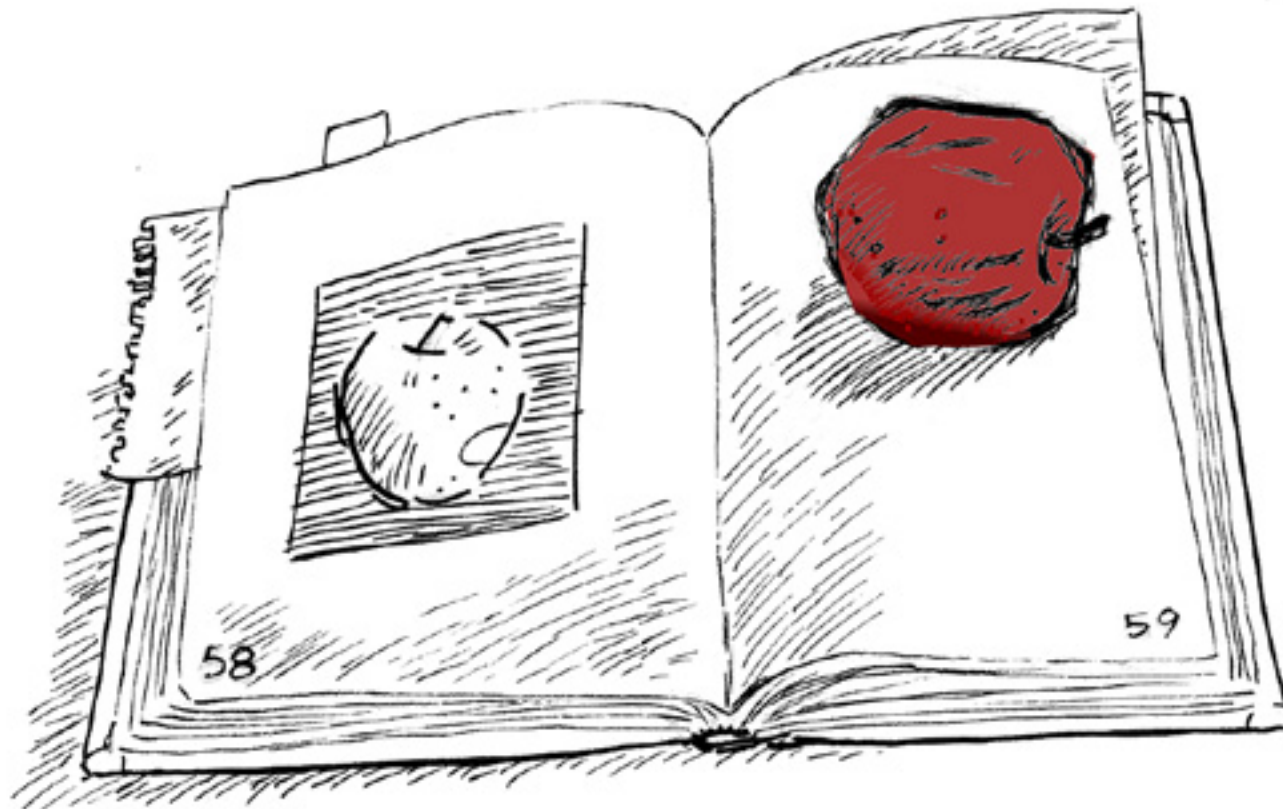


Early Colonial Ideology - part 3



Puritan's View of New World

The New World offered an opportunity to set a chaotic wilderness to a sense of Christian order. The Puritans were given the opportunity to claim a region of the world, and reinvent, *reform* the landscape in their own controlled, manicured concepts.

In a recent essay, Robert Boschman notes the English Settlers' motivation based itself on the need “to reform the environment, to Anglicize it, as swiftly as possible” (250).

Among the Puritans, the writings of John Winthrop confirm Boschman's view. Winthrop states: “Whatsoever we did or ought to have done when we lived in England, we must do that and more also wherever we go” (*Norton Anthology of American Literature* 156).

Boschman, Robert. *In the Way of Nature: Ecology and Western Expansion*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2009. Print

Puritan's View of New World

To justify further their actions of claiming the land, even if by force, the English viewed the Native Americans as a 'failed' species due to their lack of marketable industry or civilizations.

From a 1630 sermon in England, "God's Promise to His Plantation"

Reverend John Cotton states:

"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 leaves... So that it is free from the common grant for any to take possession of vacant countries. Indeed no nation, is to drive out another without special commission from Heaven, such as the Israelites had, unless the natives do unjustly wrong them, will not recompense the wrongs done in a peaceable fort. And then they may right themselves by lawful war and subdue the country unto themselves."

Cotton, John. "The Divine Right to Occupy the Land." *The Annals of American Literature*, vol. 1: 1493-1754: *Discovering a New World*. London: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. 1976. Print.

“God’s Promise to His Plantation”

His sermon achieves multiple purposes:

- emphasizes connections between the Old Testament Israelites wandering in the wilderness and the Puritans wandering the woods of North America
- asserts the English right to plunder the Americas

Consequently:

- between 1629 and 1640, during Charles I reign, a large exodus of Puritan sects left England due to conflicting issues of control over ecclesiastical matters in the church *and* the King’s religious policies; thousands of people, mostly middle class, emigrated to New England, setting up a new lifestyle in the wild
- the common family represented Adam and Eve, struggling to produce a semblance of a new Eden in the New World

John Cotton

Brief Overview of Cotton's Career

- served as vicar of St. Botolph's, in England, at the age of 27
- beginning in 1615 he introduced changes to Anglican methods of the liturgy, without opposition from church authorities
- In this stage of his career he was in contact with John Winthrop and other members of the Massachusetts Bay Company. When Winthrop's company departed for the New World, Cotton traveled to Southampton and preached his farewell sermon "God's Promise to His Plantation."
- In 1633 higher church officials became sensitive to Cotton's views and changes. William Laud, Bishop of London, supporter of Charles I policies, summoned Cotton to the Court of High Commission. Cotton went in to hiding.
- In 1633, Cotton embarked for Boston, New England, with other men who would soon become prominent leaders in Colonial America.
- Once overseas, Cotton became involved with different reformations in Boston, wanting to develop further changes in the Church of England.

John Winthrop || *William Bradford*

John Winthrop wrote the “A City Upon a Hill” sermon

- traditionally believed to have been given when aboard the *Arbella* not long before the Puritan landing in Salem
- often used in political speeches even today

Despite the fact that the two materials have different intentions, Bradford’s text is an historical record, Winthrop’s is a religious sermon — and despite the fact that Bradford was a Separatist Pilgrim and Winthrop was an Anglican Puritan, the two texts mirror each other in style and technique.

- both are using the plain style
- both are wanting to promote their campaigns into new territories

John Winthrop || William Bradford

- Winthrop uses a typical Biblical parallelism for rhythm and cadence
- for example, “we must” phrases repeat, repetitiously in the top sentences
- notice how the phrasing slowly shift to “we shall” phrases
- lack of color
- the sermon stresses the hardships ahead
- mentions scripture throughout his sermon as a means of verifying his theme and situation
- theme proposes a sense of warning to the early colonists that their new community would be a “city upon a hill,” watched by the world
- Winthrop believed that all nations had a covenant with God
- because England had violated its religious covenant, the Puritans must leave the country

Pilgrims versus the Puritans

- for this reason, the Puritans were acting as a further confirmation of the Separatists Pilgrim's leave taking, a few years previous
- the Old World was seeing this action as a repetition of a second movement into the New World, which more or less confirmed preceding actions
- however, unlike the Separatists Pilgrims, the Puritans remained loosely associated with the Anglican church in hopes that it could be purified from within
- Winthrop believed that by purifying Christianity in the New World, his followers would serve as an example to the Old World for building a successful model of a Protestant community as opposed to a successful Church of Rome community

Pilgrims versus the Puritans

Because the Puritans believed their community was ‘specially ordained by God’

Puritan society of New England as a whole was affected:

- breaking such a covenant with God would have dire results
- to avoid incurring God’s wrath by breaking their promise, the Puritans sought to maintain a perfect order in their society

Their conventions lead them to create an extremely rigid society in New England, to contrast with the other loosely-bound colonies, such as the mercantile colony of Jamestown.

Pilgrims versus the Puritans

Both the Separatists and the Puritans wanted the freedom to practice their own religion, but their religious views were very strict and not at all compatible with our contemporary notions of religious freedom.

- the Puritans forced everyone in the Massachusetts Bay Colony to follow the laws of their puritanical faith
- the Pilgrims forced everyone in the Plymouth Colony to follow the Separatists doctrine

United Colonies of New England

At one point the English colonies loosely bound together as a body of government despite their various differences of religious thought.

United Colonies of New England

- one of the preliminary governments of New England
- formed May 19, 1643 and lasted until 1684
- included the colonies of:

Massachusetts Plymouth

Connecticut New Haven

As an united force these English colonies envisioned themselves opposed to the outside “heathen” influences such as Native Americans; the Dutch, in what is now New York; and the French Jesuits, in what is now Canadian territory.

United Colonies of New England

English Colonies Excluded:

- The Virginia colony Jamestown was not included because it was created as a commercial venture and was invested through another British-based company.
- The Rhode Island colony was excluded because of their liberal leanings and sympathy to the Native Americans.

Conflicts between the Colonies existed nonetheless

- Even with the United Colonies of New England government policy in place these groups often were in border skirmishes with each other and with Native Americans.
- Bloodshed common in territory disputes between the colonies and outside “heathens.”