems and institutions.

In the chapters to come, we will focus on the concrete steps taken to enact the founding principles articulated by Cotton and Winthrop in the development of political

²¹² John Winthrop, *Journal*, 113.

²¹³ John Winthrop, *Journal*, 114.

²¹⁴ John Winthrop, *Journal*, 116.

and social institutions for the colony. These were not only shaped by the civic aspirations of the founding generation, but were also intended to help perpetuate them: New Englanders' intention of building a permanent political community depended upon their ability to heed John Cotton's admonition to "have a tender care that you look well to the plants that spring from you, that is, to your children."²¹⁵ The colony's schools, churches, and laws would help to convey the colonists' legacy to successive generations, but they would also reflect their testing and further evolution by the second and third generations. In the face of ongoing dissent for clear and significant reasons, the leaders of the colony would have to continually re-cement the people of New England in their commitment, a task they undertook with vigor.

²¹⁵ Cotton, *God's Promise*, 19.

CHAPTER 3: TENDING THE PLANTATION—INSTITUTIONS OF CIVIC CULTIVATION

As John Cotton had advised, the first generation of New Englanders took measures to secure the commitment of future generations to their aspirational principles of moral equality, industry, and communion.²¹⁶ Even while engaged in day-to-day tasks of securing hearth and home in their new colony, the founders of Massachusetts Bay devoted considerable attention to more lasting concerns. In this chapter, I examine two institutions—an educational system and a constitutional and representative government—created with the intention of converting their revolutionary commitments into sustainable political principles.

The creation of an educational system reflects the founding generation’s commitments to both moral equality and industry. Although the moral equality of persons is a matter of nature and not related to the diversity of stations or gifts, the political implications (that is, government by consent) of such a commitment depend upon the cultivation of certain basic understandings if it is to be prevented from devolving into merely a mobocracy. The founders recognized therefore, that they had to establish a relatively broad base of reading literacy in order to ensure that the people would be able to “read and understand the principles of religion and the capital laws of this country.”²¹⁷ On top of this foundation, the earliest New Englanders hoped to raise a smaller, yet still sizable number of men who would go on for more advanced study in the arts and letters.

²¹⁶ “Have a tender care that you look well to the plants that spring from you, that is, to your children.” Cotton, *God’s Promise*, 19.

²¹⁷ “School Law” of 1642, *Records of the MBC*, 2:6-7. Note that the text of the law refers to “children” without specifying their gender (moreover, a few lines down the court does specify that boys and girls should not be allowed to engage in immodest conversation together during their training in useful employments, which suggests that the magistrates were fully aware of that the law as written would apply to both genders equally.)

These men, it was hoped, would apply the benefits of refined learning in the cultivation of their diverse callings, and thus enhance the community being carved out of the wilds of Massachusetts.

The second measure taken to ensure that the core commitments of the founding generation would endure was to work them into the fundamental laws of the commonwealth. Through experimentation, reflection, and negotiation, New Englanders developed a constitutional and representative government that reflected the founding generation's commitments to moral equality (in the form of government by consent), industry (in the preservation of individual rights), and communion (in their understanding of the nature of representation and the pursuit of the common good). The final result was a unique mixture of liberty and authority that held the active role of individual citizens as members of society in a carefully negotiated creative tension with a strong sense of the commonwealth itself as something more than merely a mechanistic or artificial sum of its several parts.

Although the previous chapter focused on John Cotton and John Winthrop as key figures in setting out the aspirational goals of the colony, in this chapter, we begin to see the influence of others in implementing those goals in education and the law. In education, Charles Chauncey and John Fiske emerged as particularly strong voices shaping the design of both primary and collegiate learning in the settlement. Thomas Shepard and Nathaniel Ward would play essential roles in articulating and illuminating the theoretical implications of the founding commitments in the negotiated development of the colony's legal framework.

Making Moral Equality Politically Safe: Education as a Public Good

As part of their commitment to the Reformation ideal of *sola scriptura*, the Puritans believed strongly in the power of education as a tool for personal and social reform.²¹⁸ They not only valued the teaching of civil and religious leaders, but also discussion and reflection on such teachings by ordinary believers in the form of conventicles, or private study meetings. A conventicle was a “little assembly, a meeting of a private character,” particularly one “for the exercise of religion otherwise than as sanctioned by the law.”²¹⁹ In England, such meetings had been the primary focus of Puritan non-conformity (and the target of anti-Puritan legislation): the godly who absented themselves from Church of England services for the purposes of private worship, including study and discussion of the Scriptures often found their actions described as “seditious.”²²⁰ In these settings, attended by both men and women, women served as lay leaders and teachers; as such, female literacy and learning were not only personal but social, or community, goods.²²¹

²¹⁸ On this point in the Puritan movement more broadly, see John Morgan, *Godly Learning: Puritan Attitudes Towards Reason, Learning and Education, 1560-1640* (New York: Cambridge University Press: 1986). Note also that in their efforts to convert the native population, New Englanders relied heavily on the use of pietistic books translated from English into Algonquian.

²¹⁹ "conventicle, n.". OED Online. June 2015. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/Entry/40705?rskey=xmq07o&result=1> (accessed July 16, 2015).

²²⁰ Elizabeth's *Act Against Puritans* made it illegal “to...be present at any unlawful Assemblies, Conventicles or Meetings, under Colour or Pretence of any Exercise of Religion.” Charles II would revive the law in the 1664 Conventicle Act. See 1593 Act 35 Eliz. c. 1, in Gee, Henry, and William John Hardy, ed., *Documents Illustrative of English Church History* (New York: Macmillan, 1896), 492-8. Online: <http://history.hanover.edu/texts/engref/er86.html> [accessed 16 July 2015] and Charles II, 1664: An Act to prevent and suppress seditious Conventicles.', in *Statutes of the Realm: Volume 5, 1628-80*, ed. John Raithby (s.l, 1819), pp. 516-520. Online: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/statutes-realm/vol5/pp516-520> [accessed 16 July 2015]. See also Patrick Collinson, "The English Conventicle," in W. J. Sheils and D. Wood, eds., *Voluntary Religion*, Studies in Church History, no. 23 (1986), 223-59.

²²¹ David R. Como, “Women, Prophecy, and Authority in Early Stuart Puritanism,” *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 61, No. 2 (1998), pp. 203-222. See also Kenneth Charlton, Chapter 6, “Women as Agents,” in *Women, Religion and Education in Early Modern England* (Routledge: 1999), 154-187.

In addition to various forms of corporate instruction, individual believers engaged in private study (of Scripture, as well as other texts) and introspective reflection and application of their learning to themselves and the world around them.²²² All such forms of engagement with the wider world of learning—whether corporate or private, formal (schools, sermons, lectures, and catechism sessions) or informal (conventicles, godly conversation with friends and family, personal practices of reading and reflection)—required individuals to engage with texts, as readers, auditors, speakers, authors, or some combination of the above. The success of each of these modes depended upon the widespread ability to read, regardless of gender, or socio-economic status.²²³ As Charles Chauncey wrote in the introduction to Richard Mather’s *Farewell Exhortation* (1657), book have immense teaching capabilities: they convey the wisdom of “learned men departed” even on such hard topics as our living friends and advisors might not freely share.²²⁴ As the foundation for learning, reading was a way of connecting to the past that provided the context for the work to be done by the present and rising generations.

Creating a Broad Foundation: Public Education

²²² On the practice of reading in New England as a function of both individualized spiritual growth and corporate unity, see Matthew P. Brown, *The Pilgrim and the Bee: Reading Rituals and Book Culture in Early New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

²²³ The best known study of literacy in early New England remains Kenneth A. Lockridge’s *Literacy in Colonial New England: An Enquiry into the Social Context of Literacy in the Early Modern West* (New York: Norton, 1974). Lockridge based his measurements on the ratio of signatures (as opposed to personal marks) in legal documents to estimate that sixty percent of men and thirty percent of women in the mid seventeenth century were literate, in the sense of being able to both read and write. This method fails to account for the fact that writing was taught *after* reading, however and contemporary scholars tend to presume reading literacy at much higher rates. All such discussions are, of course, highly contingent upon parameters such as gender, social class, and religious affiliation—yet all these factors would tend to skew literacy rates higher in New England for the period. For a thoughtful consideration of the myriad contextual issues at play in all discussions of literacy in the early modern English world, see David Cressy, ‘Literacy in context: meaning and measurement in early modern England’ in John Brewer and Roy Porter (eds), *Consumption and the World of Goods* (Routledge, 1993), 305-319.

²²⁴ Chauncey, Preface to Richard Mather, *A Farewell Exhortation* (Cambridge: 1657).

In the seventeenth century, instruction in reading preceded instruction in writing.²²⁵ Reading literacy, after all, was an essential skill if an individual was going to study the word of God or understand and obey the published laws of the colony. Surviving records indicate that both boys and girls as young as three and four were taught to read in English, either at home or by schoolmasters, male or female, as a matter of course.²²⁶ Indeed, in Richard Mather's *Farewell*, he urged that everyone—including women, who were often “more with [their] children” than men—set themselves to the task of “teaching them [their children] as soon as ever they are capable of learning.”²²⁷ Surely there could be no expectation that mothers serve as their children's' first teachers if they did not themselves possess a solid foundation in not only the tools but also the subjects of such instruction. Reading literacy, then, although much more difficult to measure, gives every appearance of being widespread across both gender and class in early New England in a way that writing literacy does not.²²⁸ In part, this reflected New Englanders' founding commitment to the moral equality of persons; the Word of God, not only preached but read, was the inheritance of all men and women regardless of

²²⁵ Writing education came later, in part, because of the unwieldy nature of the quill pen required a relatively high degree of fine motor control not present in small children. While educational opportunities beyond mere reading literacy were not entirely closed off to female students, they were far less likely to be seen as necessary (since women were less likely to be involved in the sorts of public business that would necessitate writing), with the result that far fewer women than men would have acquired the writing skills which have often served as a tangible record of literacy.

²²⁶ On the nature of such 'elementary' or 'vernacular' education in early modern England during the years leading up to the settlement of Massachusetts Bay, see Kenneth Charlton, Chapter 5, “Away to School,” in *Women, Religion and Education in Early Modern England*, 142-153. According to Charlton, “the fact that provision was made explicitly for girls as well as boys, and sometimes for girls only, suggests . . . that when the provision was for ‘poor children’ or ‘youth of the parish’ this was not intended to exclude girls from the benefits so provided.” Charlton, 150.

²²⁷ Mather, *A Farewell Exhortation* (1657), 13

²²⁸ See E. Jennifer Monaghan, “Literacy Instruction and Gender in Colonial New England,” as well as her *Learning to Read and Write in Colonial America*.

station.²²⁹ On the political level, the manifestation of equality in consent-based politics unquestionably benefited from the promotion of the sort of basic education that would facilitate citizens' understanding of and adherence to the laws, while also helping them to cultivate the personal habits and virtue that would make their individual callings safe and purposeful within the community.

Indeed, the benefits of providing children with at least a basic education seem to have been taken for granted by the founders during the earliest years of the colony, as no attempts were made to formalize or regulate such instruction until 1642 when it became evident that "many parents and masters" were not undertaking the education of their children and servants of their own volition. At that point, the General Court stepped in to attempt to create a more formal system of education; in a 1642 order, the court chided those who failed "in training up their children in learning, and labor, and other employments which may be profitable to the commonwealth." In order to correct the

²²⁹ According to John Cotton, "reading of Scriptures is an ordinance of God" and meant to improve the believer's understanding of Christ's nature and will. Thomas Shepard charged readers with the task of applying their intellects to the study of Scripture to satisfy their longing for truth: "I grant you ought not to put up all with a charitable opinion of Scripture, but if you can, by reason, reading, and comparing, help your heart to a full persuasion, this is Scripture." My view of personal Bible study as a gender-neutral activity is derived from the frequency of allusions to such efforts in the conversion narratives of New England church membership; see, for example, those collected by Thomas Shepard. See Cotton, *A modest and cleer ansvver to Mr. Ball's discourse of set formes of prayer* (London: 1642), 15; Shepard, *Certain select cases resolved specially tending to the right ordering of the heart, that we may comfortably walk with God in our general and particular callings* (London: 1650), 47. The conversion narratives are reprinted in *God's Plot: Puritan Spirituality in Thomas Shepard's Cambridge*, Michael McGiffert, ed. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1972; revised and expanded edition, 1994), 149-225

Consider also that the among the first texts printed in the colony was Eliot's translation of the Bible into Algonquian; why bother with such a labor intensive project, if not to get the text of Scripture into the hands of individual Native Americans, for the purpose of furthering their experience of salvation and sanctification? Recent scholars have worked to translate the native marginalia in extant copies of the Eliot Bible, indicating extensive interaction with the text among native users, suggesting that New Englanders taught their study methods along with their religious doctrines. See Fisher, "Native Americans, Conversion, and Christian Practice," and Jeffrey Mifflin. "'Closing the Circle': Native American Writings in Colonial New England, a Documentary Nexus Between Acculturation and Cultural Preservation," *The American Archivist* 72.2 (2009): 344-382.

problem, the court empowered the “chosen men appointed for managing the prudential affairs” of each town to “take account from time to time of all parents and masters, and of their children, considering their calling and employment of their children, especially of their ability to read and understand the principles of religion and the capital laws of this country.”²³⁰ The wording of the law illuminates several aspects of the public nature of education as understood by the Puritans. First, the delegation of the subject to the care of those charged with administering the “prudential affairs” of the several towns underscores the civic purposes of education: if education of the young is one of the ‘prudential affairs’ of public life, and if prudence, or practical wisdom, is the preeminent political virtue, then education must contribute something to the welfare of the community.²³¹ The essentially civil character of education at this most basic level is further underscored by the fact that such institutions were controlled by the towns directly, and not officially under the oversight (although clearly subject to the influence of) the churches.²³²

Second, the combination of “learning” with “calling and employment” under the same law indicates that education was understood to have both intellectual and practical elements. The overseers were to not only ensure that the young people were being provided with proper training in their particular callings, but also with a set of peripheral skills to utilize during those periods where their employments might be less active than others. The law mentions, for example, that children tasked with watching livestock also

²³⁰ *Records of the MBC*, 2:6-7.

²³¹ See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* VI.5. In their defense of the New England way against English critics, John Allen and Thomas Shepard observed that God had left “civil societies and government thereof, ...to rules of humane prudence.” John Allen and Thomas Shepard, *A tryall of the new church-way in New-England and in old* (London: 1648), 109.

²³² Ministers in New England did not hold political office and thus had no more formal control over the schools or their curriculum than any other interested townspeople.

be given some other task such as “spinning upon the rock, knitting, weaving tape, etc.”²³³ This highlights New Englanders’ commitment to the purposeful encouragement of individual industry, not only as a way to keep the economy of the community functioning smoothly, but also as a way to keep children from the sort of “wanton, dishonest, or immodest behavior” that might tempt them were their hands idle. Here, the law alludes to the founding commitment to communion as well, for the townsmen were to “divide the town amongst them” so that each of them had “a certain number of families to have special oversight of.” Such oversight reflects both Cotton and Winthrop’s discussion of public spiritedness and communion, the special care towards ones fellow citizens that recognizes in their good—and their virtue—the good of the community as a whole.

The 1642 act was designed to be temporary, in order to allow the Court time to assess the situation and formulate a more fully developed plan for addressing any shortcomings in the education of the youth of the colony. In 1647, they passed a new piece of legislation designed to ensure “learning may not be buried in the grave of our fathers in the church & commonwealth.”²³⁴ Once again, the court adopted a policy of local control, requiring every town of fifty or more householders to designate someone “to teach all such children as shall resort to him to write and read” and every town with more than one hundred householders to also set up a grammar school, “the master thereof being able to instruct youth so far as they may be fitted for the university.” The law left the provision of salaries of the schoolmaster(s) to the discretion of the localities: they could do so either by charging a reasonable tuition fee, or by raising a general

²³³ *Records of the MBC*, 2:6-7.

²³⁴ *Records of the MBC*, 26 May 1647, 3:188.

assessment. Towns that failed to comply with the law were subject to a fine that would go to support “the next school” at which their children were presumably being educated.²³⁵

Despite this practical emphasis, the Puritan view of education was more than merely instrumental: the true purpose of learning at all levels, as Charles Chauncey argued in 1654, was to free the mind to engage with matters beyond the merely utilitarian. Failure to make adequate provisions for the education of children was a sign of serious moral degeneracy, for without the opportunity to engage their minds and souls in the process of learning and reflection, children were reduced to little more than “drudges,” objects of use rather than parental affection. Thus, in terms of intellectual outcomes, the law specified that students must be able to “read and understand the principles of religion and the capital laws” of the country (emphasis added). Reading instruction was not meant to promote rote learning, but a more robust capacity to truly understand the content of religion and law. Understanding in this sense seems to imply something more than mere comprehension, for the true value of leaning the principles of religion, for example, was not simply to know that such-and-such an action was forbidden, but to be able to reflect on and apply one’s knowledge to one’s own life.²³⁶

The importance of such a level of critical thought is further illustrated by New Englanders’ approach to catechesis, or the practice of doctrinal education typically accomplished using a set of question and answers. The purpose of catechizing was not the mere rote memorization of doctrinal statements, but rather, to provide a set of

²³⁵ This is not the only instance in which the General Court ordered the use of fines to pay for education. In a separate piece of legislation, the Court ordered that all fines collected from Indians were to be used to support “the building of some meeting houses or education of their poorer children in learning, or other public use.” *Records of the MBC*, 26 May 1647, 3:188.

²³⁶ On the tendency of Puritans to argue from principles to specific applications, see my discussion on the preface to the *Laws and Liberties* below.

categories within which the catechumen could organize theological truths so that they would be most useful to them in their everyday lives. “Catechizing,” Ezekiel Rogers observed to Winthrop in 1639, “must be a main help” in ensuring that “the body of the land” became “as [pure] we must be.”²³⁷ Although the question/response of catechesis could be conducted entirely orally, as early as 1641, the General Court ordered the ministers to “agree upon a form of catechism which might be put into print” and, presumably, read.²³⁸ While the ministers appear to have been unable to agree upon a singular catechism, they quickly produced an abundance of printed catechisms.²³⁹

Among these, John Fiske’s *The Watering of the Olive Plant in Christ’s Garden* (1657), is a useful example of the sort of civic formation that could be conveyed via this popular educational model. Fiske—physician, and sometime schoolteacher in addition to his duties as minister—came to New England in 1637 after having been relieved of his English ministry for nonconformity, early enough to be considered part of the first generation. In 1641, when several families decided to separate from both the town and church of Salem and found the neighboring town of Wenham, they called Fiske to be their pastor. His relationship with his congregants was strong enough that in 1655, he followed the majority of the church members when they decided to move *en masse* to the western frontier. Although it is unclear precisely when he composed the text of *The*

²³⁷ Ezekiel Rogers to John Winthrop, 8 December 1639, *Winthrop Papers* 4:159-160.

²³⁸ Wilberforce Eames argues that in the first decade of settlement, New Englanders relied heavily upon their stock of English catechisms, particularly William Perkins’ *Six Principles of Christian Religion*. See “Early New England Catechisms” (1898). Electronic Texts in American Studies. Paper 56. <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/etas/56>. Accessed 2/4/2016.

²³⁹ Hugh Peter, *Milk for Babes and Meat for Men* (London: 1641); John Cotton, *Doctrine* (London: 1642); Ezekiel Rogers, *Chief Grounds of the Christian Religion* (London: 1642); John Cotton, *Milk for Babes* (London: 1646), a text also translated for the Indian press; John Norton, *Brief and Excellent Treatise* (London: 1648); Thomas Shepard’s book of casuistry, *Certain Select Cases* (London: 1650) had a catechism appended.

Watering of the Olive Plant in Christ's Garden (1657), given his long and early association with a single community of believers for whom the task of catechism was a central concern, it is a useful example of the ways in which such religious instruction could be linked to everyday life.²⁴⁰

According to Fiske, a careful study of the “order and method” of the Lord’s Prayer will teach the Christian child the virtues of humility and self-sacrifice in learning “to prefer: the things of God before our own, those of public before those of private concernment, and spiritual blessings before those temporal.”²⁴¹ There are echoes of both Cotton’s *Promise* and Winthrop’s *Model* here, and a reiteration of the core commitment of communion or public-spiritedness. Just as Cotton and Winthrop had exhorted their listeners to act with generous spirits towards those less fortunate than themselves and take on the burden of self-sacrifice in the task of planting the commonwealth, Fiske’s catechism calls for a radical form of other-regarding even in the privacy of one’s heart and prayers. These, he urges, are to be oriented not towards one’s own desires or comforts, but first towards God and then towards the community. Inasmuch as Fiske’s catechism helped to foster such virtues, it was not only a form of spiritual education, but also a means of civic formation.

Moreover, he enlarged on the petition to say that Christians should pray for “the granting and blessing such means as may advantage” what he describes as “the Kingdom

²⁴⁰ Fiske regularly referred to the use of catechizing in his account of church meetings; see Robert G. Pope, ed. *The Notebook of the Reverend John Fiske, 1644-1675* (Salem, Massachusetts: The Essex Institute, 1974), 125, 128-130, 136, 158-159, 200, 222, 233. Fiske’s published catechism is unique in the emphasis it places on the Lord’s Prayer as a précis of Biblical truth; many catechisms were less literary in their approach and simply presented the catechumen with a list of doctrinal questions and responses without any useful organizing system such as the Lord’s Prayer to aid in comprehension and retention of the material.

²⁴¹ Fiske, *Watering of the Olive Plant*, 18.

of Heaven ‘on earth as it is in Heaven’.”²⁴² Fiske suggests that often these means will be quite mundane—“godly family nurture,” “civil government,” and “schools of learning.”²⁴³ Daily life, Fiske assures the catechumen reading his text, is of the greatest import to God, who has promised to provide us with “daily bread”—a category that Fiske expands far beyond actual foodstuffs to all the “creature comforts” required for the “outward man.” We ought to recognize that God is the ultimate provider of all things ranging from our “relations” with others, to the “laws, government, and order in civil society,” as well as “the enjoying a civil and religious right to our enjoyments.”²⁴⁴ There was, in short, a place for the appreciation of things of this world within a fully developed spiritual framework. The emphasis on reading literacy as a skill for spiritual development did not negate its usefulness in civic formation.

In formally providing for a system of education at the local elementary level, New Englanders were indicating their commitment to widespread reading literacy as a basic skill for all citizens of the commonwealth.²⁴⁵ In addition, by mandating the establishment of grammar schools, they also indicated their sense of the public value of more advanced levels of education for at least some portion of the population. Indeed, because grammar schools provided boys the foundation in basic Latin and Greek that they would require to succeed at the university level, towns were actually more likely to establish them without prompting as soon as they were demographically viable.²⁴⁶ Grammar schools filled the

²⁴² Fiske, *Watering of the Olive Plant*, 21-22.

²⁴³ Fiske, *Watering of the Olive Plant*, 21-22.

²⁴⁴ Fiske, *Watering of the Olive Plant*, 26-27. Fiske’s use of rights language here is worth noting in light of later New Englander’s use of the same in defense of their revolution against the Andros government in 1689; see Chapter 6.

²⁴⁵ On the normative purpose of New England schools, see Axtell, *The School Upon A Hill*.

²⁴⁶ In the first fifteen years of settlement, seven Massachusetts towns founded such institutions: Boston (1635), Charlestown (1636), Salem (1637), Dorchester (1639), Cambridge (c. 1640), Roxbury (1645), and Braintree (c. 1645). The list is drawn from Walter H. Small, “The New England Grammar School, 1635-

gap between basic literacy and university level learning; to establish their own version of the latter, free from the interference or influence of the corrupted church establishment of England, was among the earliest and most important of the articulated goals of the founders in establishing their 'New' England.

Harvard College and the Preparation of Civic Leaders

In his *History of New-England* (London: 1653) Edward Johnson records that the pressure placed on the faculty at English universities to conform to Church of England standards under Archbishop Laud was a primary motivator in the founding of Harvard College: "the fountains of learning being in a great measure stopped in our native country at this time" the founding of the college was regarded as a particular blessing by the people of New England. Indeed, "had not the Lord been pleased to furnish N. E. with means for the attainment of learning, the work would have been carried on very heavily, and the hearts of godly parents would have vanish'd away with heaviness for their poor children, whom they must have left in a desolate wilderness, destitute of the means of grace."²⁴⁷ Johnson was not alone in attributing the early provision for university level education to a sense of dread: according to the authors of *New England's First Fruits*,

After God had carried us safe to New-England, and we had builded our houses, provided necessaries for our livelihood, rear'd convenient places for God's worship, and settled the Civil Government: One of the next things we longed for, and looked after was to advance *Learning* and perpetuate it to Posterity; dreading to leave an illiterate ministry to the church, when our present ministers shall lie in the Dust.²⁴⁸

1700," *The School Review* Vol. 10, No. 7 (Sep., 1902), pp. 513-531; see also Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Intellectual Life of Colonial New England* (Ithaca: Great Seal Books, 1960).

²⁴⁷ Johnson, *History of New-England* (London: 1653), 162-163.

²⁴⁸ *New England's First Fruits* (London: 1643), 12.

While the colonists had to postpone the creation of an institution for advanced learning until after they had provided for their immediate needs of shelter and the other “necessaries” of life, as well as the establishment of both church and civil order, their next communal project was to consider the means by which such institutions could be maintained in perpetuity.

As early as 1633, John Eliot was attempting to cultivate a patron for the project, writing to Sir Simonds D’Ewes, an English historian and supporter of the Bay Colony, “if we nourish not learning, both church and commonwealth will sink.” It appears that D’Ewes had inquired about the possibility of funding or providing a library in the Bay Colony, a project which Eliot assured him was appreciated, but of secondary importance to the establishment of a college. Were D’Ewes to “employ but one mite of that great wealth which God hath given to erect a school of learning, a college among us, [he] should do a most glorious work, acceptable to God and man,” Eliot argued.²⁴⁹ The physical establishment of a local college would contribute not only to the education of the next generation of civic and religious leaders, but that of the present one as well: “though we have many learned men, both gentlemen and ministers,” they lacked a suitable location to gather together for “public exercises of learning.” Eliot’s vision for the college was quite practical: there were plenty of prospective students and enough men of learning to teach them in the colony already—all that was lacking was a physical location from

²⁴⁹ John Eliot to Sir Simonds D’Ewes, September 18, 1633, *Letters from New England: The Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1629-1638* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1976) 106-7. Note that Eliot specifies that “for the welfare of our commonwealth,” the college must provide training “not only in divinity, but in other arts and sciences and in law also.” Eliot to D’Ewes, September 18, 1633, *Letters from New England*, 109.

whence the combined knowledge of the learned among the planters could be disseminated productively throughout the colony.²⁵⁰

D'Ewes was apparently unmoved by Eliot's appeal, but in October 1636, the General Court voted to appropriate £400 to establish a college, a sum that takes on greater significance when we understand that (as Samuel Eliot Morison calculated) it represented "more than half the entire colony tax levy for 1635, and almost one quarter of the tax levy for 1636."²⁵¹ Despite the obvious earnestness of intention represented by such a large expenditure of public funds, execution of the order languished for another two years while the General Court attended to the more urgent matters of the Pequot War and the trial of Anne Hutchinson. In 1637, they appointed a mixed group of magistrates and clergy to oversee the college, purchased land in Newtown and renamed the site Cambridge in honor of that seat of English Puritan learning.²⁵² Having provided for the material conditions of learning, the court hired Nathaniel Eaton as the first master of the college. In September 1638, John Harvard—a relatively recent migrant to New England, but destined to be remembered fondly as "a Godly gentleman and a lover of

²⁵⁰ Not only was this seen as desirable by the residents of Massachusetts, it was also regarded as such by their supporters at home. See Emmanuel Downing to John Winthrop, 6 March 1637, *Winthrop Papers* 3:369-371.

²⁵¹ Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Founding of Harvard College* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935), 169.

²⁵² Cambridge—particularly Trinity, Emmanuel, and Christ's Colleges—had been the center of Puritan scholarship since the sixteenth century. See Patrick Collinson, "The Universities and the New Men," in *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Oxford, 1967). The overwhelming majority of university-educated men in New England were graduates of these three schools. See Harry S. Stout, "University Men in New England 1620-1660: A Demographic Analysis," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* Vol. 4, No. 3 (Winter, 1974), pp. 375-400.

learning”²⁵³—died, leaving his personal library and half of his estate to the college, which was then given his name.²⁵⁴

Even with Harvard’s generous bequest, the college got off to a rocky start: Eaton was dismissed for abusing the students physically, as well as neglecting them academically, and took a large part of the college’s treasury with him when he fled the colony. Under the second president, Henry Dunster, however, the college developed into an institution with traditional liberal arts curriculum following the Cambridge model. Dunster was replaced by Charles Chauncey in 1654, and for the commencement sermon preached during his first full year as president of the college, he prepared a detailed justification of the mixture of the “humane,” or human-centered, arts and sciences with the study of theology in the school’s curriculum. The humanities, although focused on man and not God, were neither godless nor devoid of the ability to illuminate reality: “there are certain principles of truth written even in corrupt nature, which heathen authors have delivered unto us, that do not cross the holy writ.”²⁵⁵ Moreover, “it cannot be denied that all truth whosoever it be that speaks it, comes from the God of truth” and that “there are found many excellent and divine moral truths in Plato, Aristotle, Plutarch, Seneca, etc.”²⁵⁶ Truth was to be sought wherever it could be found, Chauncey argued, and the best scholars were also apt to be the best men, whatever their theology.

The public ramifications of this were obvious to Chauncey, who noted that men of great wisdom had often proven to be essential to the success of the people of God. Citing

²⁵³ *New England’s First Fruits*, 12.

²⁵⁴ Morison, *Intellectual Life*, 29-30. For a corrective to Morison’s adamantly secular representation of Harvard’s founding and first century, see Winthrop S. Hudson, “The Morison Myth concerning the Founding of Harvard College,” *Church History*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Jun., 1939), pp. 148-159.

²⁵⁵ Chauncey, *God’s Mercy*, 35-36; see 1 Cor. 11:14.

²⁵⁶ Chauncey, *God’s Mercy*, 36.

Amos 2:11, Chauncey noted that as great as all the marvelous deeds done by God on behalf of His covenant people in preserving them among their enemies were, far greater were His blessings to them through their learned sons, their “prophets.”²⁵⁷ The term “prophet,” Chauncey clarified, should be understood not only to signify a person with the special ability to “foretell things to come” but also those who, on the basis of their own learning, had the capacity to “faithfully teach and instruct.”²⁵⁸ The work of the prophet was therefore not limited to religious matters, but encompassed “speaking to edification, exhortation, and the comfort of others” on a host of topics both secular and sacred.

Whatever the content of their message, Old Testament prophets, Chauncey argued, could be grouped into two categories: those few who “had their calling immediately from God and were extraordinarily inspired with gifts from above” and ordinary prophets “such as were taught in schools.”²⁵⁹ The ordinary prophets were by far the majority and their training included instruction in theology and divinity, as well as subject of a more secular nature, such as “good literature.” This did not negate the seriousness of their office for “where extraordinary means is [sic] wanting, the goodness of God in blessing ordinary means must not be forgotten.”²⁶⁰ Chauncey reasoned that the “ordinary” means of education ought still to be regarded as a blessing of God upon a people, because through it He might raise up leaders to guide and protect them against the sort of internal threats that are even more dangerous to their survival than the most menacing of mere “outward enemies.”²⁶¹ The success of such men, Chauncey argued,

²⁵⁷ Chauncey, *God's Mercy*, 6-9.

²⁵⁸ Chauncey, *God's Mercy*, 3.

²⁵⁹ Chauncey, *God's Mercy*, 3-4.

²⁶⁰ Chauncey, *God's Mercy*, 5.

²⁶¹ Chauncey, *God's Mercy*, 6-7.

depended on the fact that they were drawn from among the people and not "strangers" to them, unfamiliar with their customs. As such, they were better able to identify potential sources of internal discord that might undermine the community from within.²⁶²

The danger to the civil and religious community from outward threats was momentary: the self-destructive nature of internal dissension, apathy, or outright rejection of the covenant identity was both much more serious and reasonably connected to the project of education.²⁶³ Chauncey implicitly connected the ordinary means of education to the preservation of the nation of Israel: however much the physical manifestation of the Lord's presence with the Israelites as pillar of cloud and fire in the wilderness had protected the people from outward threats, it did not compare to the "spiritual mercy" of strong educational systems which were the only effectual means of maintaining their corporate identity.²⁶⁴

Although Chauncey did not arrive in New England until 1638, it is clear that he regarded himself as a member of the founding generation, and saw his role as president of the college as critical to the success of the commonwealth. He reassured the fathers, magistrates, and other interested supporters of the college in his audience that their efforts to promote "schools of learning" would not go unrewarded: the schools would be as "oil to the lamps" providing fuel to stimulate the young minds that would, when mature, illuminate the path of righteousness for the people.²⁶⁵ The founding generation could take comfort in knowing that although their descendants might be faced with trials and

²⁶² Chauncey, *God's Mercy*, 21.

²⁶³ Although Chauncey does not specify the particular internal threats he has in mind, in the context of Dunster's resignation, and his own doubts about the validity of infant baptism he might have been anticipating the controversy over church membership that would unravel over the course of the next decade.

²⁶⁴ Chauncey, *God's Mercy*, 8.

²⁶⁵ Chauncey, *God's Mercy*, 15.

“afflictions” of great severity, “yet this shall be a mitigation of them, that you shall have faithful teachers to instruct you still, this will surely mitigate and lighten all other afflictions.”²⁶⁶ Fueled by the wisdom of the ages, the students of the college would be well equipped to preserve the principles of the founders.

The community derived other benefits from the college beyond the preparation of a learned elite. Liberal learning, that is, education directed to “a general broadening of the mind; not restricted to the requirements of technical or professional training,” and grounded in the fields of logic, ethics and politics, rhetoric, philosophy and theology, Chauncey argued, had a powerful transformative effect upon the young.²⁶⁷ It could cure them of “addict[ion] to their pleasures and lusts” and lead them instead to “favor heavenly things, and to be set apart to God.”²⁶⁸ Indeed, the college charter of 1650 declared the purposes of the institution in sweeping terms to be “the education of the English and Indian youth of this country, in knowledge and godliness.”²⁶⁹ Neither knowledge nor godliness was sufficient on its own: the Puritans were disdainful and fearful of an unlearned ministry, but they also recognized the limitations of knowledge

²⁶⁶ Chauncey, *God's Mercy*, 8.

²⁶⁷ Morison exhaustively details the curriculum in *Harvard College in the Seventeenth Century*, 2 Vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936). The curriculum also included courses in geometry, and astronomy, and regular translation exercises in both Greek and Hebrew." liberal, adj. and n." OED Online. June 2015. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/Entry/107863> (accessed July 22, 2015).

²⁶⁸ Chauncey, *God's Mercy*, 5.

²⁶⁹ Harvard Charter, 1650, available online: <http://library.harvard.edu/university-archives/using-the-collections/online-resources/charter-of-1650>; accessed 2/4/2016. Despite their professed intentions, only a handful of native men were educated at Harvard in the seventeenth century—perhaps as few as the five named individuals whose attendance can be confirmed from the college records, but perhaps as many as a dozen, if circumstantial evidence can be believed. See Walter T. Meserve's discussion in “English Works of Seventeenth-century Indians”. *American Quarterly* 8.3 (1956): 271-276. Interesting, two examples of writings produced by Harvard students have been reprinted in Wolfgang Hochbruck and Beatrix Dudensing-Reichel, “‘HONORATISSIMI BENEFACTORES’: Native American Students and Two Seventeenth-Century Texts in the University Tradition,” *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 4.2/3 (1992): 35–47.

alone. New Englanders promoted humane study at Harvard not as an end in itself, but because they believed it aided in the development of *eupraxia*, the habit of right living.²⁷⁰

As scholars from Morison onward have recognized, the insights gleaned from education at Harvard were never to be merely ornamental, but were intended for use, the Puritan term for describing the application of truth to one's own life. For Chauncey, all learning—including that ordinarily described as non-theological, or humane—was rooted in the providential design of the universe. Other subjects (including politics and ethics) were grounded in Scripture and God's desire to see all aspects of human existence well ordered: "where are there to be found such ethical, political, or moral precepts as are to be found in the Holy Scriptures? Or such principles for the ordering of our lives, families, or commonweales?"²⁷¹ Indeed, Morison's detailed research into the weekly schedules of undergraduate lectures during the period reveals a rhythmic pattern of learning in which the student moved back and forth between humanistic subjects and more theological ones, cyclically applying the insights gained from one area to the other.

Although the curriculum was infused with a commitment to increasing the students' knowledge and understanding of scripture, the sequence of courses developed in such a way that it promoted a holistic appreciation of learning, whatever the source.

Norman Fiering's study of student notebooks and texts from Harvard indicates that the

²⁷⁰ J. David Hoeveler argues that this attribute of the Harvard curriculum is largely a result of the influence of William Ames on the founding generation, and the use of his texts *The Marrow of Theology* and *Technometry* by students throughout the period. See: *Creating the American Mind: Intellect and Politics in the Colonial Colleges* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002), 32-39. Norman Fiering cites Alexander Richardson for his "extraordinary emphasis on and expansion of, the Aristotelian ethical concept of eupraxia," as particularly influential. See *Moral Philosophy at Seventeenth Century Harvard* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), 44.

²⁷¹ Chauncey, *God's Mercy*, 37. Fiering estimates that approximately "one-third of the total lecture time of the second year" curriculum at Harvard was devoted to instruction in ethics and politics. *Moral Philosophy*, 29.

majority of instructional time was oriented towards helping these young citizens understand the meaning of “well-acting” and its connection to their personal “happiness” and sense of fulfillment. This was accomplished through the development of the habits of mind and soul that would allow the individual to become skilled in applying their abstract knowledge to specific cases.²⁷²

Fiering focuses on four major ethics texts that are known to have been used at the college during the seventeenth century, particularly those that represent “the long Christian dialogue with Aristotle’s *Nichomachean Ethics*.”²⁷³ Although the texts contain slight variations in their approach to Aristotle, what they have in common is their emphasis on the internal and external benefits of studying classical ethics. The man thus educated would better understand his own virtues and vices and thus, become better at governing himself apart from external coercion. He would also develop a greater capacity to understand the application of virtue in his external relations, treating others according to the principles of justice, for example. The student of ethics was expected to be able to reason from principles to their application in particular cases—an approach that elevated the individual as a moral agent in society capable first of governing his own actions and only then of participating in the broader government of the community.

²⁷² See Fiering’s discussion of the notebook of Samuel Shepard (AB 1658) in particular, *Moral Philosophy*, 45ff. Fiering claims relative continuity in this approach to ethical studies through “about 1690” when “events comined to bring about a break with the past order.” (64) Fiering’s work is a useful corrective to Edward Rand, who argues on the basis of the published titles of theses in grammar and *technologicae* from seventeenth century Harvard that the curriculum was of the most abstract nature, bearing little or no relation to ordinary life. Rand errs, however, in failing to recognize that such exercises by graduating students were an ornamental flourish at the end of a course of training in which philosophy was used as a practical tool for shaping the whole person. See Edward Kennard Rand, “Liberal Education in Seventeenth-Century Harvard,” *NEQ*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Sep., 1933): 525-551.

²⁷³ Fiering, *Moral Philosophy*, 66. The four texts are: Theophilus (Gottlieb) Golius, *Epitome Doctrinae Moralis* (1592), which went through multiple editions throughout the seventeenth century; Eustache de Saint-Paul, *Ethica* (1609); Franco Burgersdyck, *Idea Philosophia Tum Moralis, Tum Naturalis* (1631); and Adrian Heerboord, *Collegium Ethicum* (1648) as well as his later *Meletemata Philosophica* (1654).

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the college was the infusion throughout the curriculum of branching organizational structures derived from Ramus' logic. This made it relatively simple to produce, recreate, or follow in outline form the argument of a text, sermon, or lecture.²⁷⁴ Harvard students cultivated the logical habit of mind through the repeated use of such organizational schemes not only in notetaking, but also in the creation of their own transcriptions of manuscript texts. Students followed a cycle of engagement with the material in multiple modes: hearing a text discussed in lecture, as well as reading it and copying it for one's own use, followed ultimately by discussions with their fellow classmates. While the first stages of learning were carried on under the careful direction of the faculty fellows, in the disputation process, the students engaged primarily with one another, rather than with the faculty, and in these exchanges must have reached some conclusions of their own about the texts in question.²⁷⁵

As students worked their way through texts singly, and in conversation with peers and faculty members, they created a community of engagement and reflection centered on the discussion of a shared set of sources.²⁷⁶ A formative element of the undergraduates' education was the experience of living and studying with a community

²⁷⁴ Ramist logic proceeds through a series of dichotomies to construct the relationships between an initial proposition or category and its supporting propositions or categories. On the influence of this method in Puritan thought and theology generally, see Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939). More specifically, see Keith L. Sprunger, "Ames, Ramus, and the Method of Puritan Theology," *The Harvard Theological Review* 59.2 (1966): 133–151.

²⁷⁵ The Knoleses characterize this method of learning as essentially conservative, inasmuch as the faculty 'controlled' the versions of the texts to which students had access, and contrast this with the relatively uncontrollable access to printed texts. On the other hand, the method forced a close engagement with the material which might well have served to create more independent reflection, analysis, and questioning, not less. See Thomas Knoles and Lucia Zaucha Knoles, "In Usum Pupillorum ' Student-Transcribed Texts at Harvard College Before 1740," *AAS Proceedings*, 376-378.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 388.

of their peers. The decision to establish a residential college was not inevitable: Winthrop's brother-in-law Emmanuel Downing argued that the urgency of the need for such higher-levels of education would excuse the colonists if they chose to begin more humbly, boarding students with local families and gathering them together only for actual lectures.²⁷⁷ Yet the New Englanders waited until they were able to secure both a site and an instructor. Samuel Eliot Morison argued that "university learning apart from college life was not worth having," that is, that there was something about the college experience of communal life that added to the educational experience.²⁷⁸ The effect of such shared intimacies among the students was to create a strong social network that continued throughout their lives.²⁷⁹

Although the purpose of the college was undoubtedly to perpetuate an educated leadership for the colony, it was not an entirely closed society; approximately one-third of Harvard students in the seventeenth century were the first in their families to attain such a level of learning.²⁸⁰ The residential aspects of college life very likely also contributed to the relative 'openness' of the network; it appears that these young men learned to rely upon one another for support and encouragement, regardless of their families' socio-economic differences, and to challenge each other civilly in the course of

²⁷⁷ Downing's wife, Lucy, also urged Winthrop to hasten the colony's establishment of a college so that the couple's son could be assured of continuing his education there if the family decided to move. See Lucy Downing to John Winthrop, 4 March 1637, *Winthrop Papers* 3:367-369, and Emmanuel Downing to John Winthrop, 6 March 1637, *Winthrop Papers* 3:369-371.

²⁷⁸ Morison, *Intellectual Life*, 33-34.

²⁷⁹ On the importance of friendships among Puritan ministers in particular, see Francis J. Bremer, *Congregational Communion: Clerical Friendship in the Anglo-American Puritan Community, 1610-1692* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994), and David D. Hall, *Faithful Shepard: A History of the New England Ministry in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975). To my knowledge, no similar study has been conducted of the social networks among university graduates who did not enter the ministry, which would make an interesting project; Sibley's *Harvard Graduates* does at least provide anecdotal references to the ongoing connections between alumni over time in passing.

²⁸⁰ Roger L. Geiger, *The History of American Higher Education: Learning and Culture from the Founding to World War II* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 7.

academic disputations—skills that contributed to their success as civic leaders and that reinforced the founding aspiration to the development of civic communion. Whether of elite or humble origins, as graduates of the highest institution of learning in the colony, Harvard men would go on to serve in various positions of public influence or leadership, and in the process, continue to build on the foundation of social relationships initially cultivated during the college years.

Steeped in theology though it might have been, the undergraduate curriculum in the seventeenth century was still broad enough to prepare those who would be the future leaders of church and state. The greater percentage of Harvard students participated in the life of the community as laymen, diffusing (so it was hoped) both their learning and their habit of right living in their day to day work. According to Morison's calculations, 562 students enrolled in the college during the seventeenth century (465 graduates; 97 non graduates), of whom "less than half" served as clergymen.²⁸¹ An informal survey of Sibley's *Harvard Graduates* for the period indicates that among the non-clerical positions filled by graduates were the roles of teacher, merchant, magistrate, judge, deputy, doctor, soldier, surveyor, colonial agent, and gentleman farmer.²⁸² Regardless of their particular callings, the fact that Harvard's graduates were dispersed throughout Massachusetts both geographically and professionally meant that their learning was also in some measure dispersed through the larger community.

²⁸¹ Morison, *Intellectual Life*, 42, 57. While Morison's count of those who never served as clergy members is, presumably, reliable, his analysis of the vocations of the remaining students is complicated by the fact that he double- and triple-counts individuals who changed careers.

²⁸² See Sibley's *Harvard Graduates*, Vol. 1. During the 1640s, several of the earliest graduates returned to England to support Cromwell's army and then remained to seek their fortunes under the commonwealth.

To those who would object that the public and private benefits of education were obtainable without the sort of advanced or specialized instruction demanded by Chauncey's model, he dryly remarked: "You shall find it here, as in other trades, that there is a great difference between those that have been bound apprentices to a trade and others that are handy and have gotten a little skill by the observation of others."²⁸³ A college education was a form of intellectual apprenticeship in which the student benefited from a focused engagement with texts and ideas without the ordinary distractions of home and family. Like other apprenticeships, the training of a scholar, no matter how abstract or abstruse, was always conducted with an eye on its practical applications. As Leonard Hoar (A. B. 1650) wrote to his nephew Josiah Flynt during the latter's first year at Harvard in 1661, scholarship was complex and continuous process.

As you must read much that your head may be stored with notion, so you must be free and much in all kinds of discourse of what you read; that your tongue may be apt to a good expression of what you do understand. And further; of most things you must write to; whereby you may render yourself exact in judging of what you hear or read and faithful in remembering of what you have once known.²⁸⁴

The task of the young scholar, in other words, was not simply to absorb as much information as possible, but also to discuss his knowledge with others and to move from understanding to evaluation and 'remembering.' This last skill, one imagines, might take place well after graduation when the men thus prepared entered into the life of their community at all levels, saturating daily conversation with the insights gleaned from their years of study, and as parents, masters, or schoolteachers, continuing the cycle of basic education by educating the next generation of children.²⁸⁵

²⁸³ Chauncey, *God's Mercy*, 30.

²⁸⁴ Leonard Hoar to Josiah Flynt, 27 March 1661, in *The Puritans: A Sourcebook of Their Writings*, Perry Miller and Thomas Johnson, eds. (New York: Dover Publications, 2001), 709.

²⁸⁵ Chauncey, *God's Mercy*, 15.

Chauncey thus urged his listeners' continued financial support of the commonwealth's system of education for "this course of the instruction of youth is the means to provide for present and future times."²⁸⁶ New Englanders, mindful of the public benefits of education, should not only train their own children in "good literature" but also sponsor the children of others "in setting up free schools as the Lord enables you." Even if one lacked the financial wherewithal to contribute materially, "if ye be poor, yet pray for posterity and means of education, and pray for the peace of Jerusalem."²⁸⁷ Jerusalem, in this case, a rhetorical stand-in for New England, God's new Zion, and her peace, intimately connected to the successful establishment of schools of learning, because as an institution, they helped to perpetuate Massachusetts' the founding principles of moral equality, industry, and communion across all ages and levels of society.

The Bramble and the Trees: Law, Liberty, and Civic Formation in Massachusetts Bay

The process of drafting and publicizing the law code that could properly shape New English society by ensuring the transmission of its founding principles across the generations, as well as structure individual and communal life within the generations is a complex story, stretching over almost the first twenty years of settlement, and involving both elites and non-elites.²⁸⁸ Indeed, the initial call for a written code of laws came from the freemen through their deputies, who believed that codification would serve as a check

²⁸⁶ Chauncey, *God's Mercy*, 34.

²⁸⁷ Chauncey, *God's Mercy*, 32-33.

²⁸⁸ For an overview of the historiography of the development of the 1648 *Laws and Liberties*, see Richard J. Ross, "The Career of Puritan Jurisprudence," *Law and History Review*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Summer, 2008), pp. 227-258. Mark D. Cahn, "Punishment, Discretion, and the Codification of Prescribed Penalties in Colonial Massachusetts," *The American Journal of Legal History*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (Apr., 1989), pp. 107-136.

on what they perceived to be the magistrates' untoward exercise of discretionary power.²⁸⁹ Although the magistrates, led by Winthrop, were resistant to the idea, through experimentation, reflection, and negotiation, New Englanders developed and published a constitutional and jurisprudential system that reflected all three of the founding generation's core commitments.²⁹⁰

Their ultimate commitment to the rule of law was itself a reflection of New Englanders' commitment to the moral equality of persons: the magistrates were presumed to be equally subject to the laws they enacted and enforced, and were prohibited from exercising unlimited discretionary power over the people whom they governed.²⁹¹ Equality also necessitated government by consent; this, combined with the idealization of a personal calling and the virtue of industry led to a heightened respect for property, including property in the form of personal conscience and thus, New Englanders enacted legal protections for the liberty to dissent which had driven them from England's shores in the first place. Finally, the goal of civic communion manifested itself in the development of a certain view of representative government in which individual voters were 'represented' only insofar as they were beneficiaries of the common good. In this

²⁸⁹ John Winthrop, entries for May 1635 and December 1639, *Journal*, 146, 314-315. Note that in the latter entry Winthrop attributes at least some of the resistance to the formulation of a legal code to concerns that it might "transgress the limits of our charter, which provide, we shall make no laws repugnant to the laws of England, and that we were assured we must do. But to raise up laws by practice and custom had been no transgression."

²⁹⁰ The timeliness of the matter is mentioned explicitly in the dedicatory epistle of the *Laws and Liberties*: "There can be no just cause to blame a poor colony (being unfurnished of lawyers and statesmen) that in eighteen years hath produced no better rules for a good, and settled government the this book holds forth." The claim about a lack of lawyers in the colony is repeated with some regularity in the early years; see, for example, John Eliot's remark about the need for men with legal training to migrate to the colony. Eliot to D'Ewes, September 18, 1633 in *Letters from New England*, 104-109.

²⁹¹ Ralph H. Clover, "The Rule of Law in Colonial Massachusetts," *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, Vol. 108, No. 7 (May, 1960), pp. 1001-1036. This article also links the idea of a binding "higher law" to the political principle of government by consent and the question of divided sovereignty, topics I shall touch on below.

securing this last perspective, Winthrop and those who supported magisterial discretion earned a victory of sorts, inasmuch as representatives in this sense were relatively free to determine the common good according to their own understanding, without overt consideration of their constituents' interests.

In what follows, I briefly highlight some key episodes leading to the publication of the *Laws and Liberties* (1648). Together, these relatively mundane political moments illuminate the process by which the founding generation worked their aspirational commitments into the legal fabric of the colony. I begin with the crisis over the magisterial veto or "negative voice" and popular fears about unchecked magisterial discretion and the threat of arbitrary government. The magistrates' stubborn insistence on their right to a veto appears to have crystalized popular demand for a published legal code as a safeguard against their discretionary authority. In light of these conflicts, I next turn to Thomas Shepard's 1638 election sermon and his 1641 lecture series on Christian liberty and the right to dissent, both of which illustrate the importance of the people's active engagement in their own governance. I then examine Winthrop's 1645 impeachment trial and the General Court's response to a small group of political remonstrants led by Robert Childe as evidence of an emerging sense of New English legal identity. I end with a brief discussion of those elements of the 1648 *Laws and Liberties* that seem to most exemplify the 'negotiated' understandings of the applications of the core principles as I have described them above.²⁹²

Liberty and Arbitrary Government: Negotiating Representation, 1634-1644

²⁹² On Thomas Lechford's role in the push for written laws, see Angela Fernandez, "Record-Keeping and Other Troublemaking: Thomas Lechford and Law Reform in Colonial Massachusetts," *Law and History Review*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Summer, 2005), pp. 235-277.

The scale of the community in Massachusetts Bay very quickly made any sort of direct exercise of political power by the freeman as a whole impractical. Thus, a system was put into place whereby the people delegated their political decision making power to a smaller subset of the community for specified periods of time and within certain constraints. The delegation of political authority from the freemen to their representatives in either the magistracy or among the deputies was a trust—for the duration of their terms, the men so chosen were empowered to act on behalf of the people in all things, using their combined wisdom and legal/political knowledge for the common good.

There was some dispute about whether the nature of the authority delegated to the magistrates and the deputies was of precisely the same kind, however: the magistrates, after all, were generally drawn from among the better educated and better-off among New Englanders, the deputies, although still men acknowledged to be leaders in their localities, tended to have less in both areas of accomplishment. It would be imprudent, some argued, to give both the same weight in practice: the magistrates, by virtue of their greater wisdom and learning, should have greater authority. Consider Winthrop's *Model*, which is premised on the idea of diversity among men in both talent and station. To disregard the differences between the magistrates and the deputies would be to disregard the will of God and to deny the commonwealth the benefit of such differences.²⁹³ On the other hand, to grant additional legal authority to the magistrates was seen by some as a denial of the sovereignty of the people, and a move in the direction of arbitrary government.

²⁹³ John Winthrop, *Model*, ¶1.

The dispute moved from the realm of theory to practice in September 1634 in the form of a controversy over the propriety of allowing the magistrates to exercise a veto (or “negative voice”) over the deputies, and spiraled over the next several years into accusations of arbitrary government. During the early days of the conflict, John Cotton addressed the General Court on the need for the interdependence of the various elements of society. Rather than simply support one party, Cotton “shewed how all of these [people, magistrates, and clergy] had a negative voice” over the others, a rudimentary version of what might be termed checks and balances. Winthrop tells us that Cotton used “Haggai 2:4 etc.” as the textual basis for his position and it was an apt passage—in the Biblical text, the prophet Haggai was exhorting a prince, a priest, and “all the people of the land” to continue in the work of rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem after their return from exile.²⁹⁴

Just as this endeavor had required the combined resources of prince, priest, and people, so too the success of the New England experiment would depend on the cooperation of the same orders within society. In the event of a true deadlock between these various elements, however, Cotton instructed his audience that “the ultimate resolution &c: ought to be in the whole body of the people &c” and closed with “a declaration, *of the people’s duty & right to maintain their true Liberties against any unjust violence &c.*” (Emphasis added).²⁹⁵ Likewise, John Norton pointed out in a *Small Treatise on the Negative Vote* that “scripture, nature, and reason teach the people not to suffer their hand to be tied by such a vote but to arm themselves in their own defense.”²⁹⁶

²⁹⁴ John Winthrop, *Journal*, 128.

²⁹⁵ John Winthrop, *Journal*, 128.

²⁹⁶ [John Norton], *Small Treatise on the Negative Vote* (1643) in *Proceedings of the MHS*, Third Series, Vol. 46 (Oct., 1912 - Jun., 1913), 284.

In other words, both ministers maintained that the people had a responsibility to engage in watchful oversight of their rulers, in order to ensure that they were not unjustly exercising their power.²⁹⁷

Israel Stoughton (1602-1644), deputy from the town of Dorchester, applied Cotton's logic to defend his vocal opposition to the negative vote. Writing to his brother John, Stoughton detailed the history of the controversy, noting that he wrote out his objections to the magisterial veto on a "paper" that was subsequently passed to Winthrop.²⁹⁸

Unfortunately for Stoughton, Winthrop "took such distaste of them [the arguments from the patent] and [Stoughton] for them," that he became determined to take legal action against the deputy. Thus, at the next meeting of the Court, Winthrop and his followers charged Stoughton with "writing a book against the magistrates."²⁹⁹

Stoughton was accused of "den[ying] the assistants to be magistrates" and of "ma[king] them but ministers of justice, etc."—that is, he denied that the assistants' had any legitimate claim to greater legislative or executive authority than did the deputies

²⁹⁷ Nathaniel Ward, a minister with legal training who drafted the Massachusetts Body of Liberties (1641) was less sanguine about the role of the people. In 1639 he wrote to Winthrop questioning the decision to circulate the draft "to the common consideration of the freemen" saying "I suspect both Commonwealth and Churches have descended too low already. I see the spirits of the people run high and what they get, they hold. They may not be denied their proper and lawful liberties, but I question whether it be of God to interest the inferior sort in that which should be reserved *inter optimates penes quos est sancire legas.*" NW to John Winthrop, 1639, *Winthrop Papers*, 4:162.

²⁹⁸ Israel Stoughton to John Stoughton, 1635 in *Letters from New England*, 148. Note that Stoughton explicitly grounds his objections in a close reading of the MBC charter, an early indication of the importance of that document for shaping Massachusetts' civic identity.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.* The use of the word "book" in this context is worth noting, for earlier in the letter Stoughton told his brother that he had so little time to prepare his reasons prior to passing them along to the ministers who had requested them that they covered only a single sheet of paper. Given what we know of scribal publication in the period and New Englander's respect for books as a category of text, for him to then turn around and describe this single sheet as a "book" suggests that despite his earlier protestations about the relatively informal nature of the document, perhaps he did consider it of a serious nature. On the other hand, if it was Winthrop who first introduced the term 'book,' then perhaps Stoughton meant to emphasize the governor's exaggeration of the incident; to refer to a single leaf of paper as a 'book' becomes an example of magisterial misunderstanding and overreach. In either case, the shift in terminology seems significant and underscores the fact that Stoughton's actions—however innocently intended or overblown—constituted a substantial critique of the court, if not an outright challenge to their authority.

(with whom they were still seated as a unicameral body). Such powers were necessarily limited in nature, derived from the higher authority of the political body for which the minister acted as an agent. Contrast this with the power of a magistrate, whose powers in the English tradition were more fully executive (in the sense of being discretionary) in nature. Although the assistants were differentiated from the deputies by virtue of their greater judicial responsibilities, Stoughton argued these did not entitle them to a veto over the deputies when the General Court sat as a legislative or executive body.³⁰⁰

Stoughton denied having any intention of slighting the assistants, but argued (both in court and to his brother) that on the grounds of scripture, English custom, and the Massachusetts charter, the governor and assistants were by nature of their office “ministers as well as magistrates.”³⁰¹ His purpose in arguing against the negative vote was to remind the assistants that “their power...was not so great that they could do ought or hinder ought simply according to their own wills, but they must eye and respect general courts, which by patent consist of the whole company of freemen.”³⁰² Stoughton was technically correct about the ultimate authority of the freemen of the colony under the patent; a significant portion of the assistants, led by Winthrop, seem to have taken

³⁰⁰ See “minister, n.”. OED Online. September 2015. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/Entry/118877?rskey=FBylta&result=1> (accessed October 05, 2015); and “magistrate, n.”. OED Online. September 2015. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/Entry/112219?rskey=Y7AJK9&result=1> (accessed October 05, 2015). See also Francis Bremer’s account of the incident in *Forgotten Founding Father*, 243-245.

³⁰¹ Stoughton cited Romans 13, and the “printed oath for all freemen” of the city of London as evidence for the first two claims.

³⁰² Stoughton assured his brother, no doubt with some exaggeration that “this is in very deed the magistrates’ own judgement and the judgments of every man in the land that hath expressed himself” on the issue. In the end, however, Stoughton submitted publically to the assistants’ position: “Much ado there was, and because it was adjudged by some it would much please and pacify them if I would desire that it might be burned, at length for peace’ sake, and to show how little I esteemed ought of mine, I said let the book be burned if it please them.” See Stoughton, 149.

Stoughton's view as a challenge to the essence of their authority, however.³⁰³ In denying the assistants' right to a veto power over the deputies, Stoughton apparently rejected the founders' understanding that a commitment to the moral equality of persons was compatible with a social order in which the diversity of individual gifts and endowments justified a certain amount of hierarchy among the members of the civic communion. Stoughton's book, in other words, highlighted the tension between these founding aspirations: in the name of the people, he charged the assistants with having overstepped their rightful authority, but in doing so, he threatened the community's core understanding of the nature of the political bonds through which the power of the people was both realized and kept in check.

Shortly after this incident, the deputies raised the argument about equality and consent again, this time over the larger issue of the colony's lack of a settled code of laws and the "danger" to the people arising from this oversight. In the same way that allowing the magistrates a special power to veto the deputies would have undermined the principle of moral equality, so too would allowing them to act with undue discretionary powers. The deputies, Winthrop records, saw this as a "great danger to our state," that would best be remedied by establishing a constitution or other legal framework that would check magisterial discretion. To that end, the deputies recommended "some men should be appointed to frame a body of grounds of laws, in resemblance to a Magna Charta, which, being allowed by some of the ministers, and the general court, should be received for

³⁰³ Interestingly, Winthrop would later admit as much in his essay, "Arbitrary Government Described and the Government of the Massachusetts Vindicated from that Aspersion," 1644. *Winthrop Papers*, 4:468-488.

fundamental laws.”³⁰⁴ This motion was approved by the whole court and in 1635, the first committee on the laws was formed.³⁰⁵

The deputies were not alone in their fears about the problems that might arise without a settled code of laws. The situation was so distasteful to the eminent Thomas Hooker that he abandoned the Bay Colony in 1636 to form a separately governed colony in the Connecticut Valley with his parishioners. To give too much discretion to those in power, Hooker argued, was “a course which wants both safety and warrant: I must confess, I ever looked at it as a way which leads directly to tyranny, and so to confusion, and must plainly profess: if it was in my liberty, I should choose neither to live nor leave my posterity under such a government.”³⁰⁶ This was a matter of “common sense”—individual men were liable to be swayed by their “passion” or “self-seeking ends” and therefore, it was necessary for governments to enact laws that would “have chief rule over rulers themselves.”³⁰⁷ Hooker’s argument does not deny the premise that the magistrates either individually or as a class might have particular gifts above and beyond those of the people or their deputies—but it does deny that those gifts could safely serve as the basis for undermining the core political principle of moral equality, which unbridled discretionary power would tend to do.

Winthrop, predictably, disagreed with Hooker’s assumption that magisterial discretion was incompatible with the founding aspirations. Moral equality, as we saw in Chapter 2, required government be by consent, but precisely what consent entailed was

³⁰⁴ John Winthrop, Entry for May 1635, *Journal*, 146.

³⁰⁵ *Records of the MBC* 1:147.

³⁰⁶ Thomas Hooker to John Winthrop, c. December 1638, *Winthrop Papers*, 4:81.

³⁰⁷ Hooker to John Winthrop, c. December 1638, *Winthrop Papers*, 4:82. Winthrop seems not to have been overly impressed with Hooker’s arguments; his reply is jesting to the point of flippancy; see John Winthrop to Hooker, c. March 1638/39, *Winthrop Papers*, 4: 99-100.

the subject of vigorous disputation in the early decades of the colony. For Winthrop, the doctrine of consent was related to the “public and relative interest in each other” held by individual members of the commonwealth. This was a relatively limited principle, however: once the people chose their representatives, they were to trust them to exercise governance wisely and well—without undue interference or restraint. Consent, in other words, did not *ipso facto* require the governors consented to be denied the chance to exercise their unique abilities.³⁰⁸

Winthrop’s primary defense of magisterial discretion was that those entrusted with the exercise of the sovereign power of the people were not mere hirelings, but were themselves part of the people, drawn out from amongst them and united to them in a permanent way. Just as no sane individual would willingly injure their right hand in order to better develop the muscles and dexterity of their left hand, Winthrop argued that no reasonable magistrate would act in their own interests at the expense of the commonwealth. They were, he continued “regulated by their relation to the people, to seek their welfare in all things.”³⁰⁹ Properly understood, the principle of civic communion was just as powerful a shield to the liberties of the people as any code of laws.

He identified the very existence of a commonwealth with a recognition of the mutuality between its members: it is, literally, the good that these otherwise discreet

³⁰⁸ Recall the *Model*: diversity is part of God’s plan for the greater good, a position Winthrop held entitled the magistrates to a certain latitude in action. Later, in response to those who claimed he was against all laws whatsoever, he wrote: “I do not condemn all prescript penalties...but only so far as they cross with the rules of justice and prudence and mercy, also in such cases of smaller concernment as where thin may be lawful liberty allowed to judges to use admonition, or to respite an offender to further trial of reformation, etc.” John Winthrop, *Journal*, 562.

³⁰⁹ John Winthrop, “A Reply in Further Defense of an Order of the Court Made in May 1637,” *Winthrop Papers*, 3:466.

individuals have in common.³¹⁰ Consent and communion therefore, were interconnected: “the nature of such an incorporation ties every member thereof to seek out and entertain all means that may conduce to the welfare of the body, and to keep off whatsoever doth appear to tend to their damage.”³¹¹ In exercising their twofold responsibility to seek the good of the community and ward it from perceived threats, the citizen must be willing to subordinate his private interests to the good of the whole, recognizing that the good of the whole is their good, whether it seems to be that way in the short term or not.³¹²

In adopting this limited understanding of consent/representation, his subsequently expansive understanding of magisterial discretion, and his resistance to the full development of a legal code for the colony, Winthrop seems not to have given serious consideration to the idea that a magistrate might simply be mistaken about either his own interest, or the interest of the commonwealth. Winthrop’s oversight here might be attributed to his firm conviction that magistrates acted as the agents of divine ruler on earth and thus, his attribution to them of greater-than-usual virtues. This point is made

³¹⁰ “The essential form of a commonwealth or body politic,” Winthrop wrote, is “the consent of a certain company of people to cohabit together under one government, for their mutual safety and welfare.” John Winthrop, “A Declaration in Defense of an Order of Court Made in May 1637,” *Winthrop Papers* 3:422-423; compare this definition with Winthrop’s own earlier description of political community in the *Model*. The order in question was one allowing the magistrates to “keep out all such persons as might be dangerous to the Commonwealth.” This was less a matter of restricting such persons from visiting or traveling through the Bay Colony than it was a means to prevent their permanent settlement, which would have undermined the civic communion Winthrop and the other founders were attempting to inculcate. This is reasonable, Winthrop argues, because such persons as are unwilling or unable to adhere to the shared principles underlying the community could not truly give it the consent necessary for them to become members themselves. They therefore had no rights to speak of within its borders and “to deny a man that which he hath no right unto is neither sin nor injury.” (424)

³¹¹ John Winthrop, *Declaration*, *Winthrop Papers* 3: 423.

³¹² On the nature of Puritan politics as a type of ‘General Will,’ see Andrew R. Murphy “An American General Will? The ‘Bond of Brotherly Affection’ in New England,” in *The General Will: The Evolution of a Concept*, James Farr, David Lay Williams, eds. (Cambridge: 2015), 197-215.

most clearly in his *Little Speech on Liberty*, a text I will examine in its chronological turn later in this chapter.³¹³

For many New Englanders, however, such an understanding of political authority was difficult to reconcile with their deeply held belief in original sin and human fallibility. Unlike Winthrop, therefore, they argued that genuine consent had to be not merely formal, but ongoing and active. Having delegated their political authority to the magistrates and deputies did not absolve the people themselves from the responsibility of carefully overseeing their representatives' actions. Their industry in the act of consent, in other words, would have the effect of securing their political 'property' in the form of rights no less than their industry in their personal callings would secure their material property. To ensure the perpetuation of this understanding of liberty as a form of property was among the primary motivations behind the popular push for a code of laws throughout this period, as is clearly demonstrated in both Thomas Shepard's 1638 election sermon and his 1641 lecture series on Christian liberty.³¹⁴

Shepard (1605-1649) was educated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, but came to the Puritan cause under the tutelage of Thomas Hooker, was expelled from his pulpit for non-conformity by Laud in 1630, and migrated to New England with his wife and children in 1635. He settled with the congregation in Newtown (shortly to change its name to Cambridge in honor of the college) and as a result of his prominence, was one of the ministers appointed to advise the General Court on the subject of the laws in 1636. As

³¹³ On the importance of the personal sanctification of rulers as an element of this limited view of consent, see Andrew R. Murphy, "The Uneasy Relationship between Social Contract Theory and Religious Toleration," *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 59, No. 2 (May, 1997), pp. 371-374, especially.

³¹⁴ *MR I*, 174-175.

both his election sermon and the later lecture series illustrate, he believed the rule of law to be preferable to the rule of even the wisest of men.³¹⁵

For the 1638 election sermon, Shepard preached from a small section of an Old Testament parable on the bramble and the trees.³¹⁶ The parable highlights one of the potential dangers of a politics based on consent: that the people will, to their own detriment, grow weary of the work of participating in their own governance and become susceptible thereby to tyrannical rule. In the parable, the trees (“the rational men in a Commonwealth”) decide they need a King to reign over them and they go first to the olive and then to the fig and then to the vine—each representative of a class of men (the wise, rich, or holy) who have particular gifts—asking them each in turn to “advance [themselves] above the trees.” Each one refuses, declaring that to do so would be to reject their natural gifts of “fatness,” “sweetness,” and “wine” and thus upset the natural (divinely approved) order of things. Finally, the trees go to ask the bramble—a plant with no good fruit to offer of its own—to be king, and he is more than willing, but since he knows he cannot keep their loyalty by virtue of his fruit, he threatens the trees. With “a speech beseeming the majesty of a bramble sharp and bloody” he tells the tree that if they do not stay “under his shadow,” he will destroy them. What we learn from this short parable is simple, Shepard argued: “in free states where the government depends upon

³¹⁵ “Shepard, Thomas (1605–1649),” Michael Jinkins in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 3rd ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, May 2007, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/article/25325> (accessed February 5, 2016).

³¹⁶ See Judges 9: 7-15 (1599 Geneva Bible). Although John Cotton preached the first known election sermon in 1634, Shepard’s sermon is the first example of the genre to survive as a more-or-less complete text. See R. W. G. Vail, “A Checklist of New England Election Sermons,” *AAS Proceedings* (October 1935), 233-266.

popular election,” the people have no one but themselves to blame when they find themselves under unjust or corrupted rulers.³¹⁷

While Shepard’s sermon—delivered just prior to the actual casting of votes—unsurprisingly highlights the importance of selecting the right sort of rulers, it also alludes to the responsibilities citizens have to contribute to their own governance during non-election periods.³¹⁸ For example, he observes that in order to make sound choices in elections, the people must be able to look beyond their immediate good to “the consequences of things.”³¹⁹ That is, they must cultivate and practice a healthy level of skepticism towards those who present themselves as candidates for public office, particularly those who offer too eagerly to ease the burden of civic responsibility from the shoulders of the citizens themselves. In warning his listeners against the tendency of self-governing citizens to exchange their political power and its attendant responsibilities for the presumably “easier” role of subjects, Shepard alludes to the request of the people of Israel that God give them a king so that “we also will be like all other nations, and our king shall judge us, and go out before us *and fight our battles*,” (emphasis added).³²⁰ The burdens of citizenship in a “free government” are real, Shepard acknowledged—but he also warned the people against trying take the easy way out and abdicating their political responsibilities.

³¹⁷ “Thomas Shepard’s Election Sermon in 1638,” *New England Genealogical and Historical Register*, 24 (1870), 362.

³¹⁸ Indeed, the people of Massachusetts had just come through a particularly trying example of such a time, the Antinomian Controversy of 1636-1638. Shepard’s sermon was delivered just two months after Anne Hutchinson’s excommunication; See David D. Hall, *The Antinomian Controversy, 1636-1638: A Documentary History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990).

³¹⁹ “Thomas Shepard’s Election Sermon in 1638,” 362.

³²⁰ Shepard here alludes to 1 Samuel 8, especially verse 20.

In order to help strengthen the citizens' ability to resist their (natural) temptation to change the governors—with potentially ruinous results—Shepard urged them to embrace the idea of a strong legal system. Law not only functions as a restraint on the ability of individual men to injure one another, it also restrains the temptation of the 'bramble' to seek power.³²¹ "Where laws rule, men do not," he observed—if the laws are shaped well, then there will be less of an opportunity for persons with interests opposed to the common good to assert their ambitions. Shepard cites 1 Timothy 2:2 to assert that the divinely appointed "ends" for government are "that we may lead a quiet and a peaceable life, in all godliness, and honesty."³²² In this final exhortation, Shepard draws together all three of the founding aspirations: first, through his emphasis on the duty of the people to be diligent in the exercise of their political consent, a manifestation of the commitment to moral equality. Second, in the call to cultivate laws to support the divinely appointed "ends" of government, Shepard highlights both industry and communion: the purpose of the law is to secure the ability of individual men to exercise their particular gifts and to enable them to live in harmonious relationships with one another.

It would take approximately a decade for Shepard's vision of a commonwealth grounded in the consent of the governed and guided by strong laws to be realized. In the same General Court session at which Shepard preached this sermon, the General Court ordered the freemen of every town to "collect the heads of such necessary and

³²¹ Shepard compares the "sins of men are like [a] raging sea, which would overwhelm all if they have not banks; the banks are wholesome laws." Shepard notes the insufficiency of law apart from some party charged with their care and enforcement: "the banks will break down unless some keep them, hence: magistrates." See "Thomas Shepard's Election Sermon in 1638," 363.

³²² "Thomas Shepard's Election Sermon in 1638," 363.

fundamental laws as may be suitable to the times and places where God by His providence hath cast us,” and to submit them to the committee tasked with overseeing the legal codification project, which would collate them and prepare a report for the Court to review.³²³ Together, these two actions—each of which depended upon the participation of the freeman to an unprecedented extent—mark the first serious effort by the General Court to address the concerns raised by the deputies three years earlier. 1638 marks a decisive turning point both in the development of the colony’s legal code, and in the ongoing struggle between those who preferred a ‘thin’ definition of consent and representation and those who wanted to define these principles more robustly. Intentionally or not, the Court gave legitimacy to those who asserted that the people themselves were able to evaluate and respond appropriately to God’s will in defining their civil order.³²⁴

Meanwhile, the Court continued to solicit input from other sources as well: in 1639, two different drafts of legal codes were presented for consideration. John Cotton’s *Moses...His Judicials* was modeled on the laws of the Old Testament, and reflected all the nuance of his celebrated skill as a Hebraist. Nathaniel Ward (a minister who had also trained as a lawyer) submitted a text more closely aligned with English common law listing ninety-six separate “liberties” belonging to the freemen. Both of these were referred to a committee, who were tasked with consolidating them with the

³²³ *Records of the MBC* 1: 222, 262.

³²⁴ The outcome of this struggle between the people and the magistrates was no doubt deeply influenced by the colonists’ commitment to congregational government in their churches: it would have been extremely difficult for the magistrates to maintain the latter without eventually conceding a greater role in the former. See Winship, *Godly Republicanism*.

recommendations gathered from the freeman into a single report.³²⁵ This was then to be distributed “to the several towns, that the elders of the churches and the freemen may consider of them against the Court.”³²⁶ At the same time, Deputy Governor Richard Bellingham was ordered to prepare a report on all the laws enacted thus far by the colony, “take notice what may be fit to be repealed, what to be certified, what to stand, and make return to the next General Court.”³²⁷ Finally, at the December 1641 meeting of the General Court “the body of laws formerly sent forth among the freemen, etc., was voted to stand in force.”³²⁸ This document, largely derived from Ward’s draft, became known as the *Body of Liberties*.

The *Body of Liberties* as adopted was a positive step in the direction of the true rule of law: it stated unequivocally the connection between individual freedoms and the strength and permanency of the commonwealth. According to the preamble

The free fruition of such liberties, immunities and privileges as humanity, civility, and Christianity call for as due to every man in his place and proportion without impeachment and infringement hath ever been and ever will be the tranquility and stability of Churches and Commonwealths—and the denial or deprivation thereof, the disturbance if not the ruin of both. We hold it therefore, our duty and safety whilst we are about the further establishing of this Government, to collect and express all such freedoms as for present we foresee may concern us, and our posterity after us.³²⁹

³²⁵ Although no precise copy of this committee report on the laws has survived, all indications are that the committee largely accepted Ward’s draft, as the document copied and distributed for review by the freeman is so referenced after its enactment into law. See Hall, “Scribal Publication: A Checklist,” 59.

³²⁶ *MR I*, 279; the towns were apparently slow to respond and at the next session of the General Court, were asked to return their responses “in the next eighth month.” *MR I*, 292-293.

³²⁷ *MR I*, 320.

³²⁸ *MR I*, 346

³²⁹ *The Body of Liberties* was published from a manuscript copy in the Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society; see Francis C. Gray, “Remarks on the Early Laws of Massachusetts Bay; with the Code adopted in 1641, and called The Body of Liberties, now first printed,” *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 3d. ser. 8 (1843): 191-23.

The purpose of the document, therefore, was to publicly state “all such freedoms” as the citizens of the Bay colony were able to imagine would be of use to themselves or to successive generations, in order to ensure that these would be protected while the process of establishing the governmental institutions continued.³³⁰

Thomas Shepard’s 1641 Lectures Series: Consent and Dissent in Massachusetts

In the same year that the *Body of Liberties* was adopted, Thomas Shepard preached a lecture series on Christian liberty: the lectures highlight the connection between inward and outward government.³³¹ Man, Shepard argued, must first be able to recognize and address his own sinful nature by exercising an “inward government” in order to appreciate and appropriately submit to the various forms of “outward government” to which he falls subject.³³²

Although ideally, Shepard observed “all laws for public good should hurt no particular man,” all laws infringed upon someone’s exercise of a liberty they might legitimately claim, were it not for the competing claim of the broader society.

The heaviest end of a staff that is to be borne must fall on some man’s shoulder, and such laws must be made. Hence a man is to bear and submit cheerfully, i.e., from the rule of love which will abate of particular for the general good; love that more than mine own. 2. The law of justice: a man is to do as he would be done by; there is no man, but if his good was advanced by the general, but would be

³³⁰ Stephen Innes argues that among the most innovative aspects of the Body of Liberties is its treatment of land as an “economic commodity” unencumbered by feudal laws about primogeniture, etc. and instead, as something freely to be partitioned, sold, inherited, according to the purposes and desires of the landowner. This advancement is certainly in accord with Puritan notions of improvement and permanency as expressed by Cotton in *God’s Promise*. See Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth*, 214-216.

³³¹ The sermons were published posthumously as a single volume *A Wholeseome Caveat for a Time of Liberty* in the early 1650s when they were “transcribed by a godly brother, partly from the author’s own notes, partly from what he took from his mouth.” See: “To the Christian Reader,” (March 29, 1652), preface to *Subjection to Christ in All His Ordinances and Appointments, The best means to preserve our liberty...* in *The Works of Thomas Shepard*, Vol. III, (Boston: Doctrinal Tract and Book Society, 1853; New York: AMS Press, Inc, 1967), 283.

³³² Shepard, *A Wholeseome Caveat for a Time of Liberty*, 291.

content that some particular should be pinched. 3. The law of nature: the stomach is content to be sick, and the body weak, to heal the whole body.³³³

Note the echoes of Winthrop and Cotton’s earlier arguments about the nature of civic communion, which depends upon the willingness of the people to sacrifice their own particular interests for the good of the community as a whole.

At the core of Shepard’s lecture series is a discussion of the freedom of an individual believer to dissent in thought, word, or deed, on the basis of his or her private conscience. For Shepard, the legitimacy of the laws made by an external government depended upon them being “deliberately made [and] prudently published, for the public peace, profit, [and] comfort of the place”—and that this be “apparently so, and not in saying so only.”³³⁴ Moreover, the magistrates were to limit their lawmaking efforts to subjects included in the moral or natural law: they were not to “make what laws they will about civil, religious, or indifferent things, and then people to submit to them for no other reason but because of their will.”³³⁵ By limiting the scope of the legitimate lawmaking to those things in the moral or natural law, Shepard intended to curb magisterial discretion from the start.³³⁶

To understand the limitations upon both the authorities and the people, Shepard posed two questions. He invited the magistrates and deputies to consider “what prudence should be used in making laws,” while to his fellow citizens, he asked “how far those human laws and town orders bind conscience”—that is, to what extent an individual was

³³³ Shepard, *A Wholesome Caveat for a Time of Liberty*, 349.

³³⁴ Shepard, *A Wholesome Caveat for a Time of Liberty*, 341, 343.

³³⁵ Shepard, *A Wholesome Caveat for a Time of Liberty*, 342.

³³⁶ Such laws have been characterized in more recent scholarship as “written on the heart” or as things we “can’t not know”; see J. Budziszewski, *Written on the Heart: The Case for Natural Law* (Madison, WI: IVP Academic, 1997) and *What We Can’t Not Know: A Guide* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, Revised and Expanded Edition, 2011).

required to submit to laws they found objectionable on principle. The two questions were related, and he exhorted both groups to remember that “what is of Christian liberty hath its freedom from the word [of God]...and hence, the word only hath absolute power to bind masters, servants, and princes how they govern, and people how they subject.”³³⁷ Where scripture was silent, in other words, the individual (whether among the governed or the governor) had a degree of latitude over their choices.

In making law, Shepard urged the magistrates and deputies to limit themselves to those things either plainly stated in scripture, or logically deducible therefrom. Their task was “to make prudent collection and special application of the general rules, recorded in scripture, to such special and peculiar circumstances, which may promote the public weal and good of persons, places, proceedings.” Without this external standard, he argued, there would be no relief for the people who would otherwise be subject to the “corrupt” and perhaps capricious wills of their rulers.³³⁸

To the body of the people living under the authority of others, Shepard urged first and foremost, a measure of charity with their rulers. Although it was true that “human laws and town orders [bound] conscience” only insofar as they could be shown to be in accordance with the higher laws of scripture, for the sake of order, Shepard counseled forbearance. Were he to encounter a law not in keeping with the teachings of scripture, Shepard suggested the citizen “come in private and confer with them [the magistrates], and hear what may be said, and be willing to give and take reason.”³³⁹ By avoiding the scandal of a public confrontation, both parties would be spared the necessity to engage in

³³⁷ Shepard, *A Wholeseome Caveat for a Time of Liberty*, 346.

³³⁸ Shepard, *A Wholeseome Caveat for a Time of Liberty*, 346.

³³⁹ Shepard, *A Wholeseome Caveat for a Time of Liberty*, 347.

strategic grandstanding, and could perhaps, engage in some meaningful dialogue about the purpose and application of the law in question.

Shepard did not limit his advice to the disgruntled in conscience to this, however. As he sadly acknowledged, there was “nothing more usual than to make civil laws and orders crossing God’s law and to pretend[ed] public good, which [sic] ever prove the public pests.” If, after duly approaching the magistrate to discuss the offending law, it still appeared that the law “be made for public hurt, [then] that law is not of God.” Laws that were “only in appearance and pretense for public good, and not really, they bind not,” Shepard said simply.³⁴⁰

Shepard did not intend to advocate for widespread disregard of duly created legislation merely on the basis of individual conscience. Yet despite its potential for misuse, the individual citizen still retained a right to assess the legitimacy of the laws made ostensibly for his good, and even to refuse to obey them where they appeared to the contrary. The exhortation takes on additional poignancy when we recall that Shepard was preaching the sermon series over the same period of time during which the freemen of the colony were being asked to review and comment upon the proposed body of fundamental laws. Indeed, Shepard’s sermon might have helped to assuage the doubts of those among the freemen (or the magistrates) who questioned either the need for, or the safety of, such an exercise.³⁴¹

Shepard went on to offer some practical advice to guide such legal review. He suggested the citizen pay particular attention to the following types of harmful legislation, either of which could be resisted for conscience’s sake: first, things which

³⁴⁰ Shepard, *A Wholesome Caveat for a Time of Liberty*, 348.

³⁴¹ Recall Nathaniel Ward’s comment to John Winthrop, *supra*. n. 95.

were “forbidden plainly” by the laws of God and could therefore never be for the public good; second, things “indifferent in their nature...but inconvenient in their use”—that is, laws which created a firm rule in matters “which may as well be left undone as done.” Here, Shepard adopts a standard defense of theological dissent to legal or civil dissent as well: things indifferent were neither good nor bad in themselves, and without either warrant or exclusion from the word of God. They were therefore considered to be areas in which individual believers had liberty to act according to the dictates of their own consciences, free of the coercive power of either church or state.³⁴² Shepard noted that although “the clawbacks of princes” think they exercise the most power in these areas, “the truth is, he hath least power here because they are idle and idol laws.” They are idle, in the sense that they fail to support any acknowledged public good, and, indeed, because they are “inconvenient,” often hinder it; and idol, in that they are a usurpation by the magistrate of power over an area not given to him by God. Laws touching on such things can be legitimately resisted on the grounds that they are “inconvenient” and thus, are “not for public good, whatever is pretended,” Shepard argued: there was no legitimate reason to restrict the freedom of the people with laws in such matters.³⁴³

From Liberties to Laws: 1641-1648

Even after the *Body of Liberties* had been enacted, tensions between the magistrates and the deputies over the seemingly unbounded discretionary powers of the magistrates continued to mount. Although it has been commonplace for scholars to

³⁴² Puritan reformers frequently framed their objections to the Church of England on the grounds that many of the practices of the church—kneeling, wearing the surplice, the observation of holy days, etc.—were not sanctioned by any passage of the Bible.

³⁴³ Shepard, *A Wholeseome Caveat for a Time of Liberty*, 348-349. On the other hand, he observed that things “indifferent in their nature, but convenient and comfortable in their use, those are indeed according to God.” The critical point for Shepard was the liberty of the individual believer: “Christ hath purchased [this liberty] by his blood, and which God’s law gives, no law of man can abolish or take away.”

assume a continuity of interest between the clergy and the magistrates as members of a cultural elite in the colony, Shepard's lectures illustrate that such an alliance—when and if it existed at all—was only partial at best.³⁴⁴ The ministers were no more interested in living under an authoritarian regime than any other class of freemen in the colony; indeed, based on their experience in England, they had specific fears about an enlarged sphere of civil authority.³⁴⁵ For the purity of both church and state, no member of the New England clergy held political office during the seventeenth century, and even when the clergy were called in to consult with the General Court on political matters, there was no guarantee that they would side with the magistrates rather than with the deputies. Indeed, throughout the 1640s, whenever the deputies challenged the magistrates' claims to virtually unlimited discretionary powers, the clerical commentary tended to favor the position of the lower house.

In a series of "Answers of the Reverend Elders to Certain Questions Propounded to Them" (c. 1641-1646), the clergy repeatedly affirmed that the colony's charter gave the freeman (or their deputies) "full power and authority" and that this power extended to legislative as well as "consultative or directive" matters.³⁴⁶ The use of the terms "power and authority" was evidently meant as a rebuke to the magistrates, who had repeatedly pressed their view that the people had "liberty" only, a position the ministers clearly

³⁴⁴ On the supposed alliance between the ministry and the magistracy, see Perry Miller, *New England Mind* as well as Staloff, *American Thinking Class*. More recently, Michael Winship has demonstrated the natural alliance between the ministers and the deputies in *Godly Republicanism*.

³⁴⁵ On the support of Puritan clerics for limited government and constitutionalism in England dating back to the reign of Elizabeth I, see Michael P. Winship, "Freeborn (Puritan) Englishmen and Slavish Subjection," and Tyacke, "The Puritan Paradigm of English Politics."

³⁴⁶ The contributors to this document are not named, nor is any date given. The editors of the *Hutchinson Papers* argue that it may actually represent a compilation from a series of such exchanges dating from the period after the Antinomian Controversy and prior to 1646; see *Hutchinson Papers*, Vol. 1, (Prince Society, 1865; reprinted, New York: Burt Franklin, 1967), 208-209. All subsequent references are to this edition.

rejected: “We conceive by the patent, as the people have liberty of counsel so they have also other power or authority, *as we have expressed in our answers to the two first questions sent unto us by our honored magistrates*” (emphasis added).³⁴⁷ Finally, the elders observed that even at levels below the General Court, the institutions of justice in Massachusetts Bay were by nature “mixed”—although the judges ruled “aristocratically” in a sense, “even in these courts there is some place for a democratical dispensation in respect of the jurors.”³⁴⁸ The ministers, in other words, were careful to assert the rights and responsibilities of the people to participate in their own government on a more than mechanistic level.

The other major way in which the clergy supported the deputies was in repeatedly urging the General Court to adopt a fixed code of laws. The ministers were particularly adamant that the colony should enact and publicize prescribed penalties for various crimes.³⁴⁹ In response, in May 1643, the General Court ordered a committee in order to “examine and perfect the laws”; a year later, they ordered each of the counties in the colony to create a committee composed of a magistrate, a minister, and some freemen, for the purpose of consultation on the subject.³⁵⁰

The county committees were given over a year to produce their reports; in the meantime, the conflict between the deputies and the magistrates continued, reaching new heights in the spring of 1645 when Winthrop was brought to trial on charges of abusing

³⁴⁷ *Hutchinson Papers*, Vol. 1, 211.

³⁴⁸ *Hutchinson Papers*, Vol. 1, 212. On the democratic nature of juries in the English tradition, see for example, William Penn’s account of his trial with William Mead in 1670, *The People’s Ancient and Just Liberties Asserted*, in *The Political Writings of William Penn*, Andrew Murphy, ed. (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2002), 3-21. See also Andrew Murphy’s article, “Trial Transcript as Political Theory: Principles and Performance in the Penn-Mead Case.” *Political Theory* 41: 6 (2013): 775-808.

³⁴⁹ John Winthrop, *Journal*, 558..

³⁵⁰ *MR II*, 39, 61.

his authority.³⁵¹ In Winthrop's account of the case in his journal, he presents it not as a personal attack, but rather, as a symbolic one:

Two of the magistrates and many of the deputies were of the opinion, that the magistrates exercised too much power, and that the people's liberty was thereby in danger: and other of the deputies (being about half) and all the rest of the magistrates were of a different judgment: that authority was overmuch slighted, which if not timely prevented [or] timely remedied, would endanger the commonwealth and bring us to a mere democracy.³⁵²

Given his history as the spokesman for magisterial discretion, Winthrop suggested that what was really on trial was the legitimate balance of liberty and authority in the commonwealth. His acquittal, therefore, he took as a triumph, and he used the occasion to address the assembled people.³⁵³

Liberty, Winthrop told the people, was of two kinds: natural and civil. Natural liberty was nothing more than the assertion of the will: "man, as he stands in relation to man simply, hath liberty to do what he lists; it is a liberty to evil as well as to good." Civil liberty, on the other hand, existed "in the moral law, and the politic covenants and constitutions amongst men themselves," and was "a liberty to that only which is good, just, and honest." The problem in Massachusetts was that the people had mistaken the one for the other: they had forgotten that they were not simply "beasts" but members of a covenanted community whose freedom was limited by the purposes for which the community had been gathered.³⁵⁴ Winthrop used several metaphors to make his point: it is like the freedom of a woman, who having chosen her spouse, must accept his authority as the head of her household per biblical teaching, or that of the new Christian, who

³⁵¹ John Winthrop, *Journal*, 578ff.

³⁵² John Winthrop, *Journal*, 581.

³⁵³ John Winthrop, *Journal*, 584.

³⁵⁴ John Winthrop, *Journal*, 586.

having been set free from sin and death by Christ, must no longer keep on sinning, but conform himself to the image of Christ. Likewise, although New Englanders (through their deputies) had repeatedly claimed their liberties were in jeopardy for want of a legal code, Winthrop argued quite the opposite: the liberty which New Englanders claimed depended upon the extent to which their lives were intertwined in a network of mutuality. Whatever individual rights they might claim could only be realized within the commonwealth, and it was the wisdom of their leaders (not the laws) which secured their liberty.³⁵⁵

Winthrop's speech failed to change popular opinion, however: he tells us at the end of the account that the anti-discretion forces immediately resumed their push for "such a body of laws, with prescript penalties in all cases, as nothing might be left to the discretion of the magistrates."³⁵⁶ Within the year, the various county committees returned their reports, which were turned over to yet another committee "to extract out of the whole such as should be thought fit to be established and so to reduce them into one volume, to agree with such as were already in force, etc."³⁵⁷ At the same court, a small group of petitioners led by Dr. Robert Child took advantage of popular dissatisfaction with the Court's sluggishness in the matter to present a remonstrance against the colony's laws as incompatible with those of England.³⁵⁸ The court postponed their response to the petitioners until the next session, at which time they asserted that the purpose of the

³⁵⁵ On this point, Winthrop's thinking is not too far from Locke's in some respects.

³⁵⁶ John Winthrop, *Journal*, 590.

³⁵⁷ John Winthrop, *Journal*, 622.

³⁵⁸ John Winthrop, *Journal*, 624-625; Winthrop tells us "whereas a law was drawn up and ready to pass, for allowing non freemen equal power with the freemen in all town affairs and to some freemen of such estate, and etc. their votes in election of magistrates, it was thought fit to defer this also to the next session." For additional background and context on Child, see Margaret E. Newell, "Robert Child and the Entrepreneurial Vision: Economy and Ideology in Early New England," *NEQ* 68.2 (1995): 223-256.

remonstrance had been nothing short of “persuading the people that, partly through want of the body of English laws, and partly through the insufficiency or ill frame of those we have, they can expect no sure enjoyment of their lives and liberties” in the colony.³⁵⁹

To the first complaint, “want...of English laws,” the Court responded that nothing in their charter required them to make such a provision. The Court had “power to make laws, to erect all sorts of magistracy, to correct, punish, pardon, govern and rule the people absolutely.” This charter grant of absolute political power, the court asserted, meant that their government was “a self-sufficiency”—although they admitted to owing some “allegiance [to England],” this was not incompatible with their claim to be “independent in respect of government” or with their decision to establish their own laws.³⁶⁰ Nevertheless, the Court pointed out that it had, for several years, taken “constant care and pains... for establishing a body of laws” primarily for the purpose of “clear[ing] our government from being arbitrary and our intentions from any such disposition.”³⁶¹ The Child remonstrance, far from undermining the court’s authority, had served only to solidify their claims to an independent legal existence: when the long-awaited legal code was published in 1648, it would be the clear product of an independent government, embodying the founder’s political aspirations and applying them in ways intended to secure the ongoing independence of the community for generations to come.

Embodied Equality, Consent Constituted: The Laws and Liberties as the People’s Law

As we saw in the previous chapter, a commitment to the moral equality of persons lay at the core of New Englanders’ theological and political belief systems. As such, it is

³⁵⁹ John Winthrop, *Journal*, 658.

³⁶⁰ John Winthrop, *Journal*, 648-649.

³⁶¹ John Winthrop, *Journal*, 661. See also the official record of the Court’s response in MR II, 168-169.

unsurprising that the extension of freemanship to all male church members was among the first actions taken by the colony's founders. Government by consent was not merely a technical process however: True citizenship depended on a more robust, ongoing understanding of consent through active obedience and even enforcement. In the dedicatory epistle of the *Laws and Liberties*, the members of the General Court urged the inhabitants to study and understand the laws presented in the document as a means to encourage greater self-government.³⁶² Indeed, they apologize for its imperfections by asserting their desire to publish the volume as expeditiously as possible in response to the citizens' "longing expectation, and frequent complaint for want of such a volume to be published in print: wherein (upon every occasion) you might readily see the rule which you ought to walk by."³⁶³ Clearly, the expectation from both the magistrates and the people was that the publication of the laws would enable the citizens to read and internalize them—law in this sense was instructive, not merely prohibitory, and citizens consented to the laws through their practice of obedience.

Just as the people had consented through their votes to the selection of the magistrates and deputies, and "given [them] power to make these laws," so too they had to consent to the laws in practice or "execution." "We must now call upon you to see them executed," the Court exhorted the public, "remembering that old and true proverb, the execution of the law is the life of the law."³⁶⁴ In this context, execution seems to refer to the practice of private citizens in observing the laws, rather than to coercive actions taken after the fact by the government. Understanding the execution of the law as a

³⁶² *The Book of the General Laws and Liberties Concerning the Inhabitants of the Massachusetts*, Thomas G. Barnes, ed. (San Marino, CA: The Huntington Library, 1975). All references are to this edition.

³⁶³ Dedicatory Epistle to *Laws and Liberties*, np.

³⁶⁴ Dedicatory Epistle to *Laws and Liberties*, np.

private or individual practice here seems to suggest something more than the minimal notion of tacit consent; rather, it evokes the ideals of self-restraint and the internal cultivation of virtue characteristic of Reformed teachings on the theological process of sanctification, and applies them in a civic context.

Consent in the form of law-abidingness could also generate communion in other ways. The General Court reminded the citizens that they were members of a body politic, and must, therefore, obey some laws not for their own benefit, but for the greater good.

If any of you meet with some laws that seems not to tend to your particular benefit, you must consider that laws are made with respect to the whole person, and not to each particular person: and obedience to them must be yielded with respect to the common welfare, not to thy private advantage, and as thou yieldest obedience to the law for common good, but to thy disadvantage: so another must observe some other law for thy good, though his own damage; thus must we be content to bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.³⁶⁵

The founding aspiration of communion is combined with an appeal to private interest; individual citizens can find an incentive to obey the law even when appears to conflict with their private goods, if they remember that at other times, others will be doing the same to their benefit. The language here is very close to that of Shepard's lecture, and echoes Winthrop and Cotton's earlier arguments about the nature of civic communion. This robust vision of "enforcement" of the law through the ongoing consent of the people in the form of law abidingness can thus be understood as both private and public in its orientation.

As the individual members of the community practice law-abidingness, they are not only gaining experience in restraining their own private will for the good of the community, but they are also participating in the cultivation of a public ethos in which

³⁶⁵ Dedicatory Epistle to *Laws and Liberties*, np.

self-governance (the political manifestation of moral equality) is understood to be not simply a matter of individual choice, but of the right sort of choice, the exercise of liberty within the restraints of virtue. In formulating consent as ongoing law-abidingness, the founders of Massachusetts created a way to incorporate the vast majority of inhabitants of the physical community into their civic communion, thus using one aspirational principle to help cement the other. Non-freemen (persons without the franchise) are just as able to help execute the laws through this sort of internalized observation thereof as freeman.³⁶⁶ Although citizenship in the formal sense of suffrage was still limited to church members, the only persons exempted from the communion in the more practical sense of consent discussed above would be those who chose to exempt themselves by breaking the laws.

In substance, the 1648 *Laws and Liberties* was, as it was intended to be, a “perfection” of the laws: “both a restatement of the law [already enacted] and a code of statutes for the future” in response to the careful survey work done by the multiple committees over the preceding decades.³⁶⁷ To the freemen, the formulation and publication of a fully developed code of laws was not only a basic political right, but also a means of exercising their aspirational commitment to industry by adding an additional layer of protection against the potential for discretionary rule to become arbitrary.³⁶⁸ To the magistrates, despite their early resistance, the *Laws and Liberties* served as a

³⁶⁶ Note that in 1647, non-freemen 24 and older were given the vote in town meetings, and the obligation to serve on juries; every inhabitant was made eligible to participate and present bills to the court, etc. *Massachusetts Records* II, 197.

³⁶⁷ George Lee Haskins, *Law and Authority in Early Massachusetts: A Study in Tradition and Design* (New York: MacMillan, 1960), 136.

³⁶⁸ Arguments against arbitrary government in England had been circulating for almost fifty years by this time—the date for the first use of arbitrary in the legal sense of “discretionary, not fixed” is listed as 1581 in the OED; see “arbitrary, adj. and n.” OED Online. June 2015. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/Entry/10180?redirectedFrom=arbitrary> (accessed July 22, 2015).

monument to New England’s independent political existence—their laws, although in accordance with their charter, not repugnant to those of England, were nevertheless, wholly their own. The *Laws and Liberties* of Massachusetts Bay, then, are best understood as the institutionalization of the founding aspirations of moral equality (government by consent), industry (the preservation of individual rights), and communion (the nature of representation).

Because New Englanders’ valued the cultivation of individual vocations within a divinely ordained diversity among moral equals, they also held a relatively robust vision of personal liberties. An individual’s tangible property was worthy of respect and protection³⁶⁹—but so too, were other liberties derived from the individualism inherent in both the aspirational commitment of equality and the notion of particular vocations. Among the most important provisions were those protecting individual property in the form of personal liberties, especially the freedom of dissent: these “provisions expressed an ideal of freedom of discussion on public issues, and of positive encouragement of responsible popular participation in their resolution.”³⁷⁰ There was a law to protect “private meetings for edification in religion amongst Christians of all sorts of people”³⁷¹—an important right, given the history of the Puritan movement—and laws allowing jurors to either call for additional testimony in a case or to refer a split decision to another court, thus ensuring that all men were able to serve with “peace of

³⁶⁹ See, for example the law on Impresses, which protected an individual against either being compelled to labor for the public good, or the seizure of their “goods of what kind soever” for public use, except with a warrant and compensation. *Laws and Liberties in Colonial Origins of the American Constitution*, 119.

³⁷⁰ Haskins, *Law and Authority*, 198.

³⁷¹ Ecclesiastical Law #11, *Laws and Liberties in Colonial Origins of the American Constitution*, 111.

conscience.”³⁷² Under the heading of Common Liberties, the *Laws and Liberties* declared that

every man, whether inhabitant or foreigner, free or not free, shall have liberty to come to any public court, council, or town-meeting; and either by speech or writing, to move any lawful, reasonable, or material question; or to present any necessary motion, complaint, petition, bill, or information whereof that meeting hath proper cognizance, so it be done in convenient time, due order, and respective manner.³⁷³

As we saw above, Cotton, Norton, Shepard, and Hooker held such a robust conception of the people’s duty to active participation in the political process that they did not hesitate to frame the possibility of public dissent as a matter of Christian liberty. This sensibility grew out of the founder’s commitments to moral equality and industry, and these commitments were now embodied in the laws.

In response to the frequently expressed concerns over magisterial discretion, the *Laws and Liberties* made clear that all laws had to be passed to be by the “consent of the greater part of the magistrates on the one part and the greater part of the deputies on the other part.”³⁷⁴ More specifically, the *Laws and Liberties* opened with a declaration that “no man’s person shall be...any ways punished” and “no man’s goods or estate shall be taken away from him...

unless it be by the virtue or equity of some express law of the Country warranting the same established by a General Court and sufficiently published; or, in case of the defect of a law in any particular case by the word of God. And in capital cases, or in cases concerning dismembering or banishment according to that word, to be judged by the General Court.³⁷⁵

³⁷² Juries, Law # 4 and 5, *Laws and Liberties* in *Colonial Origins of the American Constitution*, 124.

³⁷³ Liberties Common, Law #1, *Laws and Liberties* in *Colonial Origins of the American Constitution*, 124-125.

³⁷⁴ Magistrates, Law #4, *Laws and Liberties* in *Colonial Origins of the American Constitution*, 127.

³⁷⁵ *Laws and Liberties* in *Colonial Origins of the American Constitution*, 99.

Published laws were to form the basis of the colony's judicial proceedings, yet prudence required that some provision be made for cases outside the scope of existing positive laws: here, the *Laws and Liberties* subtly declared Massachusetts' independence of England by referring only to "the word of God" and the principles derivable therefrom as the standard of judgement.³⁷⁶

In another divergence from English criminal law, where penalties were prescribed, they were generally designed not to punish offenders, but to reform their behavior and restore them as members of the political community.³⁷⁷ Indeed, as a constitution of sorts for the commonwealth, the *Laws and Liberties* depended on the preservation of civic communion, and unsurprisingly, contain several provisions tending towards the same. In response to the tendency of "many" church members to shirk their civic responsibilities by failing to apply for freemanship, the Court ordered "all such members of churches in the several towns within this jurisdiction shall not be exempted from such public service as they are from time to time chosen to by the freeman of the several towns."³⁷⁸ Similarly, the court suggested the various towns allow non-freeman who were willing to "take the oath of fidelity to this government" to serve on juries and vote in town meetings.³⁷⁹ The purpose of both laws was to strengthen the connections between otherwise disenfranchised persons and the rest of the community, while also

³⁷⁶ Perhaps, in some way, a nod to Cotton's otherwise rejected *Moses...His Judicials*.

³⁷⁷ Consider Winthrop on the rule of justice vs. mercy in *The Model*. Interestingly, even when the crime was of such a serious nature as to demand capital punishment, the Puritans used the occasion of execution sermons to both urge the criminal to repent (and thus, to be restored to the spiritual and eternal community of the saints) and as an exercise in preventative civic education as the public was warned away from the consequences of sin. Haskins has a lengthy discussion of the use of lesser penalties, such as admonition, in *Law and Authority*, 204-211; see also Cahn, "Punishment, Discretion, and the Codification of Prescribed Penalties in Colonial Massachusetts."

³⁷⁸ Freemen, Non-Freemen, *Laws and Liberties* in *Colonial Origins of the American Constitution*, 116.

³⁷⁹ Townships, Law #5, *Laws and Liberties* in *Colonial Origins of the American Constitution*, 132.

increasing the community's ability to draw on the diversity of gifts and callings of as many citizens as possible, regardless of their status as church members or landholders.

Although nothing in either law would have allowed non-freemen to vote in colony-wide elections, or enabled them to serve in a civic or political capacity at the county or colony level, in extending additional political rights and responsibilities on the local level, these provisions strengthened the bonds between such persons and their nearest civic association. As Winthrop had said about the magistrates, such relationships served a regulatory purpose; the non-freemen who might otherwise have resented the authority of their town governments as something alien to themselves, would no longer have a reason to do so, and thus, might more easily comport themselves to the local ordinances.³⁸⁰

Furthermore, although the presumption of the law is that non-freeman are at least sometimes in that category by their own choice, they are still considered members of the commonwealth, and thus, can be forced to serve when the common good requires it: their participation is a moral responsibility first. Nothing in the *Laws and Liberties* suggests that the non-freemen could refuse to serve if called upon by their local community. Likewise, nothing in the laws about election of magistrates or deputies provided for the possibility that individuals so chosen might prefer not to serve. This attitude towards representative government privileges the will of the majority (as represented by the electors in any particular town) over the independent agency of the non-freemen dragooned into serving on juries, etc., who then become, in some ways, the bondservants

³⁸⁰ John Winthrop, "A Reply in Further Defense of an Order of the Court Made in May 1637," *Winthrop Papers*, 3: 466.

of the public.³⁸¹ It is this sense of a public spirit in which the individual is in some ways, inseparable from the broader civic communion of which they are a part, and the tensions inherent between that ideal and the other founding aspirations that would prove most difficult to maintain over the remainder of the seventeenth century.

Conclusion

In both the establishment of their own educational institutions, and the creation of a body of fundamental laws, the first generation of New Englanders made clear their intentions to separate themselves from England in spirit as well as body. Education, particularly of the reflective and humanistic sort emphasized by the Puritans, shaped the souls of citizens by helping them to develop the right sorts of habits and opinions about the political community and their own role in it, whether as citizen or magistrate.³⁸² Moreover, the law and governmental institutions of the colony were designed to reinforce a sense of community identity and purpose. Although New England's educational and legal institutions reflect an appreciation for the value of the individual in their emphasis on both the cultivation of individual gifts and their robust conception of citizens as the industrious keepers of their own liberties, they also represent and reflect the founders' aspirational principle of civic communion. In their approach to negotiating the political controversies and quandaries associated with founding a new government, New Englanders consciously drew on the strength of the ministers, magistrates, and people.³⁸³ Yet as we shall see in the next chapter, for all their attempts to create institutional

³⁸¹ See the sections on Deputies and Magistrates, *Laws and Liberties in Colonial Origins of the American Constitution*, 109-110; 126-128.

³⁸² Cf. *Crito*.

³⁸³ The meeting minutes were recorded by John Cotton; see "How Far Moses Judicials Bind Mass[achusetts]," edited and introduced by Worthington C. Ford in *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* Second Series, Vol. 16, [Vol. 36 of continuous numbering] (1902), pp. 274-284.

safeguards around their founding aspirations, New Englanders were not able to transfer them to the second generation entirely smoothly.

CHAPTER 4: SHORING UP THE FOUNDATION—THE CRISIS OF THE RISING
GENERATION³⁸⁴

The middle of the seventeenth century was a “troublesome time” (to borrow Jonathan Mitchell’s phrase) for New England. The deaths of John Winthrop and Thomas Shepard (1649), John Cotton (1652) and Thomas Dudley (1653) combined with the return of a significant portion of their most prominent leaders (Nathaniel Ward and Hugh Peter, among others) to England under Cromwell meant that New England lost many of her founders in one short period.³⁸⁵ Combined with the Quaker ‘invasion’ of the later 1650s, the Stuart restoration in 1660 and the increased pressure on New England to conform to imperial policy, and the contentious adoption of Half-Way Covenant in 1662, it is not surprising that things appeared very bleak indeed. In contrast to the experimental character of the first two decades of settlement, the writings of New English leaders in the 1650s and 1660s tended toward conservatism: they comment upon what they described as the tendency of the “rising” (or, sometimes, the “present”) generation to move away from the colony’s first principles, in various ways—a “decline” that would only be reversed by the conservation and perpetuation of those founding aspirations.³⁸⁶

³⁸⁴ Delivering the election sermon in 1668, William Stoughton called for those present to join in “the solemn work of this day [which] is Foundation-work; not to lay a new Foundation, but to continue and strengthen, and beautify and build upon that which hath been laid.” William Stoughton, *New-England’s True Interest* (Cambridge, 1670).

³⁸⁵ Brief biographies of the leaders of the first generation can be found in Francis J. Bremer, *First Founders: American Puritans and Puritanism in an Atlantic World* (Lebanon, NH: University of New Hampshire Press, 2012). On New Englanders who returned to England during the Civil War and Commonwealth periods, see Susan Hardman Moore, *Pilgrims: New World Settlers & the Call of Home* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); Andrew Delbanco, *The Puritan Ordeal* (Harvard: 1989); and David Cressy, *Coming Over: Migration and Communication Between England and New England in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

³⁸⁶ Many of these publications fit within what has become known as the jeremiad tradition, in as much as they (a) extol the founding generation; (b) denounce the present generations for falling away from their example; (c) blame whatever troubles are under consideration upon said failures; and (d) prophesy the end of the declension if only the current generation of New Englanders would repent and return to the ways of the founders. Perry Miller used Danforth’s 1670 *Errand into the Wilderness* election sermon as the

Decline as these second-generation elites perceived it took many different forms: decreasing church membership, increasing worldliness, an increase of factionalism, a lack of public spirit, inattention to the education and instruction of youth...the list of public and private sins was long and varied little from one sermon to another. The ministers in particular were vocal in their attempts to warn the people away from these publicly damning and dangerous behaviors and instead encourage them to continually investigate their motivations and to attempt to reform them on behalf of the public.

As the second generation matured, leaders in church and state attempted to steer the public towards a middle course between what they described as either an excess or defect of New England's first principles of moral equality, industry, and communion.³⁸⁷ As Joshua Mitchell wrote, the overall goal was to "avoid irregular extremes and wild extravagancies" for "extremes soon run themselves out of breath, tumble down of themselves and so end in confusion." Far better instead, to "be for safe and sober principles and practices" which were "firm and stable."³⁸⁸ This chapter examines the ways in which this crisis of converting revolutionary impulses into stabilizing ones is presented as a matter of character formation (whether individually, or as members of

exemplar for the form; though Danforth was far from the first member of the Puritan clergy to make observations about declension and call for repentance and reform. Indeed, one might make such a claim for Higginson's *Cause of God and His People*, published in 1663. Beyond Miller, see also Sacvan Berkovitch, *American Jeremiad* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978) and Andrew Murphy, *Prodigal Nation: Moral Decline and Divine Punishment from New England to 9/11* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), esp. Chapter 2 on the form and general motif of the jeremiad.

³⁸⁷ New Englanders, as we saw in Chapter 3, relied heavily upon a Christianized version of Aristotelian ethics. Following Aristotle, the mean was an ideal in and of itself, not simply a compromise position between extremes. In idealizing the mean, in other words, New Englanders sought something more than simply a lukewarm adherence to the founding aspirations: "if this our wilderness breed any such like lukewarm politicians in a needful time, it is to be hoped that it will also bring forth thorns enough to teach them." See John Oxenbridge, *New-England freemen warned and warmed, to be free indeed, having an eye to God in their elections: in a sermon preached before the court of election at Boston, on the last day of May, 1671* (Cambridge: 1673), 27-28.

³⁸⁸ Mitchell, *Nehemiah on the Wall ...As it was delivered in a sermon preached at Boston in N.E. May 15. 1667, being the day of election there* (Cambridge: 1671), 29.

families, congregations, and the commonwealth) and the specific personal and corporate qualities (or civic virtues) which New Englanders associated with the perpetuation of their founding aspirations.

To accomplish their goal of engendering civic virtue as a form of civic education, New Englanders turned to the printing press. The output of the press at Cambridge dramatically increased during the 1650s - 1670s³⁸⁹—a mix of new titles by current authors and texts from the works of the founding generation.³⁹⁰ The relative permanence of the printed word offered a number of advantages over the transitory experience of a sermon or lecture : “In reading... we may stay and dwell upon what we have first a mind to, and by serious thoughts and humble prayer, improve it to our good, without depriving ourselves of opportunity of doing the like, with any other part of it afterward.” New Englanders were trained by long experience to listen to complicated oratory, but even the best memory or most detailed notebook could not compare with a complete transcript that could be studied at leisure and returned to again and again. Printed texts were divine tools intended to bring “a suitable improvement: an awakening, humbling, quickening” of the heart, and in response, a change in one’s actions.³⁹¹ Readers were instructed to “peruse [the text], read it, understand thy time according to it,” that it might inspire them to more

³⁸⁹ See the Armory’s account of the transformation in the Boston publishing industry during these years in, “Printing and Bookselling in New England, 1638-1713,” in *A History of the Book in America*, pgs. 88-95.

³⁹⁰ Examples of texts written by the founding generation and printed during this period include: Richard Mather, *The summe of certain sermons upon Genes: 15. 6* (Cambridge:1652); Richard Mather, *A farewell exhortation to the church and people of Dorchester in New-England* (Cambridge: 1657); John Cotton, *A discourse about civil government in a new plantation whose design is religion* (Cambridge: 1662); Thomas Shepard, *The church-membership of children, and their right to baptisme* (Cambridge: 1663); [Nathaniel Morton] *New-Englands memorial* (Cambridge: 1669); as well as John Norton’s biography of John Cotton, *Abel Being Dead Yet Speaketh* (London: 1658) and Increase Mather’s biography of his father, *The life and death of that Reverend man of God, Mr. Richard Mather* (Cambridge: 1670), and verse eulogies for John Winthrop (composed in 1649, but not printed until 1676).

³⁹¹ Stoughton, “To the Christian Reader,” *New England’s True Interest*.

deeply commit themselves to “the cause of God and his people.”³⁹² In other words, these texts were intended for use by the readers, to equip them to develop and refine those attributes most necessary for the public good.³⁹³

Political sermons, especially those preached on Election Days, addressed both private character as well as those habits of the heart necessary for community well-being, but they were not in any way unusual in that respect. The numerous sermons published after the adoption of the Half-Way Covenant in 1662, for example, are full of references to the behavioral expectations which went along with church membership as well as simple attendance. Likewise, discussions about the Quakers tended to speak to not only theological questions, but also to matters of individual character and the ways in which good citizens ought to relate to others within the community. The crisis of the second generation was met by a concerted effort at civic education—an attempt to shape the hearts and minds of the people in order to ensure not only their commitment to the founding aspirations, but also their ability to recognize threats to them when they appeared. Like the biblical prophet, Nehemiah, New Englanders were be asked to stand watch on the wall of the commonwealth, preparing themselves to defend their civic commitments to moral equality, industry, and communion against all possible threats.

A Defect of Industry: Idleness, Sloth, Drunkenness, Sexual Misconduct, etc.

In language echoing Winthrop’s *Model*, William Stoughton observed in his 1668 election sermon, *New-England’s True Interest* that New Englanders were blessed with a

³⁹² John Higginson, *The Cause of God and His People in New England* (Cambridge: 1663), np.

³⁹³ While it is impossible to gauge how readers reacted to these texts, the conversion narratives preserved from Wenham and Cambridge during this period are full of references to books and sermons that played critical roles in the journeys of many individuals towards faith. See *The Notebook of John Fiske* and Shepard, *Confessions*.

wide diversity in their population: some were equipped for scholarship or pastoral care, some to be farmers or merchants, others to be deputies or magistrates. In all cases, however, the individuals in question were to regard their particular abilities as “talents as well as gifts; gifts as freely bestowed and received, talents in respect to the why and wherefore they are bestowed, viz. that they may be improved.”³⁹⁴ In reiterating this traditional formulation about the nature and purpose of individual callings, Stoughton affirmed the founding aspiration of personal industry. New Englanders, however, had grown slack in their attempts at improvement: Stoughton rebuked the people for a litany of sins such as “revellings and drunkenness” that indicated their willful indulgence in gratifying their appetites and lack of industry. In this, Stoughton was not alone: complaints about the lack of industry abounded—ministers were quick to speak out against not only self-indulgent excess, but also to offer recriminations against frivolous pursuits such as card playing, Christmas-keeping, and the like.³⁹⁵ What distinguished these activities from other recreational pursuits was their association with risk and/or superstition, and their glorification of the self at the expense of God or others.³⁹⁶

The association of idleness with personal aggrandizement is evident in the discussions preserved in John Fiske’s record of the meetings of his congregation. Fiske’s

³⁹⁴ Stoughton, *New England’s True Interest*, 14.

³⁹⁵ Stoughton, *New England’s True Interest*, 20. For examples of individual New Englanders being called to task for these sorts of sins, see the Fiske *Notebook*, as well as the Pyncheon Court records. During the course of three decades, members of the congregation were called to account for their questionable actions on numerous occasions. The inciting incidents ranged from public drunkenness to abusive relationships within their families to idleness and other forms of economic malfeasance. As we shall see, these church disciplinary actions generally suffice to reform the individual in question without the involvement of actual civil proceedings.

³⁹⁶ Some of these activities (such as Christmas-keeping) were, perhaps, seen as dangerous more because of their association with the corruption of the Church of England (or worse, Catholicism!) than because of their lack of industry; on the connection between Puritan anti-vice reforms and anti-Catholic rhetoric, see Peter Lake and Michael C. Questier, *The Anti-Christ’s Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post-Reformation England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

notebook reveals that in the late 1650s, the male fashion for longer hair, which his congregation voted “justly offensive” was seen as a symbol of idleness and its associated social costs.³⁹⁷ The trend for long hair threatened the stability and order of society precisely because the style undermined the ideal of masculine industry in both practical and symbolic ways: long hair was cumbersome to manage, “an impediment to action unless bound up, which [was] unsuitable” for men, they argued and therefore, tended to undermine the efficacy of male labor. Moreover, the very purposelessness of long hair made it “an incitement to corruption, or an occasion of temptation” that made the wearer subject to “suspicion of levity and inconsistency of mind, of needless expense of time, etc.”³⁹⁸ Men who wore their hair long had to invest a significant amount of time in personal grooming—time that could be better spent on more substantive, and more community-oriented matters. The fashion for long hair was objectionable, therefore, because it prioritized the appearance of the individual, tempting them to vanity at the expense of the substantive improvement of the broader community.

The social effects of idleness were felt in other ways as well: a few years later, Joshua Fletcher, a grown ‘child of the church’—that is, a non-member still subject to the discipline of the congregation by virtue not only of the covenant promises made by his parents for him at the time of his baptism as an infant, but his choice to ‘own’ them for himself after coming of age³⁹⁹—became the subject of a series of congregational meetings

³⁹⁷ Fiske, Record from sometime in late spring 1659, *Notebook*, 132.

³⁹⁸ Fiske, Record from sometime in late spring 1659, *Notebook*, 133.

³⁹⁹ As early as 1644, Fiske’s congregation included “members of the church (however not yet received into complete fellowship), as children of the church such as are grown persons.” This position of quasi-membership was adopted by Fiske’s congregation well before it was formalized in the Half-Way Covenant approved by the Synod of 1662; indeed, when the report of the synod of 1662 on the subject was circulated to the church for consideration, Fiske notes that they compared “the propositions touching the subject of baptism...with our own agreed propositions.” See Fiske, Entry for November 12, 1644, *Notebook*, 12, 13;

about his time spent “at Rhode Island among the Quakers and of his idle and expensive courses.”⁴⁰⁰ At these early meetings, the church voted simply to warn Fletcher to reform, and urged his parents to try and take him more firmly in hand.⁴⁰¹

The church’s attempt at gentle admonishment had little effect: in 1668, Fletcher was again the subject of disciplinary proceedings, this time charged with “great negligence in his calling, idle and expensive vagaries, etc.,” as well as cheating at horseracing and lascivious behavior.⁴⁰² To New Englanders, these crimes reflected a lack of self-discipline and selfishness, a willingness to take the easy way out of any situation. Fletcher’s seduction of a young lady of the community without any intention of marrying her, for example, was aggravated by its purposeless. The congregational discussions recorded by Fiske indicate that if Fletcher and the lady in question had been planning to marry, his sexual misconduct would have been seen as a momentary but understandable lapse—a moral failure, but not a reprehensible one. On the other hand, since Fletcher apparently made it obvious the he had no intention of engaging in anything more than a carnal dalliance, the community saw his conduct as exponentially more egregious: it was an entirely selfish and self-gratifying act, dependent upon his deception of the maid, and reflective of his overall unwillingness to exercise self-discipline. Fletcher’s rejection of the founding aspiration of industry made

and Fiske, Entry for February 12, 1662, *Notebook*, 180. I discuss the political ramifications of the Half Way Covenant below.

⁴⁰⁰ Fiske, Entry for 26 December 1666, in *Notebook*, 205. What, precisely, these were, is unclear from the text, although other sources indicate that Fletcher was generally regarded as a ne’er-do-well rogue, a prosperous youth with little ambition or meaningful employment to occupy his time, who nevertheless enjoyed a certain following among the young people of the community, purportedly leading others down the path to wantonness. See Roger Thompson, *Sex in Middlesex: Popular Mores in a Massachusetts County, 1649-1699* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986), 86-87.

⁴⁰¹ Fiske, Entries for 26 December 1666 and 1 January 1667, *Notebook*, 206-207.

⁴⁰² Fiske, Entries for 1 January 1667 and 2 July 1667, *Notebook*, 206-207.

him a threat to the community's order, and a burden rather than a contributor to the commonwealth.⁴⁰³

Fiske's notebook also reveals that the problem of idleness was not restricted to young men. In 1671, John Martin—a grandfather—"having been several times dealt with for idleness and his neglect of his particular calling or living disorderly and not employing himself in any lawful outward employment," was once again brought in front of the congregation for disciplinary purposes. Martin's case was severe: "in the space of a year's time," Fiske records, Martin "had been observed not to do so much as might amount to a penny a day, taking one day with another throughout the year." Although Martin attempted to justify his idleness on the grounds of "inability" to work, his fellow congregants noted "his neglect of teaching his grandchildren to read when desired," a task that would not have required any particular physical strength or endurance. In the end, "the church unanimously voted that he was guilty of willful idleness and neglect of a particular calling, or any employments suitable to his ability." In this case, the church did not restrict themselves to merely admonishing Martin for his offense, but also voted to ask the town's elected officials to "consider some way of employ for him, and put him upon it, seeing he could find out none himself."⁴⁰⁴

Although these episodes from Fiske's congregation are illustrative of the ways in which a defect of industry was both discussed and stigmatized in the course of ordinary life, New Englanders' view of the repercussions of idleness are most readily apparent in the rhetoric of execution sermons. In these dramatic orations, preached by one or more

⁴⁰³ Ultimately, Fletcher was so flippant and blatantly unrepentant during his examination by the congregation that the church voted to excommunicate him. Fiske, Entries for 17 May 1668 and 12 July 1668, *Notebook*, 209-212.

⁴⁰⁴ Fiske, Entry for 23 April 1671, *Notebook*, 226-227.

ministers in the days leading up to a public execution, the audience heard a very focused type of jeremiad.⁴⁰⁵ Executions tended to become days of public spectacle, drawing large crowds to whom the minister(s) chosen to speak would address their remarks, rehearsing the woeful biography of the condemned criminal in an attempt to illustrate the link between early and seemingly ‘small’ sins (such as lying, idleness, and disrespect) and the larger sins which had resulted in the death sentence. The ministers tended to portray the crime as “an affront to the national covenant” and the execution of the condemned as the natural means by which the community could restore itself to equilibrium, both internally and in their relationship with the divine.⁴⁰⁶

Samuel Danforth (1626-1674) had the unfortunate responsibility of preaching before the execution of one of his younger congregants, Benjamin Goad, for sodomy in 1674. Danforth’s sermon was typical in its emphasis on the desultory long-term effects of individual indulgence in (and community toleration of) minor sins.⁴⁰⁷ Goad told Danforth that his troubles began because “he was extremely addicted to sloth and idleness.”⁴⁰⁸ Too lazy to obey his parents, attend to catechism or engage in useful work, Goad found it easy

⁴⁰⁵ As a genre, the execution sermon has been the subject of a relatively limited amount of scholarly attention: see Scott D. Seay, *Hanging Between Heaven and Earth: Capital Crimes, Execution Preaching, and Theology in Early New England* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2009); Daniel A. Cohen, *Pillars of Salt, Monuments of Grace: New England Crime Literature and the Origins of American Popular Cultures, 1674-1860* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993); Ronald A. Bosco, “Lectures at the Pillory: The Early American Execution Sermon,” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Summer, 1978), pp. 156-176. These studies are complemented by the work of John Witte and Thomas Arthur who have argued that Protestant notions of the purpose of the law broadly for cultivating and maintaining social order became deeply enmeshed in the early modern approach to criminal justice; see John E. Witte, Jr. and Thomas C. Arthur, “The Three Uses of the Law: A Protestant Source of the Purposes of Criminal Punishment?,” *Journal of Law and Religion*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (1993 - 1994), pp. 433-465.

⁴⁰⁶ Bosco, “Lectures at the Pillory,” 163, 164.

⁴⁰⁷ Goad was convicted after he admitted to engaging in bestiality with a horse over the course of a year.

⁴⁰⁸ Samuel Danforth, *The Cry of Sodom Enquired Into; Upon Occasion of the Arraignment and Condemnation of Benjamin Goad, for His Prodigious Villany* (Cambridge: 1674); 10. Online Electronic Text Edition, Paul Royster, editor, *Faculty Publications, UNL Libraries*. Paper 34. <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libraryscience/34>; accessed 10/21/2015.

to succumb to temptation when it appeared: for just as “the standing pool gathers filth, and harbors toads and filthy vermin,” so the idle man was both free (for want of gainful employment) and apt (due to his habit of gratifying, rather than restraining, impulse and desire) to indulge his baser proclivities.⁴⁰⁹

Danforth entitled his sermon *The Cry of Sodom Enquired Into* not simply because of the association between that city and sexual deviance, but because “sloth and idleness...[were] another of *Sodom’s* sins, and it is [sic] the Nurse and Fosterer of vile lusts.”⁴¹⁰ Goad’s story of progress from idleness to debauchery was not unique, in other words, but the fulfillment of a biblical trope. Citing David’s adulterous seduction of Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11:1-3, Danforth argued that “the beginning of *David’s* fall, was his sloth” for “he gave himself to carnal ease and rest, rolling himself upon his bed, when he should have been in the field, fighting the battles of the Lord; thereupon Satan assaulted him, and tempted him to uncleanness.”⁴¹¹ Idleness was a sin because it was a rejection of the doctrine of a personal calling: when this willful disobedience persisted over time, it was unsurprising that the sluggard become ensnared by deeper and more degrading sins, for they lacked the spiritual safety net of a conscience tuned to the will of God.

Danforth was not alone in seeing idleness as the root of other, more devastating, sins: preaching at the execution of two condemned murderers later that same year, Increase Mather wrote that “as for one of those poor condemned creatures, idleness hath been his bane: he would not diligently follow the Calling which he was set in, but lived

⁴⁰⁹ Danforth, *The Cry of Sodom Enquired Into*, 10.

⁴¹⁰ Danforth, *The Cry of Sodom Enquired Into*, 23.

⁴¹¹ Danforth, *The Cry of Sodom Enquired Into*, 23.

an Idle vagrant life, and what is he now come to! Therefore, beware of that sin,” (emphasis added).⁴¹² In both cases, the condemned criminal functioned as an anti-type of the ideal New English citizen, his failures pointing out the need for the rest of the community to guard against their own temptation to idleness and instead, to use every “means” available to them to avoid a similar downfall.⁴¹³

These reflections on the detrimental civic implications of idleness did not, of course, prevent New Englanders from enjoying any sort of recreation. They encouraged a wide variety of leisure activities, from picnics to meals taken at taverns, to swimming, music-making, and social visiting, precisely because these activities, often social in nature, were not “idle” but tended, as Joshua Moodey (1633-1697) put it in 1685, towards the “best improvement of time.”⁴¹⁴ Moodey focused his fellow citizens’ attention on the important distinction between idleness (which was “doing nothing”) and the sorts of non-laboring leisure activities that yet led towards the improvement of mind, body or soul.⁴¹⁵ When engaged in them, one was not “doing nothing” but “something” and since “in all labor there is profit,” he urged New Englanders to have as great a concern for their spiritual as their material success. There were times to set aside the cares of the market or household and attend to things of the spirit, Moodey argued, which included the

⁴¹² Increase Mather (henceforth: I. Mather), *A Sermon Preachd... the 18th of the 1. Moneth 1674. When two men were Executed, who had Murthered their Master*, The Second Impression (Boston: 1685), 28.

⁴¹³ First, he urged parents to provide their children with “diligent instruction” in Biblical precepts and habits of virtue, along with “solemn charges and commands” to resist temptation and restrain their baser impulses. When children erred, they were to be corrected, brought to fear the consequences of their sins, both for themselves and others. Danforth, *Cry of Sodom*, 29-30.

⁴¹⁴ On acceptable forms of leisure activity in New England, see Bruce. C. Daniels, *Puritans at Play: Leisure and Recreation in Colonial New England* (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1995). On the “earthiness” of Puritan life, see Leland Ryken, *Worldly Saints: The Puritans as they Really Were* (Zondervan, 1990).

⁴¹⁵ Joshua Moodey, *A practical discourse concerning the choice benefit of communion with God in His House, witnessed unto by the experience of saints as the best improvement of time. : Being the summe of several sermons on Psal. 84. 10. Preach'd in Boston on lecture-dayes*, (Boston: 1685), 11.

cultivation of godly conversation and meaningful personal relationships as well as prayer, attendance at divine worship, and other more overtly pious activities.⁴¹⁶

An Excess of Industry: Distraction, Covetousness, Pride, and Economic Oppression

Moodey's particular goal was to encourage attendance at the midweek lecture sermons, for even in New England, he lamented, it was a "common Objection, Men cannot come to Meeting on a Lecture-Day because their business will not give leave, this and that work calls for their presence, or else they shall be great sufferers."⁴¹⁷ While it was true that men were to work diligently in their particular callings in order to provide for their families, this did not require them to neglect the work of providing "meat that endures to eternal life" for their souls.⁴¹⁸ If neglect of industry, particularly in its more extreme manifestations was troubling, so too was an immoderate attempt to improve of one's abilities—particularly in the economic sphere.

Moodey's appeal was not unique: earlier, Stoughton had observed that New Englanders were just as guilty of "exactions and oppressions"—an excessively aggressive pursuit of economic gain—as they were any other form of sin.⁴¹⁹ This was a serious charge: in his 1671 election sermon, John Oxenbridge sternly warned his auditors that by a too-diligent concern for their material prosperity, they could easily betray not only the public interest but God himself.⁴²⁰ These ministerial concerns were shared by others in the commonwealth as well, including women: in 1664, at her son's request, Anne Bradstreet (1612-1672) wrote out a series of aphorisms about the intersection of

⁴¹⁶ Joshua Moodey, *A practical discourse* (Boston: 1685),11.

⁴¹⁷ Joshua Moodey, *A practical discourse* (Boston: 1685),47-48, 53.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

⁴¹⁹ Stoughton, *New England's True Interest*, 20. Shepard's *Certain Select Cases Resolved* offers a representative view of the proper (moderate) attitude towards improving one's calling that was embodied in the founding aspiration of industry.

⁴²⁰ Oxenbridge, *New-England Freeman Warned*.

life and faith.⁴²¹ Several of these have to do with finding the proper balance between a self-reliant striving towards improvement and a humbler acceptance of one's role as a steward of divine blessings. Although men think that by laboring "much" they will gain profit, Bradstreet observed, they too often gain "nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit" for their reward.⁴²² Far better, she argued, to seek contentment with one's portion, and to recognize that "God hath by his providence so ordered that no one country hath all commodities within itself, but what it wants another shall supply that so there may be a mutual commerce through the world. As it is with countries, so it is with men."⁴²³ Bradstreet urged her son to always consider his labor within the context of community, recognizing that his success or failure was ultimately linked to that of his neighbors and countrymen.

An excess of industry, born as it often was in Bradstreet's opinion, of selfishness or pride did not simply concern individuals and families, but implicated the entire community: it was a misunderstanding of one of the community's foundational principles. Unsurprisingly, therefore, in 1671 Jonathan Mitchell (1624-1668), the second-generation successor to Thomas Shepard's Cambridge pastorate, argued that the state had an interest in the suppression of "biting usury" and other oppressive economic actions because these tended to undermine the general "prosperity" of the people. "Matters of outward estate and livelihood...that we commonly call (wealth) is a part of the wealth or welfare of a people," he observed, and the magistrates had a responsibility to ensure that

⁴²¹ Anne Bradstreet, "Meditations Divine and Moral," March 20, 1664, in *The Works of Anne Bradstreet* (Cambridge: Belknap, 2010), 295-317.

⁴²² Bradstreet, "Meditations Divine and Moral," 302.

⁴²³ Bradstreet, "Meditations Divine and Moral," 316-317.

everyone in the community—including the poor—were able to provide for their families.⁴²⁴

Robert Keayne (1595-1656) exemplifies the struggle New Englanders had in defining and keeping to a moderate course on the question of industry. A merchant who migrated to Boston in 1635, Keayne was in many ways a model Puritan: pious, learned, public spirited, devoted to his family, church, and the commonwealth.⁴²⁵ At multiple points in his career, however, Keayne was subject to public admonishment for his excessive pursuit of profit, an accusation that nettled him so deeply, he used his last will and testament to present an extensive *Apologia* for his actions. Although a member of the founding generation, Keayne's will, composed in 1653 and made public upon his death three years later, makes clear his alienation from the idealistic aspirational nature of his contemporaries and instead, points us forward to the crisis between principle and practice that crystallized in New England's second generation.

As Phyllis Whitman Hunter has observed, “the mix of piety and profit melded into plans for the Bay Colony proved to be a volatile one.”⁴²⁶ Winthrop had proposed a community grounded in an economics of mercy and mutual aid, in which personal wealth accumulation as a result of diligent industry and skillful resource management came with a public burden to assist those less fortunate or able.⁴²⁷ Merchants like Keayne were resented and, subsequently, targeted for public admonishment for being immoderate in

⁴²⁴ Mitchel, *Nehemiah on the Wall*, 4-5.

⁴²⁵ The most recent study of Keayne's life and his apologetical will is found in Robert F. Dalzell, Jr., “Robert Keayne's Contract with Boston,” in *The Good Rich and What They Cost Us* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 10-25. See also *The Apologia of Robert Keayne: The Self-Portrait of a Puritan Merchant*, Bernard Bailyn, ed. (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1970).

⁴²⁶ Phyllis Whitman Hunter, *Purchasing Identity in the Atlantic World: Massachusetts Merchants, 1670-1780* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 14. On New England's economic development and the principles behind it, see also Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth*.

⁴²⁷ Winthrop, *Model*.

their pursuit of personal gain at the expense of their neighbors. Over the course of the 1630s and 1640s, Keayne was accused on multiple occasions of being overly zealous in his pursuit of industry, charging excessive prices for essential goods such as nails, buttons, etc. and otherwise economically “oppressing” his neighbors, in the sense of subjugating their interests to his own.⁴²⁸

Although Keayne does not mention the incidents directly in his will, his integrity was publically challenged several times over the disputed ownership of a sow. Despite the fact that he was cleared of any wrongdoing in a church hearing in 1639, his accusers refused to let the matter rest, moving the trial to the civil courts in 1640. Keayne was once again cleared of all charges, but in 1642, his opponents appealed the case to the General Court on technical grounds. There, Keayne’s case took on additional political significance as the deputies and magistrates were deadlocked: the case dragged on for another year, neither side willing to compromise, until a group of clergy were consulted and advised the court to simply let the matter drop. Public opinion still held against him to such an extent, however, that it resulted in the permanent separation of the deputies and magistrates.⁴²⁹

⁴²⁸ Keayne, *Apologia*, 46. For an insightful discussion of Puritan attitudes toward usury as a form of economic oppression revealed in cases from the 1630s and 1640s, see Mark Valeri, “Religious Discipline and the Market: Puritans and the Issue of Usury,” *WMQ*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (October 1997), pp. 747-768. See also “oppress, v.”. OED Online. September 2015. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/132001> (accessed October 28, 2015).

⁴²⁹ See also Breen, *Character of the Good Ruler*, 78-80; Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth*, Chapter 4 on the political and social ramifications of the case and the subsequent split in the General Court. Keayne’s case is often credited as giving renewed impetus to the ongoing struggle between the deputies and the magistrates during this period; see Francis J. Bremer’s account in *John Winthrop: America’s Forgotten Founding Father* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), Chapter 17. I think the importance of this incident has been overstated; see my discussion of these other factors in Chapter 3. Details of the case can be found in Winthrop’s *Journal*, 395-398, 451-458.

Keayne's will represented his final attempt to restore his public reputation through the power of text.⁴³⁰ By its nature a public document, a will had the advantage of being accessible to the broadest possible audience; it was a form that could be "read and made known and... perused, searched or copied out by any when other writings will be more hid and obscured."⁴³¹ To corroborate his testimony, Keayne urged his future audience to look to the wide array of business documents, account books, journals, and other written records accumulated over a long life: "all my dealings since I was a prentice [are] to be found in one book or another written with my own hand upon one occasion or another," he wrote. Though these had been "kept secret" during his life, upon his death they would stand as silent witnesses to the false claims made against him.⁴³²

Keayne expected the texts he left behind to function as a testament to his purposeful and positive uses of industry.

All these books and writings, not only of debts and accounts and worldly business, but also of divinity, sermon books, and some of military discipline and exercise and of merchandise and diverse other occasions which I have write with my own hand...if all these should be of no other use, yet they will testify to the world on my behalf that I have not lived an idle, lazy, or dronish life, nor spent my time wantonly, fruitlessly or in company-keeping as some have been to ready to asperse me.⁴³³

The irony of Keayne's will is that he worried his efforts to clear himself of the charges of economic wrongdoing might give his readers the mistaken impression that he had been less than diligent in his labors. He pointed to the pile of texts accumulated over a lifetime of work to illustrate that he had never had "many spare hours to spend unprofitably away." What little free time he did have had been spent "reading and writing"—activities

⁴³⁰ Keayne, *Apologia*, 46

⁴³¹ Keayne, *Apologia*, 82.

⁴³² Keayne, *Apologia*, 82.

⁴³³ Keayne, *Apologia*, 73.

that although enjoyable, were “labor enough” and, more importantly, profitable to both mind and spirit. He asserted that he had “studied and endeavored to redeem my time as a thing most dear and precious,” that is, to be properly industrious, improving his intellectual gifts in a way that led to moderate rewards, both materially and spiritually.⁴³⁴

Keayne’s will reveals that he was extremely earnest about his own spiritual development, taking multiple volumes of careful notes on sermons over the course of a long life. These he described as “my written sermon books,” and regarded as a storehouse of personal divinity training. Based on these notes, as well as passages transcribed substantive personal library of “many books, both printed and written (which I have read over),” Keayne set himself to writing a four-volume “exposition or interpretation of the whole Bible,” that he intended for “public” and “scholarly” use by others after his death.⁴³⁵ Indeed, it had been his “full purpose and resolution” Keayne wrote, “to study and endeavor in both my life and at my death to do what I could to help on any public, profitable, and general good” in New England (emphasis added).⁴³⁶ This, however, “has been answered by diverse here with unchristian, uncharitable, and unjust reproaches and slanders.”⁴³⁷ This was so much the case that even when Keayne was demonstrably

⁴³⁴ Keayne, *Apologia*, 73-74.

⁴³⁵ Note that Keayne’s discussion of his own intellectual pursuits reveals his acceptance of the founding generation’s emphasis on education as a means of personal—and thus, civic—improvement, a point discussed in Chapter 3. Perhaps more importantly, his will indicates that his wife had a similar interest in reading broadly, for he instructed that she be allowed to select “some few [among his books] for her use if she shall desire any other than those she hath already for her own” before the rest were donated to the town of Boston. He clearly hoped that the love of learning would carry on to his descendants as well; not only was his son also given his choice of books from Keayne’s “study,” but his granddaughter Hannah, was left a legacy of £300 for her “diet, clothes, and learning (a part of which my desire is may be to teach her to write well and to cipher in a reasonable manner Literacy, and the ability to order and communicate one’s own thoughts that it allowed, was for Keayne, a means of tracking as well as encouraging personal growth in the appropriate sort of virtues, including moderate industry. See Keayne, *Apologia*, 9, 29, 33.

⁴³⁶ Keayne, *Apologia*, 45.

⁴³⁷ Keayne, *Apologia*, 46.

innocent of wrong doing (as in the infamous case over a supposedly purloined pig), his detractors refused to leave him in peace.

These conflicts left a profound mark upon Keayne: he considered it both unjust and absurd to be held “a grievous malefactor” and “to be prosecuted so violent[ly] for such things as seemed to myself and others so trivial.”⁴³⁸ In the will, Keayne attempted to portray himself as both a victim of jealousy-inspired injustice, and as a publicly minded citizen: he contended that his customers frequently made purchases on credit, in some cases leaving him unpaid for years at a time, and in some cases, not paying him at all. And yet, for the sake of the public good, he had continued to offer such necessary goods as building supplies for sale at what he insisted were reasonable rates, without becoming overly anxious to collect upon outstanding debts. Whatever small mark-up he charged was, he claimed, all but eaten up by the irregularity with which his customers actually paid; moreover, since his prices were made clear at the outset of a deal, his profit making was “more honest” than his customers’ failure to pay in a timely fashion.⁴³⁹

Part of Keayne’s defense of his trading practices hinged upon the extent to which they had become “common almost in every shop and warehouse” since then and “with a higher measure of excess, yea even by some of them that were most zealous and had their hands and tongues deepest in my censure.”⁴⁴⁰ It was merely a matter of the relative scarcity of suppliers to buyers, he argued, that made his practices objectionable; consumers were unlikely to sympathize with a merchant or tradesman. Now that Boston had grown relatively prosperous and more settled, however, he argued that “any impartial

⁴³⁸ Keayne, *Apologia*, 58.

⁴³⁹ “The oppression lay justly and truly on the buyer’s hand, rather than on the seller,” he complained. Keayne, *Apologia*, 48, 52-53.

⁴⁴⁰ Keayne, *Apologia*, 78.

man or any that hath understanding in trade” would see clearly that the things of which he had been accused (over charging, and investment of capital in profit-making ventures, rather than simple charity, for example) were in truth, merely sound business practices.⁴⁴¹

The meandering narrative density of Keayne’s attempts at posthumous self-justification make it difficult to gauge whether he was, in truth, the victim of unfair public criticism, or whether his wordy will reflected his own internal doubts about the purity of his motives and actions. Regardless, Keayne’s *Apologia* offer insights on Puritan teachings about industry as a civic virtue, and the ways in which such teachings were internalized and then shaped personal reflections and self-justifications. The will reflects New Englanders’ conflicted relationship with the founding aspiration of industry; in defense of his experience, Keayne portrays himself as a successful businessmen and devout Puritan, striving to balance the aspiration of personal industry with the injunction against covetousness, pride, etc. For example, at the time of his trial for overcharging, he observes, “I did submit to the censure, I paid the fine to the uttermost.” Moreover, he also cites the freeman’s liberty to dissent from the judgements of the court, writing “I hope therefore, it will not be offensive for myself...to relate the state of my case and declare my own judgment and dissent (yea the judgments of hundreds more besides myself) in a case which doth so nearly concern me and wherein I conceive I have received so much wrong by the practices of some that I forbear to name” (emphasis added).⁴⁴² Although this statement was only published posthumously, for Keayne, it still counted as an exercise of his civil liberty: in a sense, the entire *Apologia* may be understood as a

⁴⁴¹ Keayne, *Apologia*, 54.

⁴⁴² Keayne, *Apologia*, 50-51.

dissenting opinion in Keayne's ongoing trial before the court of public opinion in New England.

As one of the wealthiest men in Boston in 1653, Keayne recognized that his success would appear immoderate and thus, suspicious to some of his neighbors, who might question "how could I get such an estate with a good conscience or without oppression in my calling" especially given his relatively humble origins.⁴⁴³ To Keayne, what mattered was not the extent of his success, but his personal motivations: he pursued wealth because he wanted to make the best possible improvement of his natural gifts and the opportunities granted to him.⁴⁴⁴ Moreover, Keayne argued not only that his industriousness did not detract from his attendance to spiritual matters (as testified by his extensive personal library and habits of godly study and reflection), it actually enhanced his ability to practice the Christian virtues. That this the underlying point of the *Apologia* is evident in Keayne's description of both his charitable giving during life and the terms in which he describes the large public endowments he planned to create upon his death.⁴⁴⁵ Perhaps the most amusing example, however, is Keayne's effort to frame even his practice of underreporting his income for tax purposes as a matter of charity.

While Keayne vehemently denied any wrongdoing in his business practices per se, he did admit to tax evasion, on the grounds that the taxes in Massachusetts Bay were both higher and more regularly collected than those in England, to the effect that he felt

⁴⁴³ Keayne, *Apologia*, 82. Keayne estimated his net worth to be £4000; the eventual valuation of the estate turned out to be the substantially lower yet still significant sum of approximately £2250.

⁴⁴⁴ Unfortunately for Keayne, despite the Puritan's use of Aristotelian ethics as part of the Harvard curriculum, his portrayal of himself as a man of magnanimity does not seem to have had much of an effect in mitigating public criticism of his behavior.

⁴⁴⁵ Keayne not only left the majority of his personal library to the town of Boston, he also left a substantial sum (£300) to provide for the construction of "a Town House Comprising a Market Place, Court Room, Gallery, Library, Granary, and an Armory." See Keayne, *Apologia*, 6.

himself and others “to be rated far above and beyond their estates.” It was neither practical nor godly for the state to “have their inhabitants crushed or weakened by continual charge,” he contended: men who felt themselves to be under an oppressive tax burden would be either unwilling or unable to “do good in their places.” Under such conditions, no man was “bound in conscience to make known his whole estate and suffer himself to be valued to the uttermost extent thereof.” In the end, as his final tortuous justifications to himself and the public, Keayne excused his success as a contribution to the public good, for in doing so, he preserved his ability to make charitable donations.⁴⁴⁶

Ultimately, Keayne’s *Apologia* illuminates the tension within New Englanders’ commitment to personal industry, the difficult task placed on each individual to maintain the proper balance between individual industry and the common good. His struggles with his neighbors’ and his own conscience suggest that the place of virtue lay not in the action per se, but in the motive. Although Keayne was proud of his success, he was humble in attributing it to the gracious providence of God. More importantly, he used his profits in both life and death for the betterment of the commonwealth, leaving legacies to the town of Boston and to Harvard that would allow others to enjoy the fruits of his labors.

An Immoderate Attachment to Equality: The Quaker ‘Threat’

In 1674, William Coddington published his declaration of *True Love Unto You the Rulers of the Colony of the Massachusetts*, an open appeal for the colony to end its persecution of the Quakers on the grounds that the Quakers were the theological

⁴⁴⁶ Keayne, *Apologia*, 83-85. Keayne asserts that such that “I know myself and others here pay more to rates and public charges yearly than those that are three times of my estate in England in four or five years.”

descendants of New England's Puritan founders. Coddington's claims, although dramatic, were given some additional credence by his own place as one of the founding generation: he came over on the *Arbella* with Winthrop, and as one of the first assistants to the governor, had helped to establish the founding principles for the new colony. During Anne Hutchinson's trial (which he regarded as responsible for provoking the repressive elements of Puritanism now brought to bear against the Quakers) Coddington had been one of only two deputies to vote against her conviction on the grounds that she had not broken any laws, but only exercised the legitimate freedom of any believer. Greatly disappointed by the outcome of the conflict, he chose to leave the colony for Rhode Island shortly thereafter, eventually undergoing an experience of the 'inner light' and becoming a prominent Quaker.⁴⁴⁷

A successful merchant, Coddington used his resources to import Quaker texts from London: the unwarranted and illegitimate confiscation of one such shipment by Massachusetts' authorities was the ostensible subject of his letter.⁴⁴⁸ It was one thing, Coddington suggested, for the magistrates (however mistakenly) to repress religious liberty within their own jurisdiction; it was another thing entirely for them to assert their authority over property in transit to a place far beyond their legitimate control. This base usurpation of power inspired Coddington to write to Governor Richard Bellingham and assistants of the Bay Colony, rebuking them for their unjustifiable repression of Quakers' civil and religious rights.⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴⁷ Details found in Coddington, *True Love*, 6, 12-13.

⁴⁴⁸ Coddington, *True Love*, 11.

⁴⁴⁹ Coddington, *True Love*, 3. Coddington's preface to the pamphlet explains that it was originally written in mid-1672, and that he had originally intended his criticisms to be communicated privately, but that his first missive was unceremoniously burned by Bellingham in the presence of some of Coddington's friends "without reading of it." Bellingham's act was particularly objectionable, Coddington observed, because the

When the letter was destroyed, unread, Coddington published it, rebuking the people of Massachusetts for a pattern of persecutory activity towards dissenters beginning with Hutchinson and continuing, with escalating violence, toward the Quakers.⁴⁵⁰ Yet at one time, he reminded them with some asperity, “thou didst own such a suffering people, that now thou dost persecute; they were against Bishops, and ceremonies, and the conformable Priests; they were the seed of God that did serve him in spirit, then called *Puritans*, now called *Quakers*.”⁴⁵¹ Such actions were unworthy of a colony which had been founded with the intention of providing a place for believers to worship freely, according to the dictates of their consciences.⁴⁵²

Coddington’s closing remark draws our attention to the serious problem posed by the very nature of revolutionary foundings: the ideals that inspire the first generation to take up the task of breaking with tradition and begetting a new society on principle are often difficult to transmit to subsequent generations. There were those, even in the first generation, who wanted to push New England’s principles to their extreme. The antinomians and other related movements have been understood by some scholars just as Coddington presented them: as the logical extension of Puritan commitments to individual conscience and personal piety. Similarly, in the second generation, the “invasion” of New England by Quaker⁴⁵³ missionaries in the late 1650s triggered an

letter was neither directed to him alone, nor to him as a private citizen, but to him as part of his “publick Trust” and on behalf of all the General Court as a whole.

⁴⁵⁰ Coddington, *True Love*, 6.

⁴⁵¹ Coddington, *True Love*, 19-20.

⁴⁵² On the connections between Puritanism and Quakerism, see Melvin P. Endy, Jr. “Puritanism, Spiritualism, and Quakerism: An Historiographical Essay,” in *The World of William Penn*, ed. Richard S. Dunn and Mary Maples Dunn. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 281-302. In contrast to Endy, see Carla Gardina Pestana, who makes a strong argument for the distinctions between Puritans and Quakers in *Quakers and Baptists in Colonial Massachusetts* (Cambridge: 1991).

⁴⁵³ The term comes from Richard P. Halliwell, *The Quaker Invasion of Massachusetts* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1883). Following Carla Gardina Pestana, I use the term “Quaker” here exclusively in order to help

inclination towards radical spiritualism that had lain dormant among the citizenry.⁴⁵⁴

From this perspective, the Quakers were not attacking New England's foundations, but honoring them by following them to their natural extension in the pursuit of a community purely Reformed. To the magistrates and the majority of the colony's ministers, however, their ideas appeared dangerous to the stability of the commonwealth. In their unmitigated religious individualism, the Quakers took the founding commitment to moral equality to an untenable extreme that threatened the stability of New English civic identity.

“Then called Puritans, now called Quakers”

Despite significant differences, Quakers and Puritans shared certain core theological orientations. Inasmuch as church membership depended upon one's internal experience of saving grace, Puritans offered women spiritual and moral equality with men. Women were also encouraged to engage fully in the study of theology, and to participate in and sometimes lead the meetings for prayer, study, and spiritual conversation that characterized the early years of the movement. Puritan divines held a positive and complementarian position on the role of women in family and society, affirming their equal yet distinct calling to care for creation.⁴⁵⁵ Puritanism was also a strongly inward and spirit-centered religion, which urged believers to seek a “new birth in

emphasize the fact that the earliest adherents of the faith tended to be much more disorderly in their behavior and rhetoric than later moderates who adopted the designation of “Friend.” Pestana, “The City Upon a Hill Under Siege: The Puritan Perception of the Quaker Threat to Massachusetts Bay, 1656-1661,” *NEQ* 56.3 (1983): 328.

⁴⁵⁴ On the linkages between orthodox Puritanism and the Baptists, Quakers and others, particularly around the idea of suffering and martyrdom as evidence of genuine (Protestant) faith, see Adrian Chastain Weimer, *Martyrs' Mirror: Persecution and Holiness in Early New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁴⁵⁵ On the connection between Puritan attitudes towards women and later Quaker teachings, see Phyllis Mack, *Visionary Women: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth Century England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), Chapter 7 especially.

Christ” and to listen to the voice of God directing their consciences and “calling” them to particular vocations.

Many of these attributes also characterized Quaker beliefs. Where the Quakers departed from their Puritan countrymen, however, was in the radicalization of these shared orientations. Quakers practiced various forms of “witness” intended to emphasize their egalitarianism by undermining traditional hierarchical relationships and/or gender roles. Puritans urged individuals to study Scripture on their own, yet their complementary respect for education, learning, and the natural light of reason kept their spirituality from becoming mystical or individualistic. The Quakers, on the other hand, rejected the necessity of theological training and embraced the mysticism of new, direct revelations from the inner light, and deemphasized the importance of systematic theology.⁴⁵⁶

Early Quakers were aggressive in their role as “prophets” portending the judgment of God against those who had not yet experienced the “inner light” and could be willfully disruptive in their proclamation of the ‘truth.’⁴⁵⁷ A General Court order of 11 July 1656 recounts the examination of Anne Austin and Mary Fisher for breaking the colony’s laws against heresy. They were found to “hold many very dangerous, heretical, and blasphemous opinions.”⁴⁵⁸ Worse, these women “acknowledge[d] that they came here purposely to propagat[e] their said errors and heresies.”⁴⁵⁹ For their crimes, the women were imprisoned until arrangements could be made for their deportation; the

⁴⁵⁶ Carla Gardina Pestana makes a strong argument for the distinctions between Puritans and Quakers in *Quakers and Baptists in Colonial Massachusetts* (Cambridge: 1991).

⁴⁵⁷ Christopher Hill has characterized the early days of the movement as particularly radical by saying “a Quaker of the early 1650s had far more in common with a Leveller, a Digger, or a Ranter than with a modern member of the Society of Friends.” Hill, *World Turned Upside Down*, 14. See also Adrian Davies’ extended discussion of the ‘radicalism’ thesis in *The Quakers in English Society: 1655-1725* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), Chpts. 10-12 especially.

⁴⁵⁸ Humphrey Norton, *New England's Ensign* (London, 1659), 5.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

books they had brought with them were ordered to be “burned and destroyed by the common executioner.”⁴⁶⁰ Any relief the magistrates might have felt was short-lived, however, for less than a week after dispatching the women back to Barbados, the General Court was confronted with a new threat: the arrival of eight more Quakers prepared to bear witness against them and the colony’s ministers as “bloody masters and oppressors” of the truth.⁴⁶¹

The colony’s resolve on the issue was tested in 1657 when Mary Dyer—a former Bostonian—and two male companions from England were arrested for spreading Quaker teachings.⁴⁶² The three were sentenced to banishment upon pain of death by the General Court. A year later, in July 1658 Humphrey Norton, one of the earliest English converts to the sect and an eager missionary, arrived in Boston and immediately began to attack New English ways.⁴⁶³ Incensed by the content of a Thursday lecture which he was attending, Norton stood, interrupted the speaker, and began to pronounce words of imprecation and doom against the community for its failure to recognize the Quakers as messengers of the truth. Norton was physically removed from the lecture and forced to leave the colony, but his censures of Massachusetts continued. In a letter sent to John Endecott and published in an English newspaper in 1659, he cursed the “rulers,”

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid, 6.

⁴⁶¹ Once again, the Quakers were arrested, their books confiscated and destroyed, their persons sequestered away from the general populace with the jailer strictly ordered that he not allow them “to speak or confer with any person, nor... to have paper or ink.” Ibid, 7, 10.

⁴⁶² Dyer was a supporter of Anne Hutchinson who first to Rhode Island and then London with her husband in the wake of the antinomian controversy. Presumably it was while in London that Dyer became convinced of the truth of Quaker teachings, and she remained in London well after her husband had returned to resume his role in the public affairs of Rhode Island. As Anne G. Myles has pointed out, Mary Dyer holds a unique position in the history of early New England in that she was the only woman associated with both the antinomian controversy and the crisis over Quakerism, yet her life has been the subject of comparatively little study; see Anne G. Myles, “From Monster to Martyr: Re-Presenting Mary Dyer,” *Early American Literature*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (2001), pp. 1-30.

⁴⁶³ Frederick B. Tolles, “A Quaker’s Curse: Humphrey Norton to John Endecott, 1658,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 14.4 (1951): 416.

“teachers,” and “people” of Boston for their partnership with the Devil in denying the servants of God freedom to profess his truth.⁴⁶⁴

That same year, and despite the severe consequences for doing so, Dyer and her companions returned to the Bay Colony, citing their divine calling to witness to the people of Massachusetts. The trio were quickly arrested and sentenced to death by hanging in the morning. In her cell, Dyer composed a brief letter to the magistrates, urging them to reconsider their persecutory laws. Portraying herself as an Esther, she admonished them not to fail to learn from the humility of the great Xerxes who had revised the law of Persia after listening to the quiet testimony of his wife. Should they refuse to relent in their persecuting ways, Dyer implied that the magistrates could expect no better end than the wicked Haman: “the Lord [would] overthrow both your law and you.”⁴⁶⁵ Perhaps Dyer felt that by appealing to a biblical example of a woman speaking with the authority of God to the supreme civil power in her time, she would be able to convince the magistrates to listen to her as a prophetic voice, and cause them to reverse their position. If so, it was a risky choice, for in portraying herself as a female prophetess, Dyer accentuated the sort of immediate revelation that New Englanders perceived as a threat to their more orderly vision of society. The fact that the letter was shortly thereafter included in a deprecatory pamphlet published in London to urge royal intervention in Massachusetts’ politics might indicate that Dyer had a larger audience in mind; if so,

⁴⁶⁴ The letter was reprinted in an English newspaper of the period and appears in Tolles, “A Quaker’s Curse,” 419-421.

⁴⁶⁵ Mary Dyer, Letter to the General Court Now in Boston in Edward Burrough, *A Declaration of the Sad and Great Persecution and Martyrdom of the People of God, called Quakers, in New-England* (London: 1661), 25-27; the quoted text is found on page 27. See also Joseph Nicholson’s account of the events in, *Standard of the Lord Lifted up in New-England* (London: 1660).

such a motivation would only confirm what New Englanders feared most about the Quakers, their intention to disrupt the established civil order with their radical teachings.

In both their doctrine and actions, the earliest Quakers appeared to have little regard for the orderly institutions of ordinary life which Puritan orthodoxy regarded as divinely ordained: the learned ministry, the household, the diversity of gifts which allowed some to be called to places of eminence while still maintaining a commitment to the moral equality of persons.⁴⁶⁶ As one anonymous writer put it, Quakerism was a “disease” and “distemper of judgement” with such dangerous consequences that it was a challenge to “consider how consistent the toleration of such persons is with the subsistence of a land.” The government of Massachusetts had merely been attempting to ward off a contagion by passing “very strict laws against them, as upon their first coming and conviction to whip them; on second coming, to cut off one ear.”⁴⁶⁷ It was only the Quakers persistence that prompted the court to escalate the punishment to include execution: indeed, as Jonathan Chu has argued, this persistence was in itself viewed as a threat, “the General Court assumed that it was dealing with a form of fanaticism that recognized no constraints.”⁴⁶⁸ Moreover, the first Quaker missionaries to New England were men and women who had left their homes, spouses, children, and livelihoods behind them in order to spread their message, an unconscionable dereliction of duty and a clear sign to Puritan authorities that they were anything but divinely inspired.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁶ Pestana, “The City Upon a Hill Under Siege.”

⁴⁶⁷ Tolles, “A Quaker's Curse,” 419-421.

⁴⁶⁸ Jonathan Chu, “The Social Context of Religious Heterodoxy: The Challenge of Seventeenth Century Quakerism to Orthodoxy in Massachusetts,” *Essex Institute Historical Collections* Vol. 118, Issue 2 (1982), 122.

⁴⁶⁹ Carla Gardina Pestana, “The City Upon a Hill Under Seige.” 348-353.

As John Norton (1606-1663) pointed out in *The Heart of N-England Rent at the Blasphemies of the Present Generation* (1659), his apologetical tract on the colony's treatment of Quaker sectaries: "Whilst we remember that God is the God of order: it is not hard to discern the maligning thereof, as proceeding from the Serpent."⁴⁷⁰ Norton, a respected member of the founding generation and John Cotton's successor at Boston's First Church, had been asked by the General Court to defend the colony's actions against the Quakers, and he did so in a lengthy tract which laid out "the destructiveness of the doctrine and practice of the Quakers unto religion, the churches of Christ, and Christian states."⁴⁷¹ Writing in the immediate aftermath of the first executions, Norton attempted to demonstrate the reality of the Quaker threat to both civil and religious stability. (In my discussion of his text below, I focus on Norton's perceptions of and claims about Quaker doctrines without elaborating on whether or to what extent such perceptions were in accord with Quaker self-understanding of their beliefs.)

Norton rejected outright Quaker claims to originality. To the contrary, he suggested that the Quaker heterodoxy was simply an inheritance or imitation of a long history of those possessed by evil spirits. Logically, he argued, since direct revelation had ceased with the end of the apostolic age, "so far is the Spirit from being a rule of life that to us it is not the spirit but as it moves agreeably to the written word. Herby we are taught to discern between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error."⁴⁷² Norton's argument highlights yet another way in which Quaker beliefs were perceived to threaten New

⁴⁷⁰ John Norton, *The Heart of N-England Rent at the Blasphemies of the Present Generation* (Cambridge: 1659), 31.

⁴⁷¹ Norton, *Heart of NE*, 30. For an account of the history of the Court's efforts to justify their actions, both via Norton's pamphlet and in the preamble to their actual orders, see Carla Gardina Pestana, "The Quaker Executions as Myth and History," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 80, No. 2 (Sep., 1993), 459. For the preamble, see Shurtleff, ed., *Records of the Governor and Company*, IV, part 1, pp. 345-47.

⁴⁷² Norton, *Heart of NE*, 9.

England's founding commitments: Norton claimed that Quakers rejected the authority of Scripture, insisting that it had been superseded by the new revelations of the Spirit to individual believers.⁴⁷³ While this claim was, in and of itself, heterodox enough to cause considerable alarm, it had significant implications in the secular sphere as well. In their insistence on the sufficiency of each believer's individual experience of the inner light as an authority for personal behavior, the Quakers undermined two of New England's founding aspirations: moral equality and communion.

At its core, Norton believed that Quakerism was "against order" and thus, against the nature of society itself. Order was "God's way of lapsed man's well-doing and well-being"; it provided the shape, or "form" that gathered a community out of disconnected individuals.⁴⁷⁴ Order not only defined the boundaries of a community but transformed those within its bounds from what Norton called a "plurality" into a "unity."⁴⁷⁵ The disordered plurality was nothing but a "heap," a jumble of tangled lives and personalities, in which, although in proximity to one another, each individual lived in isolation from their fellows, for apart from order there could be no "truth, peace, [or] communion" between men.⁴⁷⁶ The survival of the commonwealth thus depended upon these three

⁴⁷³ An act for the suppression of Quaker beliefs passed on 14 October 1656 describes them as "hereticks...who take upon them to be immediately sent of God and infallibly assisted by the spirit to speak and write blasphemous opinions, despising government and the order of God in church and commonwealth, speaking evil of dignities, reproaching and reviling magistrates and ministers, seeking to turn the people from the faith and gain proselytes to their pernicious ways."

⁴⁷⁴ Norton, *Heart of NE*, 30.

⁴⁷⁵ Norton, *Heart of NE*, 31.

⁴⁷⁶ Norton, *Heart of NE*, 30. Norton's argument about the isolationist tendencies and social destructiveness of Quaker tenets is not unique: critics of the sect in both Englands often pointed to the Quakers' neglect of traditional family relationships and the detrimental effects thereof upon the greater society. Yet those criticisms are severely strained when one considers that Quakers often risked their own imprisonment in order to comfort and advocate for their fellow believers, an act of communal suffering. Moreover, while early Quakers were more likely to be seen as heretics than Christians, they themselves pointed to Christ's statement in scripture that his disciples must be willing to leave father and mother behind to follow him, etc. See Rebecca Larson's account of the early days of the movement in *Daughters of Light: Quaker*

elements. While each individual maintained their unique identity, order allowed them to create networks of relationships within families, neighborhoods, churches, towns, and so forth up to the level of the commonwealth.

Quaker beliefs were most appealing, Norton claimed, to those New Englanders who were already of “discontented, seditious, factious, and tumultuous spirits, especially if pressed with poverty or a suffering condition.”⁴⁷⁷ Most perniciously, from the Puritan perspective, the Quaker doctrine of the inner light tended to obviate all sense of natural or political connections. Believing themselves to be acting under the influence of the spirit of God, “their dictates are presented by them both as infallible and divine,” Norton observed. This was a perilous combination: “Because of the pretense of their infallibility, they must not be questioned. By reason of the pretense of their divinity, they must be obeyed.”⁴⁷⁸ Not surprisingly, in both their “Scripts and behavior,” he charged the Quakers with an intent to “deny obedience unto the order of magistracy” and to undermine the order of the commonwealth.⁴⁷⁹

Against those who would argue for toleration, saying that if the Quakers erred, it was a peril only to their own salvation, Norton observed that Quakers undertook actions inspired by their beliefs that threatened the good of all. Were the state to allow such activity, it would bear a share of the guilt for the outcome, for “commission of evil makes it the sin of the delinquent, irregular permission thereof makes it the sin of the state.”⁴⁸⁰ It was the duty of the state to prevent errors that were “turbulent, i.e., incorrigible,

Women Preaching and Prophesying in the Colonies and Abroad, 1700-1775 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), Chapter 1.

⁴⁷⁷ Norton, *Heart of NE*, 30.

⁴⁷⁸ Norton, *Heart of NE*, 38.

⁴⁷⁹ Norton, *Heart of NE*, 31.

⁴⁸⁰ Norton, *Heart of NE*, 50.

accompanied with soliciting people to ... sedition in the commonwealth.”⁴⁸¹ The Quakers were guilty of “the disturbance, vexation, and hazard of the whole colony,”⁴⁸² if not actually then potentially. There were significant pockets of disturbance, as mentioned above, but what truly mattered to Norton was the rhetorical and symbolic impact of even a few outrageous public demonstrations. Norton claimed that dissenters who were willing to temper their own liberty in service to the greater good were equally quietly tolerated.⁴⁸³ He contrasted this with the Quakers’ stubborn refusal to cooperate with the authorities, which meant that they had to be equally strenuously rebuffed before they completely destroyed the civic communion that enabled New Englanders to live and labor together.

If New Englanders felt the reckless religious enthusiasm displayed by Quaker missionaries was a substantive enough threat to civil or social order to warrant harsh recriminations, this did not prevent them from extending a qualified toleration towards

⁴⁸¹ Norton, *Heart of NE*, 53.

⁴⁸² Norton, *Heart of NE*, 54.

⁴⁸³ In their response to Robert Childe’s *Remonstrance*, the General Court wrote “the truth is, the great trouble we have been put unto and hazard also, by familistical and anabaptistical spirits, whose conscience and religion hath been only to set forth themselves and raise contentions in the country, did provoke us to provide for our safety by a law, that all such should take notice, how unwelcome they should be unto us, either coming or staying. But for such as differ from us only in judgment, in point of baptism or some other points of less consequence, and live peaceably amongst us, without occasioning disturbance, etc. such have no cause to complaine; for it hath never been as yet put in execution against any of them, although such are known to live amongst us.” See *A Declaration of the General Court holden at Boston 4 (9) 1646*, in *Hutchinson Papers*, 244.

That this was not simply an example of either magisterial ‘spin’ or an earlier stance taken but abandoned in light of the more serious Quaker ‘threat,’ is addressed in Thomas Walley’s 1669 election sermon. Walley wrote, “Neither would it consist with our profession of love to Christ or Saints, to trouble those that peaceably differ from the generality of Gods people in lesser things. Those that are like to live in Heaven with us at last, we should endeavor they might live peaceably with us here. Those that differ in lesser things, and [do not infringe the just Liberties of others, why should they not have [peace?] A well-bounded Toleration were very desirable in all Christian Common-wealths, that there may be no just occasion for any to complain of Cruelty or Persecution; but it must be such a Toleration, that God may not be publicly blasphemed, nor Idolatry practiced. Neither ought any Error to be tolerated, that hath a tendency in its own nature to Profaneness, or the disturbing of Peace and Order in Church or State.” Walley, *Balm in Gilead* (Cambridge: 1670), 15.

converts among recognized members of the political community. As early as the winter of 1656-57, a group of New English believers was meeting privately with a Quaker missionary in Salem. Even after observing the persecution of their instructors, the group continued to meet and to grow, drawing perhaps as many as fifty attendees by the end of the decade.⁴⁸⁴ Although some newly convinced Quakers were charged by the General Court with offenses ranging from disrupting church services to reviling the clergy, in general, the local converts were less publically disruptive in their witness and thus, more likely to be tolerated.⁴⁸⁵ As Chu argues, “local Quakers fit into a complex network of social and political relationships,” that help to mitigate the extent to which they were perceived as a threat to the community: in contrast to the outsiders whose zealotry threatened to tear down the carefully structured communion between individual members of New English society, local converts were themselves deeply enmeshed in that communion, members of extended kinship networks and stakeholders in the development and success of their towns.⁴⁸⁶ At the same time that these local connections helped to shape a more tolerant approach to local Quakers, they also tended to restrain whatever impulses the local Quakers might have had to enact their dissent more dramatically. As a result, most local Quakers were subjected to relatively minimal fines for their beliefs, in amounts that were significantly less than the law allowed.⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁴ Pestana, *Quakers and Baptists in Colonial Massachusetts*, 29.

⁴⁸⁵ Pestana, *Quakers and Baptists in Colonial Massachusetts*, 36-37, 39-40. Indeed, Chu argues that these punitive measures were not directed at the religion of the converts, but merely at the public disruption caused by their behavior, regardless of its motivation. Chu, “The Social Context of Religious Heterodoxy,” 125. See also Weimer, *Martyrs' Mirror*.

⁴⁸⁶ Chu, “The Social Context of Religious Heterodoxy,” 123, 124.

⁴⁸⁷ In his extensive study of the fines from 1658-1670, Jonathan Chu found that the average fines assessed were less than half of the legal allowance; moreover, based on a comparison with other tax data in Essex County, he argues that the actual amounts of the fines tended to be equivalent to the standard household assessment for clerical support of the local congregational minister, which arguably makes the fines less a

Although the deep sense of civic communion between New Englanders seems to have mitigated state action against local Quaker converts, the General Court continued to assert its power to punish the disruptive incursions of religious outsiders. Less than a year after Norton's tract was published, Mary Dyer returned to Massachusetts Bay for the second time since her banishment. She was arrested, tried, and condemned to death. Dyer's defense, that she merely "spake the words that the Lord gave her," came dangerously close to a proclamation of immediate divine revelation, a claim of a type of highly individualistic and experiential religious authority that not only took the founding commitment to moral equality to a dangerous excess, but also undermined convictions about the importance of a learned ministry, and thus, threatened the principles of industry and communion as well.⁴⁸⁸ At her execution, Dyer compounded her offense by refusing the offered counsel of an "elder" in the church on the grounds that she "knew never an elder here."⁴⁸⁹ Dyer's unequivocal rejection of the very idea of a learned ministry, and her claims to a personal and immediate sense of God's will unmoored the Puritan commitment to individual equality and freedom of conscience from their traditional (and

punitive measure and more simply a way of ensuring support for the established order. See Chu, "The Social Context of Religious Heterodoxy," 124ff.

⁴⁸⁸ Edward Burrough, *A Declaration of the Sad and Great Persecution and Martyrdom of the People of God, called Quakers, in New-England* and Joseph Nicholson, *Standard of the Lord Lifted up in New-England* (1660), 28. Note that Myles uses the trial transcript to suggest the ongoing resonance for Dyer of Anne Hutchinson's previous encounter with the colonial authorities and argues that Dyer's gender is critical to properly understanding her role in the Quaker "crisis." While acknowledging that Quaker women seemed to be far from the seventeenth century ideal of womanhood in their most assertive pretensions to prophesy in their own names, etc., it seems to me that the threat is better understood vis a vis the disorderliness of excessive equality (regardless of gender), as I will argue below, and not as a question of patriarchy. Norton, the most outspoken defender of the colony's actions against the sect, says nothing about the violation of gender norms and it certainly was well within the Puritans' capabilities to both recognize and complain about "unwomanly" behavior when they observed it; see Winthrop *Journal*, 245-255. See Myles, "Monster to Martyr," 12-18 esp.

⁴⁸⁹ Edward Burrough, *A Declaration of the Sad and Great Persecution and Martyrdom of the People of God, called Quakers, in New-England* and Joseph Nicholson, *Standard of the Lord Lifted up in New-England* (1660), 30.

limiting) tension with the other aspirational principles of diversity and orderly civic communion.⁴⁹⁰

That Dyer's opinions were considered to be indicative of general Quaker beliefs by the Puritan mainstream is illustrated in Joshua Scottow's (1618-1698) translation of the anti-Anabaptist tract *The Rise, Spring, and Foundation of the Anabaptists* written by sixteenth century French reformer Guy de Brez. Scottow's translation, printed in London in 1659 and reprinted by the Cambridge press in 1668, was an abridgement which focused on the description of the violent, anti-Trinitarian, mystical and polygamous Anabaptists who had kept the city of Munster under a reign of terror nearly a hundred years before. Both editions made explicit comparisons between these dangerous heresies and Quaker beliefs. In the London edition, Scottow wrote, "let it be considered, whether in this small History... the spirit, countenance, language, garb, gestures and practises of those which pass under the name of Quakers, do not lively appear."⁴⁹¹ Quakerism, in other words, was a corruption of genuine Christian doctrines that instead of leading toward harmony and brotherly love, tended to poison the community, disfiguring its unity and stirring up dissension. In the end, this bitterness drew the ire of the Massachusetts' Bay authorities: Quaker missionaries who challenged them in church and state were not simply engaged in religious reform, they were attempting to foment a social as well as a

⁴⁹⁰ In a sermon given a few years later, John Wilson (1588-1667) would describe Quakers as "dreamers"; see *A seasonable watch-vword unto Christians against the dreams & dreamers of this generation delivered in a sermon November 16th. 1665* (Cambridge: 1677). On the social upheaval associated with Quaker attitudes toward the clergy, see Christopher Hill, *World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (New York: Penguin Books, 1984); and Barry Reay, *The Quakers and the English Revolution* (London: Scholar Press, 1985).

⁴⁹¹ Joshua Scottow, "To the Reader," in Guy de Brès, *Johannes Becoldus redivivus or, The English Quaker*, Joshua Scottow, trans. (London: 1659).

religious revolution, one that would upset the tenuous balance between equality and communion upon which New England's founders had built their new society.

Nevertheless, New England's brush with Quaker disorder was not entirely negative: at the close of his anti-Quaker tract, Norton had (perhaps accidentally) drawn attention to a way in which Quaker activities could actually spur New Englanders forward to a more fully developed understanding of their foundational principles. Although order was an essential underpinning for society, it alone was insufficient. Norton argued that the perfection of political communities required a trinity of order, action, and knowledge, or understanding: "Order without action is negligence; action without order is presumption. Action without knowledge is reprehensible, and order [without knowledge] unprofitable: but order, action, and understanding perfect bodies politick."⁴⁹² The Quaker threat had the unanticipated benefit of drawing attention to the ways in which Massachusetts had failed to sufficiently develop the three attributes equally. New English society had order, and a fair amount of knowledge, but it lacked (particularly in the second and third generations) action. The Quakers had been perceived as a threat to New English society primarily because they took the founding aspiration of moral equality to an extreme, and presumptively, disorderly degree: they had action, but to New Englanders, neither order nor proper understanding.

In the next decade, the imbalance between order, knowledge and action in their church polity would cause New Englanders to face a crisis of communion as members of the second- and third-generation came of age without making the public profession of faith necessary for church membership. Faced with the practical problem of moving their

⁴⁹² Norton, *Heart of NE*, 30.

congregants into full participation in the life of the church, while still maintaining their commitment to a “pure” or “gathered” congregation, the ministers devised a system of partial membership that would enable the second- and third-generation members of the community to combine personal action with inherited order and knowledge. Known as the “Half-Way Covenant,” the compromise allowed New Englanders to avoid the total erosion of their aspiration of civic communion threatened by the failure of subsequent generations to embrace full membership while still maintaining their public commitment to a faith grounded in personal experience and volition, not merely inherited forms and traditions.

The Half-Way Covenant: The Problem of Purity and the Failure of Communion

Having migrated to Massachusetts Bay in a large part in order to distance themselves from merely “formal Protestants” and “formal preachment”—the outward performance of religious activities without inward conviction—New Englanders were understandably sensitive about the potential of their own churches to suffer the same fate.⁴⁹³ They therefore adopted the position that full church membership (also referred to as “full communion,” because only church members were admitted to the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper and allowed to present their children for baptism) was restricted only to those who could make a credible profession of having experienced spiritual regeneration.⁴⁹⁴ This commitment to an individualized, internal experience of the gospel

⁴⁹³ “formal, adj. and n.”. OED Online. March 2015. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/Entry/73430> (accessed March 24, 2015). See also: “formalism, n.”. OED Online. March 2015. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/Entry/73433?redirectedFrom=formalism> (accessed March 24, 2015).

⁴⁹⁴ See John Cotton’s collected writings on the development of the New England way in *John Cotton on the churches of New England*, edited by Larzer Ziff (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1968); see also James F. Cooper, Jr., “Higher Law, Free Consent, Limited Authority: Church Government and Political Culture in Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts,” *NEQ*, Vol. 69, No. 2 (Jun., 1996), 201-222.

existed in tension with their desire for truth and order in matters of both doctrine and behavior; they thus continued to baptize the infant children of church members as a mark of their incorporation into the covenant family and a reminder of the important duty of parents to raise their children in the ways of the Lord. Thus, infant baptism, far from being an empty ceremonial observance, was an attempt to combine order, action, and knowledge so as to nurture the faith of the “children of the church” to the point where they too, would be able to make a public profession.⁴⁹⁵

Indeed, as Edmund Morgan observed, the generational crisis in Puritan New England was a logical if not inevitable result of their freedom to establish covenant communities and apply their theories of social and church organization with relative purity.

The Puritans had in fact moved the church so far from the world that it would no longer sit the biological facts of life. Had they been willing to move it a little farther still, by forming monasteries instead of churches, they might have concentrated on their own purity and left to others the task of supplying the church with new members. Had they been willing to abandon infant baptism, they might at least have avoided the embarrassment of trying to adjust spiritual growth to physical. As it was, they had chosen to apply in time and space a conception of the church that could never fit those dimensions.⁴⁹⁶

The problem for New Englanders was to engage individual citizens with just enough (but not too much) personal action, just enough (but not too much) order or knowledge. An excess or defect of any one of these would threaten the likelihood that any individual

⁴⁹⁵ As mentioned in Chapter 2, New Englanders believed strongly in the practice of catechesis to help accomplish this goal. John Fiske, the author of the catechism discussed in that chapter notes in his record of a church meeting on June 26, 1646, his congregation “concluded...that the third day of the week at the time the cows go forth the children to come down to be catechized and to give account of what they learned of the sermon Sabbath before to pastor’s house.” Fiske, Entry for June 27, 1646, *Notebook*, 48. Catechism comes up repeatedly in the notebook; see for example 17 and 24 February, 1660, *Notebook*, 158-159.

⁴⁹⁶ Edmund S. Morgan, *Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965), 128.

would become a communing member, because they would lack the inner conviction of the truth necessary to spur them to the action of covenanting.

While Morgan's assessment of the ultimate success of the "gathered church" concept is relatively morose, many New Englanders viewed their experiment as a success and accepted the 1657 Half-Way Covenant, which allowed baptized adults not yet accepted into full communion to present their own infant children for baptism, a practice previously restricted to full members of the church, precisely because it provided the sort of redefinition of time and space which Morgan insinuates was necessary. By admitting the *natural* children of church members to be included within the *spiritual* family of believers in a meaningful way, the doctrine was intended to buttress New English churches against the danger of formalistic membership as well as to prevent such persons as could not or would not make a public profession of faith from becoming apathetic towards the church and its teachings. In the Half-Way Covenant, the second generation of New Englanders attempted to define the church's role as an authority in a way that refined rather than restrained the spiritual striving of the individual soul towards Christ.

The relatively inclusive nature of the church apart from admission to the sacraments reflects New Englanders' recognition that their churches were neither complete nor completely pure in their membership.⁴⁹⁷ Nevertheless, it remained true that non-communicant members were unable to present either themselves or their children for baptism. This was critical, for baptism was the outward sign of corporate belonging and

⁴⁹⁷ In response to complaints about non-church members being discriminated against in 1646, the General Court "the truth is, we account all our countrymen brethren by nation, and such as in charity we judge to be believers are accounted also brethren in Christ." Moreover, the Court asserted that "in most places" non-members were active participants in the life of their local congregations, able to participate in not only "public prayers and instructions" but also "private conference and prayers" according to their inclinations. MBC General Court, "Reply to Child," *Hutchinson Papers*, 245.

identity most important in Massachusetts: “the unraveling of [the roles of] citizen, parent, and saint, manifested itself as a disintegration of their seemingly unified history into fractional traditions, each able to cite scripture to its own purpose.”⁴⁹⁸ To deal with this factionalism both rhetorically and in fact, New Englanders were forced to reconsider their founding ideals, and the logic of their application to the question of church membership.

The ideal of church community comprised primarily of professed saints developed in reaction to the residency-based membership system of the Church of England, which Puritans viewed as corrupting the sanctity of the church. Nowhere did this criticism apply more strongly than on the question of the Lord’s Supper, or communion: to allow those who had not actually “closed with Christ” to partake of the sacrament was an insult against the sacrifice of the atonement, and to risk divine sanction against both the non-believing communicant and the church which allowed his or her participation in the rite.⁴⁹⁹ New Englanders were therefore loathe to open access to the communion table to individuals who could not demonstrate a credible conversion; at the same time, as fewer and fewer second-generation residents made such professions, it became evident that for the church to maintain its role as the center of civic communion, something needed to change.

The issue gained consideration on the local level first: John Fiske’s congregation decided, in the fall of 1658, that the adult “children of the church” (that is, persons who had received infant baptism but not yet made a profession of faith) in good standing were

⁴⁹⁸ David M. Scobey, “Revising the Errand: New England’s Ways and the Puritan Sense of the Past,” *WMQ*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (Jan., 1984), 10.

⁴⁹⁹ On Puritan sacramental theology in both Old and New England, see Brookes Holifield, *The Covenant Sealed: The Development of Puritan Sacramental Theology in Old and New England, 1570-1720* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974).

“to be encouraged to lay hold on and so own their parents’ covenant personally,” even if they did not feel competent to make a profession of faith.⁵⁰⁰ In this intermediary position between non-member and communing member, they would be eligible to “present their children to baptism now in their right who are their next parents.”⁵⁰¹ Although still denied access to the Lord’s Supper, individuals who ‘owned the covenant’ in this way were able to combine their knowledge of religious doctrine with action in a way that respected the founding generation’s concerns about the maintenance of order around the sacraments.

Fiske and his congregants apparently believed that this was an important means by which church membership could remain both pure and true to principles of covenant theology that undergirded the Puritan sense of communion in the relational, or civic, sense. The congregation was asked by the church at Woburn to provide some additional scriptural justification for their decision; their response offers a relatively detailed report of what, precisely, the half-way membership achieved by “owning” the covenant was meant to accomplish.⁵⁰² Citing Isaiah 56:4-5, Nehemiah 10:28-29, and Deut. 29:11-12, the church at Chelmsford wrote

A personal covenanting in this wise: (a) may avail to a more full information and conviction of them as touching what is required and expected (according to vote and to such a relation) at their hands; (b) may avail to the closer holding of such from caviling against the prosecuting the rule toward them or from starting aside

⁵⁰⁰ This proposition was reaffirmed in November 7, 1658, when the church voted to apply discipline to “children of the church” as to full members, and such an action actually taken in the case of a group of young men guilty of failing to attend to the duty of catechesis. See Fiske, *Notebook*, 129, 135-136.

⁵⁰¹ In a subsequent proposition, the congregation took pains to point out to “hold” or “own” the covenant in this sense was not the same as to join in the covenant by a profession of faith. “Notwithstanding ... as the case may require the church may do regularly to satisfy themselves touching their further fitness ere they yield them the liberty of partaking in the Lord’s Supper and of voting in church affairs.”

⁵⁰² Fiske *Notebook*, 115. Although Fiske reports the request without commentary, it apparently was met with some asperity, for his recorded version of the church’s actual response to Woburn include the somewhat testy remark “for our parts we would decline to send much of our precious time in a vain contest with the generation that does stick as deep against the free grace of the covenant.” Nevertheless, the church did condescend to provide a detailed list of scriptural warrants for each of the previously adopted propositions. Fiske, *Notebook*, 115-116. These remarks come from a meeting 21 of 12th, 1656/57. They cite Gen. 17, Matthew 28, 1 Corinthians 7, Acts 2, “etc”

from the condition of the covenant; (c) may avail as a strong tie and band upon their consciences the more to quicken and to provoke to that which they not have by their own act engaged themselves and theirs unto.⁵⁰³

While Fiske's church admitted "we apprehend this way of baptizing grandchildren hath no stop and may (we fear) lead to the prophanation of the ordinance,"⁵⁰⁴ they also clearly believed that the potential benefits outweighed such a risk.

First, and most importantly, personal covenanting gave agency and voice to the experiences of the grown children of the church, forcing them to think through their lives and connect what might have seemed merely formal moments of participation into a coherent narrative of personal religious experience. When Fiske's college-aged son Moses "was called forth before the church and owned there his...covenant," for example, he had to proclaim his faith in "the true and living God," and the mediatory work of Christ as "prophet...priest...king" in his life. Second, it signaled the willingness of such persons to be recognized as part of the church community and to remain under its discipline: Moses promised to "walk according to the holy order and rule of the gospel according to your best light without giving just offense unto any," and to submit himself "to the watch and care of this church." Third, it bound the church to the ongoing oversight and nurture of the spiritual development of such persons: the church promised to "perform unto [Moses] her duty of church inspection," as well as to "be ready to own [him] afterwards to further privileges in the church as the Lord shall qualify you thereunto."⁵⁰⁵ The exchange of these mutual promises recognized that the adult children of the second and third generation could not in any meaningful sense inherit the

⁵⁰³ Fiske, *Notebook*, 118.

⁵⁰⁴ Fiske, *Notebook*, 18.

⁵⁰⁵ Fiske, Entry for September 12, 1658, *Notebook*, 126-127.

aspirational commitment of communion: they had to actively choose to maintain the sort of close relationships with their fellow congregants and citizens if the bonds of affection and mutuality necessary for civic communion were to flourish.

While there was opposition to the Half-Way Covenant,⁵⁰⁶ as John Oxenbridge pointed out in 1671, “if upon such grounds as these we admit of strife, it will canker and sour our spirits, and will take up so much of our heat and heart as to leave us feeble for ‘conserving work.’”⁵⁰⁷ He urged New Englanders not to get overly wrought about the issue, for the goal of both parties was, after all, to reach the second generation for Christ, and to secure their commitment to the community. Inasmuch as the halfway covenant allowed a greater number of the second and third generations to be tied into the church—the single greatest source of civic education available in New England—it was a good thing from Oxenbridge’s perspective, and one that became all the more necessary as New Englanders faced the biggest threat to their founding aspirations yet in the form of the restoration politics of Charles II.

“Our Crowns and Jewels”: New English Liberties and the Politics of the Restoration

On September 13, 1660, roughly three months after the restoration of the Stuart monarchy, the colonial agent for Massachusetts, John Leverett, wrote to the governor and General Court with “what I hear in relation to New England.”⁵⁰⁸ It was not good news. The new king was hearing a variety of “complaints” against the Bay Colony, from Anglican businessmen and religious dissenters who found the General Court’s

⁵⁰⁶ Charles Chauncy, *Anti-Synodalia Scripta Americana* (1662); John Davenport, *Another Essay for the Investigation of the Truth in Answer to Two Questions* (1663); other known opponents included Increase Mather (initially) and Thomas Shepard’s son, Thomas Shepard.

⁵⁰⁷ Oxenbridge, *New-England Freeman Warned*, 43-44.

⁵⁰⁸ *Hutchinson Papers*, Vol. II, 40-41.

enforcement of the congregational way overly restrictive.⁵⁰⁹ Leverett feared the king would prove sympathetic to these petitions and take action against Massachusetts' government. There was even a widespread rumor he reported, "that a governor will be sent over"—a non-elected, non-Puritan governor, without any connection to New England, or any reason to uphold her founding aspirations.⁵¹⁰

The suggestion that a royal official might be appointed to administer their government struck at the very core of New Englanders' civic identity. It undermined their commitment to moral equality, which depended upon their ability to participate in government through their duly elected representatives, persons who could be counted upon to embody the founding aspiration of communion. Unsurprisingly, the General Court took Leverett's warning to heart and began what would become a multi-year campaign to prevent the unthinkable from happening.

As their first response, the General Court adopted an "Address to the King," in which they asked for his "gracious protection of us both in our civil as in our religious liberties (according to the grantees known end of suing for the patent) conferred upon this plantation by your royal father."⁵¹¹ Although the address was full of protestations of loyalty to crown and country, it also contains several references to the founding of Massachusetts as a haven for religious conscience away from the "then...prevailing" corruptions in the English church. The authors of the Address attempted to draw parallels between Charles II's "exile" and their own experience in the "wilderness," thereby

⁵⁰⁹ Although I have chosen to focus on the fight to protect the charter, much of what transpired between Charles and Massachusetts to threaten the charter was presented on both sides as a response to the colony's harsh treatment of the Quakers, thus illustrating how tightly interwoven the three founding aspirations truly were, for in protecting one (equality, in their persecution of the Quakers), the colonists had inadvertently opened the door to an attack on another (communion, in the form of their charter government).

⁵¹⁰ *Hutchinson Papers*, Vol. II, 41.

⁵¹¹ *Hutchinson Papers*, Vol. II, 44.

creating a rhetorical bond between king and colony. The historical tension between the Stuarts and the Puritan cause, however, provides an undercurrent of distrust to the text that is clearest in its closing. Rather than simply exhort the King for his favor, or assure him of their good will and prayers on his behalf, the authors of the Address close it with a conditional clause: “if according to this our humble petition and good hope,” Charles protects “those liberties for which we hither came, which hitherto we have here enjoyed,” then the colony will “grow up as a revived infant under a nursing father.”⁵¹² Left unstated was the possibility that Charles would not fulfill the colony’s hopes of securing their charter liberties—or what that would mean for colonial loyalties.⁵¹³

It is clear, however, from the accompanying instructions to their agent that the government of Massachusetts’ intended to press their case with fervor. In their instructions to Leverett on December 19, 1660, the General Court ordered him to make clear to “the king or parliament” that the people of Massachusetts desired “all those [privileges] which are granted us by patent and that we have hitherto enjoyed in church and commonwealth, without any other power imposed over us, or any other infringement of them, which would be destructive to the ends of our coming hither.” Moreover, the Court also urged Leverett to work diligently to prevent the king from allowing cases heard in the colony to be appealed to English courts for this “would render authority and government vain and ineffectual and bring us into contempt with all sorts of people.”⁵¹⁴ In other words, although the Court acknowledged that their liberties derived from the charter granted by the royal authority of Charles I, they understood those liberties to be

⁵¹² *Hutchinson Papers*, Vol. II, 46-47.

⁵¹³ On the political developments during this period generally, see Paul R. Lucas, “Colony or Commonwealth: Massachusetts Bay, 1661-1666,” *WMQ* Vol. 24, No. 1 (Jan., 1967), 88-107.

⁵¹⁴ *Hutchinson Papers*, Vol. II., 48.

not only irrevocable, but also complete. The Court was willing to assert that Massachusetts Bay was fully sovereign within the confines of the territory and the terms of the charter.⁵¹⁵

In January 1662, the court began to discuss sending additional agents to London to press the question of the charter. In the end, they selected John Norton and Simon Bradstreet, and charged them with “obtaining [Charles’] protection and confirmation of our liberties enjoyed by patent and present establishment.”⁵¹⁶ The court also strictly forbade Norton and Bradstreet from effecting any form of compromise with the crown: “you shall not engage us by any act of yours to anything which may be prejudicial to our present standing, according to patent,” they wrote.⁵¹⁷

⁵¹⁵ As was customary on matters of great seriousness, the Court asked a group of respected ministers to offer their counsel; in this instance, the ministers who reviewed the documents being sent over to both Charles and Leverett affirmed the course of action to be firmly grounded in their understanding of the colony’s charter. See *Hutchinson Papers*, Vol. II, 50-51. The relevant portion of the charter seems to be the statement that the government of New England shall “have full and Absolute Power and Authoritie to correct, punish, pardon, govern, and rule all such the Subjects of us, our Heirs and Successors, as shall from Time to Time adventure themselves in any Voyage thither or from thence, or that shall at any Time hereafter, inhabit within the Precincts and Parts of New England aforesaid, according to the Orders, Lawes, Ordinances, Instructions, and Directions aforesaid, not being repugnant to the Lawes and Statutes of our Realm of England as aforesaid,” (emphasis added).

The question of the extent of Massachusetts’ political sovereignty did not end there, however: in June 1661, the court appointed a committee to “seriously discuss and rightly understand our liberty and duty, thereby to beget unity amongst ourselves in due observance of obedience and fidelity unto the authority of England and our own just privileges.” The members of the committee (who were equally divided between representatives of the assistants, deputies, and clergy) were instructed “to consider and debate such matter or thing of public concernment touching our patent, laws, privileges, and duty to his majesty as they in their wisdom shall judge most expedient” and prepare a report for the Court’s consideration.

The report came back on 10 June 1661, and declared that the General Court had “full power and authority, both legislative and executive, for the government of all the people here, whether inhabitants or strangers, both concerning ecclesiastics and civils, without appeal, excepting law or laws repugnant to the laws of England.” In a separate article of the report, committee stated “we conceive any imposition prejudicial to the country contrary to any just law of ours, not repugnant to the laws of England, to be an infringement of our right.” Their conclusion, therefore, was that the Court’s duty to the King lay in “a faithful discharge in the governing of this people committed to our care,” and moreover, that “it may well stand with the loyalty and obedience of such subjects as are thus privileged by their rightful sovereign, (for himself, his heirs, and successors forever,) as cause shall require, to plead with their prince against all such as shall at any time endeavor the violation of their privileges.” (See *Massachusetts Records*, Vol. 4, Part 2, 24-26).

⁵¹⁶ *Hutchinson Papers*, Vol. II, 74.

⁵¹⁷ *Hutchinson Papers*, Vol. II, 76.

Charles II's response to the petition stipulated that the King's support for the Charter was dependent upon Massachusetts's agreement to annul or repeal any laws "which are contrary or derogative to our authority and government," and upon their willingness to administer justice in His name.⁵¹⁸ Charles also demanded the General Court immediately grant freedom for Church of England services to be held, and for the sacraments to be opened to all persons "of good and honest lives and conversations."⁵¹⁹ Likewise, he commanded that the connection between church membership and suffrage rights be severed, so that "all freeholders of competent estates...may have their vote."⁵²⁰ These provisions flew in the face of all New Englanders' historical self-understanding and demanded a complete retreat from the pursuit of a godly commonwealth.

The General Court was not prepared to give in to the King's demands without resistance, although in practical terms, their tactics amounted to little more than rhetorical posturing. From 1663 on, Massachusetts' election sermons are full of passages exhorting the people to cherish, preserve, promote, and otherwise cling to their charter liberties. In *The Cause of God and His People in New England*, John Higginson advised New Englanders to follow the advice of 1 Peter 2:17—"honor all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king." Although the text suggests that Higginson would fall into the moderate faction, in the end, he was a staunch advocate for the charter. The king, Higginson observes blandly, was "supreme civil governor under God and over us,"⁵²¹ yet

⁵¹⁸ Letter from King Charles the Second to the Massachusetts, June 28, 1662, in *Hutchinson Papers*, Vol. II, 102.

⁵¹⁹ Letter from King Charles the Second to the Massachusetts, June 28, 1662, in *Hutchinson Papers*, Vol. II, 101-102. Note that here, Charles explicitly excludes the Quakers from any such program of toleration, advising the Court that he is "well content" for there to be "sharp law[s]" against the sect. See 103.

⁵²⁰ Letter from King Charles the Second to the Massachusetts, June 28, 1662, in *Hutchinson Papers*, Vol. II, 103.

⁵²¹ Higginson, *The Cause of God*, 20.

as the sermon unfolds, he urged the people to remember that “the present government” was responsible for the “many blessings” they enjoyed, “according to the Patent, which under God and the king is to be acknowledged as the foundation of the civil government here.”⁵²²

That foundation, however, was threatened by the King’s aggressive attempts to assert royal prerogative over the colony—attempts that drove the General Court to state in a letter requesting the support of Sir Robert Boyle that if the King intended to establish a policy of allowing appeals beyond the colonial government,

we can sooner leave our place and all our pleasant outward enjoyments than leave that which was the first ground of wandering from our native country...we can rather choose to return and take up our lot with our brethren than abide here under the deprivation of the end of our travels.⁵²³

Although this was a private communication with the clear rhetorical purpose of encouraging Boyle to utilize his influence on their behalf, the claim about New England’s founding is remarkably bold: the “first ground” and “end” of migration to Massachusetts, the magistrates assert, was self-government. Were they forced to give up that right, they might as well return to the safety and civilization of life in England, as continue to labor fruitlessly in the wilderness.

New England’s complaints about the usurpation of their charter rights did eventually reach the ear of the King, who responded with predictable asperity. William Morice, Charles’ secretary of state, wrote a scathing letter in the King’s name to the

⁵²² Higginson, *The Cause of God*, 23. Near the end of the sermon, Higginson turned his attention to the problem of representation. Although there had been some degree of popular unrest about the restriction of freemanship to church members, Higginson pleaded with the public to be patient. In due time, he was certain that “the General Court will take the case into serious consideration,” but in the meantime, what was most necessary was that they preserve their civic communion and “As in the matter of religion we are to keep to the word of God, so in the matter of civil government, keep to the patent.”

⁵²³ John Endecott, in the name of the General Court, to Robert Boyle, Gov. of the SPG, nd [1664?], *Hutchinson Papers*, Vol. II, 114.

government of the Bay Colony, advising them to cease their endless complaining about their charter rights. Near the end of the letter, Morice blamed Gov. Endecott for inciting popular unrest, and even went so far as to suggest that the King expected that “any other person of good reputation” would be chosen to replace Endecott at the next election. Unfortunately, Endecott died before his term was over, which mooted the question of whether the colony’s freemen would comply with this direct attack on their free political sovereignty.⁵²⁴

Charles was desperate to consolidate his power, particularly over a colony whose religious inclinations had almost universally placed them in opposition to his father’s government. If Morice hoped to strong-arm the colonists into compliance, he had to have been sorely vexed by the response to his blustery warning, for if New Englanders did not openly oppose the restoration government, they did all they could to resist it and to maintain their political autonomy. Indeed, in June of 1665, John Davenport (1597-1670) wrote to a correspondent newly elected to the Massachusetts court of assistants, and urged him to use his position to encourage the people to hold firm in their resistance. The King’s commissioners “claiming power to sit authoritatively as a court for appeals” was a blatant power play, “a manifest laying of the ground work to undermine your whole government established by your charter.”⁵²⁵ Davenport therefore applauded the Massachusetts’ government’s public “declar[ation of] the courage and resolution of the whole country to defend their charter liberties and privileges, and not to yield up their right voluntarily, for so long as they can hold it, in dependence upon God in Christ.”⁵²⁶ If

⁵²⁴ Secretary Morice to the Massachusetts Colony, 25 February 1665, in *Hutchinson Papers*, Vol. II, 115-118.

⁵²⁵ Davenport to Major General Leverett, June 24, 1665, *Hutchinson Papers*, Vol. II, 119.

⁵²⁶ Davenport to Major General Leverett, June 24, 1665, *Hutchinson Papers*, Vol. II, 120.

the General Court could impress upon the king that these were not the disgruntled murmurings of a small faction, but rather, of “the whole country,” then Davenport was hopeful the King might yet change course.

By the time the dreaded royal commissioners arrived in Boston in the summer of 1665, it was clear that the “commonwealth” men fully controlled the General Court and, in a large measure, public opinion. The commissioners’ report to Charles and their recommendations for aggressive royal action reflects their sense of the people of Massachusetts’ strong desire to be as free of royal interference as possible.

They of this colony say that King Charles the First gave them power to make laws and to execute them, and granted them a charter as a warrant against himself and his successors, and that so long as they pay the fifth part of all gold and silver or which they shall get, they shall be free to use the privileges granted them, and that they are not obliged to the King but by civility; they hope by writing to tire the King, Lord Chancellor and Secretaries too; seven years they can easily spin out by writing, and before that time a change may come, nay, some have dared to say, who knows what event of this Dutch war will be?⁵²⁷

If the leaders of the Bay Colony were not openly treasonous, in other words, they were covertly so. The “wooden college” at Cambridge was little more than a breeding ground for future “schimaticks” and “rebels” in both church and state.⁵²⁸

In an effort to coerce the General Court into compliance, the commissioners presented them with an abbreviated version of the report they planned to send to the King. In May 1665, the General Court voted to examine “whether we are deservedly charged by [the royal commissioners] with disobedience to his majesty’s authority.”⁵²⁹ Unsurprisingly, they found themselves to be free of any

⁵²⁷ Narrative of the Commissioners from England about New England, *Hutchinson Papers*, Vol. II, 148-149.

⁵²⁸ Narrative of the Commissioners from England about New England, *Hutchinson Papers*, Vol. II, 150. No doubt, the founders of Harvard would have been quite pleased by this assessment.

⁵²⁹ *Records of the MBC*, 4, Part 2:219.

wrongdoing, asserting that to have acted in compliance with the commissioners' demands would have been tantamount to "prostituting our lives, liberties, peace and comfort...unto such an arbitrariness as was never yet thought fit for the government of any of his majesty's free and natural subjects."⁵³⁰ The court then took the offensive, charging the royal commissioners with mismanaging their task, and attempting to "gather all the combustible matter of discontented spirits among us into one, to make a flame in the country."⁵³¹ The combined reports were sent to London⁵³²; Charles, understandably displeased by the unresolved tension between his personal commissioners and the people of Massachusetts requested that the General Court send four or five men to represent their case to him directly.

Over the summer and early fall of 1666, the Court debated how best to respond to Charles' request. Some of the assistants argued prudentially in favor of compliance as a way to prevent the situation from escalating further; some asserted that the King retained his prerogative authority and thus, his summons had to be obeyed. A few hardliners objected to the very notion of prerogative power on the grounds that such powers were in practice, limitless— "if the king may send for me now and another tomorrow, we are a miserable people"—and thus a usurpation of divine authority.⁵³³ In the end, the court decided the safest course was simply to thank the king for his interest in hearing its view, reiterate its earlier position, and, citing hardships at home, decline to send anyone to address the King directly.⁵³⁴

⁵³⁰ *Records of the MBC*, 4, Part 2:232.

⁵³¹ *Records of the MBC*, 4, Part 2:232, 251.

⁵³² *Records of the MBC*, 4, Part 2:274-275.

⁵³³ "Proceedings of the General Court 1666," in *Danforth Papers, Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, Second Series, Volume 8 (Boston:1826), 100.

⁵³⁴ *Records of the MBC*, 4, Part 2:316-317.

Fortunately for those who valued colonial autonomy, the rapidly escalating French war distracted Charles' attention from the matter and, for the time, Massachusetts was left once again more or less to her own devices. Yet the commissioners' visit exposed latent tensions within the commonwealth and tested popular commitment to the political implementation of the founding aspirations of moral equality, industry, and communion in new and more dramatic ways than any of the previous threats encountered by the second generation.⁵³⁵ Faced with mounting opposition from the restoration government, it was conceivable that the people would lose their willingness to fight for their liberties, that they would become either apathetic or complacent about them. In his 1671 election sermon, John Oxenbridge exhorted all the people, including "women, children, servants, yea and strangers too" to not only cherish, but also exercise and protect their liberties. New Englanders, he observed, had "beautiful and precious liberties beyond other colonies" but that could easily change if they did not take care to preserve them. "If you so root in your present and particular profits and interest as to neglect your golden liberties, what will England? What will all the world say of you, that you are not new English but no Englishmen" he chided.⁵³⁶

The key, Oxenbridge argued, was the charter, the "true and proper ligament" connecting "the crown and country," yet based upon the input and ratification of the people themselves.⁵³⁷ While he admitted that the liberties might legitimately be altered, he argued that this could only be done by following the original deliberative process and

⁵³⁵ See, for example, the numerous popular petitions in favor of appeasement in *Danforth Papers, Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, Second Series, Volume 8: 103-108.

⁵³⁶ Oxenbridge, *New-England Freeman Warned*, 28.

⁵³⁷ Oxenbridge, *New-England Freeman Warned*, 28-29.

with due submission of such an alteration to the freeman at large. The original liberties were “probationers for three years, and in all the General Courts for that time, they were passed by all the freemen, and it seems equal that all the freemen should have as sufficient time to consider of the change and abrogation of them.”⁵³⁸ What mattered, in other words, was not the specific liberties themselves, but rather the process and the principles that undergirded them – the moral equality, industry, and strong sense of civic communion embodied in the institutions and traditions of the Bay colony. As long as those were secure, “nothing can undo this country but unwariness and unfaithfulness, but the mistaking or misacting of freemen.”⁵³⁹ And if that were to happen: “you set up such as will be scourges to yourselves or brethren, you deserve to be whipt.”⁵⁴⁰

Conclusion

In the middle of the seventeenth century, the second generation of New Englanders had to negotiate the tension between their revolutionary founding commitments and the requirements of maintaining a commonwealth. The first generation had affirmed their commitment to a robust understanding of consent-based and representative institutions derived from their aspirations of moral equality, industry, and communion. Individual New Englanders, in other words, needed to be just as “warm” and “lively” as members of the body politic as they did as members of the body of Christ. Yet the survival of these larger communities required a certain degree of structure and law, the restraint of the very spirit that gave them life in the first place. Whereas the founders

⁵³⁸ Oxenbridge, *New-England Freeman Warned*, 29-30. Interesting that Oxenbridge dates the liberties to 1641, and not to 1648.

⁵³⁹ Oxenbridge, *New-England Freeman Warned*, 33.

⁵⁴⁰ Oxenbridge, *New-England Freeman Warned*, 33-34. Compare this to Shepard’s similar tone in the 1638 election sermon.

had been animated by a sense of urgency to distinguish themselves from England, to reform the practices they believed most corrupt and replace them with new modes of behavior, the maintenance of that distinction and the ongoing preservation of a unique New English “way” in both church and commonwealth required a certain cooling of the revolutionary passions. Too much coolness, however, would lead to mere formalism, an empty and ultimately groundless commitment to the community insufficient to sustain it against a new revolutionary moment, either from without or from within. In navigating the middle ground between these two extremes, New Englanders had to develop an awareness of both their inheritance and their legacy.

In the fall of 1670, Increase Mather (1639-1723) published *The Life and Death of that Reverend Man of God, Mr. Richard Mather*, a biography of his own father through which Mather tackled the larger question of generational relations and the problem of sustaining founding commitments over time that would become the central focus of his life’s work.⁵⁴¹ The following year, he edited a sermon preached by his brother Eleazar shortly before his death and published it as a *Serious Exhortation to the Present and Succeeding Generation in New England*. In his preface to the text, Increase recounted “the dying counsel which my Reverend Father [Richard Mather] left with me was that I should seriously endeavor the good of the rising generation in this country,” and that this was also shared with Eleazar.⁵⁴² The younger Mathers urged New Englanders to “neglect

⁵⁴¹ See Michael G. Hall’s discussion of the seminal role of the biography in setting the tone for the rest of Mather’s career in *The Last American Puritan: The Life of Increase Mather, 1639-1723* (Middleton: Wesleyan University Press, 1988), 83-97. See also William J. Scheick, “Anonymity and Art in the Life and Death of That Reverend Man of God, Mr. Richard Mather,” *American Literature* 42 (1971), 457-67.

⁵⁴² Mather cites a long list of earlier divines: “Mr. Cotton in his sermon on Ps. 116:15, preached on the occasion of the death of Mr. John Oliver,” as well as “Divine Herbert’s...poems of the church militant,” the works of “Renowned Hooker,” and the sermons on 2 Chronicles 12:8 by “that holy man of God, Mr. Sheperd,” Mr. Norton “another that was once a famous seer in our Israel,” etc.

not duty” in preserving the institutions and traditions of New England, not only for their sake, but for futurity.⁵⁴³ Mather’s instructions are startlingly commonplace: “work, and work for God in your several capacities,” as well as “labor...for a public spirit, let all your own interest give way...to be of a private spirit is not to be for God.”⁵⁴⁴ The rhetorical power of the jeremiad came from its presentation of second-generation New Englanders as both agents of their own destiny and as the inheritors of an unbreakable divine promise. As Eleazar Mather put it, they had to learn to “speak by lives as well as words...because families are the seminaries of church and commonwealth.”⁵⁴⁵ Inasmuch as the children and grandchildren of the founders failed to pay sufficient attention to the principles underlying their community, preferring to enjoy its privileges and stability without either understanding or contributing to its preservation, they continued to put the stability of that community at risk.⁵⁴⁶ Yet there were also elements of consolation and encouragement to this rhetoric, for the jeremiad’s potential for motivation hinged upon the idea that the God with whom the founders had covenanted could also be relied upon to fulfill His promises to their children. The elder Mathers’ advice about the imperative of generational care would prove indispensable, therefore, for his son and grandson were to prove essential forces in the successful transference of New England’s founding aspirations.

⁵⁴³ Eleazar Mather (henceforth: E. Mather), *A Serious Exhortation to the Present and Succeeding Generation in New England, Earnestly Calling upon all to Endeavor that the Lord’s Gracious Presence may be Continued with Posterity* (Cambridge: 1671).

⁵⁴⁴ E. Mather, *Serious Exhortation*, 23-24.

⁵⁴⁵ E. Mather, *Serious Exhortation*, 20.

⁵⁴⁶ On Increase Mather’s role in the push for an official public statement of the need for reformation, see Chapter 1 of Richard Gildrie’s *The Profane, The Civil and the Godly: The Reformation of Manners in Orthodox New England, 1679-1749* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994).

CHAPTER 5: INCREASE MATHER, REVIVALIST AND REFORMER

In 1674, Increase Mather was afflicted with a strong sense of concern about New England—so much so that “considering the sins of the country, and the symptoms of divine displeasure, I could not rest in my spirit without giving publick, solemn warning of judgment near at hand.”⁵⁴⁷ He did so in a pair of sermons based on Ezekiel 7: 7—“the day of trouble is near”—in which he predicted that God would shortly demonstrate his displeasure with New England by subjecting them to a period of trials. Although at the time of delivery, Mather’s dire predictions likely seemed simply a continuation of earlier ministerial admonishments about the second generation’s declension, within only a few months, the colony would be mired in the bloodiest conflict with the native population of the century.⁵⁴⁸

Reflecting on the occasion in later years, Mather attributed his forebodings to divine inspiration and accepted them as a confirmation of his own special role as an agent of providence appointed with the task of calling the people of New England back to the terms of their founders’ public covenant with God. The founders, Mather argued, had planted their commonwealth with the intention of ensuring that “a scripture pattern of reformation, as to civil, but especially in ecclesiastical respects, might be here erected, as a first fruits of that which shall in due time be accomplished the whole world throughout.”⁵⁴⁹ Over time, however, their descendants had become more “worldly,” engaging in a variety of “provoking evils” (ranging from excessive vanity and general contempt for authority to

⁵⁴⁷ I. Mather, *Autobiography*, *AAS Proceedings*, 301.

⁵⁴⁸ I. Mather, *Autobiography*, *AAS Proceedings*, 302.

⁵⁴⁹ I. Mather, “To the Reader” in Samuel Toerrey, *An Exhortation unto Reformation* (Cambridge, 1674).

drinking, cursing, loose behavior, idleness, and economic malfeasance towards the poor) that undermined the community's commitment to the aspirations of the first generation.⁵⁵⁰

Despite his severe admonishments, Mather was not entirely pessimistic: because God was, by nature, a covenant-keeper, New Englanders could embrace the hard work for personal and corporate reformation in the full confidence that their efforts would be rewarded.

Now the good Lord, who was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of David his father, grant that we may be kept faithful to the first Principles of New-England, and that not only as to our Church-state, in respect whereof, we are engaged to profess and practice the congregational way of church Government, as instituted by Christ, and held forth ...but also as to our civil-state, which hath been built upon principles of righteousness and sanctity, the laws and people of Christ being especially regarded therein. Then we may expect the continuance both of our civil and sacred liberties.⁵⁵¹

Mather sermons during this period represent his self-conscious reflection on what Sacvan Berkovitch described as the “movement from promise to experience—from the ideal of community to the shortcomings of community life”—and, as Berkovitch points out, they are profoundly optimistic, looking confidently to a future in which the promise would be more perfectly realized than it yet had been.⁵⁵²

In this chapter, I focus on Mather's attempts to revitalize New England's founding principles from the mid-1670s through the early 1680s. Although a member of the second generation, in his almost prophetic understanding of the threats to the principles of the regime from various sources—and his tireless efforts to counteract

⁵⁵⁰ Edmund S. Morgan, *Puritan Political Ideas*, 226-233. Mather took these sins personally, writing that it was his “duty...to stir them [the General Court] up to endeavor a reformation of provoking evils, by making laws for that end.” The Court responded by passing the Provoking Evils Act of 1675 for which Mather claimed credit. See I. Mather, *Autobiography*, *AAS Proceedings*, 302.

⁵⁵¹ I. Mather, “To the Reader” in Samuel Toerrey, *An Exhortation unto Reformation* (Cambridge, 1674).

⁵⁵² Sacvan Berkovitch, *American Jeremiad*, 16. Contra Berkovitch, see Murphy, *Prodigal Nation*.

them—Mather stood out from among his contemporaries. During this period, a significant number of the founding generation passed away, while at the same time, New England suffered from what seemed to be a never-ending series of threats from both internal and external sources. In the first half of the chapter, I look at works (by Mather, but also by some of his colleagues) related to the ongoing challenge of conveying the community's inherited aspirational principles to a second and third generation during the crisis period surrounding King Philip's War.

The war itself—its origins, conduct, and resolution—is not directly relevant to this project, but the occasion of the war provided an opportunity for the colony's clerical leadership to engage in two related civic formation projects. First, the artillery sermons delivered during and immediately following the war reveal an explicit recognition of the value of “military discipline and the spirit of souldiery [sic]”⁵⁵³ for literally and figuratively protecting the commonwealth. Secondly, the destructiveness of the war provided a locus for the declension rhetoric surrounding the second generation. Mather and others pointed to the war as evidence of God's displeasure with New England, and urged a public response of repentance, reform, and renewal. Their efforts culminated in the Reforming Synod of 1679 in which the clergy (led by Mather) challenged New Englanders to renew their commitment to the ideals and identity handed down from the founders by eliminating vice and increasing the practice of those virtues and the bolstering of those institutions (Harvard) that were essential to the perpetuation of the founding aspirations of the colony.

⁵⁵³ Samuel Nowell, “To the Reader,” *Abraham in Arms* (1678), np.

Mather's most critical defense of New England's founding, however, was against the Crown in the late 1680s. The creation of the Dominion of New England and the appointment of Sir Edmund Andros as royal governor (the first non-elected governor in Massachusetts Bay history) represented an attempt by the Restoration government in England to consolidate its power over the colonies. The second half of the chapter focuses on Mather's role in promoting New English resistance to Andros, and in preparing the way for the revolution of 1689.

“Qualifications for Soldiers and Christians”: The Civic Value of Martial Virtue

King Philip's or King Metacom's War (depending on whether one uses the native leader's anglicized or traditional name) left more than six hundred New Englanders dead and countless others injured, displaced, and discouraged. With the brief exception of the Pequot War in 1637, the residents of the Bay Colony had enjoyed peaceful relations with their native neighbors since their arrival. Yet suddenly, and for more than a year (from June 1675-August 1676), the people of Massachusetts were engaged in a brutal struggle for survival in which they found themselves attacked by and attacking even former allies.⁵⁵⁴

Although Massachusetts' men had been required to participate in local militia companies since the founding, including “training days” intended to “cultivate the

⁵⁵⁴ Alden T. Vaughn's history of Puritan interactions with their native neighbors is essential to understanding the lead-up to the war, although he mistakenly argues that “secularization” was a principal element in the eventual shift of New England's policy towards the native population; see *New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians, 1620-1675*, Third Edition (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995). In contrast to Vaughn, who is generally sympathetic to the Puritan side of the story, Jill Lepore argues that the war marks the origin of negative perceptions and treatment of native populations as an element of Americanism in *The Name of War: King Phillip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Knopf, 1998). More recently, James Drake has advanced a novel interpretative position which focuses on the pre-existing interconnections between native and New English populations to portray that war as a type of *internal* rather than *external* conflict; see *King Philip's War: Civil War in New England, 1675-1676* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000).

physical skills and discipline necessary for battle,” over time, this had become largely an occasion for male socializing, rather than an opportunity to practice genuine civic skills.⁵⁵⁵ Even the less frivolous aspects of training day (the election of artillery officers and the attendant public sermon) seem to have been gradually divorced from the true nature of the enterprise, for in the absence of an external foe, ministerial rhetoric predictably turned to the enemies New Englanders would face on the spiritual battleground.⁵⁵⁶ Facing an actual military engagement, however, forced a shift in the rhetoric: martial preparation and service were presented in light of the preservation of their aspirational principles of moral equality, industry, and communion which set the idealized New English soldier apart as a civic type.⁵⁵⁷

Chief among the distinguishing marks of the New-English militia man was his dual role in the service of God and country. “The church of God upon Earth is militant, in

⁵⁵⁵ On the development of training days, see Romero, *Making War, Minting Christians*, 152, and Chapter 9, especially. The requirement for male militia service was formalized by the General Court in March 1631, and as early as April 12 of that year, the General Court was requiring towns to hold regular (weekly, at first, and then monthly) training sessions. See *Records of the MBC* 1:84, 85, 102, 124. A more comprehensive militia law was passed in September 1643; see *Records of the MBC* 2:42-43.

⁵⁵⁶ Joshua Moodey berated the men of Boston in 1674 for their conduct on training days, writing “there is a great deal of flightiness and frothiness in military exercises, or in men, while conversant in those exercises; your ordinary training days are accounted recreation-days, sporting-days, and they are oft, and by many, spent in vanity and licentiousness, as if vain merriment, idleness, voluptuousness, and excess were the work of the day.” Moodey, *Souldery Spiritualized* (1674), 36. On the pageantry and festival-like nature of training days and its roots in English culture more broadly, see T. H. Breen, “English Origins and New World Development: The Case of the Covenanted Militia in Seventeenth-century Massachusetts”. *Past & Present* 57 (1972): 74–96. On the softening of the meaning of “warfare,” see for example, Urian Oakes’ 1672 artillery sermon, *The Unconquerable All-Conquering and More-Than-Conquering Souldier* (1674), which is entirely about the symbolic dimensions of Christian warfare.

⁵⁵⁷ New Englanders were far from unique in asserting the value of militia service for cultivating the habits and hearts of their citizens; the idealized citizen-soldier is a trope of political life going back to antiquity: warfare as a mode of (masculine) character formation is so commonplace in Western understanding as to be used symbolically for nearly any kind of endeavor requiring self-discipline, self-sacrifice, and the comradeship of others. Nevertheless, there are elements of the discourse around militia service that are significantly “New English” in tone that it is worth mentioning here. Note that in this section, I am concerned, as the ministers preaching these sermons were, with the ideal type of the citizen-soldier; for an examination of the particular characteristics of those men who actually fought for Massachusetts during King Philip’s War, see Kyle F. Zelner’s recent and fascinating study, *A Rabble in Arms: Massachusetts Towns and Militia Men During King Philip’s War* (New York: New York University Press, 2009).

a civil as well as in a spiritual sense,” John Richardson asserted; “while the church hath her enemies in the world, men ought to be in readiness, not only to pray...but to fight with their hands for the peace of Jerusalem.”⁵⁵⁸ Richardson’s sermon, *The Necessity of a Well Experienced Souldiery* was preached just prior to the outbreak of King Philip’s War, a period of escalating tension, and his insistence on the necessity that Christians prepare themselves for not only spiritual, but also actual warfare distinguishes his remarks from those of his predecessors.⁵⁵⁹

In contrast to the majority of previous militia sermons, Richardson focused on the practical aspects of military training, emphasizing (in contrast to the Quakers, “that abominable sect, who...never ...use any means of defense against wrong or injury,”) that self-defense was a duty incumbent upon all men.⁵⁶⁰ As the beneficiaries of a valuable inheritance through their faith in Christ, believers in all ages had a responsibility to safeguard their lives and liberties from outside threats. Citing multiple examples from the Old Testament of God’s chosen people equipping themselves for warfare, he wrote “I will never believe that our privileges under the gospel are now more narrow than theirs were under the law...the law of nature, which is God’s law too, doth ever bind us, so far as we can in a just way, to prevent any even unjustly offered.”⁵⁶¹ These themes were echoed in a 1678 militia sermon preached by Samuel Nowell, who argued that the utility

⁵⁵⁸ John Richardson, *The Necessity of a Well Experienced Souldiery* (Cambridge: 1679), 1.

⁵⁵⁹ Historians generally concur in citing John Sassamon’s betrayal of Philip/Metacomet’s secret war preparations to the Plymouth colony authorities, the ensuing (but ultimately fruitless) investigation, and Sassamon’s subsequent murder in the winter of 1674-1675 as the inciting incidents of the war. Sassamon’s body was not discovered until after the spring thaw and it was not until June 8, 1675 that three native men were convicted and sentenced to death for his murder. In retaliation, a group of natives allied with Philip/Metacomet attacked a New English settlement on June 20, 1675, the first actual military engagement of the war.

⁵⁶⁰ Richardson, *Necessity of a Well Experienced Souldiery*. 4.

⁵⁶¹ Richardson, *Necessity of a Well Experienced Souldiery*, 4, 6.

and acceptability of force were discernible not only from Scripture, but also from Nature, both of which taught men “to use all means to preserve life.”⁵⁶² Nowell merged the canonical just war tradition with Puritan civic practice to derive the principle that man had a right not only to defend himself and his property, but also “for the defense of friends and allies,” “to recover what has been taken away,” and “to punish for injuries done.”⁵⁶³ Therefore, Nowell argued, “the training of souldiers to be fit for war, is a commendable practice, yea, a duty of great consequence” and “part of the general calling, whereto God calls every man that is capable.”⁵⁶⁴ The general vocation of the Christian citizen, in other words, necessitated a willingness to engage in preparation for conflict, to defend with one’s arms and actions as well as one’s intellect, the ways of truth, justice, faith, and virtue.

War, then, was “God’s way...and he hath ordered a certain art of skill in warring, and hence commands that his people be trained up or exercised to the knowledge of it.” Richardson drew upon the traditional concept of the calling to argue that the military arts were no different than any other talents or trades; “God’s work must be done wisely... and in the best manner, so as may be suitable to the glory of his own nature; to be able to war or fight according to art, gives much glory to him, who is the author of every commendable art or science.”⁵⁶⁵ It was necessary, therefore, that all able-bodied men in the commonwealth embrace the discipline of training for militia service as an opportunity to demonstrate their gratitude towards God for having given them life and the ability to

⁵⁶² Nowell, *Abraham in Arms*, 10.

⁵⁶³ Nowell, *Abraham in Arms*, 3-4.

⁵⁶⁴ Nowell, *Abraham in Arms*, 4-5.

⁵⁶⁵ Richardson, *Necessity of a Well Experienced Souldiery*, 9. Later in the sermon, Richardson asks point-blank, “is it not thy duty to be expert in thy calling?” Richardson, *Necessity of a Well Experienced Souldiery*, 14.

protect it. Moreover, because the duty of militia service was equally incumbent upon all male members of the community, it reinforced the aspirational commitment to moral equality of all persons while also affirming the equal dignity and value of the individual lives and property of each member of the community as worthy of defense. Finally, because the success of the militia depended upon regular participation in training and drills, such service reinforced the aspirational commitment to industry by providing an additional area of life in which the male citizen could cultivate the virtues of self-discipline and public-spiritedness, as well as that sense of communion and interdependence necessary to the nurture of a strong body politic.

As a result of this rigorous training, the New England militia man, according to Nowell, was full of “spirit and courage,” able to “endure hardness” and willing to engage in the discipline of regular training exercises.⁵⁶⁶ Training day offered

a way and means to give encouragement to diligent and expert men, by giving them titles answerable to their activity and skill. ... It is a way that affordeth opportunity to put honor and respect upon Men of activity, as their Diligence, Valor, and activity calls for it. ... It is a nursery for officers beyond our common trainings...it is also a proper means for trying the skill of soldiers beyond what is at other times.⁵⁶⁷

The occasion of military training, in other words, provided men of otherwise unexceptional means and talents another field in which they might excel, thus bolstering not only their sense of self-respect, but also, perhaps, their sense of belonging and commitment to the community.

Excellence in military skills would also encourage the community’s aspirational concept of communion by nurturing orderly relationships among the men in each training band. Richardson embraced the traditional concept of unity in diversity: some were called

⁵⁶⁶ Nowell, *Abraham in Arms*, 17, 18.

⁵⁶⁷ Nowell, *Abraham in Arms*, 18.

to positions of leadership, while the majority of men were to be diligent in attending to the lessons of their commanders, to “learn so as to be able to do.”⁵⁶⁸ They must also steel themselves to be “willing to be commanded” for no military unit could function without a proper head. In this merit-based system, the communion between soldiers and commanders was based on the achievement of a shared purpose—the defense of the community—and a recognition that a limited hierarchical structure provided the surest means of achieving that end. Yet even this hierarchy carried within it the sense of mutual interdependence so critical to the founders’ vision, for as Richardson opined, “order is the soul of commonwealths and societies, it matters not who goes first, strive rather who shall march best: he can never well lead that knows not well to follow.”⁵⁶⁹ The institutional use of hierarchy within the militia was in service of the broader goal of order, in other words, not an end in and of itself, and those in positions of leadership were ever to bear in mind that they too, were in the service of a greater authority, the body politic.

Both Richardson and Nowell emphasized that the overarching purpose of militia training was the protection of the people’s liberties. In language strongly reminiscent of Winthrop’s exhortations in the *Model*, Richardson urged his listeners to “consider...that there is a great and solemn dependence upon an experienced militia, as to the safety and preservation of our lives, liberties, etc.”⁵⁷⁰ Nowell was even more adamant on this point,

⁵⁶⁸ Richardson, *Necessity of a Well Experienced Souldiery*, 12, 13.

⁵⁶⁹ Richardson, *Necessity of a Well Experienced Souldiery*, 13.

⁵⁷⁰ Richardson, *Necessity of a Well Experienced Souldiery*, 14. Likewise, Nowell argued (with seemingly little historical evidence) that the primary reason New England had enjoyed such a long period of peace and prosperity between the two Indian wars was “our readiness and expertness in military exercises is that for which we have been famed abroad in other countries, both among the Dutch and French. ... What made the Indians live quietly by us so long? They had hatred to us many years before it broke out. What was the reason it did not break out? They saw we had skill, that Skill in military discipline which they understood not: that was an awe and dread to them, and is at this day, that they dare not meet us on equal terms.” Nowell, *Abraham in Arms*, 12.

asserting “there are our Rights both as Men, and as Christians, our civil Rights and Liberties as Men and our religious Liberties and Rights as Christians; both which we are to defend with the sword, as far as we are able.”⁵⁷¹ Although might did not make right (or, as Nowell put it, “it is not another’s being strong can make our right null and void”), force of arms often provided a greater surety for liberty than force of argument. The commitment to widespread military training and service in the Bay colony thus affirmed in principle the founders’ willingness to dissent from intrusive authority in the name of individual conscience and liberty, while channeling the practical action motivated by the principle in a more communal (and thus, orderly) direction.⁵⁷²

The Necessity of Reformation: Responding to God’s Judgement on New England

Along with inspiring a turn to increasingly civic-virtue-oriented rhetoric in militia sermons during the late 1670s, the devastation wrought by King Philip’s War also provided clerical proponents of New England’s “declension” with a dramatic and concrete example of divine judgment on the colony’s multiple sins. During and immediately after the war, a significant contingent of the colony’s ministers pointed to the violence as evidence of divine displeasure. Led by Increase Mather, these jeremiahs called for a program of repentance, reform, and renewal, all of which centered on the need for New Englanders to return to their founding commitments.⁵⁷³

⁵⁷¹ God, Nowell argued, set the limits to power relations: “God hath not given great ones in the world that absolute power over men, to devour them at pleasure, as great fishes do the little ones; he hath set rulers their bounds and by his law hath determined people’s liberties and property.” Nowell, *Abraham in Arms*, 10.

⁵⁷² Nowell, *Abraham in Arms*, 10.

⁵⁷³ Stephen Foster has argued that the most adamant proponents of the declension thesis, led by Increase Mather, were actually disappointed by the relative brevity of the war within the colony proper, and used the ongoing frontier violence as a stand-in to support their contention that God was still asserting his judgement against New England. See *The Long Argument*, 220.

In March 1674, while delivering a sermon at the execution of two servants convicted of conspiring to murder their master, Mather accused New Englanders as a body of the crime of symbolically murdering their fathers. Any casual observer would see that in Massachusetts, “magistrates are not honored and acknowledged in their places as ought to be,” nor were ministers, heads of households, or the elderly afforded even the moderate respect owed to them from mere “good manners.”⁵⁷⁴ “Mark what I say,” he warned: “if ever New-England be destroyed, this very sin of disobedience to the fifth commandment will be the ruin of this land.”⁵⁷⁵ Mather might also have had in mind the more endemic dishonoring of New England’s venerable founding generation, for this was a prevalent theme among those who feared for New England’s future in the 1670s.

In 1676, for example, a broadside version of an elegy for John Winthrop was published (see Appendix 3). Winthrop’s death had occurred in 1649, and the timing of this publication, in the midst of New England’s ongoing struggles with the King, and their troublesome war against local native groups, could not have been coincidental. In a few key verses, the poet painted a picture of New England’s past that was meant to inspire the present generation to recommit themselves to the aspirational principles put in place by their forebears. Likening Winthrop to Moses, both exemplars of godly leadership in the midst of a wilderness experience, the poet wrote:

The Jews did for their Moses weep
 Who was their Gubernator,
 Let us for *Winthrop* do the like,
 Who was our conservator.⁵⁷⁶

⁵⁷⁴ I. Mather, *The Wicked Man’s Portion* (Boston: 1675), 16, 17.

⁵⁷⁵ I. Mather, *The Wicked Man’s Portion*, 17.

⁵⁷⁶ Percival Lowell, *A Funeral Elegie...on the death of the memorable and truly honourable John Winthrop, Esq.* [Boston:1676]. "conservator, n.". OED Online. December 2015. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/Entry/39575?redirectedFrom=conservator> (accessed February 28, 2016).

The image of Winthrop as a type of latter-day Moses playing the role of conservator reinforces the Puritans' self-identification of their political community as a "New Israel." Although Winthrop and his fellow founders sometimes portrayed their vision in terms of doing something new, for the purposes of this later publication, the founding narrative was more powerful if cast in terms of the conservation of the ageless ideals of God's grant of representative government to the people of Israel. The allusion to earlier democratic/republican forms of government is repeated a few lines down when the poet declares that Winthrop's "fame/exceeding far those ancient Sages/that ruled *Greeks* in former Ages," should be literally and figuratively engraved upon the landscape of the colony.⁵⁷⁷

The poet urged his audience to cherish the memory of Winthrop's generosity and public spirit:

The nature of the Pelican
 Read storyes what they say,
 To her I would compare this man
 If lawfully I may.
 To *Moses* meek, to *Abraham*,
 To *Joseph* and to *Jonathan*.
 He was *New-England's* Pelican
New-England's Gubernator
 He was *New-England's* Solomon
New-England's Conservator.⁵⁷⁸

From at least the thirteenth century, drawing on middle-eastern fables describing how the adult birds fed their young with their own blood, Christians had adopted the pelican as a

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid.

symbol of self-sacrificial love.⁵⁷⁹ Likewise, Moses, Abraham, Joseph, Jonathan, and Solomon all function as Christ-types in the Old Testament, leaders who endured personal suffering and sacrifice in order to guide the people of Israel to the next phase of their covenant relationship. The greatness of these men was universally found in their willingness to subordinate their own wills to the service of a greater good, and their humility in using their exceptional abilities not to garner riches or praise for their own sakes, but rather, to encourage and direct their fellow citizens in the fulfillment of their covenant with God.

Finally, the poet admonished his readers to not be overly mournful in their remembrance of the past, but to cling to the hope that:

They yet survive who may renew
Decay'd and dying hopes in you
Which honour due let us respect them,
No cause we have for to reject them,
They are to us as true directors
and under God our chief protectors.⁵⁸⁰

These exhortatory remarks drew upon New Englanders' affective response to their history to draw them forward into a future in which their aspirational principles—currently threatened—might be more fully realized.

In the same year, Mather published *An Earnest Exhortation to the Inhabitants of New-England*, in which he called his audience to task for their failure to act according to their religious convictions: “how many,” he asked, “although they are *Christians* in name, are no better than *Heathens* in heart, and in Conversation?”⁵⁸¹ Mather chastised New

⁵⁷⁹“pelican, n.”. OED Online. December 2015. Oxford University Press.
<http://www.oed.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/Entry/139847?result=1&rskey=KllC6G&> (accessed February 28, 2016).

⁵⁸⁰ Lowell, *A Funeral Elegie*.

⁵⁸¹ I. Mather, *An Earnest Exhortation to the Inhabitants of New England* (Boston: 1676), 6.

Englanders for having taken advantage of the “peace and blessings of God” towards them to indulge in sinful pride, excess, etc. and lack of material support for the public ministry.⁵⁸² They were also guilty of “formality in religion” and land-hunger, not to mention oath- and Sabbath-breaking, economic “oppression” and public discord or “contention.”⁵⁸³ What was worse, Mather argued, the colony’s government had made little effort to end such public disorders, despite the existence of many laws against these and similar vices. Direly, he remarked, “I have read that it is a rule in politics, that a bad executioner of laws is worse than a violator of them. Our defect is not so much in respect of the want of good laws, as in the non-execution of those laws that are good.”⁵⁸⁴

To encourage the more robust application of the laws, Mather urged an agenda with both corporate and individual dimensions.⁵⁸⁵ On the corporate side, he suggested that the second and third generations participate in covenant renewal ceremonies. In these, he proposed to have the current attendees of each congregation (members and non-members) affirm *en masse* the promises made by the original members of the church, thereby creating a sense of personal (and not merely inherited and formal) ownership and participation in the covenant community.

In addition, Mather suggested a program of personal reformation, for many New Englanders were far less godly in their habits than they ought to be.⁵⁸⁶ Indeed, to shame his listeners, Mather observed that “I do believe that many Englishmen that look with a disdainful eye upon these poor Praying Indians shall see a number of them sitting down

⁵⁸² I. Mather, *Earnest Exhortation*, 8-9, 9-10.

⁵⁸³ I. Mather, *Earnest Exhortation*, 11, 12, 13, 14.

⁵⁸⁴ I. Mather, *Earnest Exhortation*, 15.

⁵⁸⁵ I. Mather, *Earnest Exhortation*, 15-16.

⁵⁸⁶ I. Mather, *Earnest Exhortation*, 16-18.

with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of God, when I pray God they may not see themselves shut out.”⁵⁸⁷ Mather encouraged his listeners to “remember the errand that our fathers came into this wilderness for, and pursue that interest.” Although other English plantations had been established with varying goals, New England alone, he stated, had been “built upon a foundation or interest purely religious...pure worship and ordinances without the mixture of humane inventions was that which the first fathers of this colony designed in their coming hither.”⁵⁸⁸

Politically, this had manifested as a commitment to cultivate civic virtue, and to shape the laws according to the revealed will of God: “as to our civil polity, our profession hath been, that they that are rulers should be men that fear God, and that they that choose them should be such also, and that Laws in the Commonwealth should be regulated by the word of God.”⁵⁸⁹ Mather cited Jonathan Mitchell on the importance of New England’s civil liberties: “woe to that man ...that shall go about to destroy or basely betray the liberties of this people; it were better for him, that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he thrown with it into the midst of the sea.”⁵⁹⁰ Yet despite the sound foundations laid by the first generation in these matters, the “rising generation” of the 1670s was largely “poor, perishing, unconverted and... an undone Generation.” Even those who were not openly wanton, Mather feared were “only civil, and outwardly

⁵⁸⁷ I. Mather, *Earnest Exhortation*, 20. Although not personally much involved in the effort to convert the native population, Mather took the opportunity in this section of the sermon to chide the people at large for failing to do more to convert the native population. This was not only a failure to take on the founders’ commitment to the project, but also a betrayal of the patent and the “seal of the country,” both of which stated clearly that the purpose of the colony was chiefly religious and evangelical. See I. Mather, *Earnest Exhortation*, 22-23.

⁵⁸⁸ I. Mather, *Earnest Exhortation*, 21.

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁰ I. Mather, *Earnest Exhortation*, 21-22.

conformed to good order, by reason of their education, but never knew what the new birth means.”⁵⁹¹

In a sermon with the imperative title *Pray for the Rising Generation* (1678) Mather once again compared New England to Israel, referring to their exodus from Egypt as their “political birth”⁵⁹² and alluding to New England’s own founding moment as a similar exodus. It was “the blessed design of our fathers...who transported themselves into this vast and then wast[e] wilderness, in special with respect unto posterity, that so they might leave a seed that shall serve him and be accounted to the Lord for a generation.”⁵⁹³ Withdrawing themselves from the corruption of England, the founding generation had intentionally set about the establishment of a new and godly society of their own. In doing so, Mather asserted they had established a public covenant with God much like that of ancient Israel.

Harvard and the Hope for the Future

Although New England’s situation was dire, it was not yet hopeless: despite his warning deprecations against the majority of the second generation, Mather made sure to clearly state his conviction that “there are some of them...that are eminently faithful to the lord Jesus and his interest, being of the same principles and spirit that their blessed fathers were of before them: [thus] we need not fear utter ruin in their days neither.”⁵⁹⁴ Mather’s hopes sprang from his faith in the terms of the covenant – God, who had

⁵⁹¹ I. Mather, *Pray for the Rising Generation* (Cambridge: 1678), 14.

⁵⁹² I. Mather, *Pray for the Rising Generation* (Cambridge, 1678), 5.

⁵⁹³ I. Mather, *Pray for the Rising Generation*, np.

⁵⁹⁴ I. Mather, *Earnest Exhortation*, 25.

claimed New England as His own, would not fail to preserve a remnant for himself, according to his promises.⁵⁹⁵

Among the means by which the covenant could be renewed were a public commitment to a program of popular education and personal reformation. Mather urged that New Englanders prepare themselves to offer some form of public monument or work as a “testimony of our gratitude towards him who hath by his own arm saved us.”⁵⁹⁶ The most suitable demonstration of thanksgiving, Mather argued, would be “to take effectual care...that academical learning (and with it religion) may not fail in succeeding generations.”⁵⁹⁷ Just as the “fathers of the first generation in New-England” had made the construction of a local college among their highest public priorities in founding the colony, so too, ought their successors make the revitalization of a center of learning the heart of their plans for recovery and rebuilding.

It will be a great mercy and happiness to posterity and we shall have wherewith to answer adversaries, if after this war, more encouragement be given respecting the college and other schools of learning, and if ever God shall give us the lands of our enemies, I cannot think how they can be disposed of better, or more to God’s glory, and publick advantage, then in such a way and towards such an end, as hath been expressed. And what a wonderful providence will it be, if Barbarians should occasion the promotion of good literature?⁵⁹⁸

Mather, himself a graduate of Harvard and a trustee of the college, had personal reasons to be deeply invested in the success of the institution, yet his vision here is motivated by a broader public interest. It had been “well and truly observed,” he announced, “that the interest of religion and good literature hath risen and fallen

⁵⁹⁵ I. Mather, *Earnest Exhortation*, 26-27.

⁵⁹⁶ I. Mather, *Earnest Exhortation*, 30.

⁵⁹⁷ I. Mather, *Earnest Exhortation*, 31.

⁵⁹⁸ I. Mather, *Earnest Exhortation*, 31-32.

together.”⁵⁹⁹ Mather sadly observed that although “people are ready to run wild into the woods again, and to be as heathenish as ever, if you do not prevent it,” both types of learning had the potential to act as a hedge against man’s baser instincts, and tended to make him more sociable and orderly.⁶⁰⁰

Mather espoused a perspective typical of Reformed Christianity when he linked religious learning with sincere humanist inquiry, and in his role as an administrator at Harvard, he would help to ensure that this synthetic approach was carried on in the college’s curriculum through the end of the century.⁶⁰¹ After the college’s near collapse under Leonard Hoar’s presidency, Mather contributed to the revitalization of the curriculum by drafting a basic textbook on Ramist logic.⁶⁰² Significantly, that effort also contributed to the sense of Harvard as a distinctly New English institution for as Rick Kennedy and Thomas Knoles have argued, in this text “Mather was not simply importing English logic; he was creating an alternative,” a synthesis of Ramus’ method with basic tenets of Reformed theology about the nature of the world.⁶⁰³ Mather’s presentation of Ramism relied upon the combined use of both human and divine “testimony” as sources of evidence.⁶⁰⁴ Kennedy and Knoles argue that this approach made Mather’s version of

⁵⁹⁹ I. Mather, *A Discourse Concerning the Danger of Apostasy* (Election Sermon, May 23, 1677; Printed, Boston:1679), 73. Here, Mather had in mind not only the college, but also earlier levels of education: “I know there are good laws amongst us respecting inferior schools, though I doubt as to execution there is great defect in that as well as in other matters. See *Danger of Apostasy*, 74-75.

⁶⁰⁰ I. Mather, *Danger of Apostasy*, 75.

⁶⁰¹ Mather took pains in the sermon to cite the educational efforts of leaders in the international reformed movement; see *Danger of Apostasy*, 73-74. Note that this position shared by the founders of New England as well; see Chapter 3.

⁶⁰² See Rick Kennedy and Thomas Knoles, “Increase Mather’s *Catechismus Logkus*: A Translation and an Analysis of the Role of a Ramist Catechism at Harvard,” *AAS Proceedings*, 2001, 145. Based on entries in Mather’s diary for April 27-28, 1675, the authors conclude that Mather compiled the text quickly, presumably first for the immediate use of his own children, but with an eye towards its eventual role in the broader curriculum of the college.

⁶⁰³ Kennedy and Knoles, *Catechismus Logkus*, 153; see their discussion of the relative importance of Richardson and Ames to Mather’s concept of logic, 154-158.

⁶⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 159-160

Ramism more fluid and less “static” than European versions of system, and that this is reflective of Mather’s broader commitment to the revival of a genuine spirit of inquiry at Harvard.⁶⁰⁵ Whatever the impact of his curricular offerings, Mather was a vocal advocate of the colony’s educational system at all levels, frequently imploring the people of Massachusetts to invest greater resources and attention in these institutions because of the civic and religious benefits associated with the pursuit of ‘good literature.’

Redeeming Failed Citizens: The Reforming Synod and Civic Restoration

In 1677, Mather was invited to preach the annual election day sermon, and he utilized the opportunity to take the General Court to task for their refusal to encourage greater public virtue.⁶⁰⁶ Although he conceded that it was not within their power to change the internal motivations or interests of the people, he insisted on their ability to promote “an outward Reformation, which will procure outward blessings and prevent outward judgements and desolations.”⁶⁰⁷ This was not the first time Mather had addressed the need for public action to redress the sins of the land: two years earlier, he had played a significant role in influencing the content and passage of a statute aimed at eliminating the “provoking evils” of pride, worldliness, etc. that afflicted the colony. This time, however, “he threw down the gauntlet to the ruling magistrates and the ministers, declared himself the champion of the brethren of the churches, and called the people of

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid., 166, 174; the authors cite Cotton Mather’s account of an address given by his father while university president, see C. Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, 2:21n. Mather also advocated the publication of an official history of the colony, “memorials being duly communicated, an history should be compiled according to truth, for the benefit of posterity, that they might see how God had been with their fathers, in laying the foundation of the churches, and of the common wealth.” I. Mather, *Dangers of Apostasy*, 71.

⁶⁰⁶ Increase Mather’s activities in the 1670s have been the subject of a tremendous amount of scholarly output: see, for example, Chapter 10 of David D. Hall’s *The Faithful Shepherd* (University of North Carolina Press: 1974), as well as Chapters 2-4 of Michael G. Hall’s *The Last American Puritan* (Wesleyan: 1988).

⁶⁰⁷ I. Mather, *Danger of Apostasy*, 75, 80-81.

Massachusetts back to a vision of their holy purpose in America.”⁶⁰⁸ The magistrates chose not to respond to his challenge (indeed, they refused to pay for the publication of the sermon), and Mather was forced to wait another two years until the death of Governor John Leverett shifted the reins of power to the antiquated Simon Bradstreet. Bradstreet, one of the few members of the founding generation still active in colonial politics, was not only more conservative than Leverett, but also personally sympathetic to Mather’s rhetorical positioning of the founders vis-a-vis the subsequent generations.⁶⁰⁹

As Mather recorded it in his *Autobiography*, “in the year 1679, a synod was called to meet at Boston to enquire into the causes of God’s displeasure against New England and scripture expedients for Reformation,” and although Mather knew there were factions among the attendees, “the Lord favored me so far as to make me instrumental in the prevention of all differences, so that things were carried on with great unanimity.”⁶¹⁰ An important element of this unanimity came from the lay representatives: consistent with his appeals to the people as the ultimate source of political power at the end of the 1677 election sermon, Mather refused to allow the synod to take any formal action until each delegation in attendance included both clerical and lay members.⁶¹¹

The inclusion of the laity was a powerful symbolic move: it demonstrated the importance of the congregation to the congregational way, and arguably, helped to legitimate the results of the synod. With this crucial step, the acts of the reforming synod

⁶⁰⁸ See Hall’s account of this period in *Last American Puritan*, 107-111, and 129-131; the quote is from 131.

⁶⁰⁹ Hall, *Last American Puritan*, 147.

⁶¹⁰ I. Mather, *The Autobiography of Increase Mather*. Edited by Michael G. Hall. *AAS Proceedings* 7.1 (1961), 305.

⁶¹¹ Hall, *Last American Puritan*, 149. The delay caused by this decision while messengers were dispatched back to the various towns requesting additional laymen to attend the synod had the strategic benefit of allowing Mather to take charge of a committee charged with drafting an agenda in the form of a “working paper” for the proceedings.

could be presented as a matter of restoring lay power and investment in the church, not simply as an imposition of clerical authority.⁶¹² This was essential to Mather's plan to modify New Englanders' behavior, reeducating them about the connection between personal self-government and the enjoyment of the republican-style liberties which New Englanders prized so highly.

The dedicatory epistle to the report of the Reforming Synod (drafted by Mather) made clear that that the vices besetting New England were not only deplorable in and of themselves, but because they represented a fall from the elevated standards of the founding generation. "Our Fathers" Mather wrote, through their virtuous labors and with the help of their God, "turn[ed] a Wilderness into a fruitful land"; the present generation, however, has grown complacent, "we have in too many respects been forgetting the errand upon which the Lord sent us hither, all the world is witness."⁶¹³ Mather reiterated the logic of the jeremiad: in failing to keep the terms of their communal covenant with God, New Englanders had brought upon themselves His righteous judgment. By the same logic, Mather urged the people to repent, to turn away from their sinful behaviors and instead "do the first works" again. If they did, he assured them "there is reason to hope that it shall be better with us then at our beginnings," for God would not fail to once more act as their protector and provider.⁶¹⁴

Although Mather's portrayal of New England's beginnings always emphasized the founders' pursuit of what he referred to as a "religious interest" in the establishment of their laws and other institutions (thus, the covenantal theme) in practice, New England's

⁶¹² James Fenimore Cooper, Jr. *Tenacious of Their Liberties: The Congregationalists in Colonial Massachusetts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 142-149.

⁶¹³ [I. Mather], Epistle Dedicatory, *The Necessity of Reformation* (Boston: 1679).

⁶¹⁴ Ibid.

“first works” were both religious and secular. The founders were also profoundly aware of the potential corruptibility of the sort of closed religious establishments from which they had dissented in England. They took care, therefore, that the institutions of church and state—although ultimately dedicated to the same general purpose and ergo, mutually reinforcing—were, in all official senses, distinctly separate. Mather’s exhortation to the people to “do the first works” of the community, therefore, must be understood to refer to both sacred and civic duties, as must his closing prayer that

The Good Lord continue the present government, and governors, under whose shadow... we have sat with great delight; and grant that everyone (both leaders and people) in their proper place and order, may be up and doing, and that the Lord our God may be with us, as he was with our Fathers.⁶¹⁵

Although in 1679, the threat of direct royal intervention in the political arrangements of the Bay Colony was still only vaguely recognized, Mather took the opportunity to remind his audience of the centrality of their present (elected) system of government to the founder’s project. In the body of the pamphlet, Mather would elaborate on the specifics of what New Englanders ought to be “doing” for the sake of the preservation their community and, by extension, their identity as a self-governing people.

Although there are many elements of character raised in the texts, I focus on those passages which relate to the (perceived) decline of those attributes most useful for the perpetuation of the community’s founding aspirations. The “evils” identified as having “provoked” the Lord’s anger against New England in the body of the text can be broadly categorized by which of the three founding aspirations they offend. Appropriately enough, the list begins with those that undermine the community’s commitment to moral equality, all of which derive from the sin of pride. New Englanders, Mather railed, were

⁶¹⁵ Ibid.

guilty of “refusing to subject [themselves] to order according to divine appointment.”⁶¹⁶

The reference to order, coupled with Mather’s concerns about “pride in respect of apparel” which he took as a sign of a more general tendency to “go above their estates and degrees” is reminiscent of Winthrop’s explanation of social diversity as an opportunity for the active pursuit of Christian charity as way of building interdependence among the members of the commonwealth.⁶¹⁷ A reckless pridefulness that caused an individual to aspire to something other than his legitimate calling in the name of a vain supposition that x was superior to (and not simply different from) y undermined the founding commitment to moral equality.

Likewise, by disparaging the legitimate (because divinely ordained) differences between individuals that created the bonds of interdependence and communion between them, pride caused the related sin of “contention.” Mather expressed concern about the “sinful heats and hatreds... evil surmisings, uncharitable and unrighteous censures, back-bitings, hearing and telling tales... reproachful and reviling expressions... [and] lawsuits” that characterized interactions between citizens.⁶¹⁸ The breakdown of mutually supportive and edifying relationships into near-enmity had significant civic consequences: New England’s consent-based institutions in both church and state depended upon the ability of her citizens to trust one another to put selfish interests aside in pursuit of a common good. The dissolution of such trust meant that, as Mather lamented, “many of the rising generation are not mindful of that which their baptism doth engage them unto, *viz*, to use utmost endeavors that they may be fit for and so partake in, all the holy ordinances of the

⁶¹⁶ [I. Mather], *The Necessity of Reformation*, 2.

⁶¹⁷ [I. Mather], *Necessity of Reformation*, 2-3.

⁶¹⁸ [I. Mather], *Necessity of Reformation*, 5.

Lord Jesus.”⁶¹⁹ Church membership (and therefore, freemanship) were on the decline, which only served to exacerbate the tensions between those who were engaged in the public life of the community as full members and those who were not.

Against the founding aspiration to moderate industry as a recognition of one’s calling, Mather observed that New Englanders had a tendency to be either slothful or excessively worldly. On Sundays, he claimed to have observed many who “give way to their own sloth and sleepiness when they should be serving God with attention and intention,” and yet, after church, the very same people were quick to divert their energies to “worldly, unsuitable discourses.”⁶²⁰ More generally, Mather pointed out that New Englanders were intemperately fond of strong drink and other forms of frivolity such as “mixed dancings, light behavior and expressions, sinful company-keeping with light and vain persons, unlawful gaming, [and] an abundance of idleness.”⁶²¹ At the same time, as a whole the rising generation displayed “an insatiable desire after land, and worldly accommodations” that had caused many of them to settle along the frontier, far from the support (and watchful restraint) of older settlements and churches. Those who remained in the older towns were frequently guilty of seeking to take advantage of their neighbors’ needs and of charging unreasonably high rates which maximized their personal profits to the detriment of broader social harmony.⁶²²

Worldliness compounded the problems caused by contention and thus tended to further undermine the founding aspiration to communion. “A publick spirit is greatly wanting in most of men,” Mather lamented: “hence schools of learning and other public

⁶¹⁹ [I. Mather], *Necessity of Reformation*, 3.

⁶²⁰ [I. Mather], *Necessity of Reformation*, 4.

⁶²¹ [I. Mather], *Necessity of Reformation*, 6.

⁶²² [I. Mather], *Necessity of Reformation*, 7.

concerns are in a languishing state. Hence also are unreasonable complaints and murmurings because of public charges, which is a great sin; and a private self-seeking spirit.”⁶²³ In becoming overly-focused on his own success, the individual was apt to lose sight of his own interest in “public concernments” and thus, to disregard or resent attempts to garner support for projects in service of the common good.

To alleviate this complex web of dangers to the founding commitments, Mather urged the relatively simple program of repentance, reform and renewal. All the members of the second generation were to “declare our adherence unto the faith and order of the gospel, according to what is from the scripture expressed in the platform of discipline”—that is, to rededicate themselves and, by extension, the colony, to the preservation and promotion of the beginnings made by their fathers in establishing the godly commonwealth.⁶²⁴ Those who were members were exhorted to “solemn and explicit renewal of [their church] covenant,” a ceremonial acknowledgment of their participation in the ongoing process of maintaining (rather than creating) consent-based institutions.⁶²⁵ Finally, New Englanders at all social levels must take steps to encourage the magistrates in a program of legal and educational reform.⁶²⁶

Mather’s agenda aroused both official and popular response: laws were passed, a “spate of covenant renewals” were held in Boston and the surrounding towns occurred

⁶²³ [I. Mather], *Necessity of Reformation*, 8.

⁶²⁴ [I. Mather], *Necessity of Reformation*, 10.

⁶²⁵ [I. Mather], *Necessity of Reformation*, 12.

⁶²⁶ [I. Mather], *Necessity of Reformation*, 11, 14. For Mather, it appears that the educational revival was even more necessary than the legal one: “When New England was poor, and we were but few in number comparatively, there was a spirit to encourage learning and the college was full of students,” Mather asserted in a relatively free revision of the historical record. “It is deeply to be lamented that now, when we are become many, and more able then at our beginnings, that society [the college] and other inferior schools are in such a low and languishing state. Wherefore, as we desire that reformation and religion should flourish, it concerns us to endeavor that both the college and all other schools of learning in every place, be duly inspected and encouraged.” [I. Mather], *Necessity of Reformation*, 15.

shortly after the Synod completed its work, and things in general seemed to be moving towards reform by the 1680s.⁶²⁷ Although James Fenimore Cooper, Jr. has argued that much of the “crisis” of the second generation is better understood as a period of transition away from earlier, more “communitarian” understandings of religion and towards a more modern and privatized understanding, his thesis does not adequately account for the relative success of Mather and his supporters in reinvigorating New Englanders’ inherited understanding of the connection between personal character and the greater good of the community.⁶²⁸ If what Mather labeled as decline and apostasy were simply the inevitable effects of modernization upon Reformed theology, there is little reason to suppose that his impassioned appeals to the community’s founding aspirations would have been effective. Yet this period of public introspection and civic renewal laid a foundation which would prove essential to New England’s survival as a discrete political community during the trying period of the 1680s.⁶²⁹

New England in Crisis: The Royal Attack on the 1629 Charter

Although the Declaration of Breda (1660) had promised charity towards those who had overthrown his father’s reign, as we saw in the previous chapter, Charles II’s policies towards New England following his restoration were regarded by some in the Bay Colony as punitive. Charles cloaked his criticisms of the colony’s government in terms of instating religious toleration through his realm but, New Englanders’ perceived royal demands for

⁶²⁷ The results of the synod’s recommendations are summarized in Richard P. Gildrie, *The Profane, The Civil and the Godly*, 37-40 and the “spate of covenant renewals” described in Foster, *Long Argument*, 229.

⁶²⁸ Indeed, based on his research in the extant church records and related manuscripts (particularly those written by the laity), Cooper argues that there is reason to suppose the decline in full church membership was, in fact, evidence of an *increase* in popular religious scrupulosity, rather than the reverse. See Cooper, *Tenacious of their Liberties*, 134-139 particularly. See also Edmund Morgan on the same vein.

⁶²⁹ Stephen Foster, *The Long Argument*, 229. On the connection between Mather’s efforts at reformation and the political events of the 1680s, see Chapter 6 of *The Long Argument*.

institutional reform as thinly veiled attacks against a religious movement Charles associated with his father's demise. Efforts to assert royal control over the colony were delayed but not derailed by Charles' foreign policy problems during the early 1670s, but by 1675 the King was able to refocus his attention on New England.⁶³⁰

Charles authorized the newly created Lords of Trade and Plantations to dispatch Edward Randolph as an agent to Massachusetts to report on the colony's compliance with the Navigation Acts. Randolph, who arrived in June of 1676, carried orders demanding the Massachusetts General Court send representatives to London to address a wide variety of complaints raised against their governance, including disputed land claims,⁶³¹ the coining of local money,⁶³² the colony's lack of religious toleration,⁶³³ its failure to comply with the various Navigation Acts,⁶³⁴ and the compatibility of Massachusetts' laws with those of

⁶³⁰ Arguably, at least some of the king's negligence in pursuing the matter is attributable to the fact that during this time colonial affairs were handled by the Council for Foreign Plantations then under the leadership of Sir Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury, patron of John Locke and himself a Whig and major investor in colonial projects, with an interest in maintaining their relative independence from royal prerogative.

⁶³¹ Specifically, legitimacy of Massachusetts' claim to political authority over settlements in Maine and New Hampshire was seen as a gross usurpation of power by the crown because these areas were arguably beyond the geographic bounds of the 1629 Charter (and, what made the issue salient, within the territories of grants made by Charles II to supporters who wished to become colonial proprietors). In their defense, the General Court argued that the actual settlers of these areas had largely come from Massachusetts' to begin with, and that the decision to extend their territorial control was "no ways derogatory to your majesty's honor, nor prejudicial to your royal interest in this wilderness, but many ways beneficial, as also satisfactory to your majesty's subjects." See the entry for 6 September 1676, *Records of the MBC*, 5:107-108.

⁶³² Due to a shortage of specie and the inconveniences associated therewith, the General Court authorized John Hull and Robert Sanderson to begin minting coins in 1652 (during the interregnum); although coining money was technically a royal prerogative, the General Court defended their action on the grounds of economic necessity. See the I. Mather, *New England Vindicated* (London: 1689), 3.

⁶³³ Against not only Quakers, Baptists, and other dissenters, but also against Anglicans; the General Court defended their actions against the Quakers as necessary for the maintenance of public order, and denied the charge that non-disruptive variation in worship was subject to persecution. See entry for 11 June 1680, *Records of the MBC*, 5:287.

⁶³⁴ These laws were essential to the King's policy of imperial consolidation but particularly repugnant to New Englanders who found them economically crippling and offensive to their liberty of property; the General Court eventually agreed to a more strict compliance, but not without lodging a theoretical protest against the applicability of parliamentary law to colonies overseas; see their "Answer to sundry things objected against us and our laws by the honorable lords of the council for trade and plantations," 2 October 1678, *Records of the MBC*, 5:200-201, discussed at length below.

England.⁶³⁵ What united the disparate issues was the symbolism of sovereignty: in each instance, the actions taken by the General Court appeared to be those of an independent political body, and thus, were perceived by Charles and his agents as undermining the authority and dignity of the Restoration monarchy.⁶³⁶

Although it is clear that by this point in time, Charles' patience with those who opposed his move toward absolutism was waning, Robert Bliss argues that the king's decision to ask the colony to send agents to London explaining their actions in 1676 reflected his preference for political moderation and desire to be seen as working with, rather than simply against local institutions.⁶³⁷ Advised by the clerical consociation to recognize the invitation to appear before the crown for the opportunity to defend their civic traditions and identity that it was, at a special session held in August 1676, the General Court agreed to send a delegation to London.⁶³⁸ The following month, they named William Stoughton and Peter Bulkeley as the commissioners, giving them strict instructions to defend all actions taken under the charter as intended only in fulfillment of its terms, and not as expansions thereof. The court drafted a careful defense "touching the rights of our patent, and our actions in the prosecution of that our right," and specified that under no

⁶³⁵ On this point, the court initially pleaded innocent intentions; their laws were not "repugnant" to those of England, merely "diverse" from them in form or language; the "Answer to sundry things objected against us and our laws by the honorable lords of the council for trade and plantations," 2 October, *Records of the MBC*, 5:201, discussed at length below.

⁶³⁶ On the shift in royal policy towards Massachusetts and its reflection of issues besetting the king in England, see Robert M. Bliss, *Revolution and Empire: English Politics and the American Colonies in the Seventeenth Century* (University of Manchester Press: 1993), chapters 8 and 9 especially.

⁶³⁷ Bliss, *Revolution and Empire*, 232. Bliss provides an extended discussion of Lord Halifax defense of the anti-absolutist position from English law and tradition, and of Massachusetts specifically that helps situate the defenses raised by the General Court within the larger context of English political thought; see 234ff.

⁶³⁸ August 9, 1676, *Records of the MBC*, 5:98-100.

circumstances were the two men to attempt to resolve any other complaints against the colony without first seeking the General Court's advice.⁶³⁹

Throughout 1677-78, Stoughton and Bulkeley maintained an active correspondence with the General Court, asking them to respond to particular questions raised by the council for trade and plantations, or conveying the king's wishes regarding specific points of policy. The Court's responses are always carefully crafted: the tone is respectful, but not obsequious, and although they did acquiesce in certain formalities (such as requiring residents of the colony to swear their loyalty to the king), in substance, they seemed determined to maintain the broadest possible interpretation of their charter authority.⁶⁴⁰

The Court's lengthy *Answer to Sundry Things Objected Against Us and Our Laws*, for example, dismisses the crown's objection to the colony's having styled itself a commonwealth as a matter of indifference: "wherein our laws we use the word commonwealth, it is neither in contempt nor opposition to royal authority, and hath not of late been used, nor hereafter shall be."⁶⁴¹ Yet in the same document, they declare their theoretical rejection of the applicability of parliamentary laws to the colonies: "according to the usual sayings of the learned in the law... the laws of England are bounded within the four seas, and do not reach America. The subjects of his majesty here being not represented

⁶³⁹ 6 September 1676, *Records of the MBC*, 5:106.

⁶⁴⁰ See, for example, the entries for October 22 1677 and October 2, 1678, *Records of the MBC*, 5:157-165, 191-193. In the latter, the Court agreed to a royal demand that an oath of allegiance to Charles specifically be taken by all persons (note the non-gendered language) 16 years of age and older (193). This was the first time, to my knowledge, that any resident of the Bay Colony was asked to swear their specific loyalty to any political entity above the General Court; the freeman's oath which had been in use since the founding period makes no mention of any source of political authority other than God and the General Court, for example.

⁶⁴¹ "Answer to sundry things," *Records of the MBC*, 5:198.

in parliament, so we have not looked at ourselves to be impeded in our trade by them.”⁶⁴² Having boldly stated their relative independence from England as a matter of legal principle, however, the General Court reported that once they became aware of the king’s desire that the Navigation Acts be enforced within their jurisdiction, they were happy to comply within the framework of their own legal institutions, which required the passage of an order to that effect by the General Court. To have done otherwise, they argued, “could not be without invading the liberties and properties of the subject.” Now that the law had been passed in Massachusetts, the court hastened to assure the king that it would be “strictly attended...although the same be a discouragement to trade, and a great damage to his majesty’s plantation, until we obtain his majesty’s gracious favor for that liberty of trade.”⁶⁴³ Massachusetts’ compliance with the king’s wishes, thus, was more or less a matter of the inclination and choice of a sovereign state, rather than the action of a dutiful (and dependent) political entity to a supreme power.⁶⁴⁴

In their accompanying letter to Stoughton and Dudley, and in keeping with Mather’s public campaign to renew the civic aspirations of the community, the Court cited the colony’s providential history as the primary source of their confident defense of their liberties: “we cannot but judge that it would be very great ingratitude to God and to his majesty should we deal slightingly with [the institutions and traditions of the colony].”⁶⁴⁵ The following spring, the Court ordered the colony to prepare for a day of public fasting, “to entreat the lord for his mercy’s sake in Christ Jesus, yet to own us for his people

⁶⁴² “Answer to sundry things,” *Records of the MBC*, 5:200-201.

⁶⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴⁴ Likewise, in terms of the body of the colony’s law, the Court promised to review them and to repeal any that could be demonstrated to be “repugnant to the las of England...except as the repealing whereof will make us to renounce the professed cause of our first coming hither.” “Answer to sundry things,” *Records of the MBC*, 5:201.

⁶⁴⁵ Letter to Stoughton and Bulkely, October 2, 1678, *Records of the MBC*, 5:202.

continuing in our liberties, civil and sacred, and in his good time, to return our agents and save his dear people in the land of our fathers sepulchers.”⁶⁴⁶ Emboldened by their sense of divinely sanctioned purpose, the leadership of Massachusetts refused to submit quietly to the king’s demands, and for the next several years, the Court continued to send reports back to London on their ‘progress’ in addressing the crown’s concerns, always couched in the same spirit of independence that marked their first responses.⁶⁴⁷

Randolph, who had been appointed as the customs officer for New England in 1678, had also continued to provide the Lords of Trade and Plantations with a running commentary on what he perceived as the perfidious nature of Massachusetts’ purported compliance. He traveled back to London several times during this period to present his complaints in person, culminating with the presentation of a list of “articles of high misdemeanor” against the colony at the Lords’ meeting on 12 June 1683.⁶⁴⁸ Randolph accused the Massachusetts General Court of pretending to comply with the king’s wishes while in fact, continuing to act largely as if they possessed political sovereignty in their own right.⁶⁴⁹

⁶⁴⁶ Order for a Day of Humiliation, 2nd Thursday in July, May 28, 1679, *Records of the MBC*, 5:222. Note the overlap with the preparations for the Reforming Synod, which was also mentioned in the fast proclamation as a source of potential “salvation” for the colony.

⁶⁴⁷ May 22, 1680, June 11, 1680. 13 February 1683; *Records of the MBC*, 5:270, 287-289, 383. By this time, the biggest areas of concern appeared to be the matter of limiting freemanship to church members and the general conformity of Massachusetts’ laws with those of England. On the former, the Court stated: “although we humbly conceive our charter doth expressly give us an absolute and free choice of our own members, yet long since, in obedience to his majesty’s pleasure, we made void a former law that was thought to have too great a restriction in it, and established a new one for the future, which doth incapacitate no person who, being a freeholder, is also orthodox in religion, not vicious in his life, and who is rateable to the value of ten shillings.” 11 June 1680, *Records of the MBC*, 5:287. See also their instructions to Joseph Dudley (who replaced Bulkely as an agent) and Stoughton, 23 March 1682, in which they repeat the claim, citing 1664 as the date of the repeal. *Records of the MBC*, 5:347.

⁶⁴⁸ See Entries 1120 and 1121 for June 12, 1683 in the *Calendar of State Papers*, 445ff.

⁶⁴⁹ Randolph, perhaps unsurprisingly, seems to be particularly incensed about the Court’s treatment of crown officials, which he describes as “arbitrary” and “contrary to law and royal order.” *Calendar of State Papers*, 446.

Little wonder that in July 1683, Charles issued a writ of *quo warranto* against the Bay Colony, a legal document which challenged the legitimacy of Massachusetts government's existence by tasking it to demonstrate "by what warrant" it made its claim to such authority.⁶⁵⁰ In effect, the king was demanding that Massachusetts return her charter, heretofore kept safely in New England, to English soil for examination and alteration or even revocation. In an attempt to persuade the colonial government to speedy compliance, the king promised "to respect all private interests and properties in spite of the *quo warranto*, [and] to regulate the charter liberally if the Governor and Company submit without further ado."⁶⁵¹ Should the colony choose to challenge the *quo warranto* (as was their right under English law), such language implied, it could expect to be dealt with much more harshly.

When news of the writ reached New England the General Court took nearly a month to respond, but on 5 December 1683, drafted a letter authorizing an attorney in London to act as their representative, and instructed him to protest the very existence of the writ on the grounds of a number of legal technicalities.⁶⁵² While they awaited the results of these initial legal challenges, the people of Massachusetts considered the king's

⁶⁵⁰ "quo warranto, n.". OED Online. December 2015. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/Entry/156928?rskey=WDGly5&result=1&isAdvanced=false> (accessed January 11, 2016).

⁶⁵¹ See entry 1159 for July 20, 1683, *Calendar of State Papers*, 456.

⁶⁵² *Records of the MBC*, 5:421, 424-425, 430-431. Proving their reluctance to concede any political power to the crown whatsoever, and their perhaps overly strong faith in the protections afforded by their geographical distance from the king, the letter to the attorney instructs him to question "whether a charter and privileges...being exercised in America, can be tried in a court in England." Hall argues that this decision should be understood as signaling that the General Court's had already reached a decision not to surrender the charter, but the historical records are ambiguous in the extreme. Given the weight Increase Mather placed on the results of the Boston town meeting (see below), I find Hall's interpretation of the evidence questionable. It seems more likely to me that this vote was seen as a delaying tactic, not a full-blown rejection of the offer of clemency and should be understood as a reflection of the General Court's long-established habit of attempting to stall English action by any means possible, while leaving themselves as much room to maneuver as possible. See Hall, *Last American Puritan*, 191.

tantalizing offer of clemency. Although the General Court had been successfully evading actual compliance with the crown's demands for well over a decade, faced with an ultimatum, there were some who questioned the legitimacy of further resistance: would such a stance, at this time, constitute the sin of rebellion? More pragmatically, would it be *wise* to risk antagonizing the king, and face potentially greater losses?⁶⁵³ At some point during the course of their deliberations, the General Court invited the advice of the local clergy on the matter.

The clerical response, "Arguments Against Relinquishing the Charter," clearly expounded a position born out of the tradition of Reformed resistance theory with which English Puritanism in particular had long been associated.⁶⁵⁴ It would be both foolishness and a sin to give up the colony's charter without a fight; however tempting the king's offer appeared, to submit the charter under such vague promises of liberality was a false prudence. The people of Massachusetts had "no reason to believe that their religion and the

⁶⁵³ Peter Bulkeley, the former colonial agent, feared that the colonists were in danger of "hugging our privileges and franchises to death, and prefer the dissolution of our body politic, rather than to suffer amputation of any of its limbs." Bulkeley to William Blathwayt, Dec. 7, 1683, quoted in Hall, *Edward Randolph*, 80.

⁶⁵⁴ "Arguments Against Relinquishing the Charter," Collections of the MHS, 3rd Series, Volume 1 (1801), 74-81. Michael Hall points out that some have attributed this manuscript to Increase Mather on the strength of an entry in Mather's *Autobiography* in which he states: "Some desired me to deliver my apprehensions on the Question...[I] communicated them to some of the Magistrates, who so well approved of them as to disperse copies thereof, that they came into many hands, and were a means to keep the Country from complying with that proposal." Hall himself finds the attribution questionable, "because its language and argumentation are unlike any authentic Mather papers of this period," although as I point out below, Mather's own account of his speech at the Boston town meeting the next month is little more than a summation of the arguments presented in the anonymous paper. Even more importantly, Mather concedes that his document (whatever it may have been) was influenced by "several papers...that came out of England or Holland, others written in New England" (emphasis added) that presented arguments against submitting the charter. Since Mather was not ordinarily known for his generosity in sharing the credit, it suggests that he had a compelling reason for referring to the fact that the opinions expressed were not his alone. It also raises the possibility that such a document might not have reflected Mather's normal rhetorical style, in order to better accommodate these other sources. I therefore think it is likely that the anonymous "Arguments" did have Mather as their editor, but have chosen to follow Hutchinson in considering the document as a joint work. See I. Mather, *Autobiography*, 307; for Hall's opinion on the matter, see n. 18, pg. 191 in *Last American Puritan*.

court's pleasure will consist together," or that the king would leave their civil liberties secure. Indeed, the king's actions against the charters of other corporations suggested that any alterations would be aimed at the abolition of the consent-based politics upon which Massachusetts' civic identity depended, and which were in direct conflict with the king's program of absolutism. To submit, then would be "destructive to the life and being of their charter." It would also, therefore, be a sin, for to do so would be the equivalent of political suicide: "men may not destroy their political any more than their natural lives," the ministers asserted.⁶⁵⁵ It was, therefore, both prudent and pious for New Englanders to fight for their charter privileges.

If further persuasion was necessary, the ministers admonished New Englanders to follow the brave example of their fathers, who had resisted earlier encroachments by the crown, and from whom they had received their "civil liberties" as a "part of the[ir] inheritance." It would be the height of ingratitude and disrespect not only to the founders, but to God, to "give that inheritance away."⁶⁵⁶ As they had advised the court at an earlier point in the conflict with the crown, it was the "undoubted duty" of the people to "abide by what rights and privileges the Lord our God in his merciful providence hath bestowed upon us."⁶⁵⁷ If, in other words, God had granted a people freedoms (as was the case in New England when He called the founding generation to establish a new political community), then it was unquestionably their responsibility to defend those freedoms.

⁶⁵⁵ "Arguments Against Relinquishing the Charter," 74-76, 81.

⁶⁵⁶ The reference here is to the 1638 quo warranto, a document not so much resisted as ignored and ultimately, voided, by the events of the English Civil War. "Arguments Against Relinquishing the Charter," 77, 81.

⁶⁵⁷ They cite a report given to the General Court on January 4, 1680; "Arguments Against Relinquishing the Charter," 78.

In the course of their arguments, the ministers had noted in passing that since the government in Massachusetts depended upon the consent of the people, it could only be “resign[ed] to the pleasure of the court” with their consent, something they were sure “the generality of the freemen and church members throughout New England will never consent hereunto. Therefore, the government may not do it.”⁶⁵⁸ The clerical position proved to be either prophetic, or persuasive: throughout the colony, town meetings were held on the question, the majority of which voted against surrendering the charter.

Mather recorded his participation in a town meeting held in Boston on January 21, 1684 to discuss the question of “whether we shall make a full submission and entire resignation of our charter and the privileges of it [to] the king’s pleasure.” Mather spoke vehemently against submission, essentially summarizing the clergy’s “Arguments” and exhorting the freeman not to “give away the inheritance of [their] fathers.”⁶⁵⁹ He reported with satisfaction a few days later, “God was gracious in giving [the] freemen to be unanimous in declaring they durst not give away their liberties.”⁶⁶⁰ Boston’s example “had a great influence on the country,” Mather reports, such that “many other towns follow[ed]” it, also voting to support the General Court in their fight of the *quo warranto*.⁶⁶¹

The Dominion of New England

With the sanction of the ministry and the support of the people, the General Court thus resolved to resist the crown’s sanctions on the 1629 Charter to the best of its ability. Unfortunately, Charles largely ignored their efforts, declared the charter void, and began

⁶⁵⁸ See, “Arguments Against Relinquishing the Charter,” 79.

⁶⁵⁹ I. Mather, *Autobiography*, 308.

⁶⁶⁰ I. Mather, *Diary*, January 21 and 23, 1684, Microfilm edition of the Increase Mather papers, a joint publication of the Massachusetts Historical Society and the American Antiquarian Society.

⁶⁶¹ I. Mather, *Autobiography*, 308.

preparations for a new phase of colonial governance, one that would destroy Massachusetts as an independent political body. In its place, the crown created the new Dominion of New England, an extensive administrative region, spanning the formerly independent colonies of Massachusetts, Plymouth, New Hampshire, Maine, and Rhode-Island (and, eventually, New York and New Jersey as well), to be ruled by an appointed royal governor and council.

Negotiating the details of the government to be put in place over the Dominion took time, and a variety of factors (including Charles' death) further delayed the actual selection and installation of a royal governor and council. Despite the Massachusetts' General Court's attempts to persuade Charles' successor to restore their charter, James II moved forward with his brother's plans to create a system of consolidated royal government in America.⁶⁶²

In the spring of 1686, Joseph Dudley, the colonial agent for Massachusetts then serving in London, and a well-known royal sympathizer was sent back to Boston to serve as interim governor, assisted by a small, unelected council—the first non-elected government in Massachusetts Bay's history.⁶⁶³ Upon his presentation of his commission in May 1686, the General Court issued a unanimous statement condemning Dudley and his associates for accepting orders under an "arbitrary" authority and becoming coconspirators in the oppression of their neighbors, who were now "abridged of their liberty as Englishmen."⁶⁶⁴

⁶⁶² Address of the General Court to the King, 24 July 1685, *Records of the MBC* 5:495-496.

⁶⁶³ On Dudley's motivations, and his role in the settlement of terms for the Dominion government, see Michael G. Hall, "Randolph, Dudley, and the Massachusetts Moderates in 1683," *NEQ* 1956, Vol. 29 (4): 513-16; on his use of his brief stint as Governor to further his own interests, see Theodore B. Lewis, *Land Speculation and the Dudley Council of 1686*, *WMQ*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (Apr., 1974), 255-272.

⁶⁶⁴ 20 May 1686, *Records of the MBC* 5:515-516.

Dudley was replaced in December 1686 by Sir Edmund Andros: authoritarian, autocratic, and perhaps worst of all, Anglican.⁶⁶⁵ The imposition of the Dominion government—which had no provision for representation at any level—was deeply resented by New Englanders in principle, and things only became worse after Andros proved to be corrupt and arbitrary in his management of colonial affairs, conscripting a congregational meetinghouse in Boston for Anglican services, denying town charters, voiding existing land grants and exhorting fees from landowners, in addition to levying new taxes.⁶⁶⁶

Increase Mather Goes to London

In his *Autobiography*, Increase Mather recorded that in the fall of 1687, after word of James' Declaration of Indulgence for non-conformists reached the Bay Colony, he encouraged the clerical consociation to draft an address thanking the King for his actions. Later in the season he “moved that our churches (and not the ministers only) might thank the king” and that this time, the address be delivered by a specially selected emissary, someone who could use their time in England to “obtain an interest in such nonconformists as have the king's ear.”⁶⁶⁷ Mather professed to have been surprised when the nomination fell upon him, but on the grounds of duty and with a sense of divine calling, agreed to make the journey. When word of the plan became public, the Andros government attempted to detain Mather on a trumped-up defamation charge; unfortunately for their plan, the jury was comprised of commonwealth men who cleared Mather.⁶⁶⁸

⁶⁶⁵ See Mary Lou Lustig, *The Imperial Executive in America: Sir Edmund Andros, 1637-1714* (Cranbury: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2002).

⁶⁶⁶ These are charges levied against Andros in aftermath of the April 18, 1689 Revolution; see Chapter 6 for an extended discussion of their meaning vis-à-vis the founding aspirations.

⁶⁶⁷ I. Mather, *Autobiography*, 320.

⁶⁶⁸ See I. Mather, *Diary*, March 27, 28, and 30, 1688; as well as the account of the proceedings in C. Mather, *Parentator*, 106-107.

After a few months of additional preparations, Mather finally set sail in April 1688, noting in his diary with satisfaction his success at eluding those “wicked men” who had attempted to “prevent my going for England and hinder me from doing service for New England.”⁶⁶⁹ On the morning of May 30, 1688, he presented the “address of thanks” to James II, noting that it was “subscribed by twenty ministers in New England in the name of their several congregations.” Flattered, the king replied “I am glad my subjects in New England are sensible of any ease or benefits by my declaration. And it shall continue. I hope by a parliament to obtain a *magna carta* for liberty of conscience.”⁶⁷⁰ After this successful interview, Mather ended the day by attending a meeting of non-conformists at William Penn’s house, thus launching the second element of his two-pronged attempt to secure Massachusetts’ civil and religious liberties by developing an allegiance with other religious dissenters.⁶⁷¹

In Penn, Mather had found a potent advocate for New English concerns, at least insofar as those concerns paralleled Penn’s own *cause célèbre*, toleration for religious non-conformity. Although neither of them was likely able to muster a wholehearted approval (or likely, trust) of the other, given Mather’s association with Massachusetts’ harshly anti-Quaker government, for the time being, their interests were allied. Although Penn’s concept of religious toleration was much more expansive than Mather’s, both sought to utilize the personal politics of royal influence to secure freedom of worship for their preferred sects. Interestingly (and against many of their contemporaries’—as well as their

⁶⁶⁹ I. Mather, *Diary*, April 1, 1688.

⁶⁷⁰ I. Mather, *Diary*, May 30, 1688.

⁶⁷¹ I. Mather, *Diary*, May 30, 1688.

own—distrust of royal prerogative), both men were more than willing to accept James' Declarations of Indulgence as a workable means to an end.

As a royal confidante, Penn's support was essential to the success of Mather's plan, and Mather cultivated his relationship with Penn assiduously over the course of the next six months.⁶⁷² Reflecting on these meetings later in life, Mather would write in his *Autobiography*, "to give Mr. Penn his due, he did in my hearing in the king's closet (when no one has been present besides the King, Penn, and I) advise King James to be kind to his subjects in New England."⁶⁷³ Penn seems also to have spoken to James about the matter on his own time: he told Mather in a conference at Whitehall on June 18, 1688 that "they" (he and the King?) "had been considering the NE affair," and had determined that "[Lieutenant Governor of the Dominion of New England, Francis] Nicholson should be removed, and something sent to Andros which would nettle his nose, and that if he did not comply with them, he should be turned out of his government." The "true reason" for these actions, Penn confided, "was that the state of affairs is now changed in England," but he assured Mather, "they in New England will think you are the only cause of it, and that will make them afraid of thee."⁶⁷⁴ Mather was understandably pleased by this proposal, perhaps not only because it suggested some sort of practical relief was at hand, but also because Penn and the king seemed willing to allow him to take the credit for the arrangement. Unfortunately, less than two weeks after this episode, on 30 June 1688, William of Orange would receive his much-anticipated invitation to come to the 'relief' of England.⁶⁷⁵

⁶⁷² See entries in I. Mather's *Diary* for May 31, June 13, June 18, July 10, and September 26, 1688.

⁶⁷³ I. Mather, *Autobiography*, 326.

⁶⁷⁴ I. Mather, *Diary*, June 18, 1688.

⁶⁷⁵ (Sir John Dalrymple, *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland*, App., I, pp. 228-231)

Although Mather would continue to meet with Penn and James through the end of 1688, nothing further came of the proposal to remove Andros. Mather's diary reveals his growing sense of frustration: again and again, he left Whitehall with promises and assurances from James that something would be done for New England. Again and again, he was forced to return and plead his case anew. In September, after hearing yet another promise of action from James, Mather replied with some asperity, "I humbly pray that the matters may be expedited."⁶⁷⁶ Unsurprisingly, this request was met with the same bland (and empty) promises as all the others.

And so it continued until James was out of government and "the change" in English affairs completed, all of which forced Mather to begin his negotiations anew. On 9 January 1689, he met William for the first time and wasted no time in "requesting a restoration of charters" for New England.⁶⁷⁷ On 14 March of the same year, he suggested that if William would give any consideration to the problems experienced by the people of Massachusetts under the Dominion, then he could expect "the prayers of New England [which] will stand you in more stead than an army of 40,000 men, such a good and praying people are they." William, apparently, was inclined to believe that New Englanders were indeed, "a good people," and, more importantly, was willing to overlook some of their past "irregularities in government." He promised to relieve New Englanders of Andros' oppressive government and recall the royal governor to England to give "an accounting" of his actions.⁶⁷⁸ Once again Mather had secured the promise of royal intervention on behalf of New English interests, and once again, circumstances would change before that promise

⁶⁷⁶ I. Mather, *Diary*, September 26, 1688.

⁶⁷⁷ I. Mather, *Diary*, January 9, 1689.

⁶⁷⁸ I. Mather, *Diary*, March 14, 1689.

could be realized when the people of Massachusetts took matters into their own hands by overturning the Andros government in April 1689.

Conclusion

From Mather's perspective, although the April Revolution in Boston would bring yet another change of direction and additional uncertainty to his efforts in London, it was nevertheless the signal of triumph. The people of Massachusetts could not have responded more favorably to the challenge to their founding aspirations. The charter crisis had, in effect, provided the incentive for the very type of civic renewal that Mather had been urging for over a decade: it was only the experience of having their civic and religious freedoms imperiled that inspired New Englanders to commit themselves to the revitalization of their foundational principles of moral equality, industry, and civic communion. As historian Stephen Foster has observed, during this period "the New England Way... was obliged to become the New England identity; a common religious profession and a distinctive code of conduct would have to form the basis of, in effect, an ethnic collectivity. The visible organization of this people without a polity would be the only one left to them, their churches."⁶⁷⁹ In Chapter 6, I turn to an analysis of the ways in which New Englanders used the political crisis of losing their charter to revitalize their inherited civic identity by conducting a conservative revolution.

⁶⁷⁹ Foster, *Long Argument*, 237.

CHAPTER 6: A “HAPPY” REVOLUTION

In this chapter, I analyze the dramatic overthrow of the Dominion of New England from within as an example of the successful transference of the revolutionary principles of the founders into a set of more sustainable civic commitments. After providing a brief overview of the establishment and offenses of the Andros regime, I focus on the colonists’ justifications of their actions for both internal and external audiences.

Although the Andros affair is often discussed as simply a practical extension of the Glorious Revolution (bringing William and Mary to the throne in England) on New England’s soil, it actually looms much larger. The pamphlets published by New Englanders to defend their revolt are striking in the ways that they demonstrate how ordinary citizens and public leaders could share a sense of responsibility for the inherited civil order. These tracts represent the highpoint of New English political theorizing during the Puritan period. Although the principles being asserted (all of which center on the people’s responsibility to defend their liberties) are broadly derived from the original founding principles of the colony, the rhetorical use to which they are put has shifted from justifying the creation of a new political community to the defense of an old one. As a result, the tenor of the discussion has also changed: although the founders had to negotiate their share of external political relations (with the neighboring English colonies, other European powers, the native population, and an English audience skeptical of their principles) they were, to a great extent, freed by their broad understanding of their charter to focus primarily on internal political relations. Their successors in 1689, however, found themselves in the midst of a trans-Atlantic struggle to define the nature of English

liberty and political identity vis-à-vis an expanding and centralizing empire and were forced to enter into those debates to defend their own uniquely New English sense of the same they were necessarily, much more outward looking—even when speaking to a “home” audience.

I bring these two related literatures together, using the materials prepared for internal purposes to illuminate the ways in which even the external justifications of the event can be understood as drawn from New English notions of civic formation. Understanding these texts in this way helps us to see the ways in which the people of Massachusetts Bay consistently attempted to maintain their own civic identity, even while being drawn into the empire.

Civic Education, Part 1: Cotton Mather’s Pre-Revolutionary Sermon Series

While his father was at work in London, Cotton Mather remained in Boston, preaching words of encouragement and exhortation to the people yet suffering under the Andros’ administration. At some point in early 1689, a compilation of four of Mather’s “ordinary” sermons appeared under the sub-title *The Designs of Practical Godliness*.⁶⁸⁰ Internal evidence suggests that the sermons were preached and published prior to the April Revolution (there is no mention of the event anywhere in the text, and it would have been quite uncharacteristic for Mather to ignore such an obvious contemporary example of his theme). More importantly, the sermons are linked thematically by their emphasis on the connection between individual practices of piety and character formation and the identity (as well as the success) of New England as a distinct community in covenant with God. Although Mather may not have intended to convey the politically-

⁶⁸⁰ Cotton Mather (henceforth: C. Mather), *Small Offers Towards the Service of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness: Four Discourses, accommodated unto the Designs of Practical Godliness* (Boston: 1689).

infused nuances I attribute to him here, his overall aim—to help New Englanders cultivate all aspects of their individual lives in such a way most likely to bring glory to God—was entirely in keeping with the founding aspirations. In what follows, I focus on the political implications of just one of these four sermons, although in each of them, the emphasis on combining practicality and spirituality is quite evident.⁶⁸¹

In the first sermon, taking his text from Joshua 24:15, Mather addressed himself to “the New-English Israel” and emphasized the republican aspects of the government of ancient Israel. Mather describes the “divine sentence uttered by the renowned Joshua in a speech to *the Parliament of Israel*” and Joshua as “first, the *Lord General of Israel’s Army*,” and then “the *Lord Protector of Israel’s Commonwealth*,” all terms that evoked memories of another Commonwealth whose chief general had also become its Lord Protector.⁶⁸² Similarly, Joshua “call[ed] for a *convention of states*” and “all the *representatives of the people*” to attend him on his deathbed, in order to bestow upon them his final advice.⁶⁸³ With his dying speech, Mather argued, Joshua provided the Israelites with “a history” of the ways God had been faithful to them in the past; an exhortation to remember this faithfulness and consider it their duty to serve God; and “a precedent, an example, to induce them hereunto.”⁶⁸⁴ Framing his textual exegesis with this provocative language gives additional significance to Mather’s form of address: recall that Mather preached to those suffering the loss of their own republican privileges

⁶⁸¹ The remaining sermons in the series are remarkably similar in both tone and content: in each of them, Mather focused on the private attributes of individuals that were necessary to endure the long periods of strife and sorrow endemic to human life. Felicitously, these same attributes are also politically useful. The third sermon has a prolonged discussion of the properties of a “good man”—things like being pure, flexible, ‘durable,’ ‘weighty,’ etc.

⁶⁸² C. Mather, “The Good Man’s Resolution,” in *Designs of Practical Godliness*, 2-3.

⁶⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸⁴ C. Mather, “The Good Man’s Resolution,” in *Designs of Practical Godliness*, 4-5.

and the quashing of their own commonwealth identity under the Andros regime, and the sermon takes on a greater urgency, and even a level of subversive revolutionary fervor.

Mather used Joshua's exemplar to derive the "doctrine" that "every man should engage both himself and his house in the service of the almighty God," from which he then constructs a theory of community based on the use of individual endowments for mutual benefit, reminiscent of Winthrop's discussion of the bonds connecting the members of the body politic in the *Model of Christian Charity*.⁶⁸⁵ Just as Winthrop described the function of love as a ligament, a connection between the members of the political community so intimate that they were literally part of one whole, so too, Mather encouraged his auditors to embrace a community-oriented attitude towards the stewardship of their own resources and talents.

"We are not to be alone in the service of God," he wrote, "for man is a sociable creature; and as he does need, so he must help humane society."⁶⁸⁶ Men were to use their talents for the benefit of the various communities to which they belonged. In order to do so, the individual must be prepared not only intellectually but also in terms of their "time," "strength," "estates," and "all the powers of [their] spirits." They must have a will to embrace ordinary activities for their value towards the end of promoting the good of others.⁶⁸⁷

These responsibilities held true at both the national and the family level, Mather argued: "all that can be properly done by him for his Nation, in his Station to set up and bring in the service of God, so much every man is to do, if ever he would give a good

⁶⁸⁵ John Winthrop, *Model*, ¶21; see also ¶7

⁶⁸⁶ C. Mather, "The Good Man's Resolution," in *Designs of Practical Godliness*, 13.

⁶⁸⁷ C. Mather, "The Good Man's Resolution," in *Designs of Practical Godliness*, 26-27.

account of his talents in the day of God's appearing."⁶⁸⁸ He said nothing more about public service, however: perhaps he thought the times were too perilous, or too discouraging, to prudently say more on the subject, or perhaps he believed that as individuals followed his advice about cultivating their ability to serve God in private ways, they would naturally also develop the inclinations and aptitudes to serve God in public.

Mather believed that dynamic and godly home and family leadership were essential to the success of the larger community. Among the most important ways in which men and women (Mather explicitly includes women in this section of the sermon) can serve others is through their example of personal virtue and discipline.⁶⁸⁹ Mothers and fathers in their household, school masters over their students, militia captains over the other members of their band—"briefly, all superiors generally have a *family* in the kind of their superiority"—and thus, nearly everyone has the opportunity to help shape the character of someone else within their normal range of activities in such a way as to benefit or to harm the community at large.⁶⁹⁰ Here again, Mather recalls Winthrop's founding exhortation that a diversity of endowments—even hierarchy—is a political good inasmuch as it provides the opportunity for each individual to exercise and accept mercy, charity, etc.

⁶⁸⁸ C. Mather, "The Good Man's Resolution," in *Designs of Practical Godliness*, 14.

⁶⁸⁹ Mather's discussion of leadership stems from his discussion of the practice of family worship: he writes, "there should not be one prayer the less in a family because a woman is become the Ruler there: no, the losses of a family should increase the prayers of it." While Mather may or may not have intended to be condescending here, in suggesting that female heads-of-households needed prayer more desperately than male heads, he does not absolve women from this responsibility—to the contrary, he pushes them to be more excellent in the practice of it than their (absent or deceased) spouses. See "The Good Man's Resolution," in *Designs of Practical Godliness*, 30.

⁶⁹⁰ C. Mather, "The Good Man's Resolution," in *Designs of Practical Godliness*, 30-31.

Mather's advice suggests the importance of private associational life (including extra-governmental institutions like militia companies, schools, etc. that the Puritans established in earlier generations) for the foundation of larger public associations (such as government). No man, he implied, can serve God faithfully in the public sphere who has not already done the work of serving Him at home, on a daily basis, practicing the habits of governing himself and others (children or servants) under his authority.⁶⁹¹ Given the context, the picture painted here contrasts starkly with the ban on local associations such as town meetings, and the poor example of the Andros government.⁶⁹²

Mather was not the only one to reflect on the importance of such local associations for the colony's sense of civic communion and identity. Among the biggest complaints leveled by colonists against the Andros regime was the neglect of New England's traditional institutions of civic formation:

the long settled maintenance of the public ministry, even from those that applied themselves to no other way of worship, but continued ordinary hearers, could not be upheld by any act of authority providing for the same, and schools of learning so well taken care of formerly were in most cases fallen to decay, and many more such like might be reckoned up.⁶⁹³

Despite these deterrents, Mather (and presumably, other members of the clergy in other towns) continued to use his pulpit to convey the importance of individual character formation and the cultivation of an orientation towards the good of one's neighbors that

⁶⁹¹ Cf. Aristotle, as well as Adam Smith, and Tocqueville.

⁶⁹² On the public attitude towards Andros just prior to the April Revolution, several former members of Andros' council published a brief pamphlet after the revolution, for example, in which they observed a "great number of the people" were "disturb[ed] and disaffect[ed]" by Andros' government, causing widespread resentment rather than that "cheerful obedience, loyalty, love, and duty in them, which by all good means, to have been nourished and promoted." See [William Stoughton, Thomas Hinckley, Wait Winthrop, Barthol. Gedney, Samuel Shrimpton], *A Narrative of the Proceedings of Sir Edmond Andros and his Complices* (Boston: 1691) in W. H. Whitmore, ed. *The Andros Tracts: Being a Collection of Pamphlets and Official Papers....*, 3 vols., Prince Society, V-VIII (Boston, 1868-1874; rpt. 1971), Vol. 1: 137. [Henceforth: *Andros Tracts*.]

⁶⁹³ [Stoughton, et. al.], *Narrative of the Proceedings in Andros Tracts*, Vol. 1: 138.

had traditionally marked New England's churches and schools. These institutions would become the focus of attention in the documents directed at an internal audience following the revolution, as Mather and others attempted to revive the traditional means promoting civic identity in New England.

18 April 1689: A Revolution in Boston

On the morning of 18 April 1689, an unknown number of the citizens of Boston took up arms against the Dominion of New England.⁶⁹⁴ “Drums beat through the town” as many of the partisans of the Andros government were rounded up and brought to the prison. At noon, a member of the resistance read a “Declaration of the Gentlemen, Merchants, and Inhabitants of Boston, and the Country Adjacent,” aloud to the assembled public, listing not only the grievances against the Andros regime but also the rationale for taking up arms at that moment. Shortly thereafter, a messenger was dispatched to the fort to demand Andros' surrender.

By mid-afternoon, news of the unfolding political drama in Boston had spread to the neighboring towns and another “twenty companies” of militia men arrived to support the revolutionaries.⁶⁹⁵ Approximately another fifteen hundred men remained on the outskirts, possibly in anticipation of taking part in some sort of military action should Andros refuse to surrender, or worse, call for reinforcements from the English frigate anchored in the harbor. Fortunately, Andros decided to turn himself and the fort over to

⁶⁹⁴ My description of the facts of the actual overthrow are drawn from Nathaniel Byfield's *An Account of the Late Revolution in New-England* (London: 1689), reprinted in *Andros Tracts*, Vol. 1:1-10.

⁶⁹⁵ If we use eighteenth century norms in which a company consisted of between 100-200 men for estimating the size of this force, a minimum of 2,000 armed soldiers and possibly as many as 4,000 entered the city to join the Boston forces already gathered. Combined with the 1,500 men who were unable to get in and the Boston insurgents, the total mobilization in support of the Revolution has generally been estimated at around 5,000 men, or, roughly 10% of the total population of the colony at the time. See Phillip J. Greven, “Historical Demography and Colonial America,” *WMQ* 3rd Series (1967), 24:438-454.

the leaders of the popular movement. Within the next two days, a provisional government, headed by Simon Bradstreet and comprised largely of those who had previously served as members of the general court under the Charter government had assumed responsibility for not only the “safety of the People, and the Conservation of the Peace,” but also for the resumption of the status-quo ante-Andros—a goal that depended largely upon their application of the colony’s inherited principles of moral equality, industry, and civic communion.

The leaders of the uprising took steps throughout to ensure that their revolution was framed not only in the imperial context of William and Mary’s accession, but also within the local context of inherited civic principles. There are several aspects of this event that deserve closer attention for what they illustrate about the connection between the public justifications for the political actions taken by the men who participated in overthrowing the Andros regime, and the founding principles of Massachusetts Bay. First, the message sent to Andros was not only preserved, but published with the first accounts of the revolution. In their letter to Andros, those who have assumed de facto positions of leadership over the rebellion assert that it was an unplanned, popularly conceived event with which they only got involved after it had begun in order to limit the potential negative consequences. The signers of the message claim to be not only “surprised with the People's sudden taking of Arms,” but also “wholly ignorant” of any such scheme beforehand. These claims were almost certainly false. Much scholarly effort has been spent to reconstruct the timeline of the revolution; Massachusetts’ elites almost certainly provoked the people towards rebellion for some length of time prior to the actual event. Indeed, Ian K. Steele has argued persuasively for the role of the Boston

press in generating popular support for the overthrow of the Andros regime and in the concerted efforts to frame the revolution as conservative of English liberties after the fact. Any claims to the contrary must therefore, have been for rhetorical effect, to frame those who emerged as leaders of the movement as restoring law and order in the absence of any other authority. This interpretation would also seem to be supported by their decision to style the provisional government as “Council for the Safety of the People, and the Conservation of the Peace.”⁶⁹⁶

An examination of the list of men who signed the message to Andros also suggests a certain degree of rhetorical framing was at work, for among them we find the venerable Simon Bradstreet and Thomas Danforth, two of the few surviving members of the founding generation.⁶⁹⁷ Bradstreet and Danforth represented the old charter, its privileges and its promise: Bradstreet had served the colony from the first meeting of the General Court, helping to interpret its original charter and to translate the community’s founding aspirations into an established constitutional scheme. Danforth, slightly younger, had been among the most prominent members of the Harvard board of trustees since its 1650 Charter, and his efforts to steward the fledgling educational center had led to additional leadership roles in the colonial government. Most importantly of all, Bradstreet and Danforth were, respectively, the last freely elected governor and deputy-governor of the colony: their participation provided a living connection to not only the aspirations of Massachusetts Bay’s founding, but also to its last legitimate government.

⁶⁹⁶ See Ian K. Steele, “Communicating an English Revolution to the Colonies, 1688-1689,” *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (Jul., 1985), pp. 333-357.

⁶⁹⁷ See Francis J. Bremer, ‘Bradstreet, Simon (*bap.* 1604, *d.* 1697),’ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; Roger Thompson, ‘Danforth, Thomas (*bap.* 1623, *d.* 1699),’ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004.

Settling these two relics back into their previous positions of authority sent a message to the people of the commonwealth that the outcome of the April uprising would be continuity, not chaos. These men, known for their personal integrity as well as their commitment to the existence and purpose of the godly commonwealth, gave a stamp of legitimacy to the revolution. They had helped to shape New England in her infancy, guided and protected her through the trials of mid-century, and now, in the face of the greatest threat to her political existence yet, stood at the symbolic head of a popular uprising to secure her liberty. In a place with as much reverence for their founders as New England, this was a stroke of political genius.

Bradstreet and Danforth were joined in their defense of New England by a cadre of younger men who represented the ongoing vitality of the Bay Colony's identity and mission for a second, and in some cases, a third generation. The majority of the signatories were men who had either migrated to New England in their infancies, or who considered themselves native sons of the Bay Colony. Among this group we find two of John Winthrop's grandsons and John Richards, militia member and colonial agent—men who would have been educated and groomed for positions of political leadership, and who were responding to a perceived threat not only to their liberties, but also, perhaps, to their rightful role in the leadership of the community.⁶⁹⁸ A handful of the signers were merchants, physicians, or wealthy landowners: men of standing, but with little or no record of previous political activism. For these men, Andros' government represented a financial threat, certainly, but it also undermined their ability to exercise their talents and

⁶⁹⁸ Waite Winthrop (b. 1641/2 in NE – served as magistrate, militia leader); Adam Winthrop (1647-1700; Harvard graduate); John Richards (b.? – migrated with parents in 1630; militia member; served as an assistant, also as a colonial agent to protest the *quo warranto*; anti-Andros); John Foster (unknown).

participate in the life of the community, as Winthrop had envisioned. Finally, and perhaps most interestingly, the list includes several members of Andros' government, who in various ways had been attempting to meliorate the worst of the Dominion government's abuses from the inside, but who now found it congenial to join forces with the revolutionaries.⁶⁹⁹ These men ("together with such other of the old Magistrates or such other Gentlemen as they shall judge meet to associate to them") would constitute themselves as the temporary government of the colony and work to redress the grievances expressed in the Declaration of April 18.⁷⁰⁰

Most of the scholarship on the effects of the Glorious Revolution in New England has emphasized two points: first, the overwhelmingly political—and it is implied, emphatically non-theological—nature of the rhetoric used by New Englanders to justify their revolt,⁷⁰¹ and second, the relative ease with which, having been denied their original goal (however tacitly expressed) of resuming a quasi-independent status, New Englanders accommodated themselves to their new position as an imperial colony.⁷⁰²

⁶⁹⁹ William Stoughton (b. 1631; parents in MBC by 1632; Harvard graduate 1650 – went to England during the Commonwealth; returned to N. England in 1662); Bartholomew Gidney [c. 1640; son of one of the founders of Salem, born in Salem, merchant, physician, military officer, magistrate]; William Brown [member of Andros' council]; Isaac Addington (b. in Boston; attended Harvard but did not graduate; served a surgeon; served as a record keeper under Andros).

⁷⁰⁰ Council Records for April 20, 1689 in Robert Earle Moody and Richard Clive Simmons, eds., *The Glorious Revolution in Massachusetts: Selected Documents, 1689–1692* (Boston: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1988), 54. [Henceforth: *Glorious Revolution.*] . Most of these men represented families that had been in Massachusetts Bay for several generations, and who were committed to the identity of the colony.

⁷⁰¹ Such is the major premise of Breen's study of Puritan political ideas: Breen argues that "the Glorious Revolution was the crucial event in the transformation of Puritan ideas about civil leadership." He supports this claim by pointing to the colonial rejection of Edmund Andros which was justified not in terms of the governor's worthiness (or lack thereof) but rather in terms of the threat he posed to the colonists' property and liberty. Yet one wonders whether those two reasons are as far apart as Breen seems to think they are – couldn't it be true, if unspoken, that Andros was seen to be unfit *because* of his attacks on colonial rights? Wasn't one aspect of good rulership the preservation of liberty? (Cf. *Politicraticus*, for example) Breen, *Good Ruler*, xii.

⁷⁰² In general, see David S. Lovejoy, *The Glorious Revolution in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972) and Craig Yurish, *Settlers, Liberty, and Empire*, Chaps. 1-2, especially. More specifically, Theodore Lewis argues that even in the local publications, "there was a shift from theological arguments regarding

These two things are often presented as linked, with the first leading to the second, whether causally or merely as a matter of interpretative framing.⁷⁰³ Proponents of this view are often rightly concerned with situating the story of New England within a broader Atlantic or Imperial context, which has the value of helping us to understand the external factors constraining New English agents both at home and in London.

Such scholarship often seems to be accompanied by an air of inevitability—that is, that New Englanders could only have justified their rebellion on the grounds which they did, and that having done so, they had no logical choice to resist (or resent) being drawn more tightly into the imperial web.⁷⁰⁴ Thus, as helpful as the broader Atlantic or Imperial perspective is, it suffers from its failure to recognize the ways in which New Englanders—even while being drawn into the empire—consistently maintained their own civic identity.

political affairs to constitutional and legal ones.” Theodore B. Lewis, “A Revolutionary Tradition, 1689-1774: ‘There Was a Revolution Here as Well as in England,’ *NEQ*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (Sep., 1973), 424. Stephen Carl Arch focuses on Increase Mather’s London imprints, but agrees that the ‘providential’ language of Puritanism was replaced by Whig political rhetoric; see “The Glorious Revolution and the Rhetoric of Puritan History,” *Early American Literature*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (1992), pp. 61-74. Ian K. Steele argues further that the use of secular language was an intentional ploy to garner English support and to ensure “that the ensuing controversy would be a secular and political one.” See Steele, “Origins of Boston’s Revolutionary Declaration of 18 April 1689,” *NEQ* 62 (1): 81.

⁷⁰³ Indeed, even Increase Mather, in his letter admonishing New Englanders to make the best of their new charter, suggests that if they had approached things differently in making their case to the crown, they might have won the day. See I. Mather, “Address to the Inhabitants,” in *Andros Tracts*, Vol. II: 301-311.

⁷⁰⁴ For example, Arch argues not only that the event marks a decisive shift away from previous providential understanding of history and politics, but that this was the inevitable result of the practical pressures upon the political players at the time, especially Increase Mather; see “The Glorious Revolution and the Rhetoric of Puritan History.” Likewise, in his analysis of the rhetoric of the tracts surrounding the April Revolution, Lewis focuses exclusively on the common law arguments presented, and the ways in which those arguments intermeshed with the broader context of the Revolution in England and the legacy of both in leading to the later American Revolution; see “A Revolutionary Tradition, 1689-1774.” Jack Greene has focused exclusively on the outcome of the Revolution and the changing role of colonial assemblies within the Empire; see “The Glorious Revolution and the British Empire, 1688–1783,” in *The Revolution of 1688–89: New Perspectives*, ed. Lois G. Schworer (Cambridge, 1992), 260–71. More recently, Owen Stanwood has presented an intriguing analysis of the April Revolution that takes into consideration its religious dimensions and roots in the New English experience, but which ultimately links those to imperial and even international ambitions; see “The Protestant Moment: Antipopery, the Revolution of 1688–1689, and the Making of an Anglo-American Empire,” *Journal of British Studies* 46.3 (2007): 481–508.

While the 1689 Revolution in England was to be known to history as “Glorious,” that in New-England was described by Edward Rawson and Samuel Sewall in 1691 as “happy.” The two were related, this author argued, for in both instances, the object was a conservative one: in England, “to rescue the nation from *Slavery* as well as *Popery*,” and in New England, “to reassume their *Ancient Charter-Government*.”⁷⁰⁵ In both instances, although the people were engaged in armed resistance against their political leaders, they did so for the purpose of restoration and not innovation.⁷⁰⁶ In both Englands, the goals of the revolutionaries were presented as the reestablishment of an older form of government, one more conducive to individual liberty.⁷⁰⁷ Indeed, the pamphleteer argues that if

⁷⁰⁵ [Edward Rawson and Samuel Sewall], *The Revolution in New England Justified, and the People There Vindicated from the Aspersions cast upon them by Mr. John Palmer* (Boston: 1691) in *Andros Tracts*, Volume 1, 71-72. Note that the 1629 Charter was reprinted in Boston leading up to the Revolution; see *A Copy of the Kings Majesties charter, for incorporating the Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New-England....* (Boston: 1689).

⁷⁰⁶ To a certain extent, all early modern revolutions were justified in conservative terms, framed as the restoration of ancient liberties against an over-reaching regime. Modern historians have become increasingly less sanguine about accepting these claims about conservative revolution, particularly in the English context: see especially, Steve Pincus, *1668: The First Modern Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). I am less interested in the historicity of the claims made by contemporary actors and more interested in the rhetorical power of such claims in linking current political action to founding moments.

⁷⁰⁷ The centrality of individual liberty versus questions of parliamentary supremacy and the social position of the Church of England has been the source of significant scholarly debate; see the summary provided by Lois G. Schwoerer in her introduction to *The Revolution of 1688-89: Changing Perspectives* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 1-20. On the side of individual rights, in the first place, although as Peter Laslett has amply demonstrated, Locke’s *Two Treatises* were composed in the early 1680s in order to counteract the influence of Robert Filmer’s absolutist political theory, the fact remains that they were not published until 1690, at which point they appeared with a preface explicitly linking the argument presented therein to the cause of the Revolution. In this vein, Lois G. Schwoerer has argued that Locke intended the publication of the *Two Treatises* at that time to bolster public interest in and support for the Bill of Rights then pending in Parliament—a document that guarantees a variety of personal rights against both the king and parliament. (Similarly, Charles Tarlton argues provocatively that Locke’s decision to publish the *Two Treatises* in 1690 was rather intended to serve as a warning to William to avoid falling into the same sort of tyrannical impulses that had undermined Charles II/James II. If Tarlton is correct, that only underscores the importance of individual rights to the Revolution.) Schwoerer further argues that Locke viewed the “people” of England as genuinely represented in the Conference in a broader sense than they would have been under a regular Parliament. See: Peter Laslett, “The English Revolution and Locke’s ‘Two Treatises of Government,’” *The Cambridge Historical Journal* 12.1 (1956): 40–55; Lois G. Schwoerer, “Locke, Lockean Ideas, and the Glorious Revolution,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 51.4 (1990): 531–548; James Farr and Clayton Roberts, “John Locke on the Glorious Revolution: A Rediscovered Document,” *The Historical Journal* 28.2 (1985): 385–398; Charles D. Tarlton, “‘The Rulers Now on Earth’: Locke’s Two Treatises and the Revolution of 1688.” *The Historical Journal* 28.2 (1985): 279–298. On the side of

revolution in England was justified, that of New England was more so, for “the men then usurping government in New-England were King James’ Creatures” and not only like him in their manner of trammeling “both the *Liberty and Property of England Protestants*” but worse: “perhaps the like was never known in any part of the World where the English Nation has any Government.”⁷⁰⁸

Defenders of the revolution in New England framed their actions as responsive (to a particular threat, rather than recklessly proactive), restrained (limited by both religion and tradition), and yet bold (in their assertion of their natural liberties). As Cotton Mather would describe it in his biography of his father: “England made and saw a Happy Revolution. And New England upon (and almost before) the advice of it, made as just and fair a one in conformity to it, *and not resisting an ordinance of God but restraining a cursed violation of his ordinance*, imprisoned Sir Edmond Andros and his accomplices” (emphasis added).⁷⁰⁹ Mather’s account tacitly connected the April Revolution to the heritage of conscientious resistance within the Reformed tradition, in which political disobedience is always justifiable only on the grounds that the government being resisted has become arbitrary and thus, usurped powers reserved to God alone.⁷¹⁰

parliament, see: Pincus, *1668*; Tim Harris, *Revolution: The Great Crisis of the British Monarchy, 1685-1720* (New York: Penguin Books, 2007); Richard S. Kay, *The Glorious Revolution and the Continuity of Law* (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press, 2014).

⁷⁰⁸ See [Rawson and Sewall], *The Revolution in New England Justified in Andros Tracts*, Volume 1: 71-72.

⁷⁰⁹ C. Mather, *Parentator* (Boston: 1724), 117-118.

⁷¹⁰ The literature on the development of political theories of resistance within the reformed tradition is massive, often focused on particular thinkers, regions, or time periods. For a good general overview, see: John Witte, Jr., *The Reformation of Rights: Law, Religion, and Human Rights in Early Modern Calvinism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); on the English context more specifically, see Glenn Burgess, *British Political Thought, 1500-1660: The Politics of the Post-Reformation* (New York: Palgrave, 2009).

Speaking to an Audience Abroad, Part 1: The Boston Declaration of April 18, 1689

In this section, I connect the justifications presented in the externally-oriented Declaration (and later supporting pamphlets) with commentary on the proper behavior for citizens presented in a selection of internally-oriented documents produced both prior to and during the aftermath of the revolution. Drawing together the internal and external framing of the revolution in this way contextualizes the secular rights-claims made in the external documents within a community-oriented, virtue-driven paradigm.

In the main body of the Declaration, the revolutionary leaders laid out their specific grievances against Andros and the Dominion of New England, highlighting the ways in which each infringed upon one or more of these aspects of New English civic identity. All of the specific grievances were linked in that they were the result of the revocation of the Charter of 1629:

Our Charter was with a most injurious pretense (and scarce that) of Law, condemned before it was possible for us to appear at Westminster in the legal defense of it; and without a fair leave to answer for ourselves, concerning the Crimes falsely laid to our charge, we were put under a *President and Council*, without any liberty for an Assembly, which the other *American Plantations* have, by a Commission from His *Majesty*.⁷¹¹

The language here encompasses multiple complaints: first, that the charter was extra-legally retracted; second, that the colonists were unable to present a defense; third that the replacement government lacked a popular element; and fourth, that this omission was a departure from the general practice in the crown's other colonies and therefore an act of targeted oppression against the people of New England.

⁷¹¹ “The Declaration of the Gentlemen, Merchants and Inhabitants of Boston and the Country Adjacent,” April 18, 1689 in *Andros Tracts*, Vol. I: 12.

Despite all these grievances, and even though “the Commission was as *Illegal* for the form of it, as the way of obtaining it was *Malicious* and *unreasonable*,” the people “made no Resistance thereunto as we could easily have done; but chose to give all *Mankind* a Demonstration of our being a people sufficiently dutiful and loyal to our King.”⁷¹² To do so involved a fair amount of self-deception, for they had to “take pains to make ourselves believe as much as ever we could of the Wheedle then offered unto us.”⁷¹³

Although their disenfranchisement had been justified to New Englanders on the grounds that “his *Majesty's* Desire was no other than the happy increase and advance of these *Provinces* by their more immediate dependence on the *Crown of England*,” in practice, they argued that the new relationship was as restrictive of their trade as it was destructive of their freedom. Thus, the policy neither improved the status or the wealth of the King, but, on the contrary, added new and “considerable” charges to his accounts.⁷¹⁴ To label all of this as “wheedle” is to insinuate that either Charles (and, later, James) intended the harm, or that they were insufficiently able to see through lies being told them by their ‘evil advisors.’ In either case, the authors aimed to strengthen the

⁷¹² Ibid.

⁷¹³ Ibid. According to the OED, the term “wheedle” first appeared in the 1660s in Thomas Blount’s *Glossographia* as a term signifying an intention to use deceive another to act to their own disadvantage: for the authors of the Declaration to describe the justifications offered by the Crown for the revocation of the Charter as a wheedle is thus a relatively specific and strong charge against Stuart absolutism. “wheedle, n.”. OED Online. March 2015. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/view/Entry/228137?rskey=vk0Goz&result=1&isAdvanced=false> (accessed May 09, 2015)., the term first appears in the 1660s in Thomas Blount’s *Glossographia; or, A dictionary interpreting all such hard words, whether Hebrew, Greek or Latin... as are now used in our refined English tongue*, 2n edition (London: 1661).

⁷¹⁴ “Declaration,” in *Andros Tracts*, Vol. I: 12-13.

legitimacy of the revolt under the terms of republican (and Reformed) resistance theory.⁷¹⁵

Although the authors of the Declaration somewhat back-handedly acknowledge the existence of the imperial scheme of consolidation, they do so in terms that border on treason (indeed, that probably escaped being treasonous only because they refer to the recently-deposed, rather than currently sitting, monarchs. They wanted to be seen as loyal subjects (hence their long endurance of the attacks on their charter)—yet they suggest that they have little cause to be loyal, while all but accusing James II of being either deceptive or delusional about the impact of his imperial policies. With a slightly more conciliatory tone, they argue that consolidation was a poor policy because of the increased costs of to the crown. In none of these arguments do the authors of the Declaration appear to be positively embracing their role in an expanding British empire; on the contrary, they are (somewhat covertly) asserting the validity and value of the independence of the Bay Colony from too-close an oversight by the rest of the British empire.

The chief value of such an independent political existence lay in the relative freedom of New Englanders to craft and perpetuate a civic identity reflective of their own core principles of self-government: moral equality/political representation, industry/property rights, and civic communion, or public-spiritedness. To secure these to the future generations was the goal of the “happy revolution,” as Edward Rawson and Samuel Sewall called it. Not only had the people of Massachusetts protected their founding aspirations from destruction by an arbitrary government, but in doing so, they

⁷¹⁵ See Policraticus, Calvin, Sidney. See also Herbert D. Foster, “International Calvinism Through Locke and the Revolution of 1688,” *The American Historical Review* 32.3 (1927): 475–499.

had also “exploded” the “doctrine of *passive obedience and non-resistance*” (emphasis in the original).⁷¹⁶ That this doctrine (raised as part of an attack on New Englanders as sinful rebels by a critic of the April Revolution⁷¹⁷) was false was easily proven, Rawson and Sewall argued. “If, when wolves are got among sheep in a wilderness, the shepherds and principal men there shall keep them from ravening, that this is the sin of rebellion condemned by scripture?”⁷¹⁸ “The scripture speaks of a lawful and good rebellion, as well as of that which is unlawful,” they asserted⁷¹⁹ Such was also the case in New England, where the inhabitants had only acted when it became obvious that the integrity of their community was in danger from Andros and “his creatures,” who “contrary to the laws of God and Men, commit[ed] a rape on a whole Colony.”⁷²⁰ By alluding to the metaphor of the unified body politic, Rawson and Sewall invoked the history of New England—a colony founded by religious dissenters in pursuit of a place to practice a Christianity in which the whole of life was considered sacred—a place where the community would come together in both prayers and actions.⁷²¹

Indeed, the joining of the community in prayer and action was the clear goal of the Declaration, authorship of which has been attributed to Cotton Mather. While Mather never admitted to writing the Declaration, in his *Magnalia Christi Americana* (completed within a decade of the uprising), he does tell us that the Declaration was prepared well in advance of the events of the day by a group of “gentlemen” who, anticipating popular

⁷¹⁶ [Rawson and Sewall], *The Revolution in New England Justified, and the People There Vindicated from the Aspersions cast upon them by Mr. John Palmer* (Boston: 1691) in *Andros Tracts*, Vol. 1: 71.

⁷¹⁷ See John Palmer, *An Impartial Account* (London: 1690) in *Andros Tracts*, Vol. 1: 56-57.

⁷¹⁸ [Rawson and Sewall], *Revolution in New England Justified* in *Andros Tracts*, Vol. 1: 128.

⁷¹⁹ *Ibid*, 129.

⁷²⁰ *Ibid*, 128.

⁷²¹ Note that this is all contemporaneous with what Locke would articulate in the *Second Treatise*, and invokes a similar set of republican and scriptural contractarian grounds.

violence against the Andros' regime, were willing to take steps in order "to prevent the shedding of blood by an ungoverned multitude."⁷²² At the time, however, it was presented as the work of consensus, and with the goal of inspiring "all our neighbors, for whom we have thus ventured ourselves, to join with us in Prayers and all just Actions, for the Defense of the Land."⁷²³ The linkage of prayers and actions in defense of New England's civic identity speaks to the ways in which New Englanders imagined themselves as a godly people, set apart by their own choices, institutions, and mores in purposive ways from the remainder of the English-speaking world.

They had cultivated and refined this sense of a separate identity for nearly sixty years, and Cotton and Increase Mather (and others) had worked to keep the founding principles at the forefront of New English minds during the years of increasingly contentious relations with the Stuart monarchy. Now, as they prepared to restore the charter government upon which so much of that identity seemed to rest, the combined prayers and actions of New Englanders would point both backward, to the colony's founding aspirations of moral equality, industry, and civic communion, and forward, to a civic identity that would have lasting resonance for the genuinely independent nation that would one day be built in part upon a foundation of their making.

Civic Education 'Texts,' Part 2: Massachusetts Chooses an Inter-Charter Polity

In the immediate aftermath of the April 18 Revolution, it was unclear how long the provisional government of the "Council for the Safety of the People, and the Conservation of the Peace" would last. There were some who argued that the Council

⁷²² C. Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, ed. Kenneth B. Murdock (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), 294, cited in Steele, "Origins of Boston's Revolutionary Declaration of 18 April 1689," 78.

⁷²³ "Declaration," in *Andros Tracts*, Vol. 1: 19.

should maintain control until the events of the revolution could be communicated to London and the king could signal his wishes for the future of the colony. Although the majority of Massachusetts' freemen believed the Council should quickly turn over its political and military authority to a duly elected government of some sort (see the discussion below), there is evidence that some smaller subset of the population believed that doing so would be politically disastrous. An anonymous author argued that any attempt to reinstate the 1629 charter (without being instructed to do so by the crown) would threaten the colonists' ability to keep up the "pretense" that their actions had been born of "necessity and self-preservation" and instead, "render us suspected, that our real intent was, forcibly to resume our old Government." The colonists had every reason to anticipate the restoration of their political liberties by the crown, the author argued; such a "mercy waited for, when it comes orderly, will be [sweeter] to us then if we forestall God's providence and [carry] it out to ourselves."⁷²⁴

Support for this line of thinking, however, does not appear to have been widespread: the council, although comprised primarily of respected members of the colony's last government under the charter, was nevertheless, an unelected, unrepresentative body. Within two weeks of the revolution, "there being some agitation in council of the necessity of settling some forms of government, and several gentlemen appearing out of the country moving the same thing," the council voted to solicit the "farther consultation and advice of the people for the directing to the exercise of that

⁷²⁴ See the anonymous and undated "Opinion Against Resumption of the Charter" in *Glorious Revolution*, 359-360.

power and authority which is necessary in the present exigence” through a meeting of specially-elected deputies.⁷²⁵

On the appointed day, “sixty-six persons as representatives of forty-four towns and villages” of Massachusetts joined the members of the council in Boston. The following day, these men (styling themselves the “Chamber of the Country Representatives”) passed a resolution providing that for the remainder of the year, “the governor, deputy governor, and assistants chosen and sworn in May 1686 according to our Charter Rights, and the deputies then sent by the freemen of the several towns to be the government now settled in our abovesaid Colony.”⁷²⁶ In other words, these representatives of the people of Massachusetts were asserting their constituents’ right to resume their previous charter privileges—including most importantly, the right to freely elect their governor and legislators.

With some towns from the colony having declined to send representatives to the meeting, however, the members of the Council asked that the matter be referred back to the freeman directly in their town meetings, the results of which were to be communicated to the council via a second convention.⁷²⁷ During the next two weeks, at least three anonymous broadsides were printed and distributed around the colony which

⁷²⁵ Council Records for 1-2 May 1689 in *Glorious Revolution*, 64-65.

⁷²⁶ Declaration of the House of Representatives, 10 May 1689 in *Glorious Revolution*, 71.

⁷²⁷ Council Records for 10 May 1689 in *Glorious Revolution*, 71-72. Richard C. Simmons sees this as a delaying tactic and argues it is evidence of a continuation or resumption of the tension that (supposedly) emerged in the 1660s between a ‘colonial’ and ‘commonwealth’ faction in Massachusetts’ politics. This has frequently been characterized by historians as a conflict between the elites (represented by the assistants) who favored a moderate policy of appeasement to the crown because of their strong economic ties to England, and the popular party which favored a greater degree of independence for Massachusetts. These characterizations ignore not only the relatively dialogical nature of the interactions between the assistants and the deputies on this point, as well as the important role of religiously based arguments in favor of maintaining a separate New English “way.” Simmons’ article is important, however, for it highlights the relationship between Boston and the rest of the towns in Massachusetts politics during this period; see Simmons and S. I., “The Massachusetts Revolution of 1689: Three Early American Political Broadside,” *Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Apr., 1968), 1-6.

hint at the dialogue going on in Massachusetts Bay over the form of the post-Andros government.⁷²⁸ What is most interesting is not the specific policy options advocated by the various authors, but rather, the theoretical reasoning offered in each one. The three broadsides were each directed exclusively at an internal audience which shared a core understanding of the intent of the April revolution as the restoration of the founding aspirations, yet the authors differ in the conclusions they draw from that shared premise.

The first broadside, presented in the form of an open letter “From a Gentleman of Boston To a Friend in the Country,” and signed by “N.N.” presents the most politically moderate—even cautious—interpretation of what a ‘restored’ government in Massachusetts would look like. It opens with a reference to “the Motions of Divine Providence in our Days.” These, the author continues

have been stupendous, especially in present appearances for Deliverance to God’s Israel, not only in Europe, and our own Nation; but among ourselves, who were reckoned as Out-casts, whom none did seek after. . . . such a Spirit was Raised, United and Governed, to take the fittest Season, and the best way for the breaking the Nets of the Wicked, and making way for the Escape of the Birds that were entangled in them.⁷²⁹

Here, N.N. fuses religious language with the rhetoric of solidarity and civic communion to frame the recent revolution as an example of the ongoing divine providence at work in Massachusetts: he speaks to members of “God’s Israel” who, although they have been literally ‘cast out’ by others (a reference, perhaps, to New England’s founders and their flight from persecution), have drawn together with a unified spirit in order to “escape” once again from those who would limit their freedom. The power of this appeal to the community’s origins and sense of divine appointment is, in part, the power of guilt: by

⁷²⁸ Simmons and S. I, “Three Early American Political Broadside,” 1-12.

⁷²⁹ Simmons and S. I, “Three Early American Political Broadside,” 7.

reminding New Englanders of their inheritance as a covenant people, the author is able to segue from a call for public thanksgiving to an exhortation towards public restraint in the matter of settling the government as the outgrowth of that thanksgiving.

Having successfully effected an end to their sufferings under Andros, it would ill-become New Englanders to mishandle the opportunity to restore their political peace, and N. N. urged his audience to avoid “differing and dividing apprehensions among ourselves, either by groundless jealousies of each other in the present care for our safety, or various opinions about the way and time of settling the Government.”⁷³⁰ While he acknowledged that “the most sober men vary” in their opinions on the matter, some advocating a new election and others preferring to simply reinstate (or, “reassume”) the 1686 government, N.N. strongly recommended the latter as the “most eligible” course because it was the option best suited to respect the people’s right to government by consent and least likely to be seen as a radical statement by those outside the colony.⁷³¹

Among the reasons for reinstatement is the fact that “the Magistrates and Deputies Chosen in ‘86 were chosen for the Year, but were by force hindered; and that quickly from Discharging their Duty.”⁷³² One might, he argued, consider them to be “a standing Court, and adjourned,” although their adjournment had been prolonged by the imposition of the Andros regime.⁷³³ To restore to the last freely elected representatives of the people the political power usurped from them would give the post-revolutionary government a veneer of continuity with all the previous governments under the 1629 charter. This, in turn, would help to legitimize the claims being made to English audiences about the

⁷³⁰ Simmons and S. I, “Three Early American Political Broadsides,” 7.

⁷³¹ Simmons and S. I, “Three Early American Political Broadsides,” 7-8.

⁷³² Simmons and S. I, “Three Early American Political Broadsides,” 8.

⁷³³ Simmons and S. I, “Three Early American Political Broadsides,” 8.

limited aims of the revolution in New England: a restoration of the previous government was less likely to be seen as a radical attempt to assert the colony's independence from the (new) monarchy.

This broadside was answered by another on May 18, 1689, entitled "The Case of Massachusetts Colony Considered, in a Letter to a Friend at Boston," and signed with the pseudonym Philo. Angl. In contrast to N. N.'s moderation, Philo. Angl. asserted boldly "that in violent changes the people can as well authorize civil as military government; and in the meantime are not (neither can they be) tied to any other laws than what agree with the present necessity."⁷³⁴ If the good of the people was indeed the supreme law, and it required them to overthrow their existing government, under no circumstances could they be induced to accept the idea that they were bound to reassume any other particular form simply as a matter of tradition or custom. For Philo. Angl., the violent nature of the April revolution meant that as long as the public emergency continued, the people were legitimately able to take whatever measures they deemed necessary to secure their welfare.

In practice, however, he agreed with N. N. that reassuming the 1629 charter was the course best suited to securing the public good. "The Charter of this Country is deservedly accounted our Magna Charta," he wrote:

If we enjoy this, with the blessing of the Almighty, we are happy, and that if without this, we are wholly without law: the laws of England being made for England only, and in many things not suiting to us. . . . Besides, the essential part of English laws is, that they are made by the people who must obey them, and neither law made nor tax raised without their own consent, which laws can never be enjoyed by us but in the way of our charter.⁷³⁵

⁷³⁴ Simmons and S. I, "Three Early American Political Broadside," 8.

⁷³⁵ Simmons and S. I, "Three Early American Political Broadside," 8-9.

Because the relative independence of Massachusetts as political entity was dependent upon the 1629 charter with its extensive grant of self-government to the people of the colony, it was both prudent and principled for the people to reinstate the government they had enjoyed under its terms.

A third anonymous broadside entitled “The Country-Man’s Answer to a Gentleman in Boston, Mr. N.N.’s Letter to a Friend in the Country,” and signed S. I. defended the April revolution as the action of “honest, innocent Country-men” who had acted “out of conscience and tender respect to God’s Glory, loyalty to His Highness our prince, and fidelity to our country.”⁷³⁶ In contrast to N. N. and Philo. Angl., however, S. I. argued that the only legitimate way to settle the government of the colony in the aftermath of the revolution was to hold entirely new elections. S. I. asserted that “the main essential thing [to] be attained” by the revolution was not simply the end of the Andros regime, but rather “that an election or choice of government be made” by the people of the colony.⁷³⁷

While N. N.’s interpretation of the 1629 charter was literally correct on many points, in his focus on the technical requirements of the law, he had lost sight of the larger philosophical principle such requirements were meant to support: the right of the people to be governed by their own consent. If the legitimation of the April Revolution depended upon the claim that Andros’ government had been illegitimate and arbitrary because it was unrepresentative and destructive of individual rights, then in the aftermath of the revolution, lacking any settled government, the political power of the community had returned to the people at large. The people as constituted in 1689 were a new political

⁷³⁶ Simmons and S. I., “Three Early American Political Broadside,” 10.

⁷³⁷ Simmons and S. I., “Three Early American Political Broadside,” 10.

entity from the people who had elected the government in 1686: they now held their sovereignty directly as they had at the time of the founding, and they must therefore directly give it up through the process of new elections.

The recent revolution, S. I. argued, had made the “country” of Massachusetts “more united” and more interested in protecting their liberties than ever before. Moreover, circumstances had provided a slate of potential candidates for office, a group of “honorably worthy gentlemen, that have hazarded their lives for the obtaining our liberties.” With such a selection of worthies, he continued, “we shall not find ourselves puzzled in nomination of fit persons to manage the affairs of our government, if we can but have opportunity to manifest our minds by election. . . . We say therefore, we are in the fittest posture for Choice that ever we were in.”⁷³⁸ To regain their right to choose their own government was the “one main thing aimed at in the Motion of the Army” in deposing Andros. To deny the people their right to choose would be “an occasion (as we may plainly fore-see) of dividing a country, at this time so heartily united,” and therefore, to waste all of the political momentum and goodwill which might otherwise be put to good purpose in advancing the public welfare.⁷³⁹

Although in some ways the most outspoken defender of the political rights of New England’s freemen, S. I. closed his letter with a statement recognizing that the colony’s future was not entirely within their control. Acknowledging that Massachusetts was in a state of “dependence” on England, he expressed his hope that William would “consult our peace and prosperity, and once again restore to us our dear lost liberties and patent-privileges, and set up our hedge of government about us, that we may sit under our

⁷³⁸ Simmons and S. I., “Three Early American Political Broadside,” 10.

⁷³⁹ Simmons and S. I., “Three Early American Political Broadside,” 10.

vines and fig-trees, and there may be none to make us afraid.”⁷⁴⁰ He reinforced these Old Testament metaphors for the providence of God in the daily affairs of His people with a final prayer that the God who had “made us know [t]he worth of [our liberties] by the want” of them, might even now, intervene to ensure that these were secured.⁷⁴¹

The results of this mini-battle for public opinion were mixed. The second convention of town representatives voted to reinstate “the persons chosen [and] sworn governor, deputy governor, and assistants,” in 1686. They also voted to expand the assistants by an unspecified number of “fit persons...as hath been desired.”⁷⁴² In a gesture of compromise towards those who would have preferred new elections, the convention also asked each of the towns in the colony to select one or two individuals to serve in the role of deputies to the General Court.⁷⁴³

Following the convention, yet another broadside was published in order to disseminate and explain the reasoning behind the results. In light of the “shattered condition this colony is in,” the town representatives explained that they had adopted the course most likely to satisfy the “earnest desires and expectations of the several places we belong unto [of] ... re-instating and settlement under their former patent rights, that so they might enjoy tranquility, as in former days and pleasant years that are past.”⁷⁴⁴

Although the factual veracity of this gloss on the colony’s past as both tranquil and

⁷⁴⁰ Simmons and S. I, “Three Early American Political Broadside,” 10.

⁷⁴¹ Simmons and S. I, “Three Early American Political Broadside,” 10.

⁷⁴² Proceedings of May 24, 1689, *Glorious Revolution*, 82. The quoted text is from the report of the final committee vote; the individual town returns for both conventions are reprinted in the collection. These demonstrate the widespread sense of the people of Massachusetts that the revolution was both a return to government under the 1629 Charter and a moment of fresh political choice; see *Glorious Revolution*, 360-391.

⁷⁴³ Proceedings of May 24, 1689, *Glorious Revolution*, 82.

⁷⁴⁴ “At a Convention of the Representatives of the Several Towns and Villages,” (Boston: 1689), *Glorious Revolution*, 393.

pleasant is disputable (see Chapters 4-5 above), it was rhetorically useful for the combined task of legitimating the convention's activities and solidifying public support thereof. The representatives presented the decision to resume the 1629 charter not as a matter of political intrigue, but as the necessary restoration of orderly and predictable governance in a time of political disorder and uncertainty.

Within the context of Massachusetts' revolutionary heritage and associated founding aspirations, this sparse text takes on the contours of a more fully developed political theory. In explaining their response to the colony's crisis of political legitimacy, the town representatives took the time to articulate the reasoning behind the popular petitions for a settled government to replace the Council for the Safety of the People. From the founding, the political community in Massachusetts had been based upon the principles of moral equality, industry, and civic communion: these had been incorporated into the structures and institutions of the colony, most obviously in the form of a constitutional, representative system of government and the creation of a legal system that recognized individual rights. The destruction of these aspirational principles and the institutional developments derived from them had led to the overthrow of the Andros regime: to have continued under the extra-legal emergency governance of Council would have been to undermine the principled foundations of April Revolution.

To ensure the preservation of the founding aspirations, it was necessary for the people to be given the opportunity to speak: the purpose of elections, as S. I. had argued in the lead up to the convention, even if they merely confirmed the members of the Council, was "so those honorable gentlemen...may see their power confirmed and their hands strengthened by a free choice of the country who will by that means oblige

themselves in obedience to their rulers so chosen.”⁷⁴⁵ Consent, in other words, could not be inferred from either a previous choice or the absence of an active opposition to the acting government: it had to be granted in actuality, by the people voting in their respective towns and then acting through their representatives at the colony level.

The earnestness with which those involved approached the theoretical implications of the crisis of political legitimacy is, perhaps, best seen by their shared willingness to expand the franchise to include non-church members. At this critical juncture, the policy put in place by the founding generation of restricting political participation to the recognizably godly was more of a liability than an asset in terms of rallying domestic support to the side of the rebellion. It was far more important to the perpetuation of New England’s founding principles that the “generality” of the people (most of whom were at best, half-way members of their local churches) be persuaded that their interests and the interests of the colony were aligned than that some elusive standard of purity be maintained. In all four documents surrounding the second town convention, it is clear that the ideal of civic communion now necessitated the expansion of freemanship to include all reputable freeholders: this would not only be “a great expedient to our peace and security, and to the settlement of our charter-privileges,”⁷⁴⁶ it would also make the government in the colony “the most easy and most safe Government in the World.”⁷⁴⁷ By expanding the franchise, Massachusetts’ political leaders in 1689 effectively resolved the civil crisis associated with restrictive church membership practices in the previous generation, and ensured that all who had the means to evidence

⁷⁴⁵ Simmons and S. I., “Three Early American Political Broadsides,” 10.

⁷⁴⁶ Simmons and S. I., “Three Early American Political Broadsides,” 10.

⁷⁴⁷ Simmons and S. I., “Three Early American Political Broadsides,” 8, 9

their material interest and membership in the colony could do so in political matters as well.⁷⁴⁸

Speaking to an Audience Abroad, Part 2: The General Court Petitions the King

In May 1689, the Council for the Safety of the People sent an address to William and Mary both congratulating them on the “the late glorious enterprise...for the relief and deliverance of the distressed kingdoms,” and framing the April Revolution as a response to, or continuation of those events and William’s declarations “encouraging the English nation to cast off the yoke of a tyrannical and arbitrary power.”⁷⁴⁹ New Englanders, they explained, “being themselves under alike (if not worse) evil,” and with the added fear of an “invasion” from neighboring French colonies, had been “excited to imitate so noble and heroic an example.”⁷⁵⁰ They ended the address with an expression of their hope

that under the shadow of your imperial crown we may again be made to flourish in the enjoyment of our former rights and privileges, being the sole encouragement unto our fathers, and predecessors, at their own great cost, and expense to settle this colony to the enlargement of the English dominions, and so much for the glory of that crown.⁷⁵¹

Although the language here is conciliatory, it is not submissive: the council has succinctly asserted the legitimacy of their actions in overthrowing Andros and reassuming self-government, not only on the basis of William’s declarations, but also on the grounds of their historic charter and their forefathers investment in the colony.

Similarly, in a second address to William and Mary prepared on June 6, 1689, the newly elected government told the monarchs that although “several weeks” had passed

⁷⁴⁸ “At a Convention of the Representatives of the Several Towns and Villages,” *Glorious Revolution*, 394-395.

⁷⁴⁹ “The Humble Address of the President and Council for the Safety of the People, and Conservation of the Peace,” 20 May 1689, *Glorious Revolution*, 77.

⁷⁵⁰ “Humble Address,” 20 May 1689, *Glorious Revolution*, 78.

⁷⁵¹ “Humble Address,” 20 May 1689, *Glorious Revolution*, 78-79.

since they had requested the crown's advice about settling the government, no such orders had been received. In the absence of external direction, and "finding an absolute necessity of civil government," they explained, they had been forced to accede to the popular demand for a more permanent, elected government.⁷⁵² Although they were careful to classify their own sense of their authority as only a partial resumption of the 1629 charter⁷⁵³, the authors were nevertheless bold in their assertion that Charles and James had acted "unrighteously and injuriously" in revoking the colony's charter. That had been an especially grievous abuse of power, they argued, because the

royal charter [was] the sole inducement, and encouragement unto our fathers and predecessors to come over into this wilderness and here to plant, and settle the same at their own cost, and charges, which through the blessing of God, was a flourishing plantation enlarging your majesties dominion to the glory of the English crown; though since the alteration of that government, greatly impoverished and brought low.⁷⁵⁴

In both of these addresses, the acting government adopted a tone of limited and incomplete deference towards the monarchy: they seem to want to align their cause with that of the English towns and corporations that had appealed to William and Mary as the defenders of the 'Protestant interest' while simultaneously maintaining the relatively independent and sovereign status of New England within the empire.

⁷⁵² "Humble Address and Petition of the Governor, and Council, and Convention of Representatives of the People of Your Majesty's Colony of the Massachusetts in New England," 7 June 1689, *Glorious Revolution*, 89.

⁷⁵³ At this stage in the post-revolutionary restructuring of government, the administration was styling itself a "convention of the governor, council and representatives of the Massachusetts Colony," rather than using the more traditional terminology of the General Court, comprised of the governor, assistants, and deputies. On 7 June 1689, the representatives passed a resolution urging the governor and his council to cease insisting on the 'partial' nature of their powers and instead, to recognize they, as the peoples' agents, had duly empowered them to "accept government according to our charter rules" and using the former titles. See "Declaration of the Representatives from the Several Towns," 7 June 1689, *Glorious Revolution*, 90-91.

⁷⁵⁴ "Humble Address," 7 June 1689, *Glorious Revolution* 90.

These questions would plague New Englanders as they attempted to preserve the colony's founding aspirations and the sense of a separate New English identity in the face of an imperial policy of consolidation and Anglicization. In London, Increase Mather would be joined by Samuel Sewall, Elijah Cooke and Thomas Oakes as colonial agents working to secure the return of the 1629 charter or a close approximation thereof. In pursuit of this goal, Mather would publish a number of pamphlets defending New England's actions in the April Revolution and asserting the legitimacy of their claims to self-government. In Boston, his son Cotton became the unofficial spokesman for the new administration, preaching not only the first 'election' sermon given in the post-Andros era, but also several more on topics of political significance over the course of 1689-92. Together, the Mathers and other pamphlet writers would help to preserve New Englanders' sense of civic identity by focusing on the applicability and sustainability of the colony's founding aspirations of moral equality, industry, and civic communion within a new imperial framework. In the final section of this chapter, I briefly examine the post-revolutionary literature to illustrate the ways in which it both adopts and adapts the founding aspirations to face new political challenges and the ways in which the texts created for an 'internal' audience can help illuminate those produced for an 'external' one.

Civic Education, Part 2: Cotton Mather's Post-Revolutionary 'Texts'

On the fly-leaf of the published version of the sermon he preached on 23 May 1689, at the first meeting of what was the restored General Court, Cotton Mather included a stanza from the early-seventeenth century English poet George Herbert's poem "The Church Militant," on the westward progression of Christianity:

Religion stands on tip-toe in our land,
 Ready to pass to the American stand.
 When height of malice and prodigious lusts,
 (The marks of future bane) shall fill our cup
 Unto the brim, and make our measure up;
 --Then shall Religion to America flee;
 They have their Times of the Gospel, even as we.
 -- Yet as the Church shall thither westward fly,
 So sin shall trace and dog her instantly.⁷⁵⁵

Mather did not directly comment on the poem, yet its presence at the front of what was surely the most important sermon he had delivered to date, speaks volumes. Originally published in 1633 and reprinted multiple times over the next several decades, Herbert's poem traced the rise of religion in the east and its spread westward, linking that spread to the rise and fall of various empires along the way. At the time, it was recognized as portending the rise of America, perhaps even to the detriment of England. By positioning this exceptionally provocative stanza of the poem at the front of his sermon to the newly installed government, Mather sent a powerful rhetorical signal about the solemnity of the work of guiding New Englanders in the reassumption of not only their charter privileges, but also their sense of themselves as a covenant people.

In the body of the sermon, Mather emphasized the traditional motif of New England as God's 'new Israel,' that is, a people peculiarly engaged in a binding relationship with God. To develop this sense of unfolding divine purpose, he gave credit to God for protecting and guiding the people in their late revolutionary actions; urged the people to be obedient to and in communion with God; explained that one of the primary

⁷⁵⁵ C. Mather, *The Way to Prosperity* (Boston: 1690), fly-leaf. For details on the poet and the context within which he wrote, see the Poetry Foundation's biography of Herbert: <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/george-herbert>, accessed 11/19/2015. Mather also quoted from the address sent by the acting government to William and Mary just after the April Revolution in praising the people of New England for being "strongly and unanimously spirited, to intend their own safeguard and defense." Preface.

ways of being with God is in acting for God, and then linked that to a set of specific policy recommendations.⁷⁵⁶

Mather argued that “when God is *with* a people, He shapes their counsels for them, and he disposes them to the things that should be done.” God, in other words, inclines both the minds and the hearts of men to be the agents of His will in the world:

When the Jews were upon a Re-Assumption of the desirable things which the Babylonians had deprived ‘em of, they took a *Right Way* to disappoint all that were desirous to interrupt them in it. We find in Neh. 4:13, that while those exercises continued they *waited* in a posture agreeable thereunto; and when the danger was over, *then they returned everyone to his work*. How came this to pass? ‘Twas because God was *with* them.⁷⁵⁷

Here, Mather’s language is clearly intended to draw attention to the parallels between the Jewish period of exile and New England’s recent period of ‘captivity’ under Andros. In both cases, God guided His people to reassume their traditional right to self-government, bringing them through a period of “danger” and testing. In the Old Testament exemplar, Mather pointed out that having faced these trials successfully, the Jews then quickly “returned everyone to his work” and he spent the remainder of the sermon imagining what it would look like for New Englanders to do the same.

One lesson to be learned from the crisis just ended, Mather argued, was the importance of remembering the founders. “Let us consider, what *Fathers* we have had; they were *with God*.”⁷⁵⁸ The most recent generation, Mather argued, had failed to follow their example and subsequently experienced many “symptoms...of God’s not being with [them]” including: poor crops and trading woes, numerous public fires, war and Indian

⁷⁵⁶ C. Mather, *The Way to Prosperity* (Boston: 1690), 4-8, 13-14, 15-16, 24ff.

⁷⁵⁷ C. Mather, *The Way to Prosperity*, 7-8.

⁷⁵⁸ C. Mather, *The Way to Prosperity*, 22 and also 23.

attacks, and the utmost “humiliation...the loss of our government.”⁷⁵⁹ It was now time for them all to “examine [themselves] and set upon the reforming of our own hearts and lives, and the renewing of our covenants with the Lord.”⁷⁶⁰ In particular, he urged them to purge the sins of “revengefulness,” “unthankfulness,” “censure and hatred,” “contempt of the ministers,” and “lying”—all actions that tended to break down the bonds not only between God and man, but also between neighbors and fellow citizens.⁷⁶¹

Above all, Mather warned his audience to avoid “contention,” an “error” to which New Englanders were extremely susceptible, even to the point of “feverish paroxysm which this land is now raging in, through mere misunderstandings about the means leading to the end wherein we are generally agreed”—a reference to the recent public debates about how best to settle the government.⁷⁶² New Englanders were too prone to turn every dispute into a question of principle, Mather observed. He urged them to adopt a more moderate approach: “we have hitherto professed ourselves *a country of puritans*; I beseech you then let us have the wisdom to be first pure, then peacable.”⁷⁶³ The combination of these two attributes would lead individuals to look for areas of agreement and compromise, rather than stubbornly insisting on promoting their own understandings of the “best” course of action in any circumstance.

In order to accomplish this sort of public unity, Mather drew attention to the need to accompany the cultivation of a “public spirit in us all, for the good of the whole” with practical measures towards reviving the educational system in the colony.⁷⁶⁴

⁷⁵⁹ C. Mather, *The Way to Prosperity*, 20-22.

⁷⁶⁰ C. Mather, *The Way to Prosperity*, 25.

⁷⁶¹ C. Mather, *The Way to Prosperity*, 28-29.

⁷⁶² C. Mather, *The Way to Prosperity*, 28-29.

⁷⁶³ C. Mather, *The Way to Prosperity*, 31.

⁷⁶⁴ C. Mather, *The Way to Prosperity*, 35.

Although the April Revolution had liberated New Englanders from the Andros regime, the past several years' neglect of the project of civic formation had lasting implications: "I do not know whether we do, or can at this day, labor under an iller [sic] symptom, than the too general want of education in the rising generation," he lamented. As the founders' had feared, lack of a general education had resulted in a rise in "degeneracy" among the people who no longer had the spiritual or intellectual tools to resist the temptation to abandon their founding commitments.⁷⁶⁵

Mather elaborated on the link between education in civic heritage with ongoing civic practice in a sermon prepared for a day of public thanksgiving held on December 19, 1689. In this sermon, Mather urged his auditors to remember that the fullest expression of their gratitude to God would be found in their everyday ways of living and dealing with one another: "the best Thanksgiving is Thanks-living."⁷⁶⁶ Mather encouraged New Englanders to practice not only the "*general Return of Obedience*" to the laws of God, but also the "*special Return of well-doing...[of] laboring to do some singular thing, for the advancement of His Truths and Ways.*"⁷⁶⁷ Here, Mather used the word "singular" in the literal sense: to do one thing, a reference to the ways in which each person's discrete pursuit of their individual calling might also, if done with the appropriate motivation and attitude, advance not only their personal interest, but also the larger interest of the gospel.

⁷⁶⁵ Recall the founders' arguments that a robust educational system provided students with the ability to read and study the word of God for themselves (and thus, to learn to be virtuous); helped develop more broadly practical skills such as logic, rhetoric, and so forth; and refined and cultivated individual industry by developing good work habits; see Chapter 3.

⁷⁶⁶ C. Mather, *The wonderful works of God commemorated praises bespoke for the God of heaven in a thanksgiving sermon delivered on Decemb. 19, 1689* (Boston: 1690), 16.

⁷⁶⁷ C. Mather, *The wonderful works of God*, 17-18.

He also challenged his audience to be more cognizant of the work of God in their lives and to record the “excellent things” that God had done, both in their conversations and “(if we can) to *write* of them too. Every good man should leave to his children, a *Diary* for a *Legacy*.” On the community level, he suggested that “considerable appearances of God in every generation, ought with a fuller publication to be transmitted unto -posterity, by the pens of good historians.”⁷⁶⁸ In both cases, the point was to create a chain of continuity linking the generations together by their shared sense of participation in the ongoing work of God in and through his covenant people in New England. In framing their personal experiences as part of larger pattern formed from the lives of their ancestors, neighbors, and eventual progeny, Mather highlighted the ways in which New Englanders’ civic identity was a matter of both theological and historical significance. Moreover, were New Englanders to be better versed in their history, Mather suggested, they would all the more easily engage in the work of “thanks-living,” for they would better appreciate the relative insignificance of their temporary hardships in light of the more sweeping story of God’s redemptive work in the world.⁷⁶⁹ History provided a sense of perspective through which providence could be more easily discerned, and, once discerned, celebrated and remembered with the anticipation of future such interpositions.

Mather’s presentation of a providential view of history as an essential element of public thanksgiving and service drew together the founding generation’s aspirations of industry and civic communion: the actual process of historical remembrance required the teller to sift through his or her experiences, essentially re-living the good works he or she

⁷⁶⁸ C. Mather, *The wonderful works of God*, 19.

⁷⁶⁹ Mather spends the bulk of the sermon reviewing the relatively dire situation of Protestantism in Europe more broadly, and comparing it to the successful restoration of Christian liberty in both Englands; see pages 32-52.

had already completed, but with the added sense of their significance in the narrative of God's larger work in the commonwealth. Moreover, inasmuch as this process relied upon the literacy of the community to safely transmit the legacy of providences from one generation to the next, it presumed the ongoing utilization of at least one the institutions intended by the founders to perpetuate these aspirational goals, the public educational system.

Mather's themes of cultivating an historical sensitivity and an accompanying literacy among the people are also reflected in his father's framing of the April Revolution and efforts for a restoration of the 1629 Charter. The elder Mather, writing to persuade the crown to look favorably on the colony, claimed that the people had been primarily motivated by a deeply-rooted appreciation for their historic rights and identity as Englishmen. The revolutionaries "declared for the Prince of *Orange*, and the Parliament of *England*, the Protestant Religion and their Ancient Constitution"—note the linking of contemporary events and figures with past historical precedents to create a sense of continuity.⁷⁷⁰ Similarly, among the other reasons the elder Mather gives for the crown to approve of Massachusetts is her remarkable success in establishing a system of public education culminating in a university. "New England hath... out-done all America. For there they have erected a university," he wrote, not only for the education of ministers, but for instruction in the fields of liberal learning broadly. The graduates and faculty of Harvard, Mather claimed, "have a corresponding communication with other Learned Men in diverse parts of the World, where the Reformed Religion is professed, and by them [are] highly revered for their learning and sobriety."⁷⁷¹ Mather argued

⁷⁷⁰ I. Mather, *A Brief Relation of the state of New England* (London: 1689), in *Andros Tracts*, Vol. II: 160.

⁷⁷¹ I. Mather, *Brief Relation*, in *Andros Tracts*, Vol. II:162.

that these accomplishments, by building upon the solid foundations of English legal thought and education, had helped to increase the glory and renown not only of both Englands.

When speaking to a New English audience, the younger Mather generally described this sense of individual connection to the broader community in terms of a “public spirit.” Two of his sermons from the spring of 1690 are particularly helpful in illuminating the meaning of this term: in *A Discourse on the Necessities and Advantages of a Public Spirit* and in *The Serviceable Man*, Mather described the essential qualities needed for a political society to flourish. Above all, he argued, its members must endeavor to both cultivate and demonstrate a sense of civic communion, a radical willingness to consider their own good as inseparably connected to the good of their neighbors. In terms strongly reminiscent of Winthrop’s aspirational discourse on Christian charity as the vital bond between otherwise disparate and possibly antagonistic individuals, he urged his auditors to remember the interconnectedness of the body politic.⁷⁷²

In the *Necessities and Advantages of a Public Spirit*, Mather used the book of Esther to illustrate the ways a single individual and the particular people with whom they identified were inextricably connected. Mather argued both “necessity” and “faith” should move the individual to “readily and cheerfully venture his all to serve the people of God when a time of distress and danger calls for it.”⁷⁷³ Of “necessity,” Mather observed that the fates of individuals are inexorably tied up with the fate of the groups to which they belong: “it was more probable that the queen would suffer for being a Jew,

⁷⁷² C. Mather, *Necessities and Advantages of a Public Spirit* (Boston: 1690), 7.

⁷⁷³ C. Mather, *Necessities and Advantages of a Public Spirit*, 9.

than that the Jew would escape for being a queen.” He argued that in times of desperation, the soul ought to seek refuge in God, and to rely upon his providence and therefore, to freely divest themselves of all their resources in the name of the public good, with faith that these personal sacrifices would ultimately be rewarded.⁷⁷⁴

Driven by these joint motivations, Mather urged New Englanders to recognize that no clear lines of delineation could be drawn between the private and public: insofar as the fate of each individual was bound up with the fate of the region as a whole, so too, individual talents and resources ought also to be seen as a public good. Mather offered several different examples of ways in which the good of the whole might require particular individuals to make sacrifices. We must, he argued, be willing to “venture our quiet” and become involved in public causes: “we may not, for the love of ease, decline the doing of what is to be done for the interest of God and of his people.”⁷⁷⁵ The cost of doing so might be high: personal wealth, “honor,” beloved relationships, and even “our very lives” were all to be spent freely, if necessary, in the service of others.⁷⁷⁶

Aware that this might seem extravagant and even foolhardy, Mather reminded his listeners that nothing in their possession was truly their own: having been both created and redeemed by God, not even man’s soul was truly his own, but ought to be considered as a trust held for the purposes and benefit of others. As “brethren” and “companions” to one another, New Englanders had an everlasting-interest in one another’s welfare that

⁷⁷⁴ C. Mather, *Necessities and Advantages of a Public Spirit*, 7-8.

⁷⁷⁵ C. Mather, *Necessities and Advantages of a Public Spirit*, 11, 12.

⁷⁷⁶ C. Mather, *Necessities and Advantages of a Public Spirit*, 12-14. Mather meant the call to give up their lives literally: later in the sermon, he urged his auditors to be willing to take up arms in the face of a new Indian threat spurred on by French forces to protect their own and the king’s interests. C. Mather, *Necessities and Advantages of a Public Spirit*, 33. Cf. Mather’s militia sermons given during KPW, see chapter 5. In the fall of 1689, Mather would return to these themes in greater depth; see *Souldiers counselled and comforted. A discourse delivered unto some part of the forces engaged in the just war of New-England against the northern & eastern Indians*. Sept. 1. 1689. (Boston: 1689).

could not be ignored without grievous peril to both their individual souls and the survival of the commonwealth.⁷⁷⁷

In drawing out the practical implications of his doctrine, Mather did not shy away from supporting particular policies of the current General Court. First, he addressed the always-controversial subject of taxation. Men who were willing to spend their money to satisfy their own selfish desires but not to pay taxes to support the public, Mather argued, were no better than those who “would not care tho’ the houses of their neighbors were burnt, if their own apples might be roasted in the flame.”⁷⁷⁸ In setting their private interest above the interest of their community, such men either ignored or denied the ways in which those interests intersected and, indeed, in which the latter superceded the former.⁷⁷⁹

Mather feared the prevalence of this attitude was largely to blame for the various sufferings that had been visited upon the commonwealth in the form of war with the native population, as well as conflicts with neighboring colonial powers. He reproved his listeners for their personal faults, declaring “the best service that you can do for the people of God is, to forsake your wicked ways, and your unjust thoughts, and return unto

⁷⁷⁷ C. Mather, *Necessities and Advantages of a Public Spirit*, 16-17, 26. Interestingly, Mather appears to have been willing to take the primacy of the public good even to the extent of using it as a justification for ignoring the rule of law: “Even the law itself, notwithstanding the exact regard which ought to be had unto it, I say, the law itself in some circumstances and punctilios gives way to the publick safety, which is the supreme law of all. It was against law for Esther to venture upon what she did: but it could not be avoided or omitted. How much more, must our will and humor and passion give way to the good of the whole?” C. Mather, *Necessities and Advantages of a Public Spirit*, 41.

⁷⁷⁸ C. Mather, *Necessities and Advantages of a Public Spirit*, 22.

⁷⁷⁹ In the election sermon he preached just a few months later, Mather went even further argued that mutuality was a reflection of the duty the individual believer owed to God: “God hath so disposed of us, as to make us need the help one of another. The people of God may say unto us, as in Philemon 19, Thou owest unto me, even thine own self. We owe the utmost service unto the Great God, as our Creator and Presrver; but he has made his people the receivers of his rents.” C. Mather, *The Serviceable Man* (Boston: 1690), 9.

the Lord.”⁷⁸⁰ Mather then referred approvingly to the General Court’s recent proclamation reinstating all the old laws against vice.⁷⁸¹

In it, the court framed the disasters of the previous decade as the Lord’s chastisement of the colony for their “corruption of manners attended with inexcusable degeneracies and apostasies.” They therefore called for the colony’s vice legislation to be “faithfully and vigorously put into execution.”⁷⁸² These laws were intended to suppress a host of negative behaviors, but the court was primarily concerned with suppressing the “roots” of those behaviors in flawed personal character of individual citizens. These, however, were of such an inward nature that court recognized they

fall not so much under the cognizance of humane laws, namely, such as unbelief, worldliness, heresy, pride, wrath, strife, envy, and the neglect of communion with God in both natural and instituted worship, and the contempt of the ever-lasting gospel, with a shameful want of due family-instruction, which are the roots of bitterness in the midst of us.⁷⁸³

Note that the court states these internal characteristics are outside their powers of legislation not merely because they would be difficult to prosecute but because such things are “not...under the cognizance” of law: despite their sense that these personal attributes of character were the underlying cause of the colony’s problems, the court recognized as a matter of principle that such matters fell outside the legitimate purview of governmental authority.

⁷⁸⁰ C. Mather, *Necessities and Advantages of a Public Spirit*, 27.

⁷⁸¹ C. Mather, *Necessities and Advantages of a Public Spirit*, 29. The order had been printed as a broadside a few days earlier; see *By the governour & general court of the colony of the Massachusetts Bay, in New-England...wherefore it is ordered, that the laws of this colony against vice...be now faithfully and vigorously put in execution ...* [Boston : Printed by Samuel Green, 1690].

⁷⁸² The broadside singled out “the laws against blasphemy, cursing, profane swearing, lying, unlawful gaming, Sabbath breaking, idleness, drunkenness, uncleanness, and all of the [enticements] and nurseries of such impieties,” as particularly necessary in these baleful times.

⁷⁸³ *The laws of this colony against vice...be now faithfully and vigorously put in execution*, np.

In order to get at these root causes in a way that did not involve the illegitimate extension of their powers, the Court enjoined the local churches to devote themselves to the pursuit of virtue and

to reflect seriously and frequently on their covenants, to sharpen their discipline against those that walk disorderly; and immediately to compose their differences and contentions (if such there be) whereby any of them may be distempered and enfeebled, that so they may become terrible as an army with banners.⁷⁸⁴

They likewise called upon the town governments to “speedily furnish themselves with all fit means for the good education of youth” in hopes that the combined efforts of these institutions would help the people “to remember whence they are fallen, and repent and do the[ir] first works.”⁷⁸⁵ In doing so, the court not only recognized the importance of the founder’s aspirations for the colony, but also the interconnection between the primary institutions (churches, schools, and a legal/constitutional order) they had established for the fulfillment of those aspirations.

In his sermon, Mather suggested that if New Englanders could embrace the proposed personal reforms of the Court’s declaration, they might speed the arrival of a ‘golden age’ to come in which America would emerge as a leading element of the British Empire. Returning to the importance using one’s diverse talents for the broader purpose of the public good, he adopted the ship of state metaphor, reminding his auditors that they were “all in a storm” together, and that “those worthy persons” who stood at the “helm” had been placed there by their own free consent in recognition of their particular leadership abilities. Rather than ceaselessly question the course being set by the

⁷⁸⁴ *Laws of this colony against vice...be now faithfully and vigorously put in execution.*

⁷⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

government, Mather encouraged his auditors to “mind the business of your own station; pull the ropes, ply the oars and the sails as you are commanded; but leave the helm, where ‘tis managed by those that can have no other interest, but what is yours.”⁷⁸⁶

The Serviceable Man takes up this theme of civic communion in earnest, but with an emphasis the intergenerational linkages. Drawing on the Biblical account of Nehemiah, Mather used the opportunity of addressing the newly elected court to explain the connection between his present generation and that of the founders.⁷⁸⁷ The founders had come to America “to have [their] posterity settled under the pure and full dispensations of the gospel, defended by rulers that should be of ourselves and governours that should proceed from the midst of us.”⁷⁸⁸ These laudable and peaceful intentions, Mather argued, were inexplicably seen as a threat by some in England, and he briefly recounted the history of their attacks upon the Bay Colony. Mather once again ended his presentation of the sufferings of Massachusetts (God’s “Israel in America”) with a comparison to the Babylonian Captivity of the original Israel, but added the sinister suggestion that this was an intentional plot by the enemies of New England to seduce the “rising generation” away from their heritage of both a free church and free state.⁷⁸⁹

⁷⁸⁶ C. Mather, *Necessities and Advantages of a Public Spirit*, 43.

⁷⁸⁷ C. Mather, *The Serviceable Man* (Boston: 1690), 2.

⁷⁸⁸ C. Mather, *The Serviceable Man*, 31.

⁷⁸⁹ C. Mather, *The Serviceable Man*, 27; 30-31. Mather claimed that this freedom was extended to those outside of the Congregational fold as well, even towards those “sectaries and seducers that are using their battering rams upon our sacred [concerns].” He mentions the Quakers’ attempts to disrupt the public peace, but argues that “since the government has been too safe and strong for those Foxes to throw down our wall; we have now for many years indulged them an entire liberty of conscience, nor is there (nor do I bespeak) the last prospect or intent of giving them interruption in it.” C. Mather, *Serviceable Man*, 34-35.

The most important remedy for this contagion, Mather argued, was a frequent recurrence to the history of the colony.⁷⁹⁰ The founders had been men of action, willing to take risks and invest their capacities and resources for the establishment of a commonwealth true to their ideals. In contrast, he observed sadly, in the present generation, “we all have our talents that lay by unoccupied, because we do no oftener think what they be, and what is to be done therewith.”⁷⁹¹ He urged self-examination, but also institutional means to nurture such talents: he encouraged his auditors to “fill the country with a liberal education, the want of which has a more threatening aspect on us than the worst of our other circumstances” and to both “civilize” and “Christianize” their native neighbors in hopes of drawing them into a more lasting alliance and an enduring peace.⁷⁹²

Speaking to an Audience Abroad, Part 3: Law and the April Revolution

While New Englanders continued to pursue personal and corporate reformation and revitalization of their founding principles at home, the transatlantic fight over the colony’s future status within the Empire continued.⁷⁹³ As the younger Mather reported to his auditors at the 1690 election sermon, “groundless and wicked complaints” and “ridiculous and extravagant calumnies” were being brought against New England, not only in the English press, but before Parliament.⁷⁹⁴ His father, along with William Stoughton, Edward Rawson, and Samuel Sewall had launched an extensive counter-attack, issuing numerous pamphlets outlining the contours of the legal case to be made in

⁷⁹⁰ C. Mather, *The Serviceable Man*, 42.

⁷⁹¹ C. Mather, *The Serviceable Man*, 46.

⁷⁹² C. Mather, *The Serviceable Man*, 51, 52. Earlier in the sermon, Mather again touched on the subject of taxation as a form of public service, arguing for better salaries for schoolmasters. See C. Mather, *The Serviceable Man*, 45.

⁷⁹³ C. Mather, *The Serviceable Man*, 34.

⁷⁹⁴ C. Mather, *Serviceable Man*, 33.

defense of the April Revolution. Because of the tremendous distance between the colony and the capitol, many of these pamphlets were intended to serve as evidence and even as ‘witnesses’ of a sort; one of them includes affidavits sworn by persons injured by Andros’ or his cronies, and another provides first-hand testimony by a member of Andros’ council detailing the improprieties of the regime. While the rhetorical focus in these pamphlets is therefore, necessarily more secular than that of the texts aimed at the internal audiences, the types of complaints raised and the ways in which they are presented also speak to New England’s founding aspirations and the perceived dangers presented thereto by the Andros government.

Among the most basic complaints against the Dominion of New England was that it replaced the colonists’ traditional government by consent with an unelected, unrepresentative government of outsiders. From the earliest days of the Commonwealth, the people of Massachusetts had grown accustomed to selecting their own rulers from among the freemen of the colony. This system of elected representatives not only helped to protect the people’s liberties by giving them a measure of control over the government but also meant that the interests of those in government were more likely to align with those of their constituents. The connection between the people and their representatives was a close one: not only did the political leadership know the desires and needs of their constituents, but they were themselves known as individual members of the communities which selected them for their posts. In contrast, under Andros, political positions had been filled through appointments, or, as the colonists understood them, “preferments.” While election to serve as the representative of the people was a mark of respect, it was also a duty which bore heavily on the men thus chosen. In contrast, “preferments” were

rewards (or, worse, bribes) which did nothing to connect the political officeholder with the body of the people, but rather, emphasized his dependence upon the government and more particularly and problematically, the governor himself.⁷⁹⁵

Unsurprisingly, the Massachusetts men found these offices were given to men from outside the colony, and thus, not only unfamiliar with its traditions, but unlikely to be sympathetic to the ends which they were intended to promote. As William Stoughton (a member of Andros' council disclosed), although a few New Englanders had been appointed to the Dominion council, the governor swiftly moved to marginalize them and chose instead "strangers to the country, without estates or interest therein to oblige them" as his chief councilors, "persons of known and declared prejudices against us."⁷⁹⁶

Examples of men who were "preferred" under Andros included Edward Randolph (1632-1703), who served as secretary of the Dominion of New England and was an open enemy of the colony, and Joseph Dudley (1647-1720), regarded as a traitor to his own people for his role in acquiescing to the voiding of the charter, and infamous for using his position on the council to line his own pockets.

Andros resented New Englanders' attempts to assert their right to self-government and reportedly stated that they were a threat to the authority of the crown: he "made us jealous that it would be thought for his Majesties interest, if this people were removed and another succeed in their room," the revolutionaries reported in the April Declaration.⁷⁹⁷

It was now plainly affirmed, both by some in open council, and by the same in private converse, that the people in New-England were all *slaves*, and the

⁷⁹⁵ "Declaration," *Andros Tracts*, Volume I: 13.

⁷⁹⁶ [Stoughton et. al.], *A Narrative of the Proceedings of Sir Edmond Andros and His Complices*, in *Andros Tracts*, Vol. 1:138.

⁷⁹⁷ "Declaration," in *Andros Tracts*, Vol. 1:13.

only difference between them and *slaves* is their not being bought and sold; and it was a maxim delivered in open court unto us by one of the council, *that we must not think the privileges of English men would follow us to the end of the world*: accordingly we have been treated with multiplied contradictions to *Magna Carta*, the rights of which we laid claim unto.⁷⁹⁸

New Englanders were accustomed to having a voice in their government at both the colony and local levels. Under the 1629 charter, “the inhabitants of each town did assemble as occasion required to consider of what might conduce to the welfare of their respective towns, the relief of the poor, or the like.” Andros and “*a few of his council*” enacted a law to limit town-meetings to being held once a year.

Andros took other measures to limit the voices of dissent, including passing a law to prohibit the free migration of citizens out of the colony. “After that Law was made, how should any dissatisfied persons ever obtain liberty to go for *England* to complain of their being oppressed by *Arbitrary governours*,” the pamphlet author asked.⁷⁹⁹ He limited the speech freedoms even of council members: “the debates in council were not so free as ought to have been, but too much overruled and a great deal of harshness continually expressed against persons and opinions that did not please.”⁸⁰⁰

Andros also did not hesitate to dispense with the pretense that these men had any actual authority when it suited his purpose. When the majority of the council opposed a proposed tax bill, for example, Stoughton reported that Andros signed it into law “without any counting of voices” that is, without the consent of the representatives of the people.⁸⁰¹ This was not an isolated occurrence but rather a reflection of a more general

⁷⁹⁸ “Declaration,” in *Andros Tracts*, Vol. 1:14.

⁷⁹⁹ [Rawson and Sewall], *The Revolution in New England Justified in Andros Tracts*, Volume 1:80.

⁸⁰⁰ [Stoughton et. al.], *A Narrative of the Proceedings of Sir Edmond Andros and His Complices*, in *Andros Tracts*, Vol. 1:137-138.

⁸⁰¹ [Stoughton et. al.], *A Narrative of the Proceedings of Sir Edmond Andros and His Complices*, in *Andros Tracts*, Vol. 1:139-140.

disdain for the formalities of the rule of law. Under Andros, “the way and the manner... of proposing and passing all laws was very uncertain and unequal...for after a little while there were not set times appointed or given notice of for the making of laws.”⁸⁰²

Uncertainty of this sort was especially likely to prevent the council from voicing their input, for all of these men had private businesses to attend to.⁸⁰³ The policies stood in sharp contrast to the carefully negotiated provisions for the equal involvement of assistants and deputies under the Massachusetts Laws and Liberties, and tended to undermine the theoretical link between the formalities of representative legislatures and the founding principles of equality of personhood, individual liberty, and government by consent.

As far as the manner of lawmaking under Andros, New Englanders complained that Andros and his cronies enacted legislation at will. Even when they were able to attend legislative sessions, it troubled the council members that their work was “often under great disadvantages, not to advise freely and consult about the making of a law thought necessary, but to maintain a contest in opposition to a very inconvenient one, too far promoted and engaged in already.” The complaint here touches on both the nature of the laws and the manner of their passing. The laws themselves are argued to be “inconvenient” rather than “necessary”—that is, they were seen as somehow against rather than for the public good, and thus undermined the purpose for which governments existed according to New Englander’s historic and theoretical understanding.⁸⁰⁴

⁸⁰² [Stoughton et. al.], *A Narrative of the Proceedings of Sir Edmond Andros and His Complices*, in *Andros Tracts*, Vol. 1:140.

⁸⁰³ [Stoughton et. al.], *A Narrative of the Proceedings of Sir Edmond Andros and His Complices*, in *Andros Tracts*, Vol. 1:140-141.

⁸⁰⁴ [Stoughton et. al.], *A Narrative of the Proceedings of Sir Edmond Andros and His Complices*, in *Andros Tracts*, Vol. 1:140-141. Cf. the preamble to the *Laws and Liberties*.

New Englanders found the lack of representation in the government particularly offensive when it came to the question of taxes and other issues that threatened individual liberties. The Andros government had instituted a number of exorbitant and arbitrary increases in the local rates “without any Rules but those of their own insatiable avarice and beggary.” In a colony where specie was scarce, the policy of these “Horse-leeches” was devastating.⁸⁰⁵ Those who dared to object against the new policy found themselves subjected to harsh fines. Where the cost of questioning the law was likely to be as great as simple compliance, it is little wonder that New English voices of dissent grew ever quieter as Andros’ regime continued.

Finally, “because these things could not make us miserable fast enough, there was a notable discovery made of we know not what flaw in all our *titles to our lands*” (emphasis in the original).⁸⁰⁶ Andros argued that because the 1629 charter had been repealed, all previous land grants were void and the colonists’ needed to purchase them again from the King. Apart from the obvious economic ramifications, this claim offended New Englanders who had not only purchased their land from the native population, but who had also (in many cases) occupied and improved those lands for decades. Moreover, in 1683, Charles II had promised “that no man here shall receive any prejudice in his freehold or estate.” Nevertheless, “we were every day told, *that no man was an owner of a foot of land in all the colony*. Accordingly, *writs of intrusion* began everywhere to be served on people, that after all their sweat and their cost upon their formerly purchased lands, thought themselves free-holders of what they had.”⁸⁰⁷ When the colonists either

⁸⁰⁵ “Declaration,” in *Andros Tracts*, Vol. 1:14.

⁸⁰⁶ “Declaration,” in *Andros Tracts*, Vol. 1:15.

⁸⁰⁷ “Declaration,” in *Andros Tracts*, Vol. 1:15-16.

could not or would not meet Andros' fees, the governor redistributed their lands to his favorites, or re-sold the land to the owners at inflated prices.⁸⁰⁸

Rawson and Sewall addressed the issue of property rights in their pamphlet as well, using an affidavit signed by four Ipswich men. These men swore “about the 22d day of August [1687]” they were “with several principal inhabitants of the Town of Ipswich met at Mr. John Appleton’s and there discoursed and concluded that it was not the Town’s duty any way to assist that ill method of raising money without a general assembly,” a position which was subsequently affirmed by the general town meeting.⁸⁰⁹ The results of the meeting were reported to the Governor, who ordered them arrested. The protestors were “severely handled” by Andros government, left in prison for “several weeks” and then fined substantially. Moreover, they were required to “give a thousand pounds bond for good behaviour,” and at least one was additionally “declared incapable to bear office.”⁸¹⁰

There was a moral as well as a material cost to Andros' invasive policies: in breaking the ties between personal industry and property, Andros' reliance on the private (and arbitrary) grant of the king destroyed all future certainty of property ownership, and thus, disincentivized industry and the habits of character that go along with it. Rawson and Sewall coupled their collection of affidavits with the testimony of Rev. Higginson that the colonists held the lands “by a twofold right”—first that they were fulfilling the command in Genesis to subdue the earth, and second, “by a right of purchase from the

⁸⁰⁸ “Declaration,” in *Andros Tracts*, Vol. 1:16.

⁸⁰⁹ Rawson and Sewall, *The Revolution in New England Justified, and the People There Vindicated from the Aspersions cast upon them by Mr. John Palmer* (Boston: 1691) in *Andros Tracts*, Volume 1, 83-84.

⁸¹⁰ Rawson and Sewall, *The Revolution in New England Justified, and the People There Vindicated from the Aspersions cast upon them by Mr. John Palmer* (Boston: 1691) in *Andros Tracts*, Volume 1, 82.

Indians who were native inhabitants, and had possession of the land before the English came hither.”⁸¹¹ Andros and his party rejected this line of reasoning, for they argued “the lands were the Kings, and that he gave the Lands within such limits to his Subjects by a charter upon such conditions as were not performed, and therefore all the lands of New-England have returned to the King.”⁸¹² As Jeremiah Shepard and Jon Burril pointed out in their affidavit (reprinted by Rawson and Sewall), the denial of existing land-claims had far-reaching consequences. The men were told

that there was no such thing as a town in the country, neither should we have liberty so to meet, neither were our ancient town records (as he said) which we produced for the vindication of our titles to said lands worth a rush. Thus were we from time to time unseasonably treated, our properties and civil liberties and privileges invaded, our misery and ruin threatened and hastened, till such time as our country groaning under the unreasonable heavy yoke of Sir Edmund’s government were constrained forcibly to recover our liberties and privileges.⁸¹³

If there were no land grants, then there were no towns; if no towns, then no town meetings; if no town meetings, then neither any records by which to challenge Andros’ policy, nor any venue in which to do so. In short, by attacking the colonists’ existing land grants, Andros’ effectively undermined their all of the founders’ efforts to establish a government based on consent and instead, attempted to institute one based on the arbitrary pleasure of the crown.

The Andros government had infringed upon the rights of conscience as well. Although Puritans did not scruple to swear oaths, there were some who objected to the practice of swearing “on the book” preferring instead to “swear with an uplifted hand,

⁸¹¹ [Rawson and Sewall], *The Revolution in New England Justified in Andros Tracts*, Volume 1:88-89.

⁸¹² [Rawson and Sewall], *The Revolution in New England Justified in Andros Tracts*, Volume 1:89.

⁸¹³ [Rawson and Sewall], *The Revolution in New England Justified in Andros Tracts*, Volume 1:96.

agreeable to the ancient custom of the colony.”⁸¹⁴ Under Andros, these men were ineligible to serve on juries or in other civic capacities requiring an oath, and were sometimes fined and even imprisoned for their refusal. Although this issue has received less attention than some of the other more obvious rights violations, to New Englanders, the imposition of book swearing was a serious infringement upon their rights of conscience and an illegitimate restraint upon their ability to participate in the life of the community. Increase Mather and Samuel Willard each published a short tract outlining the ways in which such action would or would not constitute a violation of biblical teachings.⁸¹⁵

Edward Rawson and Samuel Sewall applauded the April Revolution as an act of legitimate resistance.⁸¹⁶ Andros and his council had “invaded both the Liberty and Property of England Protestants after such a manner as perhaps the like was never known in any part of the World where the English Nation has any Government.”⁸¹⁷ Yet Rawson and Sewall argued that the most terrifying aspect of Andros’ rule had been his close affinity to James (he was “his creature”) and thus, to French absolutism. Andros, they asserted, intended to “*destroy the Fundamentals of the English and to erect a French government,*” a threat with a double meaning, for not only were the French synonymous

⁸¹⁴ See, for example, Samuel Sewall’s diary entry for June 11, 1686, which records that he took his oath as an officer in the Artillery Company “holding the book in my Left hand and holding up my Right Hand to Heaven,” and that his acquaintance, a “Captain Hutchinson” refused to swear at all. Diary of Samuel Sewall in Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Vol. 5 (Boston: 1878), 143. In a pamphlet published the same year, Increase Mather objected to it on the grounds that it was derived from “popish superstition” and akin to idol worship. I. Mather, *A brief discourse concerning the unlawfulness of the common prayer worship and of laying the hand on and kissing the booke in swearing* (Cambridge: 1686), 19-21. See also Samuel Willard, *A brief discour[se] concerning the ceremon[y] of laying the hand on the Bible in swearing* (London: 1689).

⁸¹⁵ “Declaration,” in *Andros Tracts*, Vol. 1:48. See Note 147, *supra*.

⁸¹⁶ [Rawson and Sewall], *The Revolution in New England Justified*, in *Andros Tracts*, Vol. 1:71.

⁸¹⁷ [Rawson and Sewall], *The Revolution in New England Justified*, in *Andros Tracts*, Vol. 1:71-72.

with arbitrary government, they were also literally on the borders of New England.⁸¹⁸

Once James was deposed, rather than wait meekly for possible retaliation in the form of “harsher treatment [from] those who had tyrannized over them,” New Englanders had acted swiftly to prevent the possibility that Andros would “betray that country into the hands of the *late king* or of King *Lewis* [sic], which they had reason enough to believe (considering their characters and dispositions) they were inclined to do.”⁸¹⁹

Only under the shadow of such imminent threats to their religious and political liberty had the people of Massachusetts taken up arms. And what rational man, the apologists for the revolution asked, would say that “if, when wolves are got among sheep in a wilderness, the shepherds and principal men there shall keep them from ravening, that this is the sin of rebellion condemned in the Scripture?”⁸²⁰ On the contrary, common sense would indicate that such men be hailed as the protectors of the people. This was not merely a semantic point: the author pointed out that “Scripture speaks of a lawful and good rebellion as well as of that which is unlawful.” Hezekiah, it must be remembered, was deemed a rebel against the powerful King of Assyria (2 Kings 18:7), a label he embraced. For “casting off a tyrannical government, and asserting the liberty of them that were the Lord’s people,” Hezekiah was rewarded with the favor of God and the gratitude of his people and “the like (we hope) may be the happy case of New-England,” ended the pamphleteer.⁸²¹

⁸¹⁸ [Rawson and Sewall], *The Revolution in New England Justified*, in *Andros Tracts*, Vol. 1:80.

⁸¹⁹ [Rawson and Sewall], *The Revolution in New England Justified*, in *Andros Tracts*, Vol. 1:72. Cf. Pincus’s argument about James’ pursuit of a ‘French’ Catholicism and style of government in 1688.

⁸²⁰ [Rawson and Sewall], *The Revolution in New England Justified*, in *Andros Tracts*, Vol. 1:129.

⁸²¹ [Rawson and Sewall], *The Revolution in New England Justified*, in *Andros Tracts*, Vol. 1:129.

Increase Mather and The New Charter

From Increase Mather's perspective, this wish came true: in 1691, after having labored in London for three years, Mather finally secured a new charter for the colony, which, he argued in some measure, granted even greater privileges to New England than had the 1629 charter.⁸²² William, he assured his readers, had only slightly modified their original 'privileges' by replacing the elected governor with an appointed one. Even in this, he had been sensitive to the desires of the people, asking Mather and the other agents to "Nominate a Person that should be agreeable to the Temper and Inclinations of the People there."⁸²³ And although in certain respects, it appeared that the colony had less autonomy than it had previously exercised, in others, Mather argued, its status was now more secure, for it had previously been chartered only as a corporation, and not truly as a government for a province or similarly independent political territory.⁸²⁴ Now, he argued, the rights of the people were more secure than ever:

No Persons shall have a Penny of their Estates taken from them; nor any Laws imposed on them, without their own Consent by Representatives chosen by themselves. Religion is secured; for Liberty is granted to all Men to Worship God after that manner which in their Consciences they shall be persuaded is the most Scriptural way. The General Court may by Laws Encourage and Protect that *Religion* which is the general Profession of the Inhabitants there. ... No bad Counselor, Judge, or Justice of the Peace, can now be imposed on them. These things are as a Wall of Defense about the Lord's Vineyard in that part of the World. ... The General Court has now Power to impose Taxes upon all the Inhabitants; and to make Laws which shall Incorporate Towns, or Schools of Learning, &c. which by the First Charter they had not Power to do. That Country may now expect Protection and Assistance from *England*, as the Matter shall require, more than formerly. And although there are some things in this *New Charter* which are not desirable, yet nothing that is intolerable.⁸²⁵

⁸²² I. Mather, *A brief account concerning several of the agents of New-England, their negotiation at the Court of England with some remarks on the new charter granted to the colony of Massachusetts shewing that all things duely considered, greater priviledges than what are therein contained, could not at this time rationally be expected by the people there* (London: 1691), in *Andros Tracts*, Vol. III:271-296.

⁸²³ I. Mather, *Brief Account*, in *Andros Tracts*, Vol. III:280.

⁸²⁴ I. Mather, *Brief Account*, in *Andros Tracts*, Vol. III:280-287, passim.

⁸²⁵ I. Mather, *Brief Account*: in *Andros Tracts*, Vol. III:288-289.

Mather's endorsement was lukewarm at best, but in the end, it was the experience on the ground, and not the text of the charter itself, that would determine the success of the colony for the future—and of that, he had no doubts.

Conclusion

By the time they received their second charter in 1691, New Englanders had created a civic identity firmly rooted in their shared founding commitments, not only as abstract principles, but as part of their regular practice of political life, the merger of an appreciation for and encouragement of the individual as a free and thus, responsible agent in society, with a strong communal ethos that emphasized group unity. Puritan theology nurtured a strong sense of individual responsibility as well as individual rights; and New Englanders recognized the interdependence of diverse individuals as necessary to the ongoing success and vitality of their society. Negotiating this balance between individual and society required New Englanders to develop all of the implications of their shared founding commitment to three essential principles: the moral equality of persons, the importance of industry as a personal and public virtue, and a deep and abiding sense of civic love, or communion. These commitments were challenged in the difficult Andros' regime, but ultimately, in 1689, they emerged as the basis for restoring Puritan self-government in Massachusetts (in the short run) and civic identity in the colony—and later, America—in the longer term.

CHAPTER 7: THE PURITAN LEGACY IN AMERICAN CIVIC FORMATION

The Puritans who followed Winthrop and Cotton to the New World had some notion of individual liberty, if only in matters of religious conscience.⁸²⁶ Yet despite their practical separation from the Church of England as a result of the migration, the Massachusetts Bay Colonists resisted early attempts to carry the principles of individual dissent too far. In or around March 1631, Winthrop argued against Roger Williams regarding the necessity rejecting the Church of England as a true church.⁸²⁷ Although Winthrop acknowledged that the majority of Anglicans were “ignorant” of the deeper points of theology, this did not make them false Christians, merely “weak” in their faith. Moreover, although Williams wanted to treat these weaker brethren as essentially unregenerate, that was both unkind and hypocritical in Winthrop’s eyes. Far better, Winthrop argued, to show “charity” in such circumstances, and not become guilty of “sin...in the point of separation.”⁸²⁸

⁸²⁶ Blair Worden contends in Chapter 8 of *God’s Instruments: Political Conduct in the England of Oliver Cromwell* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012) that this argument is actually a creation of the 1640s, and that prior to the revolution, liberty did not necessarily follow reformation. His account does not adequately address the context of international Calvinism, however, of which the Puritans were but a small part and which does frame conscience as a form of liberty from the sixteenth century onward. In response to the increasingly dangerous political circumstances of protestants in Scotland, England, France, and the Netherlands, John Knox (1510-1572), John Ponet (c.1514-1556), Theodore Beza (1519-1605), and Johannes Althusius (1563-1638) are simply the best known of those who wrote strongly worded tracts drawing out the implications of Calvin’s thought on the key issues of the rights of conscience and resistance. Contra Worden see Herbert Darling Foster, “The Political Theories of Calvinists Before the Puritan Exodus to America,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (April 1916), 481-503, and “International Calvinism through Locke and the Revolution of 1688,”; and Witte, *The Reformation of Rights*.

⁸²⁷ See Robert C. Winthrop, Sr. for an argument suggesting that this document relates to Williams’ refusal to join the congregation at Boston from around this time; *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, XII. 337.

⁸²⁸ *Winthrop Papers* 3:12-13.

Yet as Michael Winship argued, such protestations were, to a certain extent, a matter of splitting hairs.⁸²⁹ New Englanders had separated from the Church of England in fact, if not in theory, and their adoption of consent-based church and political covenants was merely the outward sign of an inward orientation towards what has been called the “sanctity of dissent” that would allow them to develop a unique civic identity and the institutions to support it over the course of the century.⁸³⁰

This is actually a model of the problem of civic identity in the United States – itself a covenant community with similar commitments to moral equality, individual industry (particularly as manifest in the notion of the sanctity of dissent), and even civic communion enshrined in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. In this final chapter, I close with a reflection on the primary reasons seventeenth Puritans succeeded in perpetuating their founding commitments. I argue that these elements of the Puritan approach to civic formation recur in the history of American political thought in ways that have proven particularly useful when the nation’s founding principles seemed most threatened. I point to the inadequacies of two major strains of thought within the American tradition that diverge from the Puritan model of civic formation to successfully perpetuate the commitments of the national founding. Finally, I suggest some of the ways in which an adaptation of the Puritan mode of civic formation may be useful for shaping present-day debates about civic education.

⁸²⁹ Winship, *Godly Republicanism*.

⁸³⁰ As Timothy L. Wood points out, dissent had been the defining mark of Puritan practice in England and “the Puritan’s own heritage demonstrated that dissent (if grounded in divine truth) might be a vehicle of God’s redemptive plan.” See Wood, *Agents of Wrath, Sowers of Discord: Authority and Dissent in Puritan Massachusetts, 1630-1655* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 10.

What the Puritans Knew: Individualism Within Institutions⁸³¹

The New England experience offers two essential insights into the challenge of translating founding aspirations to future generations, particularly in revolutionary orders with strongly individualist and rights-oriented impulses. First, the fact that New Englanders held to a trinity of interconnected founding aspirations allowed the potentially dangerous aspects of equality, industry, and communion to be held in check by the tension between them. Second, New England elites never lost their sense that these aspirations were derived from a higher law. This provided an external standard against which to measure them at any point in the historical development of the regime. In short, the Puritans succeeded because they ensconced the individualistic and future-oriented elements of their civic identity within a timeless theistic framework that honored such communal institutions such as the family, school, church, and state.

As we have seen in the previous chapters, New Englanders' founding aspirations of equality, industry, and communion each had the potential to be either carried to dangerous excesses or perilously neglected. Yet over the long term, the civic commitment to maintaining all three qualities in balance within the framework of a higher law had the effect of blunting the most dangerous aspects of each of them singly. Although one might be tempted toward the overzealous pursuit of one's individual calling, and the aspiration towards industry, for example, such a temptation ought to be mitigated by the teaching that the purpose of diverse individual gifts was to bless and enrich the whole of the

⁸³¹ Michael W. Kaufman has explored the development of the first generation of New Englanders understanding of the identity-shaping aspects of the relationship between the individual and social groupings (such as the family, church, or commonwealth) at length in *Institutional Individualism: Conversion, Exile, and Nostalgia in Puritan New England* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1998).

(divinely designed) civic communion. Similarly, the political manifestations of a commitment to moral equality can be perversely individualistic, such that each individual soul demands the freedom to do precisely as they please. A carefully cultivated belief in a higher law delineates the purposes behind equality, however, and can encourage a sense of stewardship and offer a potential check on the tendency of equality (particularly in combination with industry) towards materialism. We cannot divorce the success of the Puritan experiment with civic formation, therefore, from the theistic framework within which their founding aspirations were situated and perpetuated.

Reformed Christianity as the Puritans understood it taught that God created, loves, and equips men as morally equal individuals but it also taught them to love their neighbors as themselves—indeed, to recognize that they had been divinely suited to complement one another. This sense of relational responsibility to those within the political community encourages men to see personal industry as a type of stewardship and service towards the fulfillment of civic communion. Moral obligations, like those imposed by religion or the natural law tradition, as the Puritans understood them, do not negate individual freedom: instead of serving as commands, they provide the guidelines, principles, and framework within which free individuals learn to make the best choices for themselves and for their fellow citizens.

In other words, the Puritan model of civic formation was successful because it recognized that knowledge of the aspirational principles of the regime and the cultivation of the civic virtues that support them are the foundation upon which successful political practice of self-government rests. The Puritans emphasized the transmission of knowledge and virtue from one generation to the next, and not simply the ongoing

practice of civic engagement. It matters what is being transmitted—not simply that people are engaging in political participation, but that they understand their participation in particular ways, that they have what Sydney Ahlstrom described as “the total sense of civic responsibility and moral concern which must be felt by the leaders and citizens of the body politic if the ideals embodied in the structures are to be vital, enduring, or efficacious.”⁸³² It is this category which is embraced by the term ‘civic virtue’ as I have used it, the set of moral qualities or elements of personal character which make one capable of both self-government internally and of robust participation in one’s political community.

For the Puritans, civic virtue was both an intrinsic and an instrumental good, one that not only contributed to the excellence of the human person as a free individual, but also contributed to the stability and order of the community in which such persons would flourish. The Puritan concept of civic virtue was both privately and publically oriented, in keeping with their understanding of social reform as a result of individual reformation. In part, what made possible this dualistic understanding of civic virtue was its rootedness in religion.⁸³³ The Puritans embraced a broadly Calvinist or Reformed theology that led them to see areas such as history, nature, politics, and the family as divine in origin and meant for the good of mankind. It is precisely this way of thinking which allowed the Puritans to integrate the private and public dimensions of virtue into a holistic understanding of the qualities of character required of persons who make up a self-governing community.

⁸³² Ahlstrom, “Puritanism and Democratic Citizenship,” 421.

⁸³³ On the relationship between religion and civic virtue more generally, see Christie LeAnn Maloyed, “The Religious Foundations of Civic Virtue,” (Ph. D. diss., Texas A&M University, 2010); see also Budziszewski, *The Resurrection of Nature*, and *The Nearest Coast of Darkness*.

Put another way, the Puritan understanding of civic formation depended on recognition that the good citizen must first and foremost be a good human person with a solid understanding of the natural law principles that undergird human relations. Ironically, Puritan theology, grounded in the doctrine of the total depravity of the soul, provided a prudential framework for appreciating both the possibilities and the limitations of human excellence.⁸³⁴ Men—imperfect and not perfectible—are nevertheless capable of making the attempt to live well and virtuously, and Puritan society recognized and honored this while simultaneously providing institutional measures to check the worst potential implications of our imperfections.⁸³⁵

From Massachusetts to the United States: The Puritan Legacy in American Political Thought

It is this sense of what might be termed “Reformed realism” that most significantly shaped later American political thought on the question of civic formation and the problem of perpetuating the aspirational principles of the founding. Although the revolution which brought the United States of America into existence involved a much more dramatic and decisive break with an established order than that which led to the founding of Massachusetts, the later national founding reflected a similar set of principled commitments to its seventeenth century predecessor. In the Declaration of Independence, the American founders explicitly asserted their belief in the moral equality

⁸³⁴ A foreshadowing, perhaps, of the argument made by Madison in Federalist 10 – men are not angels, but neither can they be demons if the idea of a self-governing political community is to be in anyway realized.

⁸³⁵ Sin is the radical disorder at the core of human existence, and corrupts all aspects of our nature, including our reason and our ability to engage in relationships with one another; the Puritans understood, as Carey McWilliams put it, that “a covenantal polity requires a unity of institutions to protect the political society when human beings forget or fail.” See McWilliams, “The Bible” in *Redeeming Democracy in America*, Patrick J. Deneen and Susan J. McWilliams, eds. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2011), 38.

of persons and in the endowment of individuals with inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness (the attainment of which depends upon an underlying commitment to individual industry as people work to protect and assert their rights in ways reflecting their unique makeup). They also tacitly assert the importance of some level of civic communion between men in the statement that governments are created for the effectuation of the “safety and happiness” of the people—ends that although individual in nature, are not realizable apart from some level of political bond and community. Most importantly, the founders situated all of these commitments within the scope of the Laws of Nature and Nature’s God, “the natural order conceived on the pattern of creation and Creator.”⁸³⁶ Although the Declaration does not overtly declare itself to be stating the terms of a national covenant in the same way that Winthrop’s *Model* did, the text does embody a certain theistic logic that suggests there is something more profound at stake than a mere contract or compact.⁸³⁷ As such, like New Englanders in the seventeenth century had done, the American national founders adopted an approach to civic formation in which the principles of their regime to be inculcated were presented as derived from (and thus, limited by) the logic of a higher law.

The founders recognized that such a mindset ought to introduce a level of humility into political life, and their institutional creations reflect a sense of politics as the stewardship of resources for a clearly (naturally) defined purpose. While politics may be the science of man, man in the American tradition is not the arbiter of what makes

⁸³⁶ Derek H. Davis, *Religion and the Continental Congress, 1774-1789: Contributions to Original Intent* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 59.

⁸³⁷ On the Declaration as covenant, see Moots, *Politics Reformed*, Chapter. 8, as well as Daniel Judah Elazar, *Covenant and Constitutionalism: The Great Frontier and the Matrix of Federal Democracy* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1998), Volume 3 of *The Covenant Tradition in Politics* (4 vols., 1995-1998).

government “good,” but is responsible to ensure that his political actions are in accordance with the higher law.⁸³⁸ Institutional forms and legal frameworks can reflect this commitment, but their ultimate success depends upon a widespread public knowledge of and sense of obligation to this higher law—to the fulfillment of the covenant’s moral terms.

As Thomas Jefferson put it, man is “inherently independent of all but moral law”—a law that even the religiously skeptical Jefferson assumed to be real and (because it was discernible by human reason apart from revelation) binding on all individuals regardless of particular belief systems.⁸³⁹ In short, individual political liberty of the sort declared as the *raison d’etre* of the American Revolution was not meant to be exercised without an inner restraint, but rather depends upon the cultivation of that rule-of-self provided by a sense of moral obligation in order to exist. Virtue—in the sense of self-rule—is thus prerequisite for the safe exercise of political liberty.

Like the Puritans, the American national founders envisioned an approach to civic formation which would combine widespread moral instruction in pursuit of civic virtue with public education grounded in the natural law tradition and Anglo-American

⁸³⁸ For a discussion of the ways in which moral obligation and liberty relate to one another in the political realm, see James V. Schall, S.J., *At the Limits of Political Philosophy: From "Brilliant Errors" to Things of Uncommon Importance* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1998), especially chapter 9. That this idea is in no way unique to the Puritans only underscores Jefferson’s point about its general applicability: see Plato, 350d in *The Republic*. See also his teachings on the need for moderation, 477a, 507d in *Gorgias*; Aristotle, Book 1, Chapter 2, 1094b, Book 6, Chapter 12, 1144a-b in *Ethics*; St. Augustine, Book 19, chapter 16, in *City of God*, Henry Bettenson, trans. (New York: Penguin, 1984); on the theistic logic of Lockean liberalism applied in the American Founding, see Steven M. Dworetz, *The Unvarnished Doctrine: Locke, Liberalism, and the American Revolution* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990).

⁸³⁹ Thomas Jefferson to Spencer Roane (6 Sept. 1819), in *The Founders' Constitution* Volume 3, Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18, Document 16 (University of Chicago Press), available online at: http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/a1_8_18s16.html.

history.⁸⁴⁰ Engagement in civic activities at any level (from the family to the nation) derived its meaning from, and reinforced these foundational philosophical and historical studies. The American national founders recognized that moral and historical instruction (whether at home, or in churches, schools, and other social institutions of the regime) and participation in the life of the community at various levels worked in tandem to provide the habituation of virtue necessary for the preservation of liberty.

Men who understand the theistic framework undergirding the aspirational commitments of the regime will be better citizens insofar as that knowledge enables them to better fulfill the second table of the law in the Mosaic covenant tradition—love of one’s neighbors—because it enables them to recognize that such service is also a reflection of their commitment to the first table—love of God.⁸⁴¹ Fundamentally, this is a prescription for self-government as “government of the self” and a recognition that in the absence of traditional *external* supports for social order (such as hierarchy), a republican nation must carefully cultivate the *internal* fortitude necessary for political restraint.⁸⁴²

⁸⁴⁰ On the curriculum of the early republic, see Pangle and Pangle, *Learning of Liberty*. Early examples of the importance of history to American civic education include David Ramsay’s *History of the American Revolution* (1789); and Mercy Otis Warren’s *History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution* (1805). This educational approach continued to be influential throughout the second generation of national leaders; see, for example, Joseph Story, *Constitutional Class Book* (Boston:1834).

⁸⁴¹ Washington, for example, was adamant in his *Farewell Address* about the need for religion and government to act as mutually supportive institutions, continually reinforcing the practical and moral virtues which would enable Americans to secure their place among the peoples of the world. Examples of recent scholarship which support the positive relationship between personal religiosity and civic engagement include Robert Putnam, *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010); Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*. (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1960); Robert Bellah et. al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996); Peter Augustine Lawler, ed, *Democracy and Its Friendly Critics: Tocqueville and Political Life Today*. (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2004).

⁸⁴² Americans, having adopted a relatively limited vision of government, necessarily steered such endeavors to the private sector. See, for example, Ben Franklin’s programmatic approach to the cultivation of personal virtue in the *Autobiography* (itself arguably a civic education text); Benjamin Rush on the necessity and goals of civic education; and Jefferson and Madison’s dialogue on the curriculum of the University of Virginia. For a general scholarly overview of virtue and the American founding, see: Richard

Only if each citizen exercised “government of the self” would Americans be able to negotiate the tension between their inherited revolutionary principles of dissent and individual freedom and the demands of orderly life in an ongoing political community.

Since the early republican period, subsequent American political thought has been most successful at sustaining the principles of the regime when it has recognized that these principles are intimately connected to both the moral/theological/philosophical framework of the Anglo-American historical tradition and have placed an appropriate emphasis on the cultivation of both knowledge and character, and not simply action. Perhaps unsurprisingly, as Andrew Murphy has demonstrated, protecting and promoting the nation’s founding aspirations at times when they seemed to be imperiled has often involved a recurrence to the jeremiad tradition so intimately associated with New England’s Puritans. As a form of political rhetoric, Murphy distinguishes between what he labels “traditionalist” and “progressive” jeremiads: whereas traditionalist jeremiads are focused on a strict recreation of the nation’s past cultural and political realities, progressive jeremiads view “the past not as a model for the future, not as a limiting set of empirical conditions to be replicated as closely as possible in perpetuity, but as a *promise* or birthright.”⁸⁴³ In focusing on the recreation of the past, traditionalist jeremiads tend to be formalistic and ultimately, to elevate civic action over both civic virtue and knowledge in ways that are ultimately self-defeating inasmuch as they reduce the founding aspirations to little more than rhetorical trappings around the pursuit of particular political agendas. On the other hand, in advocating the more complete realization of the nation’s

Vetterli and Gary Bryner, *In Search of the Republic: Public Virtue and the Roots of American Government* (Rowman & Littlefield: 1987).

⁸⁴³ On the distinction between traditionalist and progressive jeremiads and on their power as political narratives, see Murphy, *Prodigal Nation*, 110-124. The quoted text is from page 115.

founding principles, progressive jeremiads are forced to grapple with the nuances of their moral/theological/philosophical implications, and thus, to follow the Puritan approach in grounding their efforts at civic formation in civic virtue and knowledge in such a way as to preserve the vitality of the founding. I will discuss the limitations of one type of traditionalist agenda below; for now, let us turn our attention to three examples of American thinkers who successfully used progressive jeremiahs in ways reflective of the Puritan approach to civic formation.

Abraham Lincoln: The “Electric Cord” of Principle Around the Union

Abraham Lincoln never ceased to argue that the preservation of the Union depended upon the proper understanding of the self-evident truths of the Declaration of Independence – equality, natural rights, and the consent of the governed – as “the definitions and axioms of free society.”⁸⁴⁴ Were these principles to be carried to excess, Lincoln feared a politics of simple majoritarianism—the expression of the political passion which is always a threat to republican government—would undermine the covenantal limitations imposed upon the regime by the natural rights philosophy of the Declaration of Independence.⁸⁴⁵ Lincoln understood the notion of popular sovereignty advocated by Stephen Douglas, for example, as a corruption of the doctrine of consent: in allowing the inhabitants of the territories to choose slavery, the policy in truth allowed them to cultivate the habits of despotism.⁸⁴⁶

During the course of their debates in 1858, Lincoln accused Douglas of “blowing out the moral lights” of the American people, and undermining the virtue and knowledge

⁸⁴⁴ Abraham Lincoln, “Letter to H. L. Pierce and Others” (April 6, 1859), in *Speeches and Writings*, 489.

⁸⁴⁵ Lincoln, “Temperance Address” (February 22, 1842), in *Speeches and Writings*, 133-34; “The Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions,” (January 27, 1838), in *Speeches and Writings*, 84-85.

⁸⁴⁶ Lincoln, “The Repeal of the Missouri Compromise,” in *Speeches and Writings*, 293-296.

essential to the perpetuation of the public commitment to the nation's founding aspirations. Lincoln understood that the effects of moral indifference were pernicious: if the people failed to understand the logical implications of their political commitments when extended to others, there was no assurance that they would be equipped to successfully use them in their own defense either.⁸⁴⁷ He therefore devoted considerable effort in his public discourse to shaping public opinion towards the "readopt[ion of] the Declaration of Independence, and with it, the practices, and policy, which harmonize with it." Americans, God's "almost chosen people," he asserted, were bound together not by blood but by the "electric cord" of their shared principles.⁸⁴⁸ Lincoln's covenantal rhetoric here is unmistakable, and it underscores the importance of grounding political practice in both knowledge and virtue, if said practice is to remain true to the principles of the American founding in substance, and not merely in form.⁸⁴⁹

Martin Luther King, Jr. and the American Soul

As a leader in the Civil Rights Movement, Martin Luther King, Jr. pushed Americans not simply to end legal segregation or even cultural discrimination, but to embrace a deeper understanding of the "sublime words" of the Declaration. These, he asserted, were "a profound, eloquent and unequivocal expression of the dignity and worth of all human personality."⁸⁵⁰ King described himself as "seeking to save the soul of

⁸⁴⁷ Lincoln, "First Debate at Ottawa," in *Speeches and Writings*, 276; cf. Lincoln, "A House Divided," in *Speeches and Writings*, 378-379.

⁸⁴⁸ Lincoln, "Speech at Peoria," October 16, 1854, *Speeches and Writings*, 315; "Address to the Senate of New Jersey," February 21, 1861, *Speeches and Writings*, 575; "Reply to Douglas at Chicago," July 10, 1858, *Speeches and Writings*, 402.

⁸⁴⁹ On the role of religion in shaping Lincoln's understanding of America's founding principles, see Lucas E. Morel, *Lincoln's Sacred Effort: Defining Religion's Role in American Self-Government* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2000).

⁸⁵⁰ Martin Luther King, Jr., "The Negro and the American Dream," Excerpt from Address at the Annual Freedom Mass Meeting of the North Carolina State Conference of Branches of the NAACP, 25 September

America” by engaging in a mass civic education effort that would reconnect Americans to the “sublime principles of our Judeo-Christian tradition.”⁸⁵¹ What is most distinctive about King’s rhetoric is the extent to which it depended upon his covenantal understanding of the founding principles of the nation: the power of the Declaration as a “promissory note” depended upon its status not only as a statement of the truths of the natural law, but as the document binding Americans as a people to adhere to those truths.⁸⁵²

Sadly, King accused the majority of Americans of being “more devoted to ‘order’ than to justice” and of thus being unwilling to do the hard work of racial reconciliation the nation’s “sacred heritage” demanded.⁸⁵³ The nation’s founding principles, grounded in the eternal truths of human nature, pointed towards the possibility of a “beloved community” of blacks and whites together, King argued: better to talk only about “God’s power and human power” rather than black power.⁸⁵⁴ For King, civic action had to flow out of civic knowledge and virtue: if the purpose of the movement was to “remind America of the necessity of realizing its dream,” logically, it followed that any and all activism associated with the movement had to be steeped in the nation’s founding principles, as well as the moral/theological arguments underpinning them. Nowhere is this connection more obvious than in King’s adoption of non-violent resistance, a method

1960 (Charlotte, NC), Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project, Volume V: *Threshold of a New Decade, January 1959 - December 1960* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 508-511.

⁸⁵¹ King, Debate with James J. Kilpatrick on “The Nation’s Future,” (26 November 1960), New York, Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project, Volume V: *Threshold of a New Decade, January 1959 - December 1960* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 558; King, “The Rising Tide of Racial Consciousness,” in *I Have A Dream: Writings and Speeches That Changed the World*, edited by James M. Washington (New York: Harper Collins 1992), 67.

⁸⁵² King, “I Have a Dream,” in *I Have A Dream*, 110.

⁸⁵³ King, “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” in *I Have A Dream*, 91, 93, 98.

⁸⁵⁴ King, “The Power of Non-Violence,” *I Have A Dream*, 30-31; “Where Do We Go From Here?” *I Have A Dream*, 178.

which utilized the latent spiritual power of the nation's founding principles in order to both motivate and mobilize the resisters as well as to "establish such creative tension that a community that has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue."⁸⁵⁵ King responded to criticisms of these methods by reminding his interrogators that the nation's heritage presumed the existence of a higher law. Resistance to unjust laws, therefore—even to the point of civil disobedience—was really the highest form of civic virtue, because it highlighted the ways in which the nation had fallen away from her core commitments.⁸⁵⁶ Civil disobedience thus not only did not undermine the rule of law, but could actually help lead to the sorts of reforms necessary to ensure a greater commensurability between the positive laws of the nation and the higher law framework apart from which its founding principles were meaningless.⁸⁵⁷

Barack Obama and the Nation's Political Faith

As a presidential candidate in March 2008, Barack Obama gave a speech at the National Constitution Center in which he clearly stated his belief that the aspirational principles of the American founding, although only imperfectly realized in their original historical context, were intended to be "[to] be perfected over time."⁸⁵⁸ "America can change," he stated; "What we have already achieved [in the areas of civil rights reform, for example] gives us hope—the audacity to hope—for what we can and must achieve tomorrow."⁸⁵⁹ In the present cynical political environment, Obama's grounding of his

⁸⁵⁵ King, "The Power of Non-Violence," *I Have A Dream*, 30; "Letter from Birmingham Jail," *I Have A Dream*, 86.

⁸⁵⁶ King, "Letter from Birmingham Jail," *I Have A Dream*, 89.

⁸⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁸⁵⁸ Barack Obama, "Speech at the Constitution Center," March 18, 2008, 1. Page numbers refer to the transcript available in PDF from the National Constitution Center online exhibition on the speech: http://constitutioncenter.org/amoreperfectunion/docs/Race_Speech_Transcript.pdf, accessed 2/14/15.

⁸⁵⁹ Obama, "Speech at the Constitution Center," 6.

appeals to civic formation in hope and his generally optimistic view about the capability of the nation's citizens to move toward an ever "more perfect union" although not as explicitly rooted in the higher law tradition as such efforts by Lincoln and King nevertheless tacitly counteract the tendency towards relativism by reminding Americans that their political aspirations are part of a historical narrative.⁸⁶⁰ And although that narrative has a definite beginning (in the founding period) and a (relatively) fixed meaning, what makes Obama's jeremiad successful is the very indeterminacy with which he presents the future: it is within the grasp of the present generation to secure the fulfillment of the founding promises.

Like Lincoln and King, Obama has consistently urged the American people to remember the political "faith" embodied in the Declaration of Independence, not only as a matter of formal affirmation, but also as a standard against which to measure ourselves and our political actions. Action is thus the result of proper knowledge and virtue, a reflection of the ways in which understand the founding and our desire to "hold [the aspirational principles thereof] against a hard reality and see how we are measuring up." Obama has described the present as a bridge between "the legacy of our forbearers and the promise of future generations," a rhetorical move that simultaneously burdens our present political choices with the weight of a sense of duty towards past and future and endows them with a sense of privilege.⁸⁶¹ In Obama's lofty vision of civic life, the American people are (or ought to be) continually engaging in interactions between

⁸⁶⁰ See, for example, his remarks on the Trayvon Martin case: Barack Obama, "Remarks on Trayvon Martin," July 19, 2013, available online: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/07/19/remarks-president-trayvon-martin>, accessed 2/14/2015.

⁸⁶¹ Barack Obama, "Keynote Address at the Democratic National Convention," July 27, 2004. Transcript available online: www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A19751-2004Jul27.html, accessed 2/14/15.

history and futurity as they work to bring about an ever-closer adherence to the principles of the Declaration of Independence and hence, fulfillment of the national covenant.

Getting the Balance Wrong: Problematic Approaches to American Civic Formation

If the Puritans (and, following their example, the American national founders, Lincoln, King, and Obama) largely understood the proper relationship between virtue, knowledge and engagement for the successful transference of founding principles to later generations, there have been moments in the development of the American political tradition in which the balance has shifted with deleterious consequences. Occasionally, there have been moments in which Americans have over-intellectualized or over-moralized their approach to civic learning, creating a sense of disconnection between the “elite” principles and learning of the nation’s history and leaders and the contemporary experiences of her people.⁸⁶² More often, however, Americans have tended to over-emphasize associational life and participation at the expense of actual knowledge and character development. Americans, it has been said, are a practical people, who have a tendency to place tremendous trust in the wisdom of experience, as well as the mechanisms of their political institutions. The latter approach can be taken either accidentally or purposefully, but in both cases, tends to undermine the limiting force of both philosophy and history on the political choices of the present.

Tocqueville and the Practice of Democratic Life

⁸⁶² Criticism of the divorce between traditional “liberal arts” curricula and practical life was among the most prevalent reasons for the reorganization (sometimes also referred to as the “modernization”) of the American university in the late 19th century. See Robert Geiger, *The History of American Higher Education: Learning and Culture from the Founding to World War II* (Princeton: 2014); see also Thorstein Veblen’s critique of the effects of university reform, *The Higher Learning in America* (1918); annotated edition, Richard F. Teichgraeber III, ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2015) and the collection of essays in Andrew Delbanco, *College: What It Was, Is, and Should Be* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).

In *Democracy in America* Alexis De Tocqueville, wrote “I think I can see the whole destiny of America contained in the first Puritan who landed on those shores, as that of the whole human race in the first man.”⁸⁶³ While Tocqueville was correct to observe the significant role of the Puritan experience in defining the character of American society and politics, he was deeply mistaken not only about many of the historical particulars of the experience he described, but also about its theoretical center, which Tocqueville located in New Englanders’ use of local institutions and associations. It was through participation in the town or congregational meeting, he argued, that the Puritans learned liberty, for only within such a setting can people be self-governing in any meaningful political sense.⁸⁶⁴ Although Tocqueville praised religion in America for having provided both the rationale for defending human freedom and a framework within which that freedom could safely operate, he nevertheless slighted the importance of virtue and knowledge: his study continually points toward the conclusion that democracy (and the political freedom upon which it is supposedly based) is primarily an activity, not a philosophy.⁸⁶⁵

Tocqueville argued that one must actually practice self-government through hands-on involvement in running one’s own life and the life of one’s community in order to really understand democracy. Involvement with local government forces our attention to the intricacies of balancing our needs and wants with those of others, and with the sort of prudential statesmanship that is necessary for naturally selfish men to come to an agreement in pursuit of the common good. Without this active local involvement, he

⁸⁶³ Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Book 1, Chapter 9.

⁸⁶⁴ Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 696, 698; 63.

⁸⁶⁵ Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 47; 705.

asserted, it is far too easy to become complacent and let others govern us rather than to be genuinely free and self-governing.⁸⁶⁶

Tocqueville and his modern heirs have tended to invert the order of civic formation from that established as effective by the Puritan model (in which knowledge and virtue are seen as prior to practice), with the subsequent effect that civic associations and popular engagement have come to seem almost ends in themselves, without a meaningful connection to the perpetuation of any particular founding aspirations. At their most philosophical, proponents of this approach to civic formation suggest that participation in associational life conveys the essence of the founding aspirations to the participant.⁸⁶⁷ To the extent that this is so, the Tocquevillian position is less harmful than other divergences from the Puritan balance, yet it nevertheless remains the case that such experience-based learning fails to provide the citizen with a coherent schema for understanding self-rule provided by a more substantive theoretical and historical study of the principles of the regime. In this sense, they are jeremiahs of the traditionalist school, nostalgic for the past as the past, without an appreciation for the higher law framework which gave the types of civic engagement towards which they most often gesture meaning and vitality.⁸⁶⁸ The major danger of Tocquevillian nostalgia is that its resistance of theoretical foundations has the potential to elevate history as the arbiter of right in a neo-Calhounian way; civic formation in such schemes cannot sustain true inquiry after

⁸⁶⁶ See Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 66-67, 69, 73-74, 81, 190-194.

⁸⁶⁷ Consider Putnam, *Bowling Alone*.

⁸⁶⁸ See, for instance, the bizarre fixation of certain modern-day Tocquevillians with front porches as witness in the very title of *Front Porch Republic*, an online magazine of cultural commentary (<http://www.frontporchrepublic.com>; accessed 1.28.2015).

virtue, and instead becomes formulaic and traditionalist for the sake of tradition, rather than for the sake of any particular aspirational principle.⁸⁶⁹

John Dewey and Progressive Education

If the Tocquevillians have erred in understanding the importance of wide-spread education in the natural law, American history, and civic virtue as meaning-imparting frameworks for public life, they generally do not overtly deny the importance of either virtue or knowledge. That argument—perhaps the single greatest threat to American civic formation—however, came from the progressive educational models pioneered by American philosopher John Dewey. Dewey—who identified himself as an instrumentalist, concerned with ideas only insofar as they could be applied as tools to particular pragmatic social problems—and his followers are primarily responsible for the unmooring of American civic education from its traditional foundations in a higher law and historical tradition, and are oddly both too theoretical and too practical at the same time.⁸⁷⁰

In *A Common Faith*, Dewey proposed a distinction between religion and the religious. In contrast to religion (which he associated with the accumulation and defense of doctrinal and dogmatic positions on unknowable and/or unscientific questions), Dewey defined the religious as the natural psychological response experienced by men when they feel that they have encountered the world in a more-than-merely sensory (and yet,

⁸⁶⁹ See John C. Calhoun, “Speech on the Oregon Bill” (1848), *Union and Liberty: The Political Philosophy of John C. Calhoun*, Ross M. Lance, ed. (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1992), 539-570. The relative value (and safety) of teaching American *ideas* versus teaching American *tradition* has more recently been disputed by thinkers such as Martin Diamond and Robert Bork.

⁸⁷⁰ On the centrality of Dewey to the transformation of civic education in American classrooms through the transition from history and government courses to courses in “the social studies,” see Thomas Fallace, “John Dewey’s Influence on the Origins of the Social Studies: An Analysis of the Historiography and New Interpretation,” *Review of Educational Research* 79.2 (2009): 601–624.

definitely not supernatural) way. *A Common Faith* makes it clear that Dewey was not in any sense a theist, but rather, a humanist “in religious matters” who understood his humanism to be “in opposition to supernaturalism.”⁸⁷¹ Religion, because it is linked to unverifiable (or falsifiable) truth claims, Dewey argued, could not survive in the modern world – but the religious, in the sense of a humanistic psychological experience of transcendence – had an ongoing practical utility in helping people to cope with day-to-day living.⁸⁷² In Dewey’s eagerness to divorce religious experience from any actual supernatural truth, however, he failed to provide any reasonable expectation that such experiences would be limited to sources that are morally positive, or in keeping with the aspirations of the regime, and thus, opened the door to precisely the sort of misapplication of those aspirations that Lincoln, for example, most feared.

In a similar vein, in *Freedom and Culture*, Dewey insists that all truth-seeking must be pragmatic rather than general or universal.⁸⁷³ Pragmatism, however, is an exceptionally questionable basis for truth, inasmuch as it suggests that the ends (whatever they might be) justify the means, which cannot therefore, be judged on the basis of good or evil, but merely their relative effectiveness at attaining “progress,” however defined. Perhaps more disturbing from the view of civic education, he contends that because ideas have no independent standing as true or false, but are merely instruments, they cannot properly function as motives for human behavior. Ideas for Dewey—even those most deeply cherished as the founding principles of a regime—are nothing more than

⁸⁷¹ Corliss Lamont, “New Light on Dewey's Common Faith,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 58.1 (1961), 25, 27.

⁸⁷² John Dewey, *Common Faith*, Second Edition with introduction by Thomas M. Alexander (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 66.

⁸⁷³ Dewey, *Common Faith*, 36-7.

pragmatic responses to particular circumstances that become a more generalized form of conduct later on.⁸⁷⁴ Founding aspirations can have no more than formal significance in a political community (they certainly cannot function as any sort of authority), and thus, Dewey's progressivism leaves no reason for (and little urges) adherence to the foundations of the regime in practice, let alone in knowledge or virtue.⁸⁷⁵

Dewey criticized the American founders for offering a "simplified" theory of human nature, one that was overly determined and philosophical, rather than fluid and scientific. All genuine theory, he argued, should be circumstantial, and political theory in particular should begin with scientific investigation rather than philosophical reasoning as its model.⁸⁷⁶ For Dewey, the application of the scientific method to humanistic inquiry was not merely a matter of how we frame our inquiries, but rather, the adoption of a systematic set of attitudes about the provisional nature of truth.⁸⁷⁷ As such, it should not be surprising that Dewey openly decried the "idolatry of the Constitution" in America and instead advocated an evolutionary approach to rights.⁸⁷⁸

A Way Forward: Modern Civic Renewal on the Puritan Model

As C. S. Lewis wrote in the opening sentence of *The Abolition of Man*, "I doubt whether we are sufficiently attentive to the importance of elementary text books."⁸⁷⁹

Lewis' point was that the young are profoundly sensitive to—and thus, susceptible to—

⁸⁷⁴ John Dewey, *Freedom and Culture* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1989), 45.

⁸⁷⁵ Dewey, *Freedom and Culture*, 48-49, 68.

⁸⁷⁶ Dewey, *Freedom and Culture*, 83, 85-88, 90-91.

⁸⁷⁷ Dewey, *Freedom and Culture*, 109-111.

⁸⁷⁸ Dewey, *Freedom and Culture*, 121, 124. It should be noted that such an evolutionary approach often translates in the mere pursuit of interest, and results not in a more universal, but rather a more spectacularly particularized set of rights claims, so that there are now not only the rights of man as he was endowed with them by his Creator, but also "women's rights" (including the more specific "right to choose"), "gay rights," and so forth.

⁸⁷⁹ C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man: or, Reflections on Education with Special Reference to the Teaching of English in the Upper Forms of Schools* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2001), 1.

the unspoken assumptions about the nature of the world, “ethics, theology, and politics” that infuse all writing, including the most banal of classroom texts. Students absorb these hidden lessons along with their overt study of grammar and history, for example, in such a way that “ten years hence, its origin forgotten and its presence unconscious, [the unspoken assumption] will condition him to take one side in a controversy which he has never recognized as a controversy at all.”⁸⁸⁰ Although Lewis was primarily concerned about the spiritual effect of this phenomena, there are similarly significant civic effects as well when elementary and secondary school curricula fail to adequately provide the strong foundation in civic knowledge and virtue that lead to meaningful civic engagement. Unfortunately, most civic education initiatives in the contemporary United States do precisely this, emphasizing student ‘empowerment’ and ‘activism’ in response to “issue[s] they feel passionately about,” rather than providing students with a solid grounding in either the natural rights principles of the American tradition, or their historical application and challenges thereto.⁸⁸¹ Indeed, a large part of the controversy over recent attempts to mandate state testing in civics (by having students take the national citizenship test), for example came from critics who decried the test as focused on “disconnected facts” and who argued that it will actually prevent students from becoming interested in their rights and responsibilities as citizens.⁸⁸²

In contrast, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan advocated the gamification of civic education in his remarks at the 2011 iCivics “Educating for Democracy in a

⁸⁸⁰ Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*, 5.

⁸⁸¹ See Jessica Lander, “Teach Civics in Schools—But Do It Right,” April 18, 2015, BostonGlobe.com; <https://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/editorials/2015/04/17/teach-civics-schools-but-right/uZ7CAOtKwrpLDZXOxi06BI/story.html>, accessed 2/29/16.

⁸⁸² See the report by the Education Commission of the States on “The Civic Education Initiative of 2015,” <http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/19/46/11946.pdf>, accessed 2/29/16.

Digital Age” conference. Duncan applauded efforts to bring civic learning online through game-based applications: for example, one that encourages students to adopt the role of a Supreme Court justice asked to render a decision on a question of constitutional interpretation. While this scenario does seem to require some basic knowledge of how the nation’s institutions work, what Duncan describes sounds superficial and more concerned about giving students a (virtual) experience of democratic choice than in giving them a deep understanding of the principles that might make certain choices more or less in keeping with the nation’s founding commitments than others.⁸⁸³

In order to avoid the minimization of virtue and knowledge that accompanies the prevailing models of what is overtly labeled as ‘civic education’ in schools, some arts and cultural organizations have begun to adopt approaches to audience engagement that actually begin from the assumption that ideas are powerfully important factors in shaping the human experience. Such groups thus understand an essential aspect of their role in society to be the preservation of particular objects or traditions not exclusively as ends in themselves, but as a means of establishing a connection between past and present. They seek to draw the contemporary audience member into an experience of reflection that nourishes his interest in the enduring questions and challenges of human life and the ways in which previous generations have responded to them. This, then, naturally stimulates further inquiry into the principles and traditions of the society that have proven so essential to civic formation in the American experience.

Visiting a heritage institution, for example, can contribute to the visitor’s sense of civic virtue and knowledge in three ways. First, given that the mission of heritage

⁸⁸³ The transcript of Duncan’s remarks is available online: <http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/next-generation-civics-education>, accessed 2/29/16.

institutions is to preserve the past, they connect the individual to the shared origins and landmarks of his community, mitigating his sense of dissociation in time and place. Second, most heritage institutions strive to provide substantive educational opportunities for visitors of all ages, and to engender cross-generational conversations as well as individual reflection on topics which involve inherited principles. Third, such institutions offer opportunities beyond casual visitation which can help to foster the type of associational life that Tocqueville argued was necessary for preserving self-government in a way that connect practice with both virtue and knowledge in meaningful ways.⁸⁸⁴

Participation in local heritage institutions thus contributes to the perpetuation of the civic principles of the nation by drawing ties between those themes and local personalities, traditions, and stories. Furthermore, in curating and exhibiting the sometimes extremely small and ephemeral bits of material culture that make up the majority of everyday experience, heritage professionals encourage visitors to encounter the details of their past, to slow down and really examine the evidence left by previous generations, restoring the broken links of the chain of memory. In focusing on the role of the individual as a maker of and participant in history, rather than merely a passenger on the sea of time, such institutions also encourage citizens to pay closer attention to the

⁸⁸⁴ Anthropologists Eric Gable and Richard Handler collaborated on a three-year ‘ethnographic’ study of Colonial Williamsburg in which they attempted to explain how that institution (and by extension, all heritage museums) met its dual goals of preserving the past and educating and engaging present-day visitors. Their research reveals that many visitors experienced Colonial Williamsburg in terms of remembered family visits to the site—visits understood to be connected together as a series (‘our first visit ten years ago’ or ‘the last time we visited’) that might span three generations. Return visitors are often drawn to the site both from an interest in the specific history presented there, and from its positive associations with their more direct familial antecedents. Repeat visitors to heritage institutions thus build layers of association with the past which reinforce one another. See Gable and Handler, “Public History, Private Memory: Notes from the Ethnography of Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, U.S.A.,” in *Defining Memory: Local Museums and the Construction of History in America’s Changing Communities*, Amy K. Levine, ed. (Lanham, MD: Altamira Press, 2007), 51, 55. See also, Gable and Handler, *The New History in the Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997).

philosophies that undergird their own choices, while also hopefully deepening their understanding of and commitment to the founding principles they have seen at work in history.⁸⁸⁵

In democratic societies, heritage institutions serve as mediators of a redemptive-historical narrative that connects local history to the broader national story.⁸⁸⁶ This is explicitly the case in those places which are designated as National Historic Landmarks (NHLs). NHLs are “nationally significant historic places designated by the Secretary of the Interior because they possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States.”⁸⁸⁷ Close examination and consideration of such landmarks will reveal not only what materials and technologies were available its construction, but also allow the observer to garner information about the purpose of the

⁸⁸⁵ Note that a museum exhibition or historic site can put the same thought at various times before thousands visitors...and do so year after year after year, providing not only community, but continuity. This is especially significant given Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen’s finding that Americans tend to attribute a greater degree of trustworthiness to museums than to any other source of historical information with which they engage—including family members or other eye-witnesses See Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, STATISTICAL TABLE 1.2: TRUSTWORTHINESS OF SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE PAST -- BY RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUP, from *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* available online: http://chnm.gmu.edu/survey/1_2gnrltrst.html. For the complete description of the project, including a detailed interpretation of the survey data, see: Rosenzweig and Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

⁸⁸⁶ I am borrowing the term “redemptive historical narrative” from the Reformed tradition of Christianity, in which the Bible is generally read as one coherent narrative of God’s work, a story which begins in Genesis and carries on through to Revelation with various supporting characters, but one overarching message: God’s love for his people. Sometimes referred to simply as “biblical theology,” this approach places each canonical book as part of a broader redemptive-historical context, so that Old Testament stories are seen to prefigure or foreshadow the coming of Christ. This method of hermeneutics dates back to Jean Calvin’s sermons and Biblical commentaries yet its formalization is generally attributed to Geerhardus Vos, the first professor of Biblical theology at Princeton Theological Seminary. See Geerhardus Vos, “The Idea of Biblical Theology as a Science and as a Theological Discipline,” address given at Princeton Theological Seminary, May 8, 1894 (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph & Company, 1894). The most complete expression of Vos’ hermeneutical approach is found in *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1948); two excellent recent books in the same vein are Edmund P. Clowney, *The Unfolding Mystery: Discovering Christ in the Old Testament* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1989) and Graeme Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2012).

⁸⁸⁷ National Park Service, National Historic Landmarks Program Homepage, available online: <http://www.nps.gov/history/nhl/>.

structure, and thus offer insight on larger civic issues. Although Tocqueville believed democratic peoples would discard these tangible remnants of their past, Americans—perhaps out of an intuitive sense of their ‘placelessness’—turn to heritage institutions to connect to their origins *through* their preserved landmarks. Heritage institutions allow everyone to experience a sense of rootedness in their community, even when the visitor is a new arrival to the area (or nation).

If political life truly moves back and forth in the space between the world as we find it (whether from nature or society) and those transcendental ends towards which we hope to move that world, then heritage institutions are potentially significant as a medium through which we can shape our understanding of the ends towards which we should push political life and then when we move forward, we recognize them as the acknowledged authors of our ideas. Heritage organizations serve as the keepers of community memory, preserving both the stories and material aspects of the past of a particular locale that give it a unique sense of place. At the same time, they preserve and respect freedom, celebrating the exceptional while simultaneously presenting it in the context of an interpretive narrative that presumes equality: we too can achieve greatness, if we will follow the example of those who have gone before, we can praise them and model ourselves after them at one and the same time.⁸⁸⁸

Art can have similar effects: Makoto Fujimura, artist, intellectual, and founder of the International Arts Movement, for example, has written extensively about the need for what he terms “culture care” or the need for creative individuals in all fields to engage with the world from a position of stewardship and with a “generative” vision, that is, with

⁸⁸⁸ On this, see John Schaar, *Escape from Authority* (New York: Harper and Row, 1961).

the goal of restoring life and hope to a world too often disparaged as bereft of either.⁸⁸⁹ Genuine art is as reflective of universal truth as the most esoteric philosophical text, Fujimura argues, and as much an expression of faith in transcendence as any religious doctrine.⁸⁹⁰ Although Fujimura is a Christian in the Reformed tradition (and thus shares certain core beliefs about the nature of humanity and the world with the Puritans), his work with the International Arts Movement is not specifically creedal, and as such, it suggests a way forward for civic education in the broader religiously pluralistic society of modern day America as well.

At its core, the Culture Care initiative is a call for artists and intellectuals to utilize their talents to engage in the hard work of civic formation: beauty, Fujimura argues, is essential for human flourishing, and thus, for the flourishing of our communities and indeed, the nation. In practice, Culture Care follows the same hierarchy (virtue, knowledge and then action) that Puritans utilized successfully to perpetuate their founding aspirations: Fujimura argues that all genuine art naturally seeks to reflect a higher law framework, and this search for transcendence orients art in all genres towards virtue and truth. Only once those have been obtained (or, at least, sought after and approached) can the artist convey anything meaningful through their work; the recipient of the art is thus educated as they hear/see/read the work. Only once they have received the message of the artist can the non-artist respond, incorporating the lessons gained thereby into their activity in the world. Although the initiative is aimed primarily at adults

⁸⁸⁹ Makoto Fujimura, *On Becoming Generative: An Introduction to Culture Care* (New York: Fujimura Institute and the International Arts Movement, 2013).

⁸⁹⁰ Fujimura, *On Becoming Generative*, 21. See also Makoto Fujimura, “Keynote Address” at *Inhabit: Art in Space and Time* Conference (October 3-5, 2013), abbreviated version available online: <http://fujimurainstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/MF-Inhabit-Keynote-Notes.pdf>, accessed 1/28/2016.

with creative or artistic vocations, its non-creedal recognition of the enduring human need for what Lewis called “objective value” may be the closest we can come in the religiously pluralistic context of modern America to recapturing the unified sense of mission underlying seventeenth century Puritan civic formation.

Both traditionalist and Deweyan educational models make an education oriented toward transcendent truth impossible, and both thus fail to move students to a place of meaningful citizenship in which the principles of the regime have been brought to bear first internally, and only then, externally. In contrast to traditionalist models of civic education, which emphasize knowledge and emulation of the past as a good in and of itself, and neglect the important role of transcendent truth in shaping and giving meaning to past traditions, a “culture care” approach to civic formation would begin by having students contemplate the very same transcendent truth claims that animated their historical progenitors. From there, the student would be led to reason through the relative success or failure of previous generations in realizing their civic aspirations and only then to consider their own role in generating the future iterations of such aspirations. In contrast with the instrumentalist approach to civic education, in which the standard of success is the relative effectiveness of the students’ political mobilization in effecting the resolution of whatever ‘problem’ they have happened to identify, an educator in the “culture care” classroom would assess students’ progress as citizens by the measure of their engagement with the challenges of internal governance. The “culture care” approach to civic formation, in short, would restore the proper balance between virtue, knowledge, and action by restoring to students’ their sense of “objective value” and by training them use it as the measure of history and as the standard towards which their own efforts at

“generativity” ought to aim. Only by inspiring the link between transcendent truth and human flourishing can we truly succeed in the formation of citizens who are both self-governed and self-governing, and thereby have some confidence in the ongoing possibilities of republican government.

APPENDIX 1: MASSACHUSETTS BAY COLONY SEAL, 1629



APPENDIX 2: CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS LEADING TO THE *LAWS AND**LIBERTIES*⁸⁹¹

Other Significant Events/Documents	Date	Events Related to Law Report
	1635	Committee formed to prepare “fundamental laws.” (Gov. John Haynes, D. Gov. Richard Bellingham, John Winthrop and Thomas Dudley.) <i>Records of the MBC I:147.</i>
	5/1636	Ministers added to the committee. (Henry Vane, John Cotton, Hugh Peter, Thomas Shepard) <i>Records of the MBC I:174-175.</i>
	10/1636	John Cotton submits <i>Moses...His Judicials.</i>
JW, Defense of Court Order	5/1637	
Shepard Election Sermon	1638	Freeman added to committee formed. (William Spencer and William Hathorne) General Court ordered the freemen of every town to “collect the heads of such necessary and fundamental laws as may be suitable to the times and places where God by His providence hath cast us.” <i>Records of the MBC I:222, 262.</i>
	11/1639	Nathaniel Ward, <i>Body of Liberties</i> and John Cotton, <i>Moses...His Judicials</i> presented to the General Court. Committee to consolidate and send a new draft “to the several towns, that the elders of the churches and the freemen may consider of them against the Court.” <i>Records of the MBC I:279.</i>
	1640	Bellingham ordered to prepare a report on all the laws. <i>Records of the MBC I:292-293, 320, 346.</i>
Shepard sermon series on Christian Liberty	1641	<i>Body of Liberties</i> passed and distributed among the towns, and ordered “read and deliberately weighed” at each General Court for the next three years.
	6/1642	Committee formed to review recently passed laws with an eye to publication. <i>Records of the MBC II:21.</i>
	5/1643	Committee ordered to “examine and perfect the laws.” <i>Records of the MBC II:39.</i>
JW, <i>Discourse on Arbitrary Government</i>	1644	Three county committees formed to consult on the laws, to consist of magistrates, clergy, and freemen. <i>Records of the MBC II: 61, 109, 128.</i>
JW, <i>Little Speech on Liberty</i>	1645	
	5/1646	Committee to consolidate the county committee reports with Bellingham’s final report. <i>Records of the MBC II:157.</i>
<i>Declaration of 1646</i>	11/1646	Final revision ordered. <i>Records of the MBC II:168-169.</i>
	1647-1648	General Court passes legislation to address gaps illustrated by the committee reports. <i>Records of the MBC II:176ff.</i>
	11/1647	Final draft of <i>Laws and Liberties</i> prepared and reviewed by General Court <i>Records of the MBC II: 209, 217-218.</i>
	5/1648	Final text of <i>Laws and Liberties</i> approved and prepared for printer <i>Records of the MBC II:246.</i>
	10/1648	<i>Laws and Liberties</i> at press: one free copy for each member of General Court, the rest to be sold. <i>Records of the MBC II:262.</i>

⁸⁹¹ The most detailed account of the development of the *Laws and Liberties* remains Chapter 8, “The Path of the Law,” in George Lee Haskins, *Law and Authority in Early Massachusetts: A Study in Tradition and Design* (New York: Macmillan, 1960).

APPENDIX 3: A FUNERAL ELEGY FOR JOHN WINTHROP

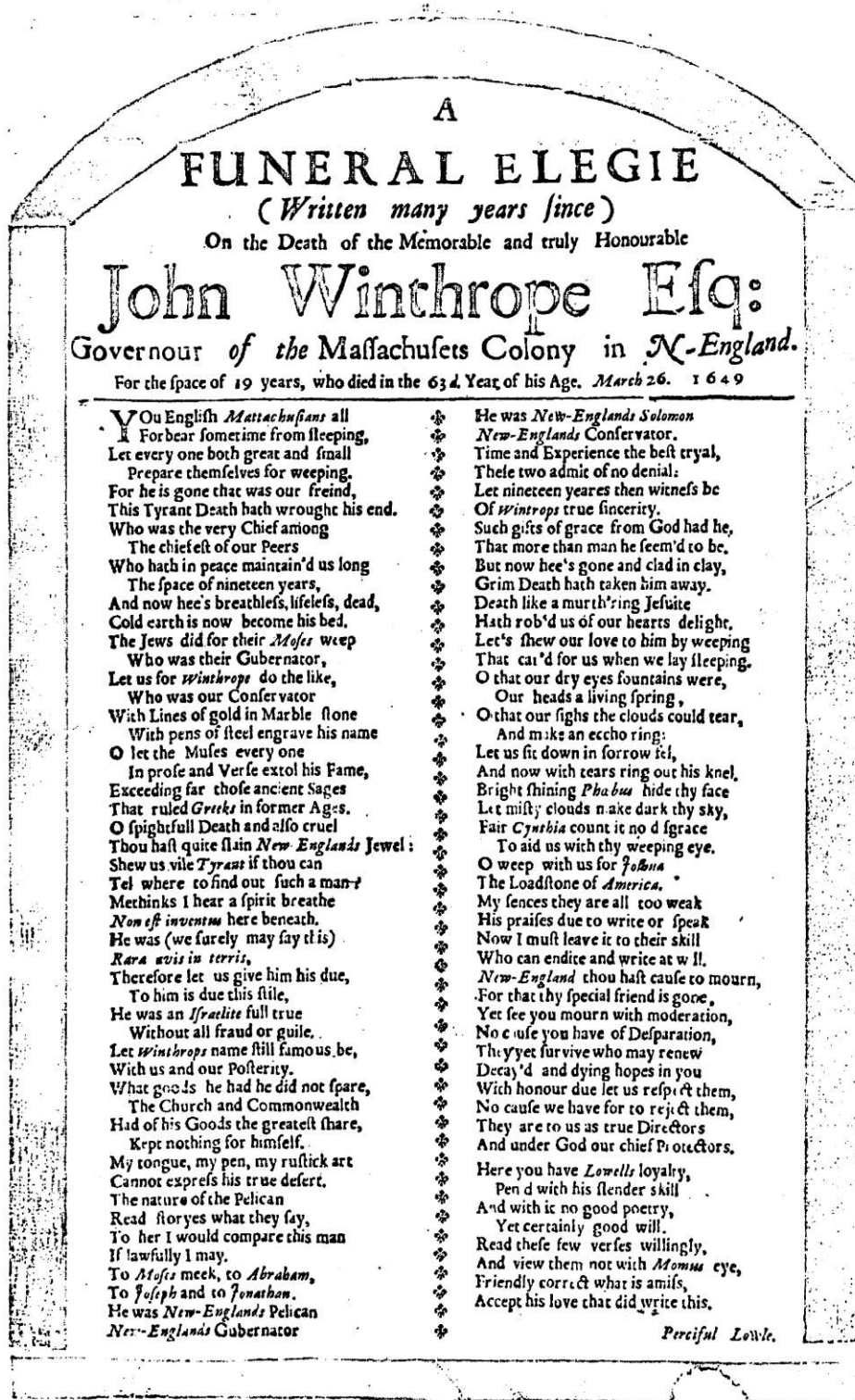


Figure 2: Broadside, Percival Lowell, *A Funeral Elegy (Written Many Years Since) on the Death of the Memorable and Truly Honorable, John Winthrop* (Boston, 1676).

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