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# **In the Devil's Shadow:**

## **Sacred Agency, Cosmic Struggle, and the Cultural-Religious Clashes that Shaped Colonial New England, 1620-1693**

### ABSTRACT

The dual narrative of sacred agency and cosmic struggle played a far more consequential role in New England's early colonial history than has been generally acknowledged by existing scholarship. Deriving from a unique cultural-religious ideology that developed within the nonconforming Reformed Anglo-Protestant traditions, the region's landscape was transformed into a spiritual battleground between the forces of darkness and God's "chosen elect" – which not only reinforced a hegemonic culture of Christian piety and devotion within the "godly colonies," but had a far-reaching influence over the colonial process itself. In addition to providing a guided sense of purpose for the settlement, governance, development, expansion, and defense of New England, such beliefs fueled the tumultuous relationship with the Algonquian tribes who shared in their adopted new world. The diabolic portrayal of resident native populations featured prominently in the seventeenth-century colonial Separatist and Puritan worldview, with the Algonquian peoples cast as a corrupted race in the service of the Devil; a means by which God challenged religious complacency or chastised collective sin; and, in times of spiritual crisis and despair, a mortal threat to the "rule of saints" in the region. This study focuses on the real-world impact of the nonconforming Reformed Anglo-Protestant belief system and the resulting cultural-religious clashes that shaped New England's early colonial period.

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# In the Devil's Shadow:

## Sacred Agency, Cosmic Struggle, and the Cultural-Religious Clashes that Shaped Colonial New England, 1620-1693

The *New-Englanders* are a people of God settled in those, which were once the *Devil's Territories*; and it may easily be supposed that the Devil was exceedingly disturbed, when he perceived such a People here accomplishing the Promise of old made unto our Blessed Jesus, *That He should have the Utmost parts of the Earth for his Possession.*

– Cotton Mather, *The Wonders of the Invisible World* (1693)

### INTRODUCTION

From the beginning, New England was conceived of as an act of providential destiny; a sacred historical conquest that brought God's "chosen people" to the New World as part of a broader cosmic narrative marked by the prophesied events of apocalypse.<sup>1</sup> As self-assigned bearers of the "true church," three generations of Separatist and Puritan ideologues envisioned a world based around the establishment of a model Reformed Anglo-Protestant society in preparation for the Second Coming of Christ; the principal basis of the "Errand into the Wilderness" in which they believed themselves to have been entrusted by God. Dramatic as it seems, it would be wrong to dismiss this version of New England's early history as symbolic analogy, creative myth-making, or religious hyperbole. It was a powerful narrative that not only provided higher purpose for the colonial endeavor, but proved to be a

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1. Philip F. Gura, *A Glimpse of Zion's Glory: Puritan Radicalism in New England, 1620-1660* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1984), 13; Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), 7. As Gura contends, "New England [...] was settled in the belief that it was to become nothing less than the fulfillment of biblical prophecy, a land in which the life of the spirit informed all behavior and so would mark the spot of the New Jerusalem." Bercovitch further notes the pronounced sense of sacred agency shared by the leading colonial religionists of the founding generation, who believed themselves to be "not only called but chosen, and chosen not only for heaven but as instruments of a sacred historical design."

central component of a cultural-religious ideology that shaped the early course of settlement, governance, development, expansion, and established relations in the region.

The nonconforming Reformed Anglo-Protestant conception of “the Devil” played an important role in this sacred drama. Cast as lord over the unconquered New World Wilderness, the Devil loomed heavily in the minds of devout colonial religionists. In their view, with God's permission this malignant deity challenged, and at times chastised, the chosen elect as they established and developed the “promised land” of New England. Throughout the seventeenth-century their world advanced in trial and tribulation, from which Separatist and Puritan settlers upheld their utopian religious-state experiment as an extension of God's glory; a scriptural model of purified Christendom, governed by the “rule of saints.” As such, they considered themselves a special target of the Devil – who, according to biblical prophecy, had been unleashed during this crucial late stage of sacred history to gather his forces and intensify the attacks upon their colonial religious social order.<sup>2</sup> It is from within these sacred and cosmic narratives that the diabolic portrayal of the region's native populations emerged.

The resident Algonquian tribes were commonly viewed as a savage, unregenerate, and cursed race – or, less generously, “the veriest *ruines of mankind*” – by the early English settlers. It was further understood that these native peoples placed the Devil (known to them as “Hobbomock”) at the center of their spiritual pantheon and remained “his most devoted and resembling children.” The true origins of the Algonquian race remained a mystery to their colonial detractors; however, many believed “that probably the Devil decoy'd those miserable Salvages hither, in hopes that the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ would never come here to destroy or disturb his *Absolute Empire* over them.”<sup>3</sup> In their dramatic

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2. Peter N. Carroll, *Puritanism and the Wilderness: The Intellectual Significance of the New England Frontier, 1629-1700* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 73-76; John Winthrop to His Wife, July 23, 1630, in *The Winthrop Papers, Volume II: 1623-1630* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1931), 303. In one of his earliest letters from New England, John Winthrop, the founding Puritan leader of the Massachusetts Bay colony, lamented, “Sathan bends his forces against us [during this period], and stirs up his instruments to all kindes of mischeife.”

3. Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana, Or, The Ecclesiastical History of New England, Volume I* (Hartford: Silas Andrus and Son, 1855; digitized by Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Library, 2005), 213, 556, 558.  
<http://name.umdl.umich.edu/AFK3754.0001.001>.

proclamations, later Puritan divines further cast hostile tribes as biblical antagonists; a New World counterpart to the heathen tribes of the Old Testament and “forerunners of the legions of darkness that would gather at Gog and Magog for a last furious but futile battle against the chosen elect.”<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, they played a crucial role in the cosmological belief system and corresponding worldviews of New England's leading Separatist and Puritan ideologues.

The primary objectives of this study are: first, to trace the origins and development of the underlying cultural-religious ideology that gave credence to the notions of sacred agency and cosmic struggle that shaped New England's dominant colonial worldviews; and, second, explore the ways in which this dual narrative contributed to the region's early colonial process, with a particular focus on the course of Anglo-Indian relations. In the past, historians have cited religious idealism as the central guiding aspect of New England's founding and early development. More recently, scholarship has concentrated on the varied material interests that motivated the colonial endeavor. Of the revisionist studies that concentrate more directly on Anglo-Indian relations, most have generally framed the subject as “a clash of cultures,” with the inevitable disparities rooted in the domineering and ethnochauvinistic nature of European conquest.<sup>5</sup> Rather than challenge this established body of historical scholarship, this thesis paper instead seeks to highlight the underlying cultural-religious ideology (and associated sacred and cosmic narratives) that provided the intellectual foundation for both the religious and material aspects of the colonial process.

As a people in covenant with God, the early colonial Separatists and Puritans who chose to “emigrate to the New World [...] signaled, among other things, a willingness to prepare for the final battle with the Antichrist.”<sup>6</sup> Framed by the dual narrative of sacred agency and cosmic struggle, it was

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4. Sacvan Bercovitch, “Forward,” in Charles Segal and David Stineback, ed., *Puritans, Indians & Manifest Destiny* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1977), 17.

5. Neal Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans, and the Making of New England, 1500-1643* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 10-12; Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 124-27.

6. Gura, *A Glimpse of Zion's Glory*, 128.

the self-assigned mission of these nonconforming religious exiles to claim the New England landscape as a “sacred inheritance” from those who lived in spiritual darkness in order to advance the prophesied “true church” in the Wilderness of the New World. The resident native populations they encountered were not simply viewed as a hindrance to the establishment of a model Christian society or the advancement of English material interests. For many leading cultural-religious ideologues they represented an antichristian challenge to the sacred mission of the elect during what was perceived to be the final days in the unfolding of apocalyptic prophecy. It is from these radical beliefs (and corresponding worldviews) that the religious ideals and material interests generally cited as central motivating factors in the early colonial process found biblical urgency and justification.

As this study concerns the hegemonic influence and real-world impact of the cosmological belief system associated with New England's leading Separatist and Puritan minority, it is largely confined to the “godly colonies” of Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, Connecticut, and New Haven. It would be an over-simplification to claim consistently unified interests among these colonies. Nonetheless, they remained closely connected by religious ideals and a shared polity throughout the seventeenth-century. More importantly, the colonial process of each was rooted in a common cultural-religious ideological tradition. Chapter I establishes the basis of this tradition with an overview of the intellectual contributions made by some of the more influential Protestant theologians rooted in the earlier period of Reformation (particularly those associated with Marian Exile movement of the 1550s), which provided an ideological foundation for both the colonial Separatists and Puritans. Specific areas of focus include the varied influences of Reformed theology, Calvinist cosmological beliefs, Old Testament typology, apocalypticism, English folklore, and the collective experience of martyrdom and persecution during the Marian counter-reformation.

Having established the ideological basis for the cosmological belief system and corresponding worldviews of New England's leading colonial religionists, Chapters II and III introduce the earliest

period of contact and settlement that set the patterns for Anglo-Indian relations in the region. Early explorations and trading enterprises brought the English into contact with Algonquian peoples, from which initial perceptions (and prejudices) were formed. A brief overview of these early encounters is included, followed by a more detailed and balanced account of Algonquian society, culture, and religiosity as it existed during this period. The founding of both the Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay colonies marked the beginning of New England's colonial process. Chapter III traces the vision and development of these “godly colonies” with a particular focus on the cultural-religious beliefs that accompanied the establishment of the “true church” in transatlantic exile. The cosmological beliefs and worldviews shared by the first generation of Separatists and Puritans imbued the New England colonial project in sacred promise and millenarian pursuit, which informed early settlement, development, and relations with the neighboring Algonquian tribes.

Once firmly settled, the New England colonies entered a brief period of crisis (in the mid-1630s) that was marked by the Antinomian Controversy and the Pequot War. Chapter IV is devoted to these two interrelated events, highlighting the sense of cosmic challenge and rupture that overwhelmed the imaginations of devout colonial religionists and necessitated a reevaluation of their covenant with God. In turn, the experience of war marked a pivotal turning point for Anglo-Indian relations with the weaponization of sacred and cosmic narratives to justify an aggressive policy of biblically-justified conquest across the Connecticut River Valley. Following the defeat of the Pequots, a period of relative stability and civil coexistence unfolded in the region that lasted nearly forty years. However, the common historical assumptions of these decades are challenged by my research in Chapter V. It was during this era of “peace” that the New England elect expanded and consolidated their hegemonic dominance to the detriment of tribal neighbors; a process that involved a conscious, albeit protracted, struggle against the Algonquian peoples that included forced servitude, aggressive expansionist

policies, armed intimidation, restrictive laws, cultural segregation, and missionary efforts intended to undermine traditional native culture, customs, and spiritual beliefs.

Contrasting the profound sense of sacred confidence and mission that accompanied the earliest period of settlement, New England's third generation of colonial religionists found themselves in spiritual crisis as perceived signs of providential disfavor and unrestrained diabolic intrigue manifested around them during the final decades of the century. Chapters VI and VII trace the calamitous events associated with the “true church” in decline – which, in the devout religious mind, invited disunity, heretical challenges, unceasing war with the natives, witch panics, and an end to the “rule of saints.” From the trauma of King Philip's War to the loss of the colonial sovereignty, and ending with the tragic events surrounding the Salem Witch Trials, the dual narrative of sacred agency and cosmic struggle featured prominently in the contemporary reflections of the late seventeenth-century as Puritan ideologues sought to make sense of their adversely changing world.

Despite competing colonial interests, the dominant social, religious, and political trends of the seventeenth-century were primarily shaped by a determined minority whose views reflected a unique cultural-religious ideology rooted in the nonconforming Reformed Anglo-Protestant traditions – which, in turn, invited an unceasing clash with those who were viewed as diabolically-inspired antagonists in the perceived sacred drama that enveloped their world. The purpose of this study is to better understand the role that the cultural-religious ideology of the leading Separatists and Puritan settlers played in shaping New England's early colonial period. The unique beliefs and worldviews of these devout colonial religionists were reflected in nearly every aspect of the colonial process and provided a means by which the developmental progress of the “biblical commonwealth” was gauged according to prophetic design. Through a detailed exploration of the consequential role that sacred and cosmic narratives provided in each stage of this process the reader is presented with a more full account of the intellectual basis that guided much of the course of New England's early colonial history.

## HISTORIOGRAPHY

In focusing on the shared cultural-religious ideology and associated narratives of the leading Separatists and Puritans as a central motivating factor for the New England colonial endeavor, this thesis deviates from many of the themes commonly associated with this area of study. From earlier progressive or consensus thought to more recent revisionist or postcolonial studies, the majority of relevant academic works have centered around the religious idealism or materialist impulse of these same pious settlers in defining the region's colonization with little appreciation for the complex belief system that guided their efforts. My own study is by no means a refutation of this established body of scholarship, but rather a reassessment that aims to establish a more developed understanding of the ideological-based sacred and cosmic narratives that informed the dominant New England colonial worldviews and guided the process of settlement, governance, development, expansion, and relations with the resident Algonquian tribes in the region.

The basis of my research is derived from a variety of primary sources, which include journals, pamphlets, letters, sermons, and legal records. I have also referenced a number of secondary studies that reflect a fairly broad range of colonial and ethnohistorical scholarship pertaining to seventeenth-century New England. The major areas of focus include: the founding religious exile movements, early contact and settlement, expansion and consolidation, the shifts in intercultural relations, and the three major “Indian Wars” that were fought during this period. Additionally, in order to fully appreciate the complexities of the colonial Separatist and Puritan belief system (particularly as it related to the resident Algonquian tribes), this study further relies on a number of academic works pertaining to Calvinist cosmology, Reformed Anglo-Protestant theology, apocalypticism, and the folklore and popular culture of Early Modern England.

Samuel Eliot Morison's *Builders of the Bay Colony* (1930) and Perry Miller's *The New England Mind* (1939) were the first works to establish the intellectual history of New England's nonconforming Separatist and Puritan movements, placing religious idealism and justification as the primary basis for the colonial endeavor.<sup>7</sup> Miller's work, in particular, remains highly influential. Other historians have since expanded on the millennialist dimension of his original thesis, including Edmund Morgan, Sacvan Bercovitch, Philip Gura, and Avihu Zakai.<sup>8</sup> Framed by the shared cultural-religious ideology of the Separatist and Puritan movements, my research relies heavily on historical scholarship that reflects this millenarian impulse while taking into account the more critical contributions of scholars such as Theodore Bozeman, Reiner Smolinski, and Jeffrey Jue.<sup>9</sup> The extent of influence that the English apocalyptic tradition had upon the early settlers continues to be debated. However, recent Puritan studies reaffirm the powerful influence of this millennialist undercurrent on the founding vision and guiding basis of the colonial endeavor, with a "stress [placed] on the witness of the Spirit in each saint and on the saint's obligation to bring Christ's kingdom to earth."<sup>10</sup>

The cultural-religious intersections between nonconforming Reformed Anglo-Protestant theology and Early Modern English folk beliefs played an important role in the colonial interpretation

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7. Roy M. Anker, "The American Puritans and the Historians," *Reformed Review* 39 no. 3 (1986): 163-66. <https://repository.westernsem.edu/pkp/index.php/rr/article/view/1035>; Samuel Eliot Morison, *Builders of the Bay Colony* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1930); Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1939).
  8. Edmund S. Morgan, *Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1965); Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978); Philip F. Gura, *A Glimpse of Zion's Glory: Puritan Radicalism in New England, 1620-1660* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1984); Avihu Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom: History and Apocalypse in Puritan Migration to America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
  9. Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *To Live Ancient Lives: The Primitivist Dimensions in Puritanism* (Chapel Hill and London, 1988); Reiner Smolinski, "Israel Redivivus: The Eschatological Limits of Puritan Typology in New England," *New England Quarterly*, no. 63 (1990): 357-395; Jeffrey K. Jue, "Colonial North America: The Puritan Errand Revised," in *Heaven Upon Earth: Joseph Mede (1586-1638) and the Legacy of Millenarianism* (Amsterdam: Springer Publishing, 2006), 175-209.
  10. Gura, *A Glimpse of Zion's Glory*, 10; David D. Hall, *The Puritans: A Transatlantic History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 26-28, 199, 216-19; Michael P. Winship, *Hot Protestants: A History of Puritanism in England and America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 67-68; As Winship notes, at the time of New England's early settlement, "the general English consensus was that all [the] heavily veiled prophecies had been fulfilled save for Revelation 20:8's prediction of the soon-approaching final great battle between the forces of good and evil."

of the “wondrous” New World, particularly in the understanding of diabolic agency, demonism, and aspects of the supernatural that came to be applied to Algonquian religiosity. Keith Thomas was the first to fully elaborate on this theme with *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (1971), a ground-breaking study that explores the social and intellectual implications of popular beliefs during England's Early Modern Era. Thomas's work highlights the continued influence of “magical thinking” as residual medieval customs, folklore, and superstitions intersected with Reformed orthodoxy (even among the religious devout) and the rapid historical developments of this period.<sup>11</sup>

Nathan Johnstone's *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England* (2006) follows within the framework provided by Thomas, albeit with a more specific focus on the role of “the Devil” in the Early Modern English mind. His expansive study examines both popular and religious conceptions of diabolic agency in post-Reformation England, where “out of a subtle realigning of emphasis” a more personalized and intrusive Devil emerged; a grand conspirator who, unlike that of the Roman Catholic tradition, regularly intervened in worldly affairs in order to “subvert man's attempts to achieve a communion with God.”<sup>12</sup> Corresponding with the post-Reformation Devil's enhanced role of tempter and deceiver was the English Protestant self-idealization of persecution and martyrdom, which played a consequential role in the dynamic shifts in Anglo-Indian relations throughout the seventeenth-century. Adrian Chastain Weimer's *Martyr's Mirror: Persecution and Holiness in Early New England* (2011) offers the most detailed elaboration on this theme, whereby the self-perception of New England's devout colonial religionists allowed them to identify as “suffering witnesses” in perpetual struggle against “Antichristian persecutors” in the Wilderness.<sup>13</sup>

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11. Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England* (New York: Penguin Books, 1971).

12. Nathan Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 106.

13. Adrian Chastain Weimer, *Martyr's Mirror: Persecution and Holiness in Early New England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 143.

David D. Hall's *World's of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Beliefs in Early New England* (1989) traces a similar pattern of cultural-religious intersections within the colonial context, navigating through the complex (and often contradictory) elements that contributed to New England's lived religious experience. Despite the influence of ecclesiastical authorities over polity and civic culture, they still represented a small and elite minority. For the common lay person, Hall reminds us, much of colonial religious life simply revolved around "marking off the zones of danger and securing some means of protection," which often deviated from a strict adherence to official Reformed doctrine and could include the ritual purging of sin through prayer or fasting, separating from (or persecuting) ungodly people, or interpreting "the lore of wonders" as signs of God's will.<sup>14</sup> Richard Godbeer's *The Devil's Dominion: Magic and Religion in Early New England* (1992) and Richard Weisman's *Witchcraft, Magic, and Religion in 17th-Century Massachusetts* (1984) expand upon this general theme, offering further explorations of the interplay between orthodoxy and the residual folk beliefs, superstitions, and ritual practices of New England's lay community.<sup>15</sup>

The premise of my study invites challenges from the established body of New England colonial scholarship. In *The Founding of New England* (1921), James Truslow Adams, a historian from the progressive school of thought, argues that the region's early settlement was motivated primarily by economic and political factors. He further maintains a reductionist view regarding the relationship between the English settlers and native Algonquians by simply noting that, similar to other colonial endeavors from this period, "[t]he natives were traded with, fought with, occasionally preached to, and then, as far as possible, exterminated."<sup>16</sup> It was only after the works of Perry Miller that the dominant

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14. David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Beliefs in Early New England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 241.

15. Richard Godbeer, *The Devil's Dominion: Magic and Religion in Early New England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Richard Weisman, *Witchcraft, Magic, and Religion in 17th-Century Massachusetts* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984).

16. Anker, "The American Puritans and the Historians," 161-62; James Truslow Adams, *The Founding of New England* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1921), 14.

religious culture of the early settlers was viewed as a consequential factor in the colonial process, with works that include Edmund Morgan's *Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea* (1963), Sumner Chilton Powell's *Puritan Village: The Formation of a New England Town* (1963), Sacvan Bercovitch's *The Puritan Origins of the American Self* (1975), and Andrew Delbanco's *The Puritan Ordeal* (1989).<sup>17</sup>

In the more specific area of Anglo-Indian relations, Roy Harvey Pearce's *Savagism and Civilization* (1953) marked the first real challenge to the traditionally accepted intercultural dynamic between the “civilized” English settlers and “savage” American natives. Although Pearce acknowledges the diabolic portrayal of Algonquian religiosity by the English, his cursory treatment of this theme places such views within the general ethnochauvinistic outlook rather than a specific cultural-religious ideological framework.<sup>18</sup> Similar views can be found in Richard Slotkin's *Regeneration Through Violence* (1973), a literary history that traces the influence of cultural antagonisms and frontier anxieties on the patterns of American settlement; and also James Axtell's *The Invasion Within* (1985), an ethnohistorical study of the religious encounters that occurred between the varied European missionary efforts and traditional native societies during the early settlement period.<sup>19</sup>

Francis Jennings' *The Invasion of America* (1975) offers a more sharply critical revisionist perspective with a provocative reassessment of the standard Eurocentric historical view that places the colonization of America within a “crusader doctrine” that “had originated to sanctify conquest of the Holy Lands [and] expanded to justify conquest of the world.”<sup>20</sup> However, in keeping his research and

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17. Anker, “The American Puritans and the Historians,” 166; Morgan, *Visible Saints*; Sumner Chilton Powell, *Puritan Village: The Formation of a New England Town* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1963); Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Puritan Origins of the American Self* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975); Andrew Delbanco, *The Puritan Ordeal* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989).

18. Roy Harvey Pearce, *Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1953).

19. Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600–1860* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1973); James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

20. Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 4.

analysis broadly focused, Jennings ignores many of the ideological complexities that lay at the heart of the New England colonial-religious endeavor – and, by extension, the unique sacred and cosmic dimension that sets it apart from other European efforts from this period. Ethnochauvinism and religious justification for worldly conquest featured prominently in the early settlement of the region, as Jennings argues, but it is my contention that it was the underlying sacred historical framework of the leading Separatist and Puritan ideologues that motivated New England's unique colonial process and guided relations with the resident native tribes.

Responding to an increased interest in revisionist historical analysis, Alden Vaughan's *New England Frontier* (1965) provided a more sympathetic – if not apologist – counter-revision that hearkened back to the thought of earlier progressive historians. He argues that “the New England Puritans followed a relatively humane, considerate, and just policy in their dealings with the Indians,” and it was only through a lack of cultural compatibility that relations ultimately broke down. Citing the “prevailing belief that the Indians were children of Old Zion who had strayed – theologically as well as geographically,” Vaughan contends that the Puritans “treated [the natives] as potential converts rather than implacable foes.” My own research challenges this general assertion, as the emphasis of belief that informed colonial religionist beliefs and worldviews regarding the Algonquian peoples shifted dramatically between periods of sacred confidence/crisis and the drive towards biblically-mandated regional dominance continued unabated throughout the early colonial period.<sup>21</sup>

Neal Salisbury's *Manitou and Providence* (1982) provides a more critical assessment of New England's early Anglo-Indian relations. Although the title of his work suggests a narrative based on the clash of native spirituality and European religion, it is in fact a historical analysis based on a “clash of cultures” that, in his estimation, was framed by the irreconcilable differences between relationships

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21. Alden T. Vaughan, *New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians, 1620-1675, Third Edition* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), lxix, 334.

based on “reciprocity” versus those that relied on “domination and submission.” Salisbury provides a more nuanced account of the period that spanned from first contact through the early decades of colonial settlement. However, similar to Vaughan, he treats the cosmological worldviews of the dominant colonial religionists as only one aspect of the antagonistic relationship that developed between settlers and natives rather than a central driving force that shaped the colonial process.<sup>22</sup>

Karen Kupperman takes a different approach in exploring this cultural clash by offering a more conscientious treatment of contemporary English references to the Algonquian peoples in her works *Settling with the Indians* (1980) and *Indians & English: Facing Off in Early America* (2000). Both provide valuable contributions to the field of study, intending to provide “an analysis of the struggle of all those involved [in New England's intercultural encounters] to come to terms with new realities.” However, in her attempt to present an unbiased account of this relationship dynamic she asserts that neither the English nor any of the resident natives approached early relations with “set, preconceived categories for describing the others,” which – although arguably true of the native peoples – downplays the extent to which the preexisting cosmological beliefs of Separatist and Puritan ideologues informed common worldviews in regards to the Algonquian peoples.<sup>23</sup> In contrast, Michael Leroy Oberg's *Dominion & Civility: English Imperialism & Native North America, 1585-1685* (1999) frames the intercultural relations established during the first century of English colonization within the broader context of an transatlantic imperial ambition that “viewed Indians within the framework of an emerging metropolitan paradigm,” which, by design, required that native populations be subordinated to English conceptions of dominion and civility in advancing empire.<sup>24</sup>

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22. Neal Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans, and the Making of New England, 1500-1643* (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 1982), 7, 10, 236-39.

23. Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Settling with the Indians. The Meeting of English and Indian Cultures in America, 1580-1640* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield, 1980); Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Indians & English: Facing Off in Early America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 1, 15.

24. Michael Leroy Oberg, *Dominion & Civility: English Imperialism & Native North America, 1585-1685* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 217.

More closely aligned with my thesis are the works of Alfred Cave, who has written numerous articles relating to the diabolic portrayal of Algonquian religiosity and its guiding influence upon Anglo-Indian relations in the region. It is a theme he further elaborates upon in his full length study, *The Pequot War* (1996). Whereas scholars have generally viewed this conflict in materialist terms of expansionist ambitions and failed diplomacy, Cave acknowledges the underlying dynamic of cultural-religious conquest and biblical mandate that reinforced what was perceived as a “just war” against the hostile (and diabolically-inspired) Pequot tribe. Jill Lepore's *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of Identity* (1999) incorporates similar themes in her exploration of contemporary views related to the later, and more consequential, King Philip's War.<sup>25</sup> Further insights regarding the diabolic portrayal of the Algonquian peoples can be found in the works of William Simmons, David Lovejoy, Steven Neuwirth, and Frank Shuffelton.<sup>26</sup> My study intends to expand upon the general arguments and insights of these works by providing a more defined ideological framework for these beliefs; further elaboration on how they advanced the dual narrative of sacred agency and cosmic struggle; and a broader assessment of their impact upon the seventeenth-century colonial process.

Lastly, as a study centered around the historical role that sacred and cosmic narratives played in the early development of New England it is important to address the periodic witch panics of this era. My research highlights the specific cases that were entangled in the diabolic portrayal of the native peoples and played into the broader cosmic struggle that was thought to envelope the region. *Before Salem: Witch Hunting in the Connecticut River Valley, 1647-1663* (2017), by Richard Ross, documents the first wave of panic, largely fueled by frontier anxieties as the colonies expanded into the remote

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25. Alfred A. Cave, “New England Puritan Misperceptions of Native American Shamanism,” *International Social Science Review* 67, no. 1 (1992): 15-27; Alfred A. Cave, *The Pequot War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1989), 168-72; Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999), 107-13.

26. William S. Simmons, “Cultural Bias in the New England Puritans’ Perception of Indians,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 38 no. 1 (January 1981): 56-2; David S. Lovejoy, “Satanizing the American Indian,” *The New England Quarterly* 67, no. 4 (1994): 603-21; Steven Neuwirth, “The Images of Place: Puritans, Indians, and the Religious Significance of the New England Frontier,” *American Art Journal* 18 (1986): 47-51; Frank Shuffelton, “Indian Devils and Pilgrim

reaches of the Wilderness still considered to be “Indian country” by contemporary settlers.<sup>27</sup> The later (and far more well-documented) Essex County witch panic of 1692, centered around Salem Village, in Massachusetts, was equally connected to “native diabolism” in the fearful minds of devout colonial religionists. Mary Beth Norton's *In the Devil's Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692* (2002) breaks with past historical scholarship by focusing more fully on the role of war-time trauma (resulting from French-Wabanaki raids along the northern frontier as part of King Williams' War) in this tragic event. Other relevant works that elaborate on the more general cosmic dimension of the panic include Elaine Breslaw's *Tittuba, Reluctant Witch of Salem: Devilish Indians and Puritan Fantasies* (1996), John Demos's *Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England* (2004), and Benjamin Ray's *Satan & Salem: The Witch Hunt Crisis of 1692* (2015).<sup>28</sup>

As a cultural history study, my general thesis draws upon the varied influences – including cosmological beliefs, intellectual traditions, and the popular imagination – that contributed to the shared cultural-religious ideology of New England's early colonial leaders. It is from within this framework that the dual narrative of sacred agency and cosmic struggle emerged. The dominant worldviews of this place and period were profoundly shaped by this unique belief system, initiating a colonial process that sharply contrasted from other contemporary English colonial endeavors – most consequentially in the antagonistic relationship with the resident Algonquian tribes who shared in their “inherited” new world and featured prominently in a sacred drama that was believed to be unfolding around God's elect during the prophesied end of days.

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Fathers: Squanto, Hobomok, and the English Conception of Indian Religion,” *The New England Quarterly* 49, no. 1 (1976): 108-16.

27. Richard S. Ross III, *Before Salem: Witch Hunting in the Connecticut River Valley, 1647-1663* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2017).

28. Mary Beth Norton, *In the Devil's Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692* (New York: Vintage Books, 2002); Elaine Breslaw, *Tittuba, Reluctant Witch of Salem: Devilish Indians and Puritan Fantasies* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), John Demos' *Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), and Benjamin Ray's *Satan & Salem: The Witch Hunt Crisis of 1692* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2015).

# **I. Calvinist Cosmology, Protestant Persecution, and the Church in the Wilderness: The Intersections of Cultural-Religious Ideology**

The cultural-religious ideology that provided the basis for the New England colonial endeavor traces beyond the first generation of religious exiles who first settled the Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay colonies. The founding Separatist Pilgrim sect and later “Great Migration” of Puritans were both part of a broader nonconforming Reformed Anglo-Protestant tradition rooted in the experience of the earlier Marian exile movement. In response to the Catholic “counter-reformation” of Queen Mary I, hundreds of devout English Protestants fled to the European continent and were exposed to the intense religious discourse and activism of the varied reform movements. Through the shared experience of persecution and guiding influence of continental theologians, a powerful cultural-religious ideology developed among those who came to view themselves as “visible saints,” or God's elect. To understand the worldviews of New England's colonial religionists one must look to the Calvinist cosmological beliefs, Old Testament typologies, apocalypticism, Protestant martyrology, and residual English folk beliefs that came to be embraced during this period of exile and the decades that followed.

The English Reformation began in the 1530s, ushering in a tumultuous era of religious upheaval, political conflict, and profound social change that lasted over one-hundred and fifty years. The Reformation, itself, marked a definitive break with Roman Catholicism and the reorganization of the Church of England. However, for more zealous Protestant believers this process fell far short of their idealistic vision of restoring apostolic purity to the church. The official reforms enacted under Henry VIII and Edward VI may have “cut the head off the Beast,” but many devout English Protestants believed that “they preserved its body in the Canons of their church.”<sup>29</sup> These reformed “purists”

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29. Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity, Vol. II: The Reformation to the Present Day* (New York: HarperCollins, 2010), 87-104; Leonard J. Trinterud, “The Origins of Puritanism,” *Church History* 20, no. 1 (1951): 37-57. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3162047>; Christopher Hill, *Antichrist in Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Verso, 1971), 43.

argued that Scriptural authority not only required a fundamental change in church polity, but must inform all aspects of religious, political, and social life. It is from within this disparate “purist” movement that the more radical, fundamentalist, and nonconforming Reformed Anglo-Protestant traditions first emerged.

The principal basis of Puritanism – and, by extension, Separatism – revolved around “[t]he authority of the word, or regulative principle, the gift of grace from a merciful God, the imperative of eliminating idolatry, and the special liberty Christians would enjoy within the fellowship of the purified church.”<sup>30</sup> It was in their idealization of “the purified church” that England's Puritan minority broke with the Anglican Protestant mainstream and “moved into an ever more resolute Biblicism with special focus upon the archetypes of the Great Time.”<sup>31</sup> In rooting their faith in apostolic certainty these nonconforming sects considered the entirety of human experience to be subordinate to religious ends – and, when provided with the opportunity, governed accordingly.

Although emboldened by England's initial Protestant rupture, it was only through the later experience of persecution and continental exile that the nonconforming traditions fully developed. Fleeing the repressive policies of the Queen Mary I during the 1550s, a number of leading English Protestants – known as “Marian Exiles” – took refuge in continental cities that were sympathetic to the emerging Reformed theology, most significantly the Swiss city of Geneva.<sup>32</sup> Influenced by the doctrine and polity of John Calvin, a French theologian and leading figurehead of the continental Reformed movement, the English-speaking church in Geneva embraced tenets that included predestination; a critique of idolatry (“that encompassed the whole of Catholic worship”); a strict adherence to the “plain

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30. David D. Hall, *The Puritans: A Transatlantic History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 16-17.

31. Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *To Live Ancient Lives: The Primitivist Dimension in Puritanism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 42; Herbert L. Osgood, “The Political Ideas of the Puritans,” *Political Science Quarterly* 6, no. 1 (Mar., 1891): 1-28. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2139228>.

32. Christina Hallowell Garrett, *The Marian Exiles: A Study in the Origins of Elizabethan Puritanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Led by the Scottish theologian John Knox, the English-speaking exile church in Geneva included a number of influential Puritan ministers and intellectuals who were, most notably, responsible for producing the *Geneva Bible* in 1558.

and infallible authority of Scripture;” the need for a disciplined and visible church to be used “as God's instrument of grace” on earth; and, most importantly, “an evangelical and social activism predicated on transforming self, church, and society into a 'new order' approximating the kingdom of Christ.” From within this basic Calvinist framework there were also those who further embraced “divine providence and apocalypticism” as a means to interpret sacred history and God's design; a set of prophetic beliefs that, to varying degrees, came to be adopted by England's nonconforming Protestant sects.<sup>33</sup>

### REFORMED CONCEPTIONS OF DIABOLIC AGENCY

The Protestant reform movements in England and across the European continent desacralized many aspects of Catholic faith and tradition. However, Calvinist cosmology remained imbued with aspects of the supernatural – both the miraculous and malevolent – and, arguably, “intensified to an even higher degree the cosmic struggle between the divine and the diabolical.”<sup>34</sup> John Calvin elaborated on his cosmological beliefs in *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1559), where he maintained that the material world could only be made intelligible as part of a broader divine plan; a cosmic parallel between the natural cosmos and humans that centered around an omnipotent God who “holds the helm, and overrules all events.”<sup>35</sup> Within Calvinist cosmology there was no boundary between the “natural” and “supernatural,” as all were the works of God. In large part this was a restatement of the Augustinian view of creation and natural order; and, like Augustine before him, Calvin believed that even “the Devil himself [remained] under God's power.”<sup>36</sup>

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33. Hall, *The Puritans: A Transatlantic History*, 17, 20-28; 117. As Hall notes, Calvinism “played a singular role in the making of the Reformation in England, Ireland, and Scotland and the development of New England.”

34. Robert William Scribner, “The Reformation, Popular Magic, and the 'Disenchantment of the World,’” *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 23, no. 3 (1993): 483. [www.jstor.org/stable/206099](http://www.jstor.org/stable/206099).

35. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion, Volume I*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Edinburgh: T. Clark, 1863), 175.

36. Moshe Sluhovskiy, “Calvinist Miracles and the Concept of the Miraculous in Sixteenth-Century Huguenot Thought,” *Renaissance and Reformation* Vol.19, no. 2 (1995): 9-11. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43444984>; Saint Augustine, *The City of God: Books XVII-XXII*, trans. Gerald G. Walsh, S.J. and Daniel J. Honan (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1954), 482.

According to the Calvinist belief system, “Satan cannot possibly do anything against the will and consent of God” and is able to execute “those things only for which permission has been given him, and thus, however unwilling, obeys his Creator, being forced, whenever he is required, to do Him service.”<sup>37</sup> New England's Separatists and Puritans shared in this paradoxical understanding of the Devil, recognizing that it was only within a divine framework that he fulfilled his cosmic role of tempter or destroyer. Diabolic agency provided God with a powerful instrument to “chasten sinful humankind: to punish sin directly; to punish humankind's ingratitude in not accepting revealed truth; to shake up the godly who were lapsing into sinfulness; [and] to test Christians to see if, under adversity, they would cleave to God or desert him for the Devil.”<sup>38</sup> It was a dominating theme that informed the worldviews of colonial religionists, who considered the Algonquian peoples to be in direct service of the Devil – and, by proxy, used by God to test the faith of the elect and punish those who lived in sin.

Despite the Devil's subservient role within Calvinist cosmology, this malevolent deity remained a complex and potent figure with destructive powers considered to be wide-ranging.<sup>39</sup> He was also cast as the cosmic adversary to the glory of God and it was the self-assigned mission of the elect to oppose him through conscious struggle. “The devil being described as the enemy of man, we should perpetually war against him,” expounded Calvin. He further declared:

For, if the glory of God is dear to us, as it ought to be, we ought to struggle with all our might against him who aims at the extinction of that glory. If we are animated with proper zeal to maintain the kingdom of Christ, we must wage irreconcilable war with him who conspires its ruin.<sup>40</sup>

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37. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion, Volume 1*, 153.

38. James Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness: Witchcraft in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 83; see also Richard Weisman, *Witchcraft, Magic, and Religion in 17<sup>th</sup> Century Massachusetts* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts, 1984), 25-29.

39. Increase Mather, *Angelographia, or A discourse concerning the nature and power of the holy angels...* (Boston: B. Green and J. Allen, 1696; digital reprint by Text Creation Partnership: Evans Early American Imprint Collection, 2011), 24. <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/N00620.0001.001>. Reflecting on the destructive capacity of the Devil, Mather contends that his unchecked powers could “destroy all the men upon the face of the Whole Earth, in a very limited time.”

40. Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion, Volume 1*, 140, 151-52.

Adhering to Calvin's teachings, England's nonconforming Protestants believed the “true church” (ie, themselves) to be locked in ceaseless combat with the Devil until the prophesied end of days when Christ would return for his millennial reign. However, their conception of cosmic struggle differed greatly from the Catholic notion of a universal clash between the opposing (and equally powerful) forces of good and evil. Reformed and redefined, they instead envisioned a more personalized conflict against the diabolic forces that had been allowed by God to permeate a sinful world.

In *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, Nathan Johnstone elaborates on the Calvinist influence upon the Reformed Anglo-Protestant traditions in regards to their developed perception of diabolic agency. Unlike “high-profile aspects of Catholic religion such as eucharistic piety or the doctrine of good works,” he notes “there was no explicit reform of demonological theology” following the Reformation, as church leaders remained “convinced that Satan offered an intimate threat to every Christian.” Where they diverged from Roman Catholic tradition, however, was in their understanding of how this cosmic threat manifested in the world. Reformed theology offered “a subtle realignment emphasis” that centered around the “Devil's power of temptation, especially his ability to enter directly into the mind [and lead] people to sin.” The Devil had been associated with temptation throughout Christendom, but it wasn't until the Protestant Reformation that this role of arch-tempter became a central aspect of his agency.<sup>41</sup>

In Calvin's theology, the Devil held unchallenged dominion over the areas of the world that remained ignorant to the “Word of God.” Elaborating on this theme, he proclaimed,

the devil reigns in the world, because the world is nothing but darkness. Hence it follows that the corruption of the world gives a place to the kingdom of the

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41. Nathan Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1-2. As Johnstone notes, the theological consequences of this shift in emphasis were important, as Reformed liturgical and devotional practices no longer offered the promise of “tangible victory the Devil.” Instead, English Protestants – particularly those of the nonconforming traditions – considered themselves to be in “perpetual struggle with the demonic [and] stressed that every individual was ultimately responsible for resisting Satan's influence.”

devil. For he could not reside in a pure and sound creature of God. It all arises from the sinfulness of men. By 'darkness' as is well known, [a state of] unbelief and ignorance of God, with their consequences. As the whole world is covered with darkness, the devil is the prince of this world.<sup>42</sup>

It was a foreboding cosmic narrative that weighed heavily in the minds of the early colonists, who had settled among the "corrupted" natives in the "darkness" of the New World. As a people in covenant with God, the New England elect considered themselves to be on the forefront of this cosmic struggle and, as such, in a heightened state of peril; a beckoning target for the Devil, who, in the colonial religionist worldview, was further empowered by Algonquian spiritual veneration.<sup>43</sup>

For the Calvinist faithful, active engagement in spiritual warfare against the Devil was considered an integral part of the sanctification process and a sign of election. However, it required a new defensive course of action. Having repudiated the sacraments, ceremonies, and intermediaries of the Catholic system, Reformed Anglo-Protestants instead looked inward to fend off such attacks.<sup>44</sup>

William Perkins, who wrote extensively on the subject of spiritual warfare, proclaimed, "When wee have truly found our own estate, we must set strong watch and guard about our hearts in respect of our infirmities, and so shall we be better able to breake the necke of Satan's temptations."<sup>45</sup> Perkins was referring specifically to the Calvinist conception of personal justification, but by extension it came to

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42. John Calvin, *Calvin's New Testament Commentaries, Volume 11: Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1996), 218.

43. Richard Godbeer, *The Devil's Dominion: Magic and Religion in Early New England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 90-92; Mather, *Angelographia*, 88, 119. Warning of their heightened exposure to diabolic threats, Mather proclaimed, "The Devil is full of wrath and rage [...] against those especially, which Keep the Commandments of God, and the Testimony of Jesus." He further states, "As for them that belong to the Election of God, the Devil is set against them to destroy them, as soon as they come into the World."

44. Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 188-89. As Johnstone explains, "The correct response to temptation was not to attempt to be rid of affliction through magical ceremonies," explains Johnston, "but patiently to bear it, and so demonstrate a faith that the Devil would ultimately be constrained by God."

45. William Perkins, *The combat betweene Christ and the Divell displayed: or A commentarie upon the temptations of Christ* (London: Printed by Melchisedech Bradwood, 1606), 15, 51. <http://name.umd.umich.edu/A09463.0001.001>. For further Puritan commentary regarding "spiritual warfare," see also John Downname's *The Christian Warfare Against the Devil, World & Flesh* (1633-34) and William Gurnell's three-volume *The Christian in Complete Armour* (1655-62).

be accepted that the Puritan “estate” (ie, “community of visible saints”), as a sacred space, offered conditional protection from the Devil's wrath and intrigues so long as the social body remained united in piety, vigilance, and a strict adherence to moral and religious obligations.<sup>46</sup> For those who still found themselves under diabolic assault, Reformed theology provided additional spiritual protections in the form of Scripture, hymnals, prayer, fasting, and personal austerity.<sup>47</sup>

Calvinist cosmology played a central role in the Early Modern English conception of diabolic agency. However, it was accompanied by varied cultural influences and popular beliefs as Reformed Anglo-Protestantism merged with established folklore concerning demonism, witchcraft, and the supernatural. In *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England*, David D. Hall explains the role that this cultural-religious fluidity played in informing common English worldviews regarding such beliefs. Although “religion was embedded in the fabric of everyday life,” he argues that “in the flow of experience it was [often] partial, ambiguous, and even contrary.” As a metaphor, he refers to cultural “debris” floating in the river of Reformed orthodoxy “to evoke a muddied, multilayer process by which culture was transmitted, one that functioned to preserve and pass along many bits and pieces of past systems of belief.”<sup>48</sup>

Darren Oldridge further elaborates upon this basic premise in *The Devil in Early Modern England*, explaining how

many medieval attitudes towards [the Devil] persisted in folklore and cheap literature throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, though these were intermingled with certain aspects of reformed theology. The result was an interesting mixture of Protestant ideas and older beliefs concerning

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46. Increase Mather, *Remarkable Providences Illustrative of the Earlier Days of Colonisation* (London: Printed by John Russell Smith, 1856), 143. <https://library.si.edu/digital-library/book/remarkableprovi00math>. Mather notes that the Devil's power over human affairs was “not so frequent in places where the Gospel prevaieth as in the dark corners of the world.”

47. Scribner, “The Reformation, Popular Magic, and the 'Disenchantment of the World,’” 484.

48. David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Beliefs in Early New England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 3, 11.

the devil, an outcome which probably typified the wider achievements and limitations of the English Reformation.<sup>49</sup>

Indeed, as historian Keith Thomas notes in his seminal work *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, “[g]enerations of medieval theologians had [already] developed an elaborate and sophisticated demonology, which percolated down to ordinary men in a cruder and more immediate form” by the sixteenth-century Age of Reformation. It was accepted that “the Devil” regularly intervened in worldly affairs and, despite a lack of recognition by official church doctrine, could take on a variety of physical forms in the popular imagination of this era. Rather than weaken popular beliefs regarding diabolic agency, Thomas argues that “[t]he Reformation [...] almost certainly strengthened it.”<sup>50</sup> Johnstone supports this view and notes an even greater emphasis among the nonconforming “purist” sects, as “the culture of the zealous godly [not only] provided a natural setting for the emphasis on internal temptation,” but also brought “diabolic activity into the commonplace, [and encouraged] engagement with its possibilities,” thus ensuring “Protestant demonism a far wider audience.”<sup>51</sup>

Common depictions can be found in tracts, ballads, and plays that offer insight into the popular conceptions of the Devil. Some of the best contemporary sources that relay such folk beliefs can be found in the collected documents of Tudor and Stuart era witch trials. Accused witches confessed to fearful encounters with human-like entities described respectively as “a black man [who spoke] in a low murmuring, and hissing voice,” a boy “one halfe of his Coate blacke, the other browne,” and “something like a man in all proportions, saving that he had cloven feet.” Further accounts described bestial apparitions that included “a blacke beare,” “a male goat,” “a strange thing like unto a snaile,”

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49. Darren Oldridge, *The Devil in Early Modern England* (Stroud, UK: Sutton Publishing, 2000), 57.

50. Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England* (New York: Penguin Books, 1971), 560.

51. Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 289.

and “an evyll dogge with hornes on his head.”<sup>52</sup> Similar folk beliefs describe demons, imps, fairies, ghosts, and a host of other supernatural entities thought to haunt the Early Modern world.<sup>53</sup>

The Devil represented temptation, despair, and torment in the Reformed Anglo-Protestant belief system; a means by which God tested faith or punished sin. Although Calvinist orthodoxy understood diabolic agency as it applied to a personalized struggle from within, the cultural influence of longstanding English folk beliefs affirmed the physicality of this cosmic threat which tied into a common understanding of the supernatural world. Each of these influences contributed to a cultural-religious ideology that accompanied the founding generations of Separatist and Puritan colonists in transatlantic migration. In fact, as Michael Winship explains, these nonconforming religious exiles were “far more wrapped up in the world of witches, possessions, and devils than were conformists [since] their piety was all about an intensely experienced, pressing supernatural world where evil and sin loomed large.”<sup>54</sup> The varied English conceptions of diabolic agency, both in official church doctrine and the popular mind, conjured a fearsome adversary that awaited the early colonial religionists in their “inherited” estate – and as a people in direct covenant with God, the New England devout considered themselves to be especially targeted by the Devil's wrath as he waged an unceasing campaign to undermine the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the New World.

## THE ENGLISH PROTESTANT CULTURE OF PERSECUTION

The English Protestant culture of persecution provided another important component of New England's dominant cultural-religious ideology. Rooted in experience of the Marian Exiles, the

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52. James Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness: Witchcraft in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 75; Jane P. Davidson, *Early Modern Supernatural: The Dark Side of European Culture* (Oxford: Praeger, 2012), 42; Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 149; Oldridge, *The Devil in Early Modern England*, 59-61; Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, 565; Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment*, 74.

53. Oldridge, *The Devil in Early Modern England*, 61-63.

54. Winship, *Hot Protestants: A History of Puritanism in England and America*, 260.

idealization of religious suffering and martyrdom informed the culture of the English Reformed movement – particularly that of the nonconformist sects. In *Martyrs' Mirror: Persecution and Holiness in Early New England*, Adrian Weimer elaborates on the significance of the historic martyrs in the colonial Separatist and Puritan understanding of “authentic Christianity,” where “[t]he historical narrative of spiritual victory through physical suffering, rooted in both primitivist and apocalyptic beliefs, became central to the way [they] understood themselves, the true church, and holiness itself.” In short, “[s]uffering, linked to godliness, became a mark of religious legitimacy.”<sup>55</sup> For the pious faithful who endured suffering and hardship in England, extreme dislocation in transatlantic exile, and struggled for survival in the desolation of the New World, identifying as persecuted martyrs provided the necessary psychological underpinning for the “sacred Errand” in which they believed themselves to have been tasked as representatives of the “true church.”

The Catholic counter-reformation under Queen Mary I had brought a temporary halt to twenty years of Protestant advancement in England, culminating in a wave of executions, imprisonment, and forced exile.<sup>56</sup> Through persecution, England's disparate Protestant milieu developed a shared identity as it “solidified into a cohesive faction for the purpose of mutual reinforcement.” For many, this hostile climate also served to reinforce a greater sense of sacred mission. Envisioning themselves as “true Christians who suffered the paternal chastisement of God for their past failures as reformers,” the more zealous Marian exiles were inspired to restore apostolic purity to the church upon their return.<sup>57</sup> In 1563, John Foxe published his *Acts and Monuments*, a highly influential work of Protestant history and martyrology. Later editions elevated the persecuted Marian martyrs as representatives of

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55. Adrian Chastain Weimer, *Martyrs' Mirror: Persecution and Holiness in Early New England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3-4, 51.

56. Christopher Haigh, *English Reformation: Religion, Politics, and Society Under the Tudors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 228-30. Nearly three-hundred people were burned at the stake under the Marian regime, while a further 800 men, women, and children fled to the European continent. Countless others were imprisoned or went into hiding.

57. Harrison Crumrine, “The Oxford Martyrs and the English Protestant Movement, 1553-58,” *The Historian* 70, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 85-86. <http://www.jstor.com/stable/24454295>.

the “true church,” linking their stories with the early Christian martyrs of antiquity to create “a golden chain of piety, a holy remnant surviving the centuries of Antichristian domination.”<sup>58</sup>

The impact that this work had on the cultural-religious ideology of the colonial Separatists and Puritans cannot be understated. Weimer explains,

In the history of the apostles, early church martyrs, Waldensians, Lollards, and other “proto-Protestant” sufferers, culminating in the Marian martyrs, the true church emerges as institutionally invisible, but spiritually vibrant. Encased in the scriptural prophecies about the battles between the saints and Antichrist, Foxe's martyrs exist in the conflation of apostolic and apocalyptic dramas.<sup>59</sup>

It was within these martyrs that the religious ideal of “sainthood” was made available to ordinary people through holy suffering; a shared identity of persecution that reinforced the boundaries of the “true church” and strengthened the covenant of God's elect. As Cotton Mather later remarked, “the Great God often makes his Truth to spread by the Sufferings of them that profess the Truth.”<sup>60</sup>

Challenged by harsh colonial realities and the experience of extreme social dislocation from their homeland, the transatlantic religious exile movements of the 1620s to the 1640s were steeped in this culture of persecution which served to reinforce their pronounced sense of personal election. As such, they not only viewed their colonial endeavor as providential destiny; but also as a sacred mission framed by a broader cosmic narrative that placed them in perpetual struggle against the “antichristian forces” that sought to undermine the advancement of the “true church” in the Wilderness of the New World. Passionately believing themselves to be “the pure, persecuted church,” Separatist and Puritan

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58. John R. Knott, “John Foxe and the Joy of Suffering,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 27, no. 3 (1996): 721-34; <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2544014>; Weimer, *Martyrs' Mirror*, 23.

59. Weimer, *Martyrs' Mirror*, 24.

60. Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana, Or, The Ecclesiastical History of New England, Volume I* (Hartford: Silas Andrus & Son, 1855; digitized by Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Library, 2005), 264. <http://name.umd.umich.edu/AFK3754.0001.001>.

ideologues routinely cast both religious heretics and native adversaries as “cruel and cosmic persecutors” that served the interests of the Devil, using the language of persecution in times of internal religious strife or war with the region's hostile tribes.<sup>61</sup>

### IN PURSUIT OF THE MILLENNIUM

Millenarianism – that is, the belief in a forthcoming messianic reign on earth – has permeated Judeo-Christian traditions since the time of antiquity and played a major role in the cultural-religious ideology of the colonial Separatists and Puritans, providing the principal basis for the sacralization of New England and a means to interpret “God's providential dispensations in cycles of historical prefiguration and fulfillment.”<sup>62</sup> As Avihu Zakai explains in *Exile and Kingdom: History and Apocalypse in the Puritan Migration to America*, by embracing apocalypticism the early transatlantic religious exiles were provided with a sacred framework from which they

sought to construe a meaningful, historical context within which to explain their removal to, and presence in, the wilderness of America within the course and progress of salvation history – the unfolding story of God's plan of salvation and redemption – or within the annals of ecclesiastical history. [These beliefs] determined not only the creation of New England as a sacred center [...] in the history of salvation, but ultimately served also as a basis for the creation of a sacred errand into the wilderness of America.<sup>63</sup>

The primary basis for Reformed Anglo-Protestantism relied on Scripture. However, it further drew upon “typological exegesis,” an interpretative method “that fuses theology and polemic, spiritual

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61. Weimer, *Martyrs' Mirror*, 143

62. Mason Lowance and David Watters, eds., “Increase Mather's 'New Jerusalem': Millennialism in Late Seventeenth-Century New England,” in *The Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 87, part 2, October 1977 (Worcester, MA: The American Antiquarian Society, 1978): 344; Francis J. Bremer, *Building a New Jerusalem: John Davenport, a Puritan in Three Worlds* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 171-72. Unlike the more radical apocalypticism that emerged during the England's civil war period (1642-51), the millennialist impulse of leading New England Separatist and Puritan ideologues pointed to a more gradual process that would unfold in prophesied stages.

63. Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom*, 1, 10-11.

and temporal history, [and] national and international politics.”<sup>64</sup> The narratives and allegories of the Old Testament, in particular, provided a crucial means in which to decipher the course of sacred history and fulfillment of New Testament promises. The English apocalyptic tradition developed around typological readings of biblical texts such as Revelation, Daniel, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zachariah, and Canticles. “Revealed truths” in these writings were deciphered and applied to world events, both past and present, in preparation of the prophesied end of history and Second Coming of Christ.

John Calvin, himself, was fairly dismissive of apocalypticism. However, “the hint of progressivism in his thought left the way open for the frank meliorism and chiliasm of many later Calvinist thinkers.”<sup>65</sup> Millennialist influence upon the English Protestant movement instead derived from other continental reformers who attributed far greater sacred historical significance to Scripture-based prophecies, with Martin Luther being the most significant. In a preface to his German translation of The New Testament (1530), Luther wrote a commentary on the Book of Revelation, which he interpreted as consequential to the Protestant cause. He identified the Ottomans Turks and Roman Catholic papacy with Antichrist and concluded “the end of history to be imminent.” These theories were later imparted on the English Reformed traditions through the returning Marian exiles.<sup>66</sup>

The intellectual foundation for England's apocalyptic tradition can more directly be traced to the Protestant historiographer John Bale, a celebrated Marian exile who was largely responsible for introducing eschatological discourse to the English Reformed movement. In *The Image of bothe Churches* (1547), a commentary on the Book of Revelation, he declared the apocalyptic text to be “highly necessary [...] to him that is a true member of Christes church, as of any other booke of the

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64. Adrienne Streete, *Apocalypticism and Anti-Catholicism in Seventeenth-Century English Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 6; Robert Middlekauff, *The Mathers: Three Generations of Puritan Intellectuals, 1596-1728* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 27-29; Bremer, *Building a New Jerusalem*, 173.

65. Robin Bruce Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis: Apocalypticism in the Wake of the Lutheran Reformation* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1988), 33.

66. Martin Luther, *The Works of Martin Luther, the Philadelphia Edition: Volume VI* (Philadelphia: A.J. Holman Company, 1932), 480-90; Richard Kyle, “John Knox and Apocalyptic Thought,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 15, no. 4 (1984): 453. [www.jstor.org/stable/2540361](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2540361).

sacred Byble.” Deciphering the coded messages of Revelation provided radical polemicists such as Bale “a scheme for discerning the hidden diabolism of the Roman faith.” In particular, he interpreted the form of the dragon, “with its seven heads, [as the] chronological picture of Satan's attempts to corrupt mankind” through religious subservience and false doctrine.<sup>67</sup> *The Geneva Bible* (1560) generated further interest in the prophecies of Revelation by providing English readers with extensive marginal annotations and theological interpretations for these esoteric biblical passages, which were presented as revealed signs from God in the unraveling of sacred history.<sup>68</sup>

Bale's assignment of sacred historical agency to the English people – who, in his assertion, had replaced the Israelites of the Old Testament as God's chosen elect and represented the vanguard of Europe's Protestant Reformation – had an even greater impact on the nonconforming transatlantic religious exile movements. The first to identify England as an “elect nation” in the struggle against the “Antichristian church,” Bale provided the Reformed Anglo-Protestant movement with “a special place in apocalyptic history and portrayed the Church of England as the purest of all churches.”<sup>69</sup> Equally influential was Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, the later editions of which reflected Bale's influence in articulating the country's ecclesiastical history of reform as an accumulative struggle against the forces of the Devil and Antichrist.<sup>70</sup> However, despite England's sacred historical role in the writings of Bale and Foxe, both men understood “it was merely one part of the cosmic drama which the Book of Revelation described,” which was “purely temporary and provisional, destined to last for those few

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67. John Bale, Rev. Henry Christmas, ed. “The Image of bothe Churches” (1550) in *Selected Works of John Bale* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1849), 251, 254-55; Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England*, 50.

68. Crawford Gribben, “Deconstructing the Geneva Bible: The Search for the Puritan Poetic,” *Literature and Theology* 14, no. 1 (2000): 2-4. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23926231>; Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom*, 41.

69. James Messmer, “The Final Judgement: John Bale's Apocalyptic Justification of English Protestantism,” *Honors Thesis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2018), 57-60; Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom*, 26-31. It was Bale's belief that “the purification of Christendom” could be traced to John Wycliffe, a fourteenth-century English heretic, rather than the Protestant theology of Martin Luther, thus “plac[ing] the English squarely at the center of [the] Reformation” and identifying the Church of England as “the true church.”

70. Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom*, 33, 41. Foxe accepted the interpretation of the Seven Seals of Revelation as symbolizing historical periods and applied these theories to England's Reformed movement, the emergence of which he believed to signal the final battle of apocalyptic prophecy.

years” prior to the Second Coming of Christ when he returned to claim his chosen people.<sup>71</sup> Following within this tradition, apocalyptic narratives accompanied the founding of the New England colonies through the sacralization of the New World “Wilderness” in Separatist and Puritan myth-making.<sup>72</sup>

Another important theme within English apocalypticism that came to be applied to the New England experience concerned the role of the Jews according to biblical prophecy. Later speculation over the origins of the native Algonquians (in the 1650s) led to a popular theory that they were the prophesied Lost Tribe of Israel, hearkening back to the eschatological beliefs regarding “the Jewes” from a century prior. “The Jewes must be sealed with the word of verity,” declared Bale, and “they must have the sure signe of faith: they must know and confess Christ, whom God afore promised by the prophets, that twelve thousand of every tribe may be sealed unto salvation. For that time must the Antichrist cease.” *The Geneva Bible* made similar references to the sacred historical necessity of Jewish conversion.<sup>73</sup> Initially this was considered a fairly radical theory. However, once it was adopted by William Perkins, the leading Puritan intellectual at Cambridge University during the late sixteenth-century, it would “go on to influence the major puritan expositors throughout the evolution of the movement and remain a staple of mainstream Protestant eschatology for the ensuing centuries.”<sup>74</sup>

The English Protestant movement was inundated with millenarian beliefs by the turn of the century, particularly among the nonconforming sects. In 1593, the radical Scottish reformer and mathematician John Napier published *A Plaine Discovery of the Whole Revelation of Saint John*, an apocalyptic tract that interpreted Revelation verse by verse. In his estimation, “[t]he seven seals, seven

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71. Leslie Fairfield, *John Bale, Mythmaker for the English Reformation* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1976), 109-10.

72. Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom*, 129.

73. Sharon Achinstein, “John Foxe and the Jews,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (Spring, 2001): 105. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1262221>; Bale, *Selected Works of John Bale*, 335-36; Note on Romans 11:15, in *The 1599 Geneva Bible* (White Hall, WV: Tollege Press, 2010). The note proclaims: “The Jewes now remaine, as it were, in death for lacke of the Gospel: but when they & the Gentiles shal embrace Christ, ye world shal be restored to a newe life.”

74. Gribben, “Deconstructing the Geneva Bible,” 5; William Perkins, “A Fruitful Dialogue Concerning the End of the World,” in *The Works of William Perkins, Volume III* (London: Printed by John Haviland, 1631; eBook reprint by Monergism), 19-20. <https://www.monergism.com/fruitful-dialogue-concerning-end-world-ebook>.

trumpets, and seven vials of the Apocalypse trace[d] the history of the Christian church and [led] to calculations that fix[ed] the end of the age” within a few generations.<sup>75</sup> Even more influential in the development of New England's millennialist current was Thomas Brightmann, a Bedfordshire Puritan minister who wrote extensive commentaries on Revelation, Daniel, and Canticles.<sup>76</sup> Brightman's theories represented “the first cautious modification of the traditional Augustinian eschatology,” predicting a more immediate period of advent (preceding Christ's millennial return) where “brightness” signaled the acceleration of sacred history toward apocalyptic promise.<sup>77</sup> Additionally, the emphasis Brightman placed on “the importance of the reformed church as the key agent in bringing about the kingdom of God” provided a greater sense of biblical urgency for the New England colonial religious endeavor. It was his belief that the “new Jerusalem [...] is not that city which the saints shall enjoy in heaven after this life, but a [transfigured] church to be expected on earth.”<sup>78</sup>

Despite the fact that much of his work had been suppressed or censored until the 1640s, the most comprehensive theorist of English apocalypticism was Joseph Mede. A nonconformist with Anglican sympathies and a Fellow of Christ's College in Cambridge, Mede wrote extensively on the topic of apocalypse in published works such as *Clavis Apocalyptica*, *The Apostasy of the Later Times*, and *Key of the Revelation Searched and Demonstrated*. His writings inspired some of the more radical factions during the English Civil War, who relied heavily upon his theories “as a religious and national justification for drastic ecclesiastical and political activism.” They also found resonance within New

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75. Robert G. Clouse, “John Napier and Apocalyptic Thought,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 5, no. 1 (1974): 106-109. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2539589>. Using numerology, mathematics, and biblical interpretation, Napier predicted eschaton to begin around 1698-1700.

76. Andrew Crome, “The Restoration of the Jews in Transatlantic Context, 1600-1680,” in Andrew Crome, ed., *Prophecy and Eschatology in the Transatlantic World, 1550-1800* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 129-30; Bremer, *Building a New Jerusalem*, 169. As Bremer notes, Brightmann's theories were highly influential in shaping the millenarian beliefs of John Cotton and John Davenport.

77. Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *To Live Ancient Lives: The Primitivist Dimension in Puritanism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 207; John H. Duff, “*A Knot Worth Unloosing*”: *The Interpretation of the New Heavens and Earth in Seventeenth-Century England* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019), 71.

78. Bremer, *Building a New Jerusalem*, 169, 174; Brightman, quoted in Theodore Bozeman, *To Live Ancient Lives: The Primitivist Dimension in Puritanism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 203.

England's Puritan intellectual circles, influencing the beliefs of John Cotton, John Davenport, William Hooke, Edward Johnson, and both Increase and Cotton Mather.<sup>79</sup> These leading ideologues attempted to adapt Mede's eschatology to the circumstances of their colonial world, interpreting events according to “the proper course of events from Christ's return to judge the Antichrist and the first resurrection of the saints at the beginning of the thousand years, to the general resurrection at the end of the millennium.”<sup>80</sup>

Amid this intense apocalyptic discourse and millennialist anticipation the initial waves of nonconforming religious exiles embarked on their transatlantic colonial endeavor. In the prophetic vision of Revelation, while Michael and his angels fought the forces of the Devil “the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God.”<sup>81</sup> Living within a period marked by England's “counter-reformation” and the catastrophic religious wars of continental Europe, the metaphoric significance of this passage was not lost on the colonial Separatists and Puritans. God's elect had been called upon to preserve the “true church” in the desolation of the New World as part of a “prophetic, redemptive vision of the Errand of the Church in the Wilderness as described in the Apocalypse.”<sup>82</sup> As sacred actors living in the final days of history, they sought to build a “New Jerusalem” beyond the corrupt reach of the Old World as “a representation of the imminent Kingdom of Christ.”<sup>83</sup>

The powerful symbolism of the “Wilderness” appears throughout Old and New Testament scripture. In the Book of Exodus, “[t]he trials and temptations of the wilderness were designed to purify and strengthen the faith of the Israelites,” and it was there “that Moses received the Tabernacles

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79. Jeffrey K. Jue, *Heaven Upon Earth: Joseph Mede (1586-1638) and the Legacy of Millenarianism* (Heidelberg: Springer Publishing, 2006), 19-20, 179-84, 193-95, 245; Bremer, *Building a New Jerusalem*, 174.

80. David D. Hall, *The Puritans: A Transatlantic History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 217-18; Jue, *Heaven Upon Earth*, 183; John Davenport, “Epistle to the Reader,” in Increase Mather, *The Mystery of Israel's Salvation* (London: Printed for John Allen, 1669; digital reprint by Text Creation Partnership: Evans Early American Imprint Collection, 2011), A6. <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/N00091.0001.001>.

81. Revelation 12:6, *The 1599 Geneva Bible*.

82. Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom*, 190-91; John Allin and Thomas Shepard, *A Defense of the Answer, made unto the the Nine Questions sent from New England* (London: Printed by R. Cotes, 1648; reprinted by Early English Books Online Text Creation Partnership, 2011), 1-2. <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/A23641.0001.001>.

83. William Charles Eamon, “Kingdom and Church in New England: Puritan Eschatology from John Cotton to Jonathan Edwards,” *Masters thesis* (Missoula: University of Montana, 1970). 31-32. <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd/5529>.

from the Lord.” John The Baptist later retreated to the Wilderness “to reinvigorate the faith” and prepare for the ministry of Jesus Christ. The Wilderness of the Judean Desert was also where Christ, himself, resisted the Devil's temptations for forty days and nights according to the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. New England's leading colonial religionist ideologues “viewed these examples as literal precedents of their own experience” of escaping worldly corruption, seeking religious insight, and enduring trials or persecution as a test of faith.<sup>84</sup>

In the cultural-religious belief system of the early colonial Separatists and Puritans, New England was a land gifted by God. Paradoxically, it was also considered to be the realm of the Devil; a place of temptation and spiritual darkness.<sup>85</sup> As the Puritan minister Thomas Shepard later preached,

in a wilderness there is not only want of many comforts, but there is danger as to many positive evils which such are exposed unto: Hence... the wilderness is said to be a land of pits & fiery serpents; when Christ is in the wilderness he is said [to be] among the wildbeasts [...] and they that are in a wilderness state may look to suffer much:and thus is becomes a place of temptation [where] darkness betokens the privation of light.<sup>86</sup>

The two-fold struggle to claim their sacred inheritance and undermine the power of the Devil motivated the Separatist and Puritan vision for settlement in the region. Guided by a cultural-religious ideology that incorporated Calvinist theology and cosmological beliefs, Old Testament narratives, Protestant martyrology, apocalypticism, and aspects of popular English folklore, the leading ideologues of New England's first generation advanced a colonial process that reflected this unique worldview.

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84. Peter N. Carroll, *Puritanism and the Wilderness: The Intellectual Significance of the New England Frontier, 1629-1700* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 62; Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, Luke 4:1-13, in *The 1599 Geneva Bible* (White Hall, WV: Tollege Press, 2010).

85. Carroll, *Puritanism and the Wilderness*, 11; Bremer, *Building a New Jerusalem*, 175-76.

86. Thomas Shepard, Jr., *Eye-salve, or A watch-word from our Lord Iesus Christ unto his churches: especially those within the colony of the Massachusetts in New England to take heed of apostacy* (Cambridge: Printed by Samuel Green, 1673; reprinted by Evans Early American Imprint Collection, 2011), 4-5. <http://name.umd.umich.edu/N00127.0001.001>.

## II. “Naked Slaves of the Divell”: The Diabolic Portrayal of Algonquian Religiosity in the English Colonial Mind

New England's colonial process was shaped, in large part, by the dual narrative of sacred agency and cosmic struggle that accompanied the cultural-religious ideology of the dominant Separatist and Puritan settlers – particularly in regards to the relations established with the resident Algonquian tribes who co-inhabited the region. As previously stated, the basis for this ideology can be found within a series of interconnected cosmological, cultural, and eschatological beliefs that developed in the wake of the English Reformation and period of Marian Exile. However, these nonconforming religious exiles were far from unique in harboring religious-based apprehensions toward the native peoples of the Americas, as they were reflected in the broader anxieties and prejudices that accompanied all of the English explorations and colonial endeavors from this period.

In Elizabethan England, where national identity was intimately tied to an Anglo-Protestant consciousness, the early transatlantic explorations were driven by men who held strong religious convictions and a chauvinistic sense of cultural superiority. Additionally, they harbored many of the popular beliefs of their day regarding demonism, diabolic agency, and the supernatural. The early expeditions to the North American continent brought English explorers in contact with the Algonquian-speaking tribes of the Eastern Woodland, who inhabited a vast geographic area along the Atlantic seaboard that ranged from the Canadian Maritimes to the Carolinas. Similar to the Christian portrayal of pagan societies during late antiquity, the spiritual beliefs and worship practices of these indigenous populations were generally derided as a form of “devil-worship” by these early English observers.

In studying the impact of sixteenth-century English travel narratives on early colonial discourse, historian Alfred Cave contends that such texts “offer valuable insights into the preconceptions and assumptions which molded English Indian policy in its formative years.” In

particular, he cites the collections of Richard Hakluyt, a prominent editor of travel narratives and leading proponent of English colonization. Based on “faulty observations and uncorroborated rumors, compounded with medieval specters of devils and sorcerers,” Cave argues that Hakluyt's collections – which included reports from expeditions in search of the Northwest Passage and the ill-fated Roanoke venture – were largely responsible for establishing the formative impressions of “the Indian” as “a devil worshiper, sorcerer, and cannibal” in the years leading up to permanent English settlement.<sup>87</sup>

From the beginning, the native *powwaws* – religious leaders, shamans, and traditional healers – were viewed as spiritual conduits for the Devil and black magic practitioners. Thomas Hariot, a scientist appointed by Sir Walter Raleigh to study Carolina Algonquian society and a contributor to Hakluyt's collections), was one of the first to make specific reference to the diabolic role played by these native “priestes,” who he described as “conjurers or jugglers [who were] verye familiar with devils.”<sup>88</sup> Additionally, prominent Elizabethan explorers such as Sir Francis Drake, Henry Hawkes, and John Davis all claimed direct encounters with the “enchantments” of the *powwaws*, “which sometimes shrouded their ships in dense fog, at other times shifted treacherous shoals along the coast, or in some manner conjured up other hazards aimed at frustrating their progress.”<sup>89</sup>

Further confirmation of the diabolic nature of the Eastern Algonquian peoples came with more sustained Anglo-Indian contact following the establishment of the Jamestown colony, in 1607. In describing the religious customs of the resident Powhatan tribes, Captain John Smith asserted that “[the] chiefe God they worship is the Divell,” who was venerated in makeshift temples, “[where] they have his evill image favouredly carved and then painted and adorned with chaines, copper, and beades;

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87. Alfred Cave, “Richard Hakluyt's Savages: The Influence of 16th Century Travel Narratives on English Indian Policy in North America,” *International Social Science Review* 60, no. 1 (1985): 3, 18-22. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41881605>.

88. David B. Quinn, ed., *The Roanoke Voyages, 1584-1590: Documents to Illustrate the English Voyages to North America Under the Patent Granted to Walter Raleigh in 1584, Volume I* (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1955), 442.

89. David S. Lovejoy, “Satanizing the American Indian,” *The New England Quarterly* 67, no. 4 (1994): 609-10. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/366436>; Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques & Discoveries of the English Nation, 12 Volumes* (Glasgow: James MacLehose & Sons, 1903-5), 9:382, 11:106-7, 7:397.

and covered with a skin in such manner as the deformity may well suit with such a God.”<sup>90</sup> William White, another early Virginia settler, painted a more horrific picture as he relayed details of a Powhatan ceremony in which ten adolescent boys were allegedly sacrificed by a band of men painted “black like devils, with horns and loose haire,” who emitted a “hellish noise” as they danced and performed ritual invocations.<sup>91</sup> In *Good Newes from Virginia*, a 1613 promotional tract, Reverend Alexander Whitaker lent further credence to these dubious claims by characterizing the Powhatans as “naked slaves of the Divell” and comparing their powwaws to “no other but such as our English Witches are.”<sup>92</sup>

The English colonial precedent for the diabolic portrayal of indigenous populations had been established by these early secular expeditions and endeavors. Such beliefs were based on commonly held religious fears and cultural prejudices associated with a general Anglo-Protestant identity. However, the more far consequential diabolic interpretation that accompanied the founding of New England was based on a far more complex set of sacred and cosmic narratives that were rooted in the unique cultural-religious ideology of the founding nonconforming sects. Not merely viewed as a degenerated race that worshiped false idols, the shared worldview of the colonial Separatists and Puritans held that the resident Algonquian populations were cosmic antagonists in direct service of the Devil – and, by extension, instruments by which God challenged the complacency of his chosen elect and chastised those who transgressed against his Word in the New World Wilderness as the prophesied final days of sacred history unfolded around them.

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90. Lindsey Newman, ““Under an Ill Tongue”: Witchcraft and Religion in Seventeenth-Century Virginia,” *Masters thesis* (Blacksburg, VA: Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2009), 30. <http://hdl.handle.net/10919/31667>; Joseph Smith, *A Map of Virginia: With A Description of the Countrey, the Commodities, People, Government and Religion* (Oxford: Printed by Joseph Barnes, 1612), 29. <https://archive.org/details/mapofvirginiavvi00smit>.

91. Philip L. Barbour, ed., *The Jamestown Voyages Under the First Charter, 1606-1609, Volume 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 147-50. Although White admitted to being absent for the ceremony's conclusion, he surmised that the Powhatan shamans had “made a great fire to sacrifice their children to the devil.”

92. Cave, “Richard Hakluyt's Savages,” 18-19; Alexander Whitaker, *Good News from Virginia* (London: Fielix Kyngston, 1613; reprint, New York: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 2008), 24. <https://archive.org/details/goodnewesfromvir00whituoft>.

## NATIVE NEW ENGLAND

From the time of New England's earliest permanent settlements, encounters with the resident Algonquian peoples differed vastly from the Virginia experience. Unlike the formidable Powhatan confederation, the scattered Wampanoag, Massachsett, and Pennacook populations that resided along the Massachusetts coast had been decimated by an epidemic just prior to the arrival of the first English colonists. "The Great Dying," as it was known to natives, likely originated among the Abaneki tribes of present-day Maine who were in regular contact with French traders and Jesuit missionaries. Following trade routes south, the disease spread among the coastal villages and is thought to have claimed the lives of 75-90% of the area's indigenous populations.<sup>93</sup> Thomas Morton, an early colonial merchant, provides the most vivid account of the devastating impact of this affliction, describing how

in a place where many inhabited, there hath been but one left a live, to tell what became of the rest, the living being (as it seems) not able to bury the dead, they were left for the Crowes, Kites and vermin to prey upon. And the bones and skulls upon the severall places of their habitations, made such a spectacle after my coming into those partes [...] it seemed to mee a new found Golgotha.<sup>94</sup>

In addition to the immense loss of life, the region's tribal infrastructure was left in ruins as economic networks were severely disrupted and spheres of power shifted dramatically in the wake of the epidemic.<sup>95</sup> For the English, this "wonderfull Plague" was considered to be of providential design,

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93. Christobal Silva, *Miraculous Plagues: An Epidemiology of Early New England Narrative* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 24-26; Timothy L. Bratton, "The Identity of the New England Indian Epidemic of 1616-1619," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 62, no. 3 (Fall 1988): 351-83. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44450997>; Sherburne F. Cook, *The Indian Population of New England in the Seventeenth Century* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1976), 31.
94. Thomas Morton, *New English Canaan* (London: Printed by Charles Green, 1662; reprint, Washington, DC: P. Force, 1838), 19. <https://archive.org/details/newenglishcanaan00mor>.
95. Matthew Kruer, "A Country Wonderfully Prepared for their Entertainment: The Aftermath of the New England Indian Epidemic of 1616," *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council* (Spring/Summer 2003): 85. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/nhcjournal/129>.

with “Destruction, Devastacion, and Depopulacion” having been unleashed upon “the Sauages and brutish People [...] by God's Visitation” so that “Civil Societie and [the] Christian Religion” could take root in the New World.<sup>96</sup> Puritan chronicler Edward Johnson further praised the “miraculous nature” of the 1616-19 epidemic, noting how “by this means Christ [...] not onely made room for his people to plant, but also tamed the hard and cruell hearts of these barbarous *Indians*.”<sup>97</sup>

Although the Algonquian tribes of southern New England experienced rapid changes in the aftermath of “The Great Dying,” their traditional customs, social structures, and religious practices were largely preserved. Colonial observers interpreted native society in feudal terms, with a polity based around kinship, loyalty, and hierarchical tributary relationships. The *Great Sachem*, or highest political leader, was regarded as the reigning monarch. Tribes under his geographic sphere of influence were, in turn, led by *lesser sachems* (“his viceroys, or inferiour Kings”) who pledged their allegiance as lord subjects.<sup>98</sup> Inter-tribal relations were relatively fluid and linked by marriages, migration patterns, and trade. Within this social framework was the confusing role of the *powwaws* (from the Algonquian word “taúpowaw,” which was translated to mean “a wise speaker”). Although it was understood that these figures were respected in their communities as shamans and healers, in the minds of early colonist religionists they were derided “as no other than our English witches.”<sup>99</sup>

There was little colonial appreciation for the social function of native spirituality or the complex relationship between shamanic power and tribal authority. In fact, the entirety of the native spiritual

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96. Michael Leroy Oberg, *Dominion & Civility: English Imperialism & Native America, 1585-1685* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 84-85; The Charter of New England (1620), in Francis Newton Thorpe, ed., *The Federal And State Constitutions, Colonial Charters, And Other Organic Laws of the State, Territories, And Colonies Now Or Hertofore Forming the United States of America, Volume III* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1909), 1828-29. <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001140815>.

97. Silva, *Miraculous Plagues*, 27-28; Edward Johnson and J. Franklin Jameson, eds., *Johnson's Wonder-working providence, 1628-1651* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), 41. <http://library.si.edu/digital-library/book/johnsonswonderw00john>.

98. William Wood, *Wood's New England's Prospect* (Boston: John Wilson & Son, 1865), 89-90. <https://archive.org/details/woodsnewengland00woodgoog>; William S. Simmons, *Spirit of the New England Tribes: Indian History and Folklore* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1986), 42.

99. Roger Williams, *The Complete Writings of Roger Williams, Volume I* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1965), 152.

belief system proved beyond English comprehension as the “[dualistic understanding] of spirit and matter, sacred and profane, good and evil, so basic to the Christian tradition, were misapplied [...] to the Algonquian world.”<sup>100</sup> By dividing “the invisible world into the divine and the diabolical,” basic Calvinist cosmology provided a contrasting worldview to the native acceptance of the “ambivalent nature of all spiritual power.”<sup>101</sup> Like many hunter-gatherer and primitive agrarian cultures, the animistic beliefs of the southern New England's tribes connected them to manifestations of spiritual power (known as *manitou*) that permeated all areas of their harmonic and holistic world – which, in turn, “enabled its adherents to accommodate traditional religion to changing circumstances.”<sup>102</sup>

Among the gods and spiritual forces within the Algonquian pantheon, early English observers identified a form of religious dualism that centered around the worship of a benevolent creator god known as Cautantowwit or Kiehtan, who was equated with Jehovah, and a malevolent god referred to as Hobbomock (variously known as Abbamacho, Chepian, Cheepi, or Okee), who was cast as “the Devill.”<sup>103</sup> In native cosmology, the figure of Hobbomock embodied the dark forces of both the natural environment and supernatural realm; a powerful spiritual figure associated with death, the departed, disease, misfortune, the night, the northeast wind, the moon, the color black, swamps and marsh lands, and the desolate reaches of the untamed forest. Parallels with the Reformed Anglo-Protestant conception of “the Devil” appeared to be self-evident, as it further came to be understood that this

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100. Alfred A. Cave, “New England Puritan Misperceptions of Native American Shamanism,” *International Social Science Review* 67, no. 1 (1992): 20. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41882032>.

101. Ann Marie Plane, *Dreams and the Invisible World in Colonial New England: Indians, Colonists, and the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 56.

102. Neal Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans, and the Making of New England, 1500-1643* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 39; William S. Simmons, “Southern New England Shamanism: An Ethnographic Reconstruction,” *Papers of the 7th Algonquian Conference* (1975): 218. <https://ojs.library.carleton.ca/index.php/ALGQP/article/view/337>.

103. Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Indians & English: Facing Off in Early America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 116-17, 121-22; Edward Winslow, *Good Newes from New-England: or, A true relation of things very remarkable at the plantation of Plimoth in New-England* (London: Printed by I. Dawson and Eliot's Court Press, 1624), 52-53. <https://archive.org/details/goodnewesfromnew00wins>.

fearful deity “resided in the underworld, [and was] inclined toward wickedness, shape shift[ing], and typically appeared as a horned serpent casting the shadow of a man.”<sup>104</sup>

To the dismay of English observers the Algonquians maintained a committed (albeit complex) relationship with this “devil god,” in both life and death.<sup>105</sup> In fact, native informants confided a more direct connection with the “local and powerful, if more ambivalent forces of good and evil embodied” in Hobbomock than they did with the “distant benignity [of] Cautantowwit.”<sup>106</sup> Spiritual reverence only increased among the coastal peoples who survived “The Great Dying,” as they grew “more and more cold in their worship of Kiehtan” just as the initial waves of English settlers colonized the region. The veneration of this controversial deity seemingly confirmed suspicions of “devil-worship” among the native tribes in the colonial mind. However, within the dualistic Algonquian belief system it made practical sense to “to pacifie [Hobbomock] by their Sacrifice, and get deliverance from [his] evil.”<sup>107</sup>

Great supernatural powers were attributed to Hobbomock; and it was to him that the powwaws most often turned as a “means to control their environment and enhance their lives” through shamanic ritual magic. Communion was achieved through visions or dreams, where the figure of Hobbomock (appearing “most ordinarily [as] a snake”) imparted “extraordinary supernatural gifts” upon chosen recipients.<sup>108</sup> As supernatural conduits, the powwaws, themselves, also played an ambivalent role

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104. Kathleen J. Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England, 1500-1650* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 189; Simmons, “Southern New England Shamanism,” 219-20; David J. Silverman, “Indians, Missionaries, and Religious Translation: Creating Wampanoag Christianity in Seventeenth-Century Martha's Vineyard,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 62, no. 2 (2005): 91. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3491598>.

105. John Eliot and Thomas Mayhew, *Tears of repentance: or, A further narrative of the progress of the Gospel amongst the Indians in New-England* (London: Printed by Peter Cole in Leaden-Hall, 1653; digital reprint by Text Creation Partnership Early English Books, 2011), iv. <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/A84357.0001.001>. According to native informants, Hobbomock was additionally considered to be “the god of the Dead” whose presence could be felt (and occasionally seen) hovering over Algonquian deathbeds. It was further revealed that, in their language, “the same word they have for Devil, they use also for a Dead Man” as it was into his “deformed likeness they conceived them|selves to be translated when they died.”

106. Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England*, 190.

107. Edward Winslow, “Good Newes from New England” (1624), reprinted in Edward Arber, ed., *The Story of the Pilgrim Fathers, 1606-1646* (New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1897), 585; Eliot and Mayhew, *Tears of repentance*, iv.

108. Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England*, 189; Kupperman, *Indians and English*, 122; Simmons, *Spirit of the New England Tribes*, 39, 41-42; Julie Fisher and David Silverman, *Ninigret, Sachem of the Niantics and Narragansetts: Diplomacy, War, and the Balance of Power in Seventeenth-Century New England and Indian Country* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), 10-12.

within native society, “both respected and feared [as] specialists in crossing thresholds into otherworldly realms where they would effect cures and (it is thought) send misfortune to their enemies.” They were considered to be “liminal figures [with] access to great power,” which could be harnessed for either beneficial or destructive purposes.<sup>109</sup> Due to their access to the spiritual realm the powwaws were often sought out by sachems for advice over important tribal decisions (such as treaty negotiations or declarations of war), which allowed them immense political power.<sup>110</sup>

Separatist and Puritan religious authorities were quick to denounce the powwaws as “conjurers” and “witches.” Although there was no lack of miracles in their own belief system, it was generally accepted that “those to which our opponents lay claim are mere delusions of Satan, inasmuch as they draw off the people from the true worship of God to vanity.”<sup>111</sup> Despite this damning designation, however, there is no evidence to suggest that colonial authorities ever sought the prosecution of a native powwaw for the specific crime of witchcraft as this was an internal offense that was almost exclusively reserved for members of the English settler community.<sup>112</sup> The Algonquian peoples, themselves, obviously held to a more nuanced understanding of “witchcraft,” which, in their belief system, “represented the abuse of the power which a shaman possessed, not the regular exercise of the shamanic calling.” The rare use of magical means for malevolent ends was a punishable offense according to Algonquian social customs, but in general the powwaws were respected “by virtue of their control over spirits.”<sup>113</sup>

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109. Plane, *Dreams and the Invisible World in Colonial New England*, 53.

110. Simmons, “Southern New England Shamanism,” 223.

111. John Calvin, “Prefatory Address to the King of France,” from Anthony Uyl, ed., *The Institutes of the Christian Religion, Volume I* (Ontario: Devoted Publishing, 2018), 19. Calvin was speaking specifically of the purported miracles associated with Catholic saint worship, but for the Pilgrims and Puritans these beliefs similarly applied to the supernatural qualities attributed to native shamans.

112. John Demos, *Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 71; Alfred A. Cave, “Indian Shamans and English Witches,” in Elaine G. Breslaw (ed.), *Witches of the Atlantic World* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 95.

113. Cave, “New England Puritan Misperceptions of Native American Shamanism,” 19; Simmons, *Spirit of the New England Tribes*, 42.

In addition to a negative view of the powwaws, there was a persistent colonial fear regarding the supernatural imprint left by native spirituality and ritual worship practices within the surrounding Wilderness as they were believed to further empower the Devil's presence in the region.<sup>114</sup> Sacred space played an equally important role in the Algonquian spiritual belief system. According to ancestral traditions, the cosmos was divided between three major realms: the sky or upper world, the earth or middle world, and the water-based underworld domains. It was within “[a]nomalous watery places, springs, whirlpools, swamps, and marshes, [which] were thought to be the customary dwelling places of powerful manitou,” that the powwaws sought communion with Hobbomock, who most often appeared as an eel or snake.<sup>115</sup> To the dismay of the English colonists who were steeped in Christian tradition and symbolism, the snake figured prominently in the Algonquian cultural-religious psyche. Explaining how one became a powwaw, a native informant revealed

that if any of the Indians fall into any strange dreame wherein Chepian [Hobbomock] appears unto them as a serpent, then the next day they tell the other Indians of it, and for two dayes after the rest of the Indians dance and rejoyce for what they tell them about this Serpent, and so they become their Pawwaws.<sup>116</sup>

For the early Separatist and Puritan colonists, such admissions offered indisputable evidence that “their Pawwaws [were] great witches [who maintained] fellowship with the old Serpent.”<sup>117</sup>

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114. Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America: Or, An help to the Language of the Natives in that part of America, called New-England* (London: Printed by Gregory Dexter, 1643; fifth edition reprint by Rhode Island and Providence Plantations Tercentenary Committee, 1936; digital reprint by Internet Archive, 1997), 129. [https://archive.org/details/bub\\_gb\\_wOfpAPRxIVYC](https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_wOfpAPRxIVYC). In regards to Algonquian ritual worship practices, Williams noted, “By this Feasting and Gifts, the Divell drives on their worships pleasantly.”

115. George R. Hamell, “Mythical Realities and European Contact in the Northeast during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” *Man in the Northeast*, 33: 67-69; Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England*, 189.

116. John Eliot, Thomas Shepard, *The Day Breaking If Not the Sun Rising of the Gospel With the Indians In New England* (London: Printed by Rich Cotes, 1647; reprinted, New York: Reprinted for J. Sabin, 1865), 26-27. <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100769908>. Deriving from the account of the fall in Genesis, common Christian lore emphasized a correspondence between the Devil and “the Serpent” who served as his agent of temptation.

117. Eliot, *The Day Breaking If Not the Sun Rising of the Gospel*, 27.

From the period of early exploration through permanent settlement, the diabolic portrayal of the varied Algonquian peoples was stamped in the English colonial mind. These indigenous populations were generally treated as cultural inferiors who needed to be introduced to Christian civility and religion in order to uplift them from their barbarism and idolatry. However, for the nonconforming Separatist and Puritan settlers of New England, such interpretations went beyond standard European ethnochauvinism. In their unique belief system, the Algonquians were viewed as the “children of the Devil” who descended from of the cursed bloodline of Cain; biblical antagonists in the sacred drama that surrounded the idealized New England colonial-religious endeavor. Even the Algonquian language itself was considered to be satanic, with words so long and difficult to decipher they were thought to have derived from “the confusion at Babel.”<sup>118</sup> Such views were a conscious reiteration of John Calvin's teachings, which claimed that “as believers are recognized as the children of God because they bear his image, so are those rightly recognized to be the children of Satan from his image, into which they have degenerated.”<sup>119</sup> From the beginning the stage was set for a cultural-religious clash that would shape the later course of colonization in the region.

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118. Richard Godbeer, *The Devil's Dominion: Magic and Religion in Early New England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 90-91; Alfred A. Cave, *The Pequot War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), 10-12, 170-73; Lovejoy, “Satanizing the American Indian,” 607-611; Jill Lepore, “Dead Men Tell No Tales: John Sassamon and the Fatal Consequences of Literacy,” *American Quarterly* 46, no. 4 (1994): 487. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2713381>.
119. John T. McNeill, ed, *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book 1* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960), 178. Calvin's pronouncement derives from 1 John 3:10, where it states, “In this are the children of God known, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness, is not of God.”

### **III. The Sacred Promise of New England: Early Anglo-Indian Relations and Cultural-Religious Clashes, 1620-1636**

The initial period of New England's settlement is fairly unique in the annals of European colonization in that it was not based on the violent conquest and exploitation of the resident native populations, but rather a complex relationship that balanced cultural and religious antagonisms with a practical need for mutuality and civil coexistence. Despite conflicts, the Separatist Pilgrims of Plymouth and Puritan settlers of Massachusetts Bay were able to achieve a high degree of consensus and stability with the region's Algonquian tribal communities. However, it is from within this fragile equilibrium that the initial stages of native subjugation emerged; establishing the basis for later acts of displacement, deprivation, and war to take place during periods marked by sacred crisis and despair.

From the outset the region's colonization was shaped by a uniquely Reformed Anglo-Protestant conception of sacred agency and cosmic struggle, from which the inevitable clash with Algonquian religiosity guided the course of Anglo-Indian relations. The leading ideologues of the founding generation shared in a religious culture that embraced a volatile combination of divine assurance, millenarian anticipation, and residual medieval influence that steeped the popular culture in wonder and superstition. New England, itself, factored heavily in their cosmological belief system as the prophesied "Wilderness," a place of both sacred promise and cosmic threat where God had called His people to inhabit and prosper. In a blending of biblical narrative and ethnochauvinistic construct, the Algonquian peoples played a key role in the elaborately conceived sacred drama that enveloped the region. Derided as "pagan idolaters," "unregenerate savages," and "devil-worshippers," the resident native populations were believed to be connected to the dark spiritual forces of both the surrounding landscape and broader cosmos; instruments by which the Devil, with God's permission, tested or chastised the chosen elect in the final days leading up to Christ's millennial return.

## THE FOUNDING OF PLYMOUTH COLONY

The founding of Plymouth colony marked the arrival of nonconforming English religious exiles in the New World. It also established an important precedent that guided relations with the region's Algonquian tribes throughout the early colonial period. For the Separatist sect that came to be known as “Pilgrims,” early encounters with the tribal societies that dotted the New England coastline represented a new chapter in a long history of diabolic persecution that provided them with sacred identity and purpose. William Bradford begins his opus history of the Pilgrim movement, *Of Plimouth Plantation*, by describing the spiritual vulnerability of nonconforming Reformed Anglo-Protestants in the context of the broader cosmic struggle. In his words, from “the first breaking out of the light of the gospell in our Honorable Nation of England [...] what warrs and oppossions ever since Satan hath raised, maintained and continued against the Saincts,” as they, and they alone, represented a fundamental threat to his “loathsome kingdom” through their sacred mission to revert the churches of God “to their anciente purite; and recover their primitive order, libertie and bewtie.”<sup>120</sup>

The Separatist beliefs of the Pilgrims “represented the extreme left wing of English Puritanism,” as they “believed that Church and State were separate realms [and] that the civil ruler had no authority over spiritual affairs.”<sup>121</sup> John Robinson, their benevolent spiritual leader, insisted on “the exclusive, voluntary gathering of visible saints – those who believed they had received God's grace and demonstrated it in their actions – for mutual edification and 'true' worship.”<sup>122</sup> These convictions forced the group to abandon their English homelands in order to establish a “community of visible saints” in

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120. Nick Bunker, *Making Haste from Babylon: The Mayflower Pilgrims and their World, A New History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), 62-65; William Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation, 1620-1647, Volume I*, edited by Worthington Chauncey Ford (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1912), 3.  
<https://archive.org/details/historyplymouth01socigoog>.

121. Henry Wilder Foote, “The Significance and Influence of the Cambridge Platform of 1648,” *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 69 (1947): 84. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25080408>.

122. Francis J. Bremer, *One Small Candle: The Plymouth Puritans and the Beginning of English New England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 37-39; Bunker, *Making Haste from Babylon* 170-77; Martha Finch, *Dissenting Bodies: Corporealities in Early New England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 9.

exile, ostensibly escaping “[the] yoke of Antichristian bondage [and] join[ing] themselves (by a covenant with the Lord) into a church estate, in the fellowship of the Gospell.” However, the shadow of diabolic persecution followed them through both continental exile and transatlantic exodus; a cosmic belief that contributed to the sacred narrative that shaped colonial-religious purpose and a corresponding views of the native peoples who shared in their unfamiliar new world.<sup>123</sup>

Plymouth's founders were well aware of the storied accounts of native savagery, witchcraft, and devil worship (particularly those from the Virginia Colony) prior to their departure for the New World. Bradford offers a glimpse into the foreboding mindset of these wayward exiles as they embarked on their uncertain journey, anticipating the “continual dangers of the salvage people, who are cruell, barbarous,” and “delight to torment men in the most bloody manner.” Describing graphic scenarios that involved torture, cannibalism, and “cruelties [too] horrible to be related,” Bradford's fearful portrayal drew heavily from the English Protestant tradition of persecution and martyrdom. Such imagery not only related the anticipated “savagery” of the native peoples to the tortures endured by the early Christian martyrs of pagan Rome and more recent Marian persecutions, but also carried demonic undertones that evoked common Early Modern depictions of the torments of Hell.<sup>124</sup>

The founding of Plymouth colony was steeped in sacred promise and millenarian expectation. From the outset it was a colonial-religious endeavor conceived of as “a great revelatory and prophetic event in the course of the progress of the church upon earth in which God's divine providence transformed the locus of the history of redemption and salvation from the Old World to the New World.”<sup>125</sup> In studying the eschatological dimensions of New England's nonconforming religious exile

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123. Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation, Volume I*, 21-22; Charles Segal and David Stineback, ed., *Puritans, Indians & Manifest Destiny* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1977), 33.

124. Adrian Chastain Weimer, *Martyrs' Mirror: Persecution and Holiness in Early New England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 50-51; William Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation, Volume I*, 57.

125. Avihu Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom: History and Apocalypse in the Puritan Migration to America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 130.

movements, Avihu Zakai argues that the Pilgrims marked a radical departure from previous English colonial endeavors in North America by outlining an ideological justification for settlement,

based upon a new sacred model taken from the annals of ecclesiastical history; namely, the *Exodus*, or judgmental, type of religious migration, which stressed the Saint's divine duty and obligation to separate from, and not to take part in, the sin and corruption of the Old World.<sup>126</sup>

Expecting God's wrath to fall upon the sinful nations of Europe (including Protestant England) and asserting their own uniquely independent sacred historical agency, the Separatist Pilgrim patriarchs tasked themselves with the building of a new apostolic church in the “Wilderness” of the New World. In doing so, their faith was tested by the hardships of persecution, exile, and migration, just as the children of Israel were tested in the biblical Exodus. In suffering they accepted their legitimate claim as a visible people of God; bearers of the “true church,” with any lingering doubts regarding the sanctity of their mission alleviated by what was believed to be a series of providential signs of approval.

Whether by error, intention, or “the guiding hand of the Almighty,” the *Mayflower* landed in present-day Massachusetts in November 1620. The Leiden congregants represented a fraction of the total passengers, but with the signing of the “Mayflower Compact” they secured de facto authority over the colonial venture and legal claim “to represent the Crown in exercising local sovereignty over the land and its native inhabitants.”<sup>127</sup> After two months at sea and weeks of wandering the Cape Cod coastline the beleaguered Pilgrims were eventually graced by the discovery of the Patuxet ruins, a once-thriving Wampanoag village decimated by “the great mortalitie” that struck the region three years

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126. Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom*, 134-35.

127. Bremer, *One Small Candle*, 94-97; Michael Winship, *Hot Protestants: A History of Puritanism in England and America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 71-72; Jenny Hale Pulsipher, *Subjects unto the Same King: Indians, English, and the Contest for Authority in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 15; Neal Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans, and the Making of New England, 1500-1643* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 113.

prior in what was considered to be a “wonderful act of God” that had prepared the land for the arrival of his elect.<sup>128</sup> The abandoned site, cleared and cultivated by the former native occupants, provided the ideal location for planting their new society and a sacred foundation from which “the gospel of the kingdom of Christ” would be advanced in this remote corner of the world.<sup>129</sup>

Confident of their sacred historical agency, the founding of Plymouth colony was accompanied by divine reassurances for the Separatist faithful despite the fearful unknown that existed beyond their established boundaries. Their conception of the New World Wilderness held sacred promise as a place of refuge from the corruption and degeneracy of the Old World. Paradoxically, it was also considered to be the Devil's dominion; a desolate realm that was home to wild beasts, savage men, and dark supernatural forces; a place of peril where the saints expected to be tempted, just as Christ had been tempted in the Judean Desert. For the Separatist Pilgrims, transatlantic exile in the forests of New England symbolized “a psychological and spiritual quest [for] salvation in the wilderness of the human mind and soul.”<sup>130</sup> Faith held that the “true church” would eventually triumph, but not without struggle. In addition to inspiring doubts from within their religious community, it was understood that the Devil guided the Algonquian peoples to hinder their progress every step of the way.<sup>131</sup>

Committed to Calvinist theology, the early Pilgrim settlers considered the power of the Devil – and, by extension, those who served him – to be subordinate to the will of God. Unfortunately, it was a religious faith that offered little assurance to those who found themselves under diabolic siege. Within the Reformed Anglo-Protestant belief system it was generally accepted that devotion to God ensured

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128. William Bradford, et al, *The Journal of the Pilgrims at Plymouth: In New England in 1620*, Reprint (New York: Published by John Wiley, 1848), 143.

129. David D. Hall, *The Puritans: A Transatlantic History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 7-8; Nathaniel Morton, *New England's Memorial*, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition (Boston: Congregation Board of Publication, 1855; Digitized by Internet Archive, 2011), 12. <https://archive.org/details/newenglandsmemor00m>.

130. Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973), 39.

131. Peter N. Carroll, *Puritanism and the Wilderness: The Intellectual Significance of the New England Frontier, 1629-1700* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 11.

the protection of one's soul. However, there were few safeguards that extended to the corporeal and material realities of everyday life.<sup>132</sup> Furthermore, considering that one's personal and communal covenant with God was always in question, the threat of the Devil remained a constant; and the Pilgrims, as bearers of the true church in the New World, considered themselves to be particularly vulnerable.<sup>133</sup> From the initial *Mayflower* landing, the dual narrative of sacred agency and cosmic struggle that underscored relations between the Pilgrim settlers and resident Algonquian peoples provided a test of both the Devil's power over, and God's favor for, the chosen elect. A seminal event within this dual narrative construct was later relayed to Bradford by a native informant, who claimed,

before [the Pokanokets] came to the English to make friendship, they gott all the Powachs of the cuntrie, for three days together, in a horid and divellish maner to curse and execrate them with their cunjurations, which asembly and service they held in a darke and dismale swampe.<sup>134</sup>

In documenting this event, Bradford emphasized both the existential and cosmic threat posed by the innately diabolic peoples who surrounded their newly established plantation. It also served to reinforce the religious faith and a sense of sacred purpose of the Separatist Pilgrims by acknowledging providential favor at such a critical moment of their colony's founding.<sup>135</sup>

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132. Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England* (New York: Penguin Books, 1971), 591; William Perkins, *The combat betweene Christ and the Divell displayed: or A commentarie upon the temptations of Christ* (London: Printed by Melchisedech Bradwood, 1606), 17. <http://name.umd.umich.edu/A09463.0001.001>. Perkins elaborated on this point using biblical authority, warning, “it is but the fancy of presumptuous persons, when they say, their faith is so strong, that all the witches in the world cannot hurt them: for if God permit, Satan can grievously afflict man's body, as he did the body of Job.”
133. William Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation, 1620-1647, Volume II*, edited by Worthington Chauncey Ford (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1912), 309. <https://archive.org/details/historyofplymout02brad>. It was Bradford's belief that “Satan has more power in these heathen lands [...] than in more Christian nations,” Bradford warned, “especially over Gods servants in them.”
134. Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation, Volume I*, 211-12.
135. Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana: or, The ecclesiastical history of New-England, from its first planting in the year 1620. unto the year of Our Lord, 1698, Book I* (London: Printed for Thomas Parkhurst, 1702), 9. <https://archive.org/details/magnaliachristia00math>. Mather later placed great cosmic significance on this event by claiming that the Devil, in defeat, “acknowledged unto [the powwaws], that they could not hinder those People from their becoming the Owners and Masters of the Country,” as “no Enchantment or Divination” could prevent the Plymouth colonists from transforming the New England wilderness into a monument to Christ.

Bradford's account undoubtedly “betray[ed] his fear of witchcraft as it was understood by Europeans rather than a comprehension of Indian beliefs and customs.” Citing their past ill-treatment by English adventurers, historian Neal Salisbury argues that it is more than likely that the Wampanoags “were ritually purging themselves of their hostilities toward the English as a prelude to their diplomatic reversal.”<sup>136</sup> Another explanation is that the powwaws sought supernatural protections from further outbreak of disease before initiating contact with the newly arrived English settlers, whose God, it was widely believed, was responsible for the pestilence that ravaged the coastline prior to their arrival. As Bradford's brief mention is the only surviving record, it is impossible to determine the true nature of this ritual gathering. Regardless, it mattered little to the Pilgrims if these native shamans had acted with malicious, diplomatic, or protective intent. The ritual appeasement of Hobbomock, in and of itself, confirmed their worst fears of “devil worship” among the region's Algonquian peoples.

In spite of this diabolic portrayal of the resident native populations, Plymouth's leaders were able to balance such beliefs with the assurance of their sacred agency and a commitment to Christian charity, civil conduct, and a practical consideration of their vulnerability in isolation. In March 1621, a regional alliance was solidified with the neighboring Pokanokets (the dominant Wampanoag tribe) which, in turn, initiated peaceful coexistence with the region's broader Wampanoag confederacy.<sup>137</sup> Threatened by the Narragansett tribes to the south and bolstered by exclusive trading rights with the colony, it proved to be a beneficial relationship for the Wampanoags. However, by design it remained an unequal relationship (what some historians have described as a “patron-client relationship”) between two separate and distinct communities with no attempt at substantive intercultural exchange.<sup>138</sup>

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136. Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 114.

137. Bremer, *One Small Candle*, 104-05; Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation, Volume I*, 201-02.

138. Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 117-19; Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 131.

## EARLY ANGLO-INDIAN RELATIONS

Of the early Plymouth chroniclers, Edward Winslow wrote the most extensively on Algonquian religiosity. A printer by trade and an active member of Robinson's Leiden congregation, Winslow was delegated to act as the colony's liaison with the Pokanket tribe. Despite direct access to native informants and his own witness experiences, his accounts of native customs and spiritual beliefs were based on preexisting cultural-religious assumptions. Upon witnessing a native healing ceremony, he remarked on the frenzied dancing, unsettling trance-states, and chanted invocations made by the shamans, who, he claimed, “call upon the Devill [to cure] diseases of the sick and wounded.”<sup>139</sup> An elite class of Indian warriors, known as *pnieses*, was also described; “men of great courage and wisdom” who possessed exceptional powers in battle that they attributed to Hobbomock's favor; a “hellish height of honor” that all young males strived to attain. In his final analysis, he argued that the Algonquian people were permeated by a diabolic presence in nearly all aspects of their lives.<sup>140</sup>

The distorted observations of Winslow profoundly influenced colonial discourse and Anglo-Indian relations in the decades that followed. In 1634, William Wood repeated many of these claims in *New England's Prospect*, using similar language to describe the healing powers of the powwaws that he attributed to “the Devil's help.”<sup>141</sup> Forty years later, English naturalist John Josselyn continued to recite Winslow's major points of condemnation in *An Account of Two Voyages to New-England*, once again asserting,

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139. Alfred A. Cave, “Indian Shamans and English Witches,” in Elaine G. Breslaw (ed.), *Witches of the Atlantic World* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 197; Edward Winslow, “Good Newes from New England” (1624), reprinted in Edward Arber, ed., *The Story of the Pilgrim Fathers, 1606-1646* (New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1897), 55.

140. William S. Simmons, “Southern New England Shamanism: An Ethnographic Reconstruction,” *Papers of the 7th Algonquian Conference* (1975): 219-22. <https://ojs.library.carleton.ca/index.php/ALGQP/article/view/337>; Cave, “New England Puritan Misperceptions of Native American Shamanism,” 17; Winslow, “Good Newes from New England,” 55.

141. William Wood, *Wood's New England's Prospect* (Boston: John Wilson & Son, 1865), 93-94. <https://archive.org/details/woodsnewengland00woodgoog>.

[The Indians] worship the Devil [and] their [powwaws] are little better than Witches, for they have familiar conference with him, who makes them invulnerable. [...] Crafty Rogues, abusing the rest at their pleasure, having power over them by reason of their Diabolical Art in curing of Diseases [...] sometimes calling upon the Devil for his help, mingling their prayers with horrid and barbarous charms.<sup>142</sup>

The early Pilgrim chroniclers relied upon their own cultural-religious constructs to describe unfamiliar concepts relating to native customs, spirituality, worldviews, mythologies and ritual practices. Colonial scholars have debated the extent of influence that this diabolic portrayal had over the official policies of Plymouth colony and their diplomatic relations with the surrounding tribes. In the view of Alden Vaughan, the prejudicial worldview of the Pilgrims was no more extreme than those of other English Protestants. Native spiritual beliefs and worship practices were rhetorically demonized similar to those of European Catholics and any such portrayal had a negligible effect over colonial policies and intercultural relations.<sup>143</sup> Indeed, despite the common interpretation of Algonquian religiosity as a form of “devil worship,” a relatively high degree of equity and civility was maintained towards native allies throughout Plymouth's early settlement. However, as revisionist historians have argued, a determined power imbalance had been established from the outset in order to assert regional dominance.<sup>144</sup> Principled alliances were challenged by conflicting interests, while the pervading ethnochauvinism and cultural-religious ideology of the Pilgrims ensured that

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142. John Josselyn, *An Account of Two Voyages to New-England: Made During the Years 1638, 1663* (Boston: W. Veazie, 1865), 104-05.

143. Alden T. Vaughan, *New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians, 1620-1675, Third Edition* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), lxix, 19. Despite this diabolic portrayal, Vaughan asserts that the settlers of Plymouth Plantation “followed a relatively humane, considerate, and just policy in their dealings with the Indians” and “had surprisingly high regard” for their interests and welfare of allied tribes.

144. Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 115, 123; Morton, *New England's Memorial*, 40. Salisbury notes important discrepancies between signed treaties and their selective interpretation by Plymouth's leaders. For instance, the original treaty document stated that “King James would esteem of [Massasoit] as his friend and ally,” whereas Nathaniel Morton's later record of the treaty signing claimed that the Wampanoag sachem “acknowledged himself content to become the Subject of our Sovereign lord the King aforesaid; and gave unto them all the lands adjacent, to them and their heirs forever.”

the colony's posture and policies not only precluded the reciprocity to which Indians were accustomed in their social relations but [also] betrayed the English fear of Indians that lay behind it. For Plymouth's leaders, [the resident native populations represented] a symbolic antithesis, threatening the material, political, and ideological foundations of the settler community.<sup>145</sup>

The diabolic portrayal of the Algonquian peoples served to reinforce this power imbalance, with real-world implications that were most pronounced in the military policies adopted to ensure security for the fledgling settlement. Colonial anxieties were heightened by news from Virginia of the Powhatan uprising, a native conspiracy that resulted in the coordinated massacre of 347 people (nearly a quarter of the colony's population), in March 1622.<sup>146</sup> Edward Waterhouse, secretary for the Virginia Company, was unequivocal in placing blame for the anti-English violence on “the instigation of the Devill.” A colonial witness to the bloody revolt noted similarly, claiming that “the devil had through the medium of the priests [exerted] such an influence upon the natives that they only waited for a good opportunity to extirpate the foreigners.”<sup>147</sup> It was an stark reminder of the potential for diabolically-inspired treachery that was always present in the New World Wilderness.<sup>148</sup>

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145. Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 138-39.

146. Michael Jude Kramer, “The 1622 Powhatan Uprising and Its Impact on Anglo-Indian Relations,” *PhD dissertation*, Illinois State University, 2016. <https://ir.library.illinoisstate.edu/etd/513>; Alden T. Vaughan, ““Expulsion of the Salvages”: English Policy and the Virginia Massacre of 1622,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (1978): 82-84. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1922571>. Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation, Volume I*, 275-276. Bradford relays the sense of insecurity that overtook the settlement upon hearing of the Powhatan uprising, describing how the “deanger of the time required” heightened vigilance and militarization in light of the “the great massacre in Virginia” and the “conitnuall rumors of the fears from the Indeans [...] especially the Narigansets.”

147. Edward Waterhouse, “A Declaration of the State of the Colony and Affaires in Virginia,” in Susan Myra Kingsbury, ed., *The Records of the Virginia Company of London, Vol. III* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1906), 556. <https://archive.org/details/recordsofvirgini03virg>; Lindsey Newman, ““Under an Ill Tongue”: Witchcraft and Religion in Seventeenth-Century Virginia,” *Masters thesis* (Blacksburg, VA: Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2009), 30. <http://hdl.handle.net/10919/31667>; “Voyage of Anthony Chester in Virginia, Made in 1620... also, A Terrible and Treacherous Massacre Perpetrated in a Cruel Manner by the Inhabitants of V Virginia on the English (1707),” reprinted in *William & Mary Quarterly* 9 no. 4 (April 1901): 208. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1920038>.

148. Increase Mather, *A Relation of the Troubles which have hapned in New-England, by reason of the Indians there: From the Year 1614 to the Year 1675*; edited by S. G. Drake as *Early History of New England: Being a relation of hostile passages between the Indians and European voyagers and first settlers* (Albany: J. Munsell, 1864), 78. <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000248862>. In later myth construction, the perceived cosmic and existential threat represented by the surrounding native tribes during these uncertain years served to portray the saintly “poor church of Plymouth” as a persecuted “Flock of sheep amidst a Thousand Wolves.”

By their diabolic nature the Algonquian peoples were generally considered to be cruel and deceitful. In the colonial religionist worldview, it was only by the intervention of God (who filled “the heart of the savages with astonishment”) that the Pilgrims prevented native plots and treacheries against their settlement.<sup>149</sup> However, in the aftermath of the Powhatan uprising it was deemed necessary to supplement the protective assurances of sacred agency with a policy of armed coercion to ensure regional security. Establishing a colonial precedent that guided further English settlement in the region, Plymouth authorities balanced principled alliances with defensive caution, a domineering assertion of authority, and a general policy of cultural segregation. Myles Standish, Plymouth's chief military officer, fortified the settlement and organized the male population into militia bands. The public drills instilled a culture of preparedness and showcased colonial military prowess for any would-be native observers. Following English tradition, native dignitaries were also routinely greeted by armed salutes. Corbitant, an allied Nemasket chief, protested such threatening displays, asking, “if your [Christian] love be such, and it bring forth such fruits, how cometh it to pass, that when we come to Patuxet, you stand your guard, with the mouths of your pieces presented to us?”<sup>150</sup>

It was within this climate of fear and mistrust that rumors of a plot by Massachusetts tribesmen against the English merchant colony of Wessagusset, thirty miles north of Plymouth, began to circulate in March 1623. Massasoit confirmed the plot to Winslow and further implicated several Nauset tribes from Cape Cod, raising fears of a more broad-based threat to English settlement in the region.<sup>151</sup> Regardless of the true danger represented by this alleged conspiracy, Plymouth's response was swift and brutal. Captain Standish led a armed group to Wessagusset and staged a preemptive massacre of

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149. Winslow, “Good Newes from New England,” in *The Story of the Pilgrim Fathers*, 513-14.

150. Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 123-25; Pulsipher, *Subjects unto the Same King*, 18-19; Bunker, *Making Haste from Babylon*, 314-315; Winslow, “Good Newes from New England,” in *The Story of the Pilgrim Fathers*, 12, 325.

151. Bremer, *One Small Candle*, 107; Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 130-32. The veracity of Massasoit's claims have been debated, but there appears to have been legitimate native grievances over thefts and provocations by the Wessagusset men that, in turn, may have connected with broader tensions around increased English expansion and militarization in the region.

eight suspected conspirators. He then returned to Plymouth with the severed head of Wituwamet, the offending Massachusetts chieftain, which was posted on top of the fortified meetinghouse “for a terror onto others.” The macabre relic remained on public display for a number of years, gaining a semblance of religious significance as a protective icon that inspired fear in the hearts of would-be native adversaries who plotted treachery against the colony.<sup>152</sup>

Regional dominance was further asserted through strict preventative measures. From the outset, Plymouth's authorities pressed for an English monopoly over firearms by forbidding the trade in muskets, gunshot, and powder with any of the neighboring tribes. In general there was little that could be done to prevent “irregular living” merchants or fisherman from exchanging European weapons for highly profitable beaver furs. However, when Thomas Morton, the decidedly non-Puritan leader of the Mount Wollaston trading colony, avoided Plymouth's regulations to barter firearms and alcohol with Massachusetts tribesmen, the colony was quick to act. In May 1628, Standish's men raided the settlement and seized Morton, who was brought to Plymouth under armed guard and subsequently exiled back to England. It was a decisive action intended to strike a blow at the illicit arms trade, a threat that William Bradford feared “[would] be the overthrow of all” if they failed to suppress it.<sup>153</sup>

The potential dangers associated with the “Wessagusset Crisis” and “Morton Affair” seem obvious enough, but each incident also represented a more subversive threat to Christian civility and social order in the region – not by the surrounding tribes, but rather the influence of “heathen” culture and customs on the “strangers” who shared in the broader English-colonial social sphere. The

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152. William Bradford, “A Letter of William Bradford and Isaac Allerton, 1623,” *The American Historical Review* 8, no. 2 (1903): 299. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1832928>; George F. Willison, *Saints and Strangers* (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1945), 228-29; Finch, *Dissenting Bodies*, 57; Thomas Morton, *New English Canaan* (London: Charles Green, 1662; reprint, Washington, DC: P. Force, 1838), 76. <https://archive.org/details/newenglishcanaan00mor>. Proving themselves capable of such ruthless bloodshed, the Plymouth settlers earned the titled reputation of “Wotowequenage,” a word that roughly translated as “Cutthroates” in the Massachusetts language, according to Morton.
153. Vaughan, *New England Frontier*, 89; Bremer, *One Small Candle*, 135-36; Bernard Bailyn, *The Barbarous Years: The Peopling of British North America: The Conflict of Civilizations, 1600-1675* (New York: Vintage Books, 2012), 345-47; William Bradford, *Governor William Bradford's Letter Book* (Boston: Massachusetts Society of Mayflower Descendants, 1906), 36. <https://archive.org/details/governorwilliam00bradgoog>.

Algonquians came to symbolize “what men might become if they lived far from God's Word.”<sup>154</sup> The Pilgrims, themselves, never sought to enforce strict religious hegemony beyond their own settlement. Instead, they intended to “serve as a model of reconstructed, reimagined New Testament church life.”<sup>155</sup> However, the nature of the region's fledgling market economy inevitably brought the “strangers” of their colony in contact with the “profane influence” of outsiders (both native and European). As such, pious Separatist leaders felt a persistent need to uplift their fellow Englishmen against degradation and “diabolic affections” in order to promote social cohesion and preserve the sanctity of their mission.

In regards to the events at Wessagusset, Plymouth authorities not only sought to put down an immediate security threat but also “to reassert and expand its control of the surrounding territory and its inhabitants, English as well as Indian.” There were Wessagusset men who stole from the Massachusetts tribes and threatened regional stability. However, arguably more threatening were those who chose to live among the natives (“against the law of God and Nature”) in order to avoid indentured servitude or starvation.<sup>156</sup> Similarly, the “villainy” of Thomas Morton and his “Merrymount” settlement not only included illicit trade practices, but intercultural transgressions that took place among the men who resided within his settlement (“inviting the Indian women for their consorts”).<sup>157</sup> To embrace such “savage ways,” even in part, was to court the corruptions of the Devil and threaten the very foundations of Reformed Anglo-Protestant civilization in the New World.

Within the colonial jurisdiction of Plymouth colony, itself, diplomatic requirements of hospitality toward native emissaries and trading partners were offset by a separatist desire for cultural

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154. Roy Harvey Pearce, “The “Ruines of Mankind”: The Indian and the Puritan Mind.” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 13, no. 2 (1952): 203. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2707611>.

155. Jeremy Bangs, *Strangers and Pilgrims, Travellers and Sojourners: Leiden and the Foundations of Plymouth Plantation* (Plymouth: General Society of Mayflower Descendants, 2009), 685.

156. G.E. Thomas, “Puritans, Indians, and the Concept of Race,” *The New England Quarterly* 48, no. 1 (1975): 12. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/364910>; Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 132; Winslow, *Good Newes from New-England*, 35.

157. Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence*, 58-65; Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation, Volume II*, 48.

isolation in order to preserve religious and communal integrity. This was particularly true of William Bradford, a conservative leader who “consistently drew boundaries and distinctions” in order to maintain cultural-religious purity and restrict contact with both the surrounding natives and broader Atlantic trading networks.<sup>158</sup> In keeping with this provincial outlook, casual visitations by neighboring Pokanokets were generally discouraged as the terms of alliance with Massasoit were revised so that only sachems or their designated representatives were welcomed within the colony. There were, of course, individual natives who were welcomed guests within the colony, such as Tisquantum (“Squanto”) and the curiously-named Hobamok, who acted as guides and interpreters. However, a general practice of cultural segregation prevailed during these earliest years of settlement.<sup>159</sup>

The insular nature of Plymouth's culture may have alleviated fears of corruption from within, but in many ways it also prevented the “Word of God” from being imparted upon the Wampanoags. Despite a common belief that the area's resident Algonquian peoples were “enslaved by the Devil,” there was no organized mission to share the Reformed Christian gospel with their native allies.<sup>160</sup> The “Mayflower Compact” makes no mention of evangelistic intent. In fact, the Calvinist doctrine of predestination questioned whether such efforts would even be effective among peoples considered to be an “unregenerate race.” Having identified one of the primary gods of the Algonquian pantheon as “the Devil,” the consensus of the Plymouth's colonial leaders appears to have been, as Salisbury argues, “not for evangelical activity, but for ideological reinforcement of the boundaries separating the two peoples.”<sup>161</sup> It was a sentiment that was, in turn, shared by their native allies as Massasoit consistently

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158. Cynthia Jean Van Zandt, “Alliance Making and the Struggle for the Soul of Plymouth Colony,” in *Brothers Among Nations: The Pursuit of Intercultural Alliances in Early America, 1580-1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 106, 108.

159. Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 117-18.

160. George D. Langdon, Jr., *Pilgrim Colony: A History of New Plymouth 1620-1691* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 158. As Langdon states, there is “no evidence exists to show that white missionaries had made sustained efforts to convert Plymouth Colony's western Indians.”

161. Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 139.

sought to protect the spiritual traditions of his people and never embraced Christianity. When the treaty between the Wampanoags and Plymouth Colony was later renewed, in 1639, one English chronicler made note of Massasoit's intention “to bind [the colonists] never to draw away any of his people from their old pagan superstition and devilish idoltry to the Christian religion.”<sup>162</sup>

There were, however, informal efforts made by the Pilgrims to share Christian teachings and notions of “civility” upon their tribal neighbors. In December 1621, Robert Cushman, the chief agent in London for the Leiden congregation, advised the Pilgrims to lead lives of exemplary religious fellowship in order to “win [the natives] to peace both with yourselves, and one another,” as such peaceable examples “[would] preach louder to them than if you cry in their Barbarous language.”<sup>163</sup> More directly, Edward Winslow used social occasions – such as the blessing of a meal shared with native hosts – for a lesson on “God's workes of Creation [and] His Lawes and Ordinances, especially of the Ten Commandments.”<sup>164</sup> He also saw evangelical opportunity in treating the gravely ill Massasoit, in March 1623, “to prove the English God more powerful and beneficial than the devilish powers behind the [powwaw's] communal authority.”<sup>165</sup> In the wake of the Wessagusset massacre, John Robinson sent a strong letter of rebuke to William Bradford that not only pleaded for a more moderate course of relations, but also suggested active proselytization among the neighboring tribes in order to ensure a lasting peace.<sup>166</sup> However, it was only with the founding of the Massachusetts Bay colony that such evangelical pretensions would become fully incorporated into the New England “Errand.”

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162. Lincoln N. Kinnicutt, “Plymouth's Debt to the Indians,” *The Harvard Theological Review* 13, no. 4 (1920): 353. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1507717>.

163. Robert Cushman, *The sin and danger of self-love described, in a sermon preached at Plymouth, in New-England, 1621* (Boston, C. Ewer, 1846; reprint by University of California Libraries, 2006), 32. <https://archive.org/details/sinanddangerofse01cushrich>.

164. Winslow, *Good Newes from New-England*, 33.

165. Finch, *Dissenting Bodies*, 44.

166. John Robinson to Governor Bradford, 1623, in John Robinson, *Words of John Robinson. Robinson's Farewell Address to the Pilgrims upon their Departure from Holland 1620, and other sermons* (Boston: Directors of the Old South Work, 1903). “Concerning ye killing of those poor Indeans,” wrote Robinson, “how happy a thing had it been, if you had converted some, before you had killed any.”

## THE GREAT PURITAN MIGRATION

Beginning a decade after the landing of the *Mayflower*, “The Great Migration” brought successive waves of Puritan émigrés who sought to “serve the Lord and work out [their] Salvation under the power and purity of His holy Ordinances” in the mythologized New England Wilderness<sup>167</sup> However, unlike the earlier settlement of their Separatist Pilgrim counterparts, the ambitious Puritan colonial-religious endeavor was well financed, coordinated, and fully chartered, ensuring the dominant power status of Massachusetts Bay in the region.<sup>168</sup> The initial call to depart from England came in response to the anti-Calvinist “counter-reformation” enacted under King Charles I (and his crypto-papist Archbishop William Laud), where outspoken ministers were censored, removed from official positions, and persecuted for their beliefs. Parallels were drawn between this increasingly repressive climate and the earlier period of the Marian Exiles, invoking the English Protestant tradition of martyrdom to bolster the self-image of Puritan reformers as persecuted saints.<sup>169</sup>

Related to this climate of restrictive policies, religious compromises, and forced conformity was the country's deteriorating conditions, which were broadly interpreted by the Puritans as warning signs from God. As England's economy shifted from a manorial to market-based system, there was a steep rise in unemployment, displacement, and poverty. Hardest hit were the commercialized areas of the country surrounding London that became the heartland for transatlantic Puritan migration.<sup>170</sup> For many, these downward trends signaled providential judgment cast upon the nation for its failure to complete the Protestant Reformation. In a sermon preached to the House of Commons in April 1628, the Puritan

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167. John Winthrop, “A Model of Christian Charity,” in Richard S. Dunn and Laetitia Yeandle, eds., *The Journal of John Winthrop, 1630-1649: Abridged edition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 8.

168. Joseph A Conforti, *Imagining New England: Explorations of Regional Identity from the Pilgrims to the Mid-Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 11-12.

169. Weimer, *Martyrs' Mirror*, 59.

170. Joseph Conforti, *Saints and Strangers: New England in British North America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 37; Michael Leroy Oberg, *Dominion & Civility: English Imperialism & Native America, 1585-1685* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 82-83

minister Jeremiah Dyke somberly warned that “God is departing from us.”<sup>171</sup> Michael Metcalfe, an English Puritan contemporary, was more direct in his prophetic warnings, declaring ominously that the Almighty “is about to try his people in the furnace of affliction.”<sup>172</sup>

Social, economic, and political factors were all cited as reasons for collective removal, but it was the overwhelming sense of prophetic mission that remained central to the Puritan colonial-religious endeavor. Transatlantic migration offered a means of sacred redemption and an opportunity to create a “biblical commonwealth” based around primitive Christianity, agrarian simplicity, and harmonious social organization where citizens could enjoy “not [...] some ordinances of god, but of all, & all in Purity.”<sup>173</sup> Under the leadership of John Winthrop, a devout Puritan lawyer, and backed by the Massachusetts Bay Company, eleven ships carried nearly 1,000 settlers to the Massachusetts shores over the summer of 1630. The majority of early Puritan colonists were farmers or people of middling professions who were accompanied by their families. However, the opportunities of the New World also attracted a significant number of “strangers” who represented a diversity of material interests, social backgrounds, and religious beliefs. Despite ongoing tensions between these colonial segments, Puritan leaders established sufficient consensus and hegemonic influence for their envisioned “biblical commonwealth” to take shape. Within a decade the colony's population exceeded 20,000 people and had entirely transformed the social landscape of the region.<sup>174</sup>

There were important distinctions in cultural-religious identity and character between the Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay colonies, primarily in regards to their relationship to the Church

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171. Winship, *Hot Protestants: A History of Puritanism in England and America*, 71; Jeremiah Dyke, *A Sermon Preached at the Publicke Fast To the Commons house of Parliament, April 5, 1628* (London, 1629), 25.

172. Michael Metcalfe, “To all the true professors of Christ's gospel within the city of Norwich,” January 13, 1636, in *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, XVI (1862), 281-83.

173. Segal and Stineback, *Puritans, Indians & Manifest Destiny*, 42-43; Winship, *Hot Protestants*, 77, 79-80; John Cotton, *The Correspondence of John Cotton*, ed. Sargent Bush Jr. (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 184.

174. Conforti, *Saints and Strangers*, 33-38, 43-46; Bailyn, *The Barbarous Years*, 349, 366. By comparison, neighboring Plymouth had fewer than 2,000 people at this time.

of England and connections to the Old World. The Separatist Pilgrims severed all ties with the English Protestant mainstream and practiced their own form of primitive congregationalism in relative isolation. The Puritans, on the other hand, maintained a relationship with the Church of England and connections to the English Protestant reform movement.<sup>175</sup> Over time, however, the ecclesiastical polity that developed in the New England colonies deviated from the presbyterianism of English Puritan orthodoxy, leading to the establishment of an independent – and, according to critics, “de facto separatist” – tradition that came to be known as “The New England Way.”<sup>176</sup>

Despite these points of divergence there remained a shared cultural-religious ideology and sense of sacred historical agency between the two colonies. For their part, however, the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay placed a far greater significance (rhetorically, at least) than their Separatist brethren on the religious conversion of the Algonquian natives as a necessary component of advancing the Kingdom of Christ in the New World. Reflecting this commitment, the original Massachusetts Bay charter stated unequivocally that “the principall ende of this plantation” is to “wynn and incite the natives of [the] country to the knowledg and obedience of the onlie true God and Saviour of mankinde, and the Christian fayth.” Likewise, the colony's first official seal featured a crudely-depicted native tribesmen pleading “Come over and help us,” a reference to the Biblical vision of the Apostle Paul where he was beckoned to bring Christianity to the Macedonians.<sup>177</sup>

In part this missionary impulse was a fulfillment of eschatological promise, as the Puritans anticipated “a great outpouring of the Spirit just before the establishment of the Kingdom, resulting in

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175. Conforti, *Imagining New England*, 12; John A. Doyle, “The First Century of English Colonization” in *The Cambridge Modern History, Volume VII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907), 15.

176. Francis Bremer, “Shaping the New England Way,” in *Lay Empowerment and the Development of Puritanism* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 69-86; Mark A. Peterson, “The Plymouth Church and the Evolution of Puritan Religious Culture,” *The New England Quarterly* 66, no. 4 (1993): 570-93. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/366034>; Winship, *Hot Protestants*, 99-100.

177. Barbara A. Moe, *The Charter of the Massachusetts Bay Colony: A Primary Source Investigation of the 1629 Charter* (New York: Rosen Publishing Group, 2004), 94.

the conversion of the heathen and the calling of the Jews.”<sup>178</sup> On a more immediate level it served as a rallying point to garner English support for their colonial endeavor as a pledge to “raise a Bulwork against the kingdom of AntiChrist which the [French] Jesuits labour to rear up in those parts.”<sup>179</sup> However, despite these avowed evangelical pretensions there were few actual attempts to proselytize among the native tribes during the initial period of settlement. Instead the Puritans operated under the premise “that the Indians were obligated either to emulate the English without undue persuasion, or else face God's wrath.”<sup>180</sup> It was only in the aftermath of Pequot War that any real momentum built towards the Christian conversion of the region's Algonquian peoples.

## SACRED HISTORY AND THE BIBLICAL COMMONWEALTH

The founders of the Massachusetts Bay were no less millenarian in their cosmological belief system or faith in the prophetic importance of the “Errand into the Wilderness.” than the Separatist Pilgrims of Plymouth. Puritan ideologues were equally steeped in apocalyptic expectation, as John Winthrop revealed in his *General Observations for the Plantation of New England*, where he declared,

[the] churches of Europe are brought to desolation, and it cannot be, but the like Judgement is comming upon us: and who knows, but that God hath provided this place [New England], to be a refuge for manye, whome he meanes to save [us] out of the general destruction.<sup>181</sup>

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178. William Charles Eamon, “Kingdom and church in New England; Puritan eschatology from John Cotton to Jonathan Edwards,” *Master's thesis* (Missoula: University of Montana, 1970), 44. <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd/5529>.

179. Winship, *Hot Protestants*, 77; Robert C. Winthrop, ed., *Life and letters of John Winthrop: Governor of the Massachusetts-Bay Company at their Emigration to New England* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1864; digitized by Boston Library Consortium Member Libraries), 309. <https://archive.org/details/lifelettersofjoh00wint>.

180. Alfred A. Cave, “Canaanites in a Promised Land: The American Indian and the Providential Theory of Empire,” *American Indian Quarterly* 12, no. 4 (1988): 292. [www.jstor.org/stable/1184402](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1184402); Henry M. Knapp, “The Character of Puritan Missions: The Motivation, Methodology, and Effectiveness of the Puritan Evangelization of the Native Americans in New England,” *The Journal of Presbyterian History* 76, no. 2 (1998): 113-16. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23335366>.

181. John Winthrop, “General Observations for the Plantation of New England” (1629), in *The Winthrop Papers, Volume II: 1623-1630* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1931), 114; Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom*, 138.

The biblical urgency used by Winthrop to justify collective removal was a “product of the widespread belief that they were not merely fulfilling a part of God's universal plan, but that they were participating in it's last act, the events which would bring the millenium.”<sup>182</sup> It was an apocalyptic worldview reinforced by Calvinist providential determinism, whereby the New World Wilderness had been hidden prior to England's Reformation and since revealed to the Puritan elect in order that they “establish the scriptural model of church government [and] serve as an example for co-religionists across the Atlantic” in preparation for the Last Judgement.<sup>183</sup>

The arrival of John Cotton, a celebrated preacher and leading English Puritan intellectual, in September 1633, provided further depth and coherence for the millenarian discourse that had been brought to the colonies. As minister of the First Church of Boston, Cotton was the first to consciously equate the “pure” Congregationalist model with millennial anticipation, revealing a belief system that “was as much about the visible church on earth as it was about the defeat of Antichrist, the return of Christ and the dawning of the millennium.” Within a decade he had developed his eschatological beliefs and delivered a series of lectures that presented a full commentary on the Book of Revelation, later published as *An Exposition upon the Thirteenth Chapter of the Revelation, The Powring out of the Seven Vials*, and *The Churches Resurrection*.<sup>184</sup> Cotton was encouraged by the advanced reforms instituted by New England's Puritan leaders, however, he cautiously noted that the prophesied

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182. Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Settling With The Indians: The Meeting of English and Indian Cultures in America, 1580-1640* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1980), 159.

183. Jan Stievermann, “Reading Canticles in the Tradition of New England Millennialism: John Cotton and Cotton Mather's Commentaries on the Song of Songs,” in *Prophecy and Eschatology in the Transatlantic World, 1550-1800*, edited by Andrew Crome (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016), 218-19.

184. Joseph Jung Uk Chi, “Forget not the wombe that bare you, and the brest that gave you sucke”: John Cotton’s Sermons on Canticles and Revelation And His Apocalyptic Vision For England,” *Doctoral thesis* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 2008), 13. <https://era.ed.ac.uk/handle/1842/5953>; Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *To Live Ancient Lives: The Primitivist Dimension in Puritanism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 229; Philip F. Gura, *A Glimpse of Zion's Glory: Puritan Radicalism in New England, 1620-1660* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1984), 129-30.

millennial age had yet to begin and the power of the Devil remained a potent threat in the world.<sup>185</sup>

As with the cultural-religious worldview of the Separatist Pilgrims, the Algonquian natives factored heavily in the conceptualized sacred drama of the Puritans. In *Gods Promise to His Plantation*, the farewell sermon that Cotton delivered to Winthrop's fleet as it departed England, he preached that "God's people take the land by promise," drawing parallels to God's gifting of Canaan to the Israelites. By providential destiny, the Puritan elect were guided to "inhabite," "taketh possession," and "bestoweth culture and husbandry upon" the Promised Land that awaited them in transatlantic exile.<sup>186</sup> By casting the Puritans as a "chosen people" called upon to claim their "Inheritance," Cotton's sermon offered powerful ideological justification for the colonization of New England. Consequently, it was a biblical analogy that had far-reaching consequences for the region's tribal communities. Comparisons to the pagan Canaanites of the Old Testament defined the Algonquian natives, in essence, "as a people without rights and open to expropriation, and even extermination, in the eyes of God."<sup>187</sup>

In reality these extremities of subjugation proved unnecessary to the founding of the Massachusetts Bay colony. By the "wonderous work of the great Jehovah," who "wast[ed] the natural inhabitants with death's stroke," the area had been depopulated by disease and "prepared" for colonial-religious settlement prior to the arrival of the Puritans.<sup>188</sup> "The Great Dying" had devastated the local indigenous populations, leaving no more than a few hundred Massachusett and Pennacook peoples scattered along the coastline and river valleys. The initial wave of settlers were largely welcomed by these weakened tribes, who relinquished land rights and readily accepted subject status under English

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185. John Cotton, *The Churches Resurrection, or the Opening of the Fift and sixt verses of the 20th Chapter of the Revelation* (London: Printed by R.O. & G. D., 1642), 20. In Cotton's estimation, "Satanicall power" could not be restrained until a future historical stage, where "Satan be cast into the bottomlesse pit, and the Roman Catholicke Church damned from the face of the Churches also, and cast out."

186. John Cotton and Reiner Smolinski, ed., *Gods Promise to His Plantation* (London: Printed by William Jones for John Bellamy, and are to be solde at the three Golden Lyons by the Royall Exchange, 1630; reprint, Electronic Texts in American Studies, 2007), 4-5. <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/etas/22>.

187. Kupperman, *Settling With The Indians*, 167.

188. Edward Johnston, *Johnson's Wonder-working providence, 1628-1651* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), 48. <http://library.si.edu/digital-library/book/johnsonswonderw00john>.

law in exchange for trading opportunities and protection against the hostile Abenaki tribes to the north.<sup>189</sup> However, once the colony had been firmly established the drive toward expansion and regional dominance undermined these relatively peaceable beginnings.

By English standards the entire region was considered to be uncultivated – and, therefore, “uninhabited.” As a chosen people, the Puritans believed themselves to be biblically obligated to take possession of the land “in accordance with God's commandment [for] men to occupy the earth, increase, and multiply.”<sup>190</sup> In the interest of regional stability, it was recommended that wherever the “salvages pretend [the] right of inheritance to all or any part of the lands granted in our patent, endeavor to purchase their tittle, that we may avoid the least scruple of intrusion.”<sup>191</sup> However, since the resident tribes had not “subdued” these forested lands, Winthrop cited the doctrine of *vacuum domicilium* to argue that they merely retained a “natural right” (as opposed to a civil right) to these areas and, as such, “imposed [no] obligations of true legal property.” Biblical justification bolstered these self-serving claims with an air of moral authority.<sup>192</sup> Rhetorically, he asked, “[i]f God were not pleased with our inheriting these parts, why did He drive out the natives before us? And why does he still make roome for us by diminishing them as we increase?”<sup>193</sup>

Confident of having both royal and divine authority on their side, Puritan colonists were emboldened to extend God's glory beyond the established coastal settlements and into the dark recesses of the New England frontier. In doing so, they initiated a process of displacement that inevitably created tensions with the resident Algonquian tribes. According to leading Puritan ideologues, they also

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189. Vaughan, *New England Frontier*, 94; Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 184.

190. Pearce, “The “Ruines of Mankind,” 202; Thomas, “Puritans, Indians, and the Concept of Race,” 10-11.

191. Matthew Cradock to John Endicott, February 16, 1629, in Alexander Young, ed., *Chronicles of the First Planters of Massachusetts Bay from 1623 to 1636* (Boston: Little and Brown, 1846), 133-34.

192. Oberg, *Dominion & Civility*, 85-86; Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 82-83. See also Psalms 2:8, where it states, “Ask of me, and I shall give thee, the heathen for thine inheritance, and the ends of the earth for thy possession.”

193. John Winthrop to John Endicott, January 3, 1634, in *Winthrop Papers: 1631–1637, Volume III* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1943), 149.

initiated a cosmic rupture that offset the balance of spiritual power in the region. By erecting “monuments to Christ” in the formally uncontested Wilderness, they had angered the Old Gods of the native pantheon – particularly Hobbomock (“the Devil”), who, it was believed, responded with a fearful determination to undermine the further Christian conquest of native lands, bodies, and souls.<sup>194</sup>

William Wood, an early colonial promoter of Massachusetts Bay, was one of the first chroniclers to use this cosmic narrative to describe the cultural-religious clash between the English settlers and resident Algonquian tribes. In *New England's Prospect* (1634), he relayed a native folk belief regarding Hobbomock, who “in the past was wont to carrie away [the] wives and children” of Algonquian men in order to inspire fear and “confirme their beliefe of this his much desired authoritie over them.” It was Wood's belief that the arrival of the English had disrupted his rule over the native peoples, who “daily fall from his colours [...] and acknowledge our God to be supream.” The angered deity responded by conjuring “horrible apparitions, fearefull roarings, thundering and lightning” in an attempt to frighten them back into his service.<sup>195</sup>

Rather than dismiss such beliefs as baseless native superstition, clerical opinion acknowledged the antichristian threat that this “native devil” represented for the biblical commonwealth as religious leaders, themselves, “believed in the existence of this Hobbomock or Satan, and saw good reason why he, the great evil spiritual power of the land, should wish to destroy the christian church here, which [intended to uproot] his Priests (the Indian Wizards), their faith, and church.”<sup>196</sup> As for the powwaws, or “Indian Wizards,” who upheld Hobbomock's reign over the Algonquian peoples through black magic and spiritual deceit, no consensus could be reached regarding the true extent of their diabolic powers.

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194. William S. Simmons, *Spirit of the New England Tribes: Indian History and Folklore* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1986), 118; Cotton Mather, *The Wonders of the Invisible World. Observations as Well Historical as Theological, upon the Nature, the Number, and the Operations of the Devils*, edited by Reiner Smolinski (Boston: Printed by Benjamin Harris, 1693; reprint by Electronic Texts in American Studies, 1998), xi-xiv. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/etas/19>.

195. Wood, *Wood's New England's Prospect*, 94.

196. George F. Chever, “The Prosecution of Ann Pudeator for Witchcraft, A.D. 1692,” in *Essex Institute Historical Collections, Volume 4* (Salem, MA: G.M. Whipple & A.A. Smith, 1862), 40.

Some dismissed them as petty conjurers who exploited the ignorance of their people for personal gain, while others acknowledged their powers but believed “[they] could not work [their] witchcraft in the presence of an English person, nor could [their] incantations have any effect on the English.”<sup>197</sup>

However, in general, there was little reason to doubt the abilities of these shamanic-religious figures to perform extraordinary healing miracles or supernatural feats. Similar to the popular conception of witches during this period, the native powwaws were generally thought to be capable of producing “effects of wonderment” in order to serve the interests of the Devil.<sup>198</sup>

Typifying such beliefs is Wood's account of Passaconaway, an infamous Pennacook chief who was described as “the most celebrated powow in the country, [able to] make the water burn, the rocks move, the trees dance, and metamorphize himself into a flaming man.” It was further rumored that he could raise the dead (through the use of “necromanticke charms”) according to astonished witnesses, who claimed he was able to “make a dead snake's skin a living snake, both to be seen, felt, and heard.”<sup>199</sup> Roger Williams, the early Puritan dissenter who was among the most culturally sympathetic to the Algonquian peoples, voiced his own revulsion toward their “hideous worship of creatures and devils.”<sup>200</sup> Similar to other English colonial observers, he likened the powwaws to “no other than our English witches,” and fearfully confided that “after once being in their houses and beholding what their worship was, I durst never bee an eye witness, Spectatour or looker on, lest I should have been a partaker of Sathans Inventions and Worships, contrary to Ephesians 5:14.”<sup>201</sup>

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197. Thacher, *History of the Town of Plymouth*, 360.

198. Kupperman, *Settling With The Indians*, 72; Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America: Or, An help to the Language of the Natives in that part of America, called New-England* (London: Printed by Gregory Dexter, 1643; fifth reprint by Rhode Island and Providence Plantations Tercentenary Committee, 1936; digital reprint by Internet Archive, 1997), 198. [https://archive.org/details/bub\\_gb\\_wOfpAPRxIVYC](https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_wOfpAPRxIVYC). Although Williams claims many powwaws to be dishonest “conjurers,” he acknowledges that some “doe most certainly (by the help of the Divell) worke great Cures.”

199. Cave, “Indian Shamans and English Witches,” in Breslaw, ed., *Witches of the Atlantic World*, 198-99; Wood, *Wood's New England's Prospect*, 92-93.

200. Roger Williams, “Christenings make not Christians” (1645), ed. H. M. Dexter, *Rhode Island Historical Tracts* 1, no. 14 (1881): 19-20.

201. Roger Williams, *The Complete Writings of Roger Williams, Volume I* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1965), 152.

Ever mindful of the cosmic perils that enveloped the colony, John Winthrop warned that “[t]he devil would never cease to disturb our peace [in the New World].”<sup>202</sup> In addition to the overt threat of the surrounding native peoples who could be rallied against the English at the instigation of the Devil, there was the more insidious supernatural dangers that accompanied the Reformed Anglo-Protestant conception of diabolic agency. As David Hall notes, the Puritans of seventeenth-century New England “lived in an enchanted universe.” In *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment*, he describes the various “wonders” or “portents” that signaled either a divine presence or diabolic shadow cast upon their everyday lives, which contributed to their “understanding of the world [as] magical [and] not bounded by ordinary rules of cause and effect.”<sup>203</sup> He further explains,

What enriched and made this language [of portents] relevant was the colonists' assumption that they lived in covenant with God. For them the covenant transformed the body social into a moral order, a “Theocratic” erected on the basis of the laws of God. It was the wonder that made visible this fusion of the social and the moral, at once manifesting God's protection and – more frequently – warning of God's anger at their carelessness.<sup>204</sup>

With God's permission, the Devil had real power to induce sinful behavior or inflict tragedy, suffering, and hardship among the colonists. However, they did not consider themselves powerless in the face of such cosmic adversity. As previously mentioned, devout Puritans upheld their faith in God's protection over their souls and relied on prayers, rituals, and the sanctity of their “estate” as a means to repel the power of the Devil within their world. In fact, personal struggle against these dark forces was believed to be a commonplace occurrence among the elect. John Cotton discussed his early

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202. John Winthrop, *The History of New England, from 1630 to 1649* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1853), 338.

203. David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Beliefs in Early New England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 71-73, 238. In the Puritan mind, miraculous wonders or portents included birth deformities, comets, unexplained lights or apparitions, earthquakes, crop failures, disembodied voices or sounds, hail storm, strange cloud formations, and lighting.

204. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment*, 91.

temptations by the Devil back in England, citing them “as a fundamental part of his preparation for the ministry.”<sup>205</sup> Winthrop, in turn, recorded his own personal battles with the diabolic, claiming,

Resist the Devill & he will flee from you: this have I found true by often experience, [for] it pleased the Lord, in prayer, to discover unto me that it was Satan that did thus followe me with his assaults; whereupon I sett myselfe against him by applyinge such places of scripture, as did best oppose his temptations.<sup>206</sup>

The cosmic threat represented by these diabolic interventions into the everyday lives of New England's Puritan faithful was an accepted part of the “order of a theocentric universe” in the Reformed Anglo-Christian worldview. It also had teleological significance as part of the “grand scheme laid in the Apocalypse, the war of Antichrist against the godly,” which served to reinforce broader eschatological beliefs and the sense of sacred historical agency enjoyed by the chosen elect.<sup>207</sup>

### LIVING IN THE DEVIL'S SHADOW

Like the Separatist Pilgrims before them the sacred and cosmic narratives that permeated the worldviews of the Massachusetts Bay Puritans connected Algonquian religiosity to devil worship, which was believed to empower the dark forces of the region to the detriment of their fledgling godly society. However, similar to the Plymouth experience, these fears were balanced by both practical colonial considerations and a pronounced sense of sacred confidence. Colonial authorities initially looked to the precedents of the New England Company (the corporate predecessor to the Bay Company) and Plymouth Colony to guide the “Indian policies” of Massachusetts Bay. During these

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205. Nathan Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 98.

206. Winthrop, *Life and letters of John Winthrop*, 121-22

207. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment*, 93.

early years of divine assurances and the generally accommodating demeanor of the resident natives, Anglo-Indian relations remained grounded in secular concerns that placed regional stability and economic opportunity above both religious-based prophecies and prejudices.<sup>208</sup> The rapidly expanding colony also maintained an obvious military advantage over their weakened tribal neighbors, as expressed by Francis Higginson, a Puritan minister and founding settler of Salem, who boasted, “We neither feare nor trust [the resident native population], for forty English musketeers could drive five hundred warriors from the field.”<sup>209</sup>

Despite a prevailing trend of relative civil coexistence the underlying fears regarding the “diabolic savagery” of the surrounding tribes did have a tangible effect upon Anglo-Indian relations, particularly in provoking anxieties that shaped early defensive policies and security precautions. The Powhatan uprising had proven the scale of bloodshed and destruction that “the Devil” could unleash upon the vulnerable English colonies through his native proxies. In response, military preparedness dominated the early public concerns of Massachusetts Bay. Weekly training days were mandated for each town and, following Plymouth's precedent, public displays of armed force were used to intimidate the neighboring tribes with drills coordinated “att a convenient place aboute the Indian wigwams.”<sup>210</sup> The fear of native plots also called for the implementation of a series of reactionary preventative measures. Trading was heavily regulated to prevent the free movement of native peoples within English settlements, as each town was required to designate a single trading post, “wither the Indians may resorte to trade, to avoid there coming to severall howses.” Large tribal gatherings within colonial

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208. Vaughan, *New England Frontier*, 91.

209. Francis Higginson, *New-Englands Plantation: Or, A short and true description of the commodities and discommodities of that countrey* (London: Printed by T. & R. Cotes, 1630; digital reprint by Text Creation Partnership:: Early English Books Online, 2011), 13. <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/A03330.0001.001>.

210. Oberg, *Dominion & Civility: English Imperialism & Native America*, 90; Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 189-90; Massachusetts General Court, *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England, Volume I* (Boston: W. White, 1853), 90. <https://archive.org/details/recordsofgoverno01mass>.

jurisdiction were also routinely dispersed by armed militia bands and it was strictly forbidden to “sell munition, gunns or other furniture to arme the Indians against us, or teach them the use of armes.”<sup>211</sup>

Minor acts of native resistance to colonial expansion were “interpreted not as evidence of a legitimate conflict of cultures, but as a feeble and foredoomed manifestation of Satan's opposition to [the English Puritan] holy mission.”<sup>212</sup> However, it appeared that these early land disputes were decisively resolved through divine intervention when, in the fall of 1633, “God ended the Controversy by sending the Small-pox amongst the Indians.” Thousands of natives perished in the wake of this new epidemic that had little affect on the colonial settlements. In a letter sent to England the following year, John Winthrop claimed that “[the natives] are neere all dead of the small Poxe, so as the Lord hathe cleared our title to what we possess.” Those who remained accepted their subjugated status under English colonial rule.<sup>213</sup> Although relative peace was maintained, from the outset the Puritans considered their relationship with the native peoples as pastoral rather than symbiotic.<sup>214</sup>

There were important distinctions between the Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay colonies in terms of regional power dynamics. The Plymouth Company's patent gave the colony the right to settle the land under English law, but they lacked a formal charter and had limited authority. As such, their relationship with the neighboring tribes was one of friends or allies. In contrast, the fully chartered Massachusetts Bay treated with the natives within their jurisdiction as fully domesticated

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211. Vaughan, *New England Frontier*, 102; Oberg, *Dominion & Civility: English Imperialism & Native America*, 91; Massachusetts General Court, *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay*, 96; Massachusetts Bay Company to Endicott, February 16, 1629, in, *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay*, 392.

212. Cave, *Canaanites in a Promised Land*, 292

213. Roy Harvey Pearce, *Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1953), 19-20; Christobal Silva, *Miraculous Plagues: An Epidemiology of Early New England Narrative* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 32-36; Increase Mather, *Early History of New England: Being a Relation of Hostile Passages Between the Indians and the European Voyagers and First Settlers* (Albany: J. Munsell, 1864), 110; Winthrop to Sir Nathaniel Rich, May 22, 1634, *Winthrop Papers, Volume III*, 167.

214. Andrea Robertson Cremer, “Indian Bodies, Cultural Control, and Colonialism in the Pequot War,” *Early American Studies* 6, no. 2 (Fall 2008): 308. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23546576>.

subjects.<sup>215</sup> In terms of colonial strength, Plymouth dealt with various tribes that, if combined, held a numerical advantage over their small population. Massachusetts Bay had no such disadvantage as they vastly outnumbered the surrounding native peoples. However, whereas the Pilgrims could remain culturally separated from their tribal neighbors (the nearest major Wampanoag village was fourteen miles away), the Bay colony Puritans lived directly adjacent to the indigenous communities within their established boundaries.<sup>216</sup>

Rather than diminish religious fears, the close proximity of the tribes and sustained cross-cultural contact only served to further entrench these commonly held beliefs. As reports circulated back to England describing Algonquian religiosity biblical scholars debated their nature, place, and prophetic significance in both the colonial and cosmological spheres. Among the most influential (particularly with second and third generation New England Puritan intellectuals) was Joseph Mede.<sup>217</sup> In his essay “Satanizing the American Indian,” historian David Lovejoy elaborates on Mede's beliefs regarding the indigenous populations of the New World and the pessimism he placed on their religious conversion. Of their origins, he suggested

that these primitive, heathenish people had migrated to the New World because the Devil himself had led them there. An increasing fear of losing his dominance in Europe as the Gospel spread had provoked the Devil to gather together hordes of barbarous northerners who had never heard of Christ. An empty land superior to their own, the Devil promised them, where they might thrive in a kingdom over which he would rule.<sup>218</sup>

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215. Pulsipher, *Subjects unto the Same King*, 3.

216. Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 186-87.

217. Jeffrey K. Jue, *Heaven Upon Earth: Joseph Mede (1586-1638) and the Legacy of Millenarianism* (Amsterdam: Springer Publishing, 2006), 14-15, 177-84. As Jue notes, Mede maintained extensive correspondence with ecclesiastical figures across England and continental Europe with an established influence that extended to the New England colonies (initially through Thomas Goodwin, a student of Mede's and close associate of John Cotton, and later through formerly banned works that were printed and shared among leading colonial Puritan intellectuals in the wake of the English Civil War).

218. David S. Lovejoy, “Satanizing the American Indian,” *The New England Quarterly* 67, no. 4 (1994): 607. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/366436>; Joseph Mede to Rev. William Twisse, March 23, 1634/35, in *The Works of the Pious and Profoundly Learned Joseph Mede, B.D.* (London: Printed by Roger Norton, 1672), 980-81; Jue, *Heaven Upon Earth*, 184-5.

Dismissive of the evangelical pretensions expressed by the colonial Puritans, Mede made clear that he saw no prospect in converting the Algonquians to the Reformed Anglo-Protestant faith. Evangelist efforts may serve to “disturb and vex the Devil,” but they could expect to “make no Christians there.” He further derided the Algonquian peoples as “purely malevolent beings whose total defeat was to be their only contribution to the course of divine history.”<sup>219</sup>

Belief in the inherently diabolic nature of the Algonquians took on various forms throughout the early colonial period. In apocalyptic narratives, they were considered to be among the heathen forces of Antichrist who would confront the Christian elect prior to the establishment of the kingdom of God. As a manifestation of religious persecution they provided a means for testing the physical and spiritual fortitude of the errant saints in the New World. For many, the native tribes provided a living example of humanity in its most primitive, degenerative, and corrupted state; a demonstrative warning of what can become of those who are estranged from Christ. To justify expansionist policies, they were compared to the accursed Canaanites of the Old Testament and treated as passive objects destined to make way for his God's people. And as the Devil's servants, they proved to be the foremost impediment to the Reformed Anglo-Christian conquest of the region.

The Separatist Pilgrims of Plymouth and Puritans of the Massachusetts Bay colonies were not alone in their religious-based views regarding the American natives. It was a prejudice shared by nearly all of the major European colonial endeavors of this era. However, as the personalized role of “the Devil” was greatly exaggerated in their cosmological belief system the threat of “diabolic savagery” more directly consumed their lives in the unfamiliar Wilderness of the New World. A relatively civil coexistence was maintained in large part due to the pronounced sense of sacred confidence and

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219. Lovejoy, “Satanizing the American Indian,” 608; Richard H. Popkin, “The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Indian Theory,” in Joseph Kaplan, Henry Méchoulan, and Richard H. Popkin, ed., in *Menasseh ben Israel and his World* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1989), 66.

prophetic mission shared by these devout colonial religionists. In these pre-war years the diabolic portrayal of the Algonquian peoples instead served as a rhetorical device intended to challenge complacency and reinforce cultural-religious ideology. As Richard Slotkin explains,

Looking at the culture of the New World in which they had come to live, the Puritans saw a darkened and inverted mirror image of their own culture, their own mind. For every Puritan institution, moral theory and practice, belief and ritual there existed an antithetical Indian counterpart. Such analogies were never lost on the Puritans, who saw them as metaphors of God's will.<sup>220</sup>

For New England's founders, the clash of religiosities confirmed preexisting conceptions of “diabolic savagery” which, in turn, fostered an antagonistic relationship that shaped Anglo-Indian relations throughout the seventeenth-century. Although there was a general uneasiness regarding the culture of Algonquian “devil-worship” that took place in the surrounding Wilderness, prejudicial beliefs were tempered by sacred confidence and the cooperative demands for colonial survival. In the colonial religionist worldview, judgment was ultimately left up to God.<sup>221</sup> Tensions obviously existed from the outset, particularly over land use and trade practices, but the dominant trend in early relations was one of relatively principled interaction and a shared desire for civil coexistence. Reflecting on this paradox, colonial leaders “concluded that God, out of concern for His Elect, had “softened the hearts” of the devil's New World cohorts,” allowing for favorable relations between the two cultures.<sup>222</sup> Divine intervention was the only conceivable means of explaining acts of charity, hospitality, or good will on the part of the natives, as such acts were thought to fundamentally contradict their otherwise “savage

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220. Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence*, 57.

221. Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus posthumus, or Purchas his Pilgrimes: Contayning a History of the World in Sea Voyages and Land Travells by Englishmen and others, Volume XIX* (Glasgow: J. MacLehose and sons, 1905), 220. Despite religious-based fears, it was asserted that “the Heathens [...] are villains not to us; but to the Lord their God.”

222. Cave, “Richard Hakluyt's Savages,” 21.

nature.” Had “the good providence of God” not “possessed the hearts of the savages,” it was generally accepted that the colonial endeavor would not have survived.<sup>223</sup>

The post-plague weakened state of the initial tribal contacts and English monopoly over superior weapons and technology obviously contributed to the softening of this “savage nature.” However, while these providential, corporeal, and material advantages may have induced favorable conditions for colonial settlement, it does not explain the discrepancy between the overtly damning rhetoric of devout English settlers and the high degree of mutuality and reciprocity they were able to maintain with their Algonquian neighbors. Although motives and circumstances varied, it was the underlying religious conditioning, strength of ideological conviction, and profound sense of sacred agency held by these “visible people of God” that provided the confidence needed to maintain relatively peaceable relations with a race of “devil-worshippers.”<sup>224</sup> Richard Mather reiterated this sentiment in his theological justification for the Puritan transatlantic exodus. Upon arrival, the New England elect expected special protections under God in the desolation of the New World. As with the Israelites of Old Testament, who “kept and walked in God's wayes, no enemy [would be] able to prevail against them.”<sup>225</sup> The early religious exiles who settled the New England shores believed that “the Errand” in which they had been destined to fulfill gave them the protective capacity to resist the dark spiritual forces that permeated the foreboding landscape and confronted them in their daily lives.

Following what was considered to be providential destiny, the Separatists of Plymouth and Puritans of Massachusetts Bay settled lands that had been, in their mind, cleared for their arrival. From their initial landing they were convinced of their sacred agency and confronted these deeply-held fears,

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223. Winslow, *Good Newes from New-England*, 12.

224. Francis Higginson, *New-England's Plantation, with the sea journal and other writings* (Salem: Essex Book and Print Club, 1908; Digitized by the Internet Archive, 2007), 108. <https://archive.org/details/newenglandsplant00higgrich>; Higginson paraphrases Paul from Romans 8:31, rhetorically asking “if God be with us, who can be against us?”

225. Increase Mather, *The Life and Death of That Reverend Man of God, Richard Mather, Teacher of the Church in Dorchester in New-England* (Cambridge: Printed by S.G. And M.F., 1670; facsimile reprint, Athens, OH: Ohio University, 1966), 18. <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/etas/69>.

superstitions, and prejudices with the confidence of God's elect. Collective self-assurance proved to be short-lived, however, as the guiding "Errand into the Wilderness" was compromised by corruption, fragmentation, and dissent. With providential favor threatened it was feared that the "biblical commonwealth" became susceptible to the dark forces of the region. As the Devil's servants and a manifest of God's displeasure, hostile tribes were emboldened to strike against the frontier settlements and turn back the expansion of Christ's kingdom. In Puritan mythology, the Pequot War was portrayed as an important battle in the broader cosmic struggle against the "antichristian" enemies of the "true church." It also marked a pivotal shift in the Anglo-Indian relations in the region as the rhetoric of religious fear became weaponized during the campaign to advance the war effort and conquest of the Connecticut River Valley.

## IV. From Religious Discord to Sacred Bloodletting: The Antinomian Controversy and the Pequot War, 1636-1638

The reoccurring instances of open warfare with the region's varied native populations throughout the seventeenth-century placed the dual narrative of sacred agency and cosmic struggle at the forefront of the colonial-religious mind. As New England's first instance of large scale, intercultural violence, the Pequot War marked a major turning point in Anglo-Indians relations in the region. Historians have generally interpreted the conflict as having been motivated primarily by material and political interests.<sup>226</sup> However, an equally important (although often overlooked) factor was the sacred and cosmic framework in which the war was interpreted and portrayed by the leading colonial voices from this period. In recognizing the underlying role that the cultural-religious ideology of the dominant Puritan settlers played in these events, it becomes clear that the Pequot War was not simply a battle over competing material interests of the establishment of regional dominance for political ends. According to contemporary sermons, diaries, and pamphlets, it was widely perceived as a point of cosmic rupture in the sacred history of the region; a call to holy war from which all future conquests against the Algonquian peoples would be waged. For devout colonial religionists, both Separatist and Puritan, the conflict provided a renewed sense of sacred purpose with righteous militia bands acting as "Souldiers of Christ" called to impose the will of God upon the resistant heathen occupiers of their Promised Land as part of their covenant promise.<sup>227</sup>

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226. Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 178-79; Alden T. Vaughan, *New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians, 1620-1675, Third Edition* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma, 1995), 152-54; Jenny Hale Pulsipher, *Subjects unto the Same King: Indians, English, and the Contest for Authority in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 21-22; Alden T. Vaughan, "Pequots and Puritans: The Causes of the War of 1637," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 21, no. 2 (1964): 256-69. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1920388>.

227. Alfred Cave, *The Pequot War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), 169-74; Edward Johnson, J. Franklin Jameson, ed., *Johnson's Wonder-working providence, 1628-1651* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), 121. <http://library.si.edu/digital-library/book/johnsonswonderw00john>.

The pretext for war involved a complicated set of economic, territorial, political, and circumstantial factors.<sup>228</sup> However, there were underlying cultural-religious dynamics that served to heighten existing antagonisms and gave ideological reinforcement for the ensuing hostilities. The Pequot War was preceded by a period of religious uncertainty, motivated by the fearful anticipation of God's waning favor due to disunity, heresy, and the prevalence of sin in the fledgling colonies. Thomas Hooker, a leading Puritan minister and founder of the Connecticut colony, exemplified this foreboding outlook as he cautioned the faithful, "Sometimes God makes an eclipse of the truth at midday, that so he might expresse his Wrath from Heaven, against the unthankfulnesse, prophanesse, and Atheisme of a malignant world."<sup>229</sup> In the colonial religionist worldview, God had allowed the Devil to unleash the fearsome Pequot warriors upon the frontier settlements of Connecticut. In part, this was interpreted as divine admonishment for the corruptions and discordance that had taken root in the colonies. But for many it was also considered a test of redemption and means of reasserting sacred purpose by faithfully adhering to God's command and "execute vengeance upon the heathen" to further advance the Christian conquest of the region.<sup>230</sup>

### THE PERILS OF RELIGIOUS UNCERTAINTY

The initial New England colonial-religious endeavor was bolstered by a pronounced sense of sacred agency among those who believed themselves to be among God's elect. However, once

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228. Lynn Ceci, "Native Wampum as a Peripheral Resource in the Seventeenth-Century World-System," in Laurence Hauptman and James Wherry, eds., *The Pequots in Southern New England: The Fall and Rise of an American Indian Nation* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 60-61; Joseph Conforti, *Saints and Strangers: New England in British North America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 21; Michael Leroy Oberg, *Dominion & Civility: English Imperialism & Native North America, 1585-1685* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 107-08, 111-12.

229. Thomas Hooker, *A Survey of the Summe of Church-Discipline: Wherein the way of the churches of New-England is warranted out of the Word* (London: Printed by A.M. for John Bellamy, 1648), 1.  
<https://archive.org/details/surveyofsummeofc00hook>.

230. Alfred A. Cave, "Canaanites in a Promised Land: The American Indian and the Providential Theory of Empire," *American Indian Quarterly* 12, no. 4 (1988): 292. [www.jstor.org/stable/1184402](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1184402).

established, the fragile Puritan hegemony of the Massachusetts Bay colony was immediately confronted by social contradictions, fragmentation, and internal dissent; which, in turn, challenged sacred agency and invited a heightened vulnerability to the dark forces of the region. The profane influence of “strangers” (those outside of the church) among “saints” was viewed as a detriment to the development of a cohesive and virtuous Puritan social body. To maintain God's favor for their colonial-religious enterprise it was deemed crucial “to preserve unity of spirit, Faith and Ordinances, to be all like-minded, of one accord.”<sup>231</sup> However, the “Great Migration” was a fairly diverse enterprise with more than half of the migrant Puritan families accompanied by indentured servants, who made up a nearly 17% of the population. Additionally, the prosperity of the fishing industry and maritime trades attracted large numbers of “strangers,” as did the need for general laborers and skilled artisans.<sup>232</sup>

Considered to be outside of God's saving grace and therefore more susceptible to diabolic manipulation, these marginalized social segments posed a fundamental challenge to the covenant promise of the New England elect. Reflecting on the lessons of Sodom and Gomorrah, a significant marginal note in *The Geneva Bible* proclaimed: “Nothing is more dangerous, then to dwel where sinne reigneth: for it corrupteth all.”<sup>233</sup> It was a sentiment that not only inspired popular Puritan sermons, but also the passage of restrictive laws intended to manage public morality and punish or “warn out” malefactors. Unsurprisingly, these varied “strangers” among the broader colonial population bore the brunt of Puritan justice for transgressions “that ranged from drunkenness, assault, and lewdness to larceny, blasphemy, and slander.”<sup>234</sup>

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231. Timothy H. Breen and Stephen Foster, “The Puritans' Greatest Achievement: A Study of Social Cohesion in Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts,” *The Journal of American History* 60, no. 1 (June, 1973): 12-13. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2936326>; Nathaniel Ward, *The Simple Cobler Of Aggawamm In America* (Salem: The Salem Press Company, 1906), 4.

232. Conforti, *Saints and Strangers*, 68-69; Bernard Bailyn, *The Barbarous Years: The Peopling of British North America: The Conflict of Civilizations, 1600-1675* (New York: Vintage Books, 2012), 367.

233. Genesis 19:4, *The 1599 Geneva Bible* (White Hall, WV: Tollege Press, 2010), 22.

234. Conforti, *Saints and Strangers*, 70.

While struggling with these social contradictions the founding Puritan patriarchs were also forced to contend with material pressures that led to population dispersion and religious fragmentation. Winthrop's original vision was to establish an organic and united "city of God" (based on the model of Geneva), where the exiled community of visible saints submitted themselves to "one body in Christ."<sup>235</sup> However, the vast expanses of the New World Wilderness provided opportunities that compelled many of his co-religionists to move beyond the initial cluster of coastal towns and settle areas deemed more fruitful for the economic livelihood of their congregations. In fact, it is estimated that nearly three-fifths of the English colonists who arrived prior to 1634 vacated their original habitations in order to remigrate elsewhere in the region.<sup>236</sup>

In many ways, dispersion alleviated religious tensions between overly zealous Puritan ideologues and allowed for increased land cultivation and prosperity. However, for Winthrop, the collective removal of Puritan populations to greater distances from Boston represented "a great weakening" of the fully integrated social body that he envisioned serving as the heart of the biblical commonwealth. Lamenting this trend, he argued that "if one may go, another may, and so the greater part, and so church and common wealth may be left destitute in a wilderness, exposed to misery and reproach, and all for thy ease and pleasure."<sup>237</sup> Plymouth colony experienced a similar population dispersal that William Bradford, like Winthrop, feared would "be the ruin of New-England, at least of the churches of God there, [and] provock the Lord's displeasure against them."<sup>238</sup> In addition to

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235. John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity," in Richard S. Dunn and Laetitia Yeandle, eds., *The Journal of John Winthrop, 1630-1649: Abridged edition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 6.

236. Bailyn, *The Barbarous Years*, 417, 420. As Bailyn notes, "[i]t immediately became clear that the Puritans' world would consist not of a single, integrated community devoted to carefully defined Christian goals but a sprawl of small settlements spread across the countryside and dominated by contentious magistrates and clerics of increasingly divergent views."

237. John Winthrop, *The History of New England, from 1630 to 1649* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1853), 312; John Winthrop, Richard S. Dunn and Laetitia Yeandle, eds., *The Journal of John Winthrop, 1630-1649* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 216.

238. Francis J. Bremer, *One Small Candle: The Plymouth Puritans and the Beginning of English New England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 163-64; William Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation, 1620-1647, Volume II*, edited by Worthington Chauncey Ford (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1912), 153.  
<https://archive.org/details/historyofplymout02brad>.

weakening these coastal “Jerusalems,” there was a related concern that frontier settlers would regress to a “savage state” given their closer proximity to native cultures and the absence of congregational oversight. In 1635, the Massachusetts General Court responded with an order that stated “hereafter noe dwelling house shall be builte above half a myle from the meeting house, in any newe plantation.”<sup>239</sup>

Corrupting influences and the lure of material prosperity may have compromised the “sacred Errand,” but it was the turbulent process of establishing orthodoxy that presented the greatest challenge to “purified” religious hegemony in the New World. While England's Protestant Reformation was under assault by anti-Calvinist forces at this time, Puritan divines warned that “the devil was [also] cunningly at work raising up a faction” to undermine the “rule of saints” in New England.<sup>240</sup> Of the early deviations, the most threatening proved to be a doctrine “of Error, and Schisme” that later came to be known as “Antinomianism.”<sup>241</sup> At issue was a theological dispute over the relationship between *sanctification* (“the daily course of living a godly life”) and *justification* (election by God) that had far-reaching consequences. As a lay revolt against clerical authority that also subverted patriarchal relations the controversy threatened the very foundations of colonial Puritan society.<sup>242</sup>

While the founding Puritan leaders of Massachusetts Bay remained critical of “papist hierarchy,” they were compelled to establish functioning ecclesiastical organization. In response, devoted followers of John Cotton's “free grace” teachings (led primarily by Anne Hutchinson, John Wheelwright, and Massachusetts Bay Governor Henry Vane) voiced dissent over these emerging

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239. Conforti, *Saints and Strangers*, 51; Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, ed., *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England, 1628-1641* (Boston: William White, 1653), 157.

240. Michael P. Winship, *Hot Protestants: A History of Puritanism in England and America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 106.

241. Johnson, *Johnson's Wonder-working providence*, 67, 124. Johnson declared the Antinomian dissenters to be manipulated by “Satan” in a “cunning policy [of] machevillian Principle, [to] divide and overcome” the Kingdom of Christ in the Wilderness.

242. Karyn Valerius, ““So Manifest a Signe from Heaven”: Monstrosity and Heresy in the Antinomian Controversy,” *The New England Quarterly* 83, no. 2 (June 2010): 182. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20752690>; Philip F. Gura, *A Glimpse of Zion's Glory: Puritan Radicalism in New England, 1620-1660* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1984), 240-41.

church structures and the enforcement of a religious doctrine perceived to be based on a “covenant of works,” whereby individuals could heal their corrupted nature by struggling with sin and achieving salvation through fulfilling the conditions of God's covenant. Instead, they proclaimed that one “needed only Christ's holiness in them, not any of their own,” a belief that placed personal revelation in equal authority to Scripture and disregarded the need to engage in transformative struggle with the sins of human nature.<sup>243</sup> In response, Thomas Shepard, a minister from Newtowne (Cambridge) and leading critic of these heterodox beliefs, argued that,

by advancing the Spirit, and revelation of the Spirit, they destroy or weaken revelation of the Scriptures; by depending upon Christs righteousness and justification, without the workes of the Lawe, they destroy the use of the Lawe, and make it no rule of life unto a Christian.<sup>244</sup>

The advocacy of free grace was denounced by New England's Puritan mainstream as heresy, which not only undermined civil and religious authority but also threatened the integrity of the biblical commonwealth and covenant with God. Proponents were derided as “Familists,” in reference to a radical sixteenth-century Dutch Anabaptist sect, and accused of sedition and blasphemy.<sup>245</sup> As the controversy dragged on, Shepard voiced fears over their destabilizing effect and “means of which division by these opinions the ancient and received truth came to be darkened, God's name to be blasphemed, the church's glory diminished, many godly grieved, many wretches hardened, deceiving and being deceived, growing worse and worse.”<sup>246</sup> Citing her practice of lay prophesying, some

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243. David D. Hall, *The Antinomian Controversy, 1636-1638: A Documentary History, Second Edition* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 3; Robert Middlekauff, *The Mathers: Three Generations of Puritan Intellectuals, 1596-1728* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 62-64; Winship, *Hot Protestants*, 103-04.

244. Thomas Shepard, *The Works of Thomas Shepard: First Pastor of the First Church of Cambridge, Mass: with a Memoir of His Life and Character, Volume I* (Boston: Doctrinal Tract and Book Society, 1853), cxvii.

245. Stephen Foster, “New England and the Challenge of Heresy, 1630 to 1660: The Puritan Crisis in Transatlantic Perspective,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (1981): 631-34. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1918908>.

246. Michael McGiffert, ed., *God's Plot: The Paradoxes of Puritan Piety; Being the Autobiography & Journal of Thomas Shepard* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1972), 65.

detractors further accused Hutchinson, in particular, of being an agent of the Devil tasked with sowing chaos and disorder to undermine the doctrine of true church.<sup>247</sup> In response, Wheelwright used fiery apocalyptic rhetoric to condemn “those under a covenant of works” and cast the clergy and magistrates of Massachusetts Bay as persecutors aligned with the Antichrist.<sup>248</sup>

In highlighting the significance of martyrdom and persecution in English Protestant culture, Adrian Weimer provides insight into the dynamics that fueled such “intense emotions, violent rhetoric, and high stakes of this theological conflict that so alarmed the infant colony.”<sup>249</sup> With the more tangible threat of English “papists” behind them, the colonial Puritans turned inward to identify and suppress dissenting voices from within their own religious communities who threatened the dominant cultural-religious social order. The embattled free grace advocates responded in kind, using the language of martyrdom to identify New England Puritan orthodoxy as a false doctrine and the Massachusetts magistrates as the enemies of Christ. The controversy continued to divide the Puritan community until it was formally suppressed in March 1638.<sup>250</sup>

Dozens of elite families fled the colony or were forcefully expelled in the wake of the crisis. Many others recanted by “acknowledging their error” and returned to the church fold. Hutchinson, herself, was singled out by the General Court and made to stand trial and answer for the charges of “promoting and divulging” opinions that were “prejudicial to the honor of the churches and ministers thereof” and holding meetings “not tolerable nor comely in the sight of God nor fitting for [her] sex.”<sup>251</sup> In pronouncing the articles of excommunication against her, John Wilson, the Puritan minister of the First Church of Boston, declared, “in the name of Christ I doe deliver you up to Sathan that you may

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247. “The Examination of Mrs. Anne Hutchinson at the Court at Newtowne,” in David D. Hall, ed., *The Antinomian Controversy, 1636-1638: A Documentary History*, Second edition (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 343.

248. Adrian Chastain Weimer, *Martyrs' Mirror: Persecution and Holiness in Early New England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 65.

249. Weimer, *Martyrs' Mirror*, 62.

250. Michael P. Winship, *Making Heretics: Militant Protestantism and Free Grace in Massachusetts, 1636-1641* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 188-210.

251. Hall, *The Antinomian Controversy*, 312.

learne no more to blaspheme to seduce and to lye,” as “I command you [...] as a Leper to withdraw your selfe out of the Congregation.”<sup>252</sup> In defending the harsh sentence, John Winthrop asserted, “better it is some member should suffer the evill they bring upon themselves, than that, by indulgence towards them, the whole familie of God in this countrey should be scattered, if not destroyed.”<sup>253</sup>

For devout colonial religionists, the theological rupture produced by the crisis signaled a broader cosmic threat that invited the Devil's wrath upon the colonies. In the worldview of leading Puritan ideologues the traumatic event was intrinsically linked to the Pequot War, which threatened the advancement of the Kingdom of Christ.<sup>254</sup> The two events were considered to be dual “manifestations of the Antichrist [...] conjoined in their malevolence, [as] threats from within merged with threats from without to form a heated atmosphere of apocalyptic danger.”<sup>255</sup> In response, “a general fast was kept in all churches” as an appeal for divine protection against “the dangers of those at Connecticut, and of ourselves also, by the Indians; and the [Antinomian] dissensions in our churches.”<sup>256</sup>

Having been compromised by corruption, fragmentation, and schism, the initial sense of sacred confidence and historical agency enjoyed by the Separatist and Puritan devout came into question as signs of God's disfavor began to manifest. In October 1637, Mary Dyer, a devoted follower of Hutchinson, suffered a miscarriage. Considered a “monstrosity,” the deformed stillbirth was interpreted as a powerful omen. “The said monster,” according to Nathaniel Morton, of Plymouth,

was without head, but horns like a beast, scales or a rough skin like the fish, called the thornback ; it had legs and claws like a fowl, and in other

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252. “A Report on the Trial of Anne Hutchinson Before the Church of Boston,” in Hall, *The Antinomian Controversy*, 366.

253. “A Reply in Further Defense of an Order of Court Made in May, 1637,” in John Winthrop, *Papers of the Winthrop Family, Volume III, 1631-1637* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1943), 475.  
<https://archive.org/details/winthroppapersv3wint>.

254. David D. Hall, *The Faithful Shepard: The New England Ministry in the Seventeenth-Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972), 156-66; McGiffert, *God's Plot*, 68. In his diary, Thomas Shepard emphasized the interconnection between these two events, noting how the “Familists” and Pequots “arose and fell together” in their diabolic attempts to undermine the advancement of the Puritan sacred “Errand.”

255. Bailyn, *The Barbarous Years*, 438, 444.

256. John Winthrop, *The History of New England From 1630 to 1649, Volume I*, edited by John Savage (Boston: Phelps & Farnham, 1825), 254.

respects as a woman child; the Lord declaring his detestation of their monstrous errors, as was then thought by some, by this prodigious birth.<sup>257</sup>

Hutchinson, herself, miscarried a few month later, in May 1638. These “monstrous births” were commonly interpreted as acts of divine punishment (or else proof of the Devil's seduction) of Hutchinson and her followers. For the more superstitious-minded, they were also considered to be a symbolic warning of the dark forces that had been unleashed by the crisis upon the region.<sup>258</sup> A few weeks after Hutchinson's miscarriage a powerful earthquake shook the colonies in an prodigious event that William Bradford interpreted as “the Lord [showing] the signs of His displeasure.”<sup>259</sup> Amid these signs of ominous wonder, the “godly settlements” of New England engaged in their first real battle with the Devil's proxies (in the guise of the formidable Pequot tribe) in order to reestablish their covenant with God and further advance the “sacred Errand” in the fertile Connecticut River Valley.

### AT WAR WITH THE PEQUOTS

For devout Puritans, the Antinomian Controversy was symptomatic of the complacency and ambiguity that had infected their congregations. Beyond hindering the reformation process, it was viewed as a challenge to the covenant with God. By allowing heresy and division to take root in the church, New England's elect had invited providential disfavor and left the colonies more vulnerable to diabolic affliction. It was amid this backdrop of fearful uncertainty that the war against the Pequots

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257. Nathaniel Morton, *New England's Memorial, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition* (Boston: Congregation Board of Publication, 1855; Digitized by Internet Archive, 2011), 135. <https://archive.org/details/newenglandsmemor00m>.

258. Anne Jacobson Schutte, “Such Monstrous Births”: A Neglected Aspect of the Antinomian Controversy,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (1985): 95-101. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2861332>; Christobal Silva, *Miraculous Plagues: An Epidemiology of Early New England Narrative* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 77; Valerius, “So Manifest a Signe from Heaven,” 179-80.

259. William Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation, 1620-1647, Volume II*, edited by Worthington Chauncey Ford (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1912), 271-72. <https://archive.org/details/historyofplymout02brad>.

unfolded. Although largely driven by material and political factors, in Puritan mythology the conflict also represented a struggle for sacred redemption; a test of faith, intended to rouse the “Souldiers of Christ” to subdue the barbarous servants of the Devil that had been unleashed against the frontier settlements in order to reestablish their sacred covenant with God.<sup>260</sup> As Thomas Shepard later preached in *The Parable of the Ten Virgins*, “I believe we should not have had those Pequot furies upon us, but God saw we began to sleep.”<sup>261</sup>

English colonists first came into contact with the powerful Pequot tribe in 1633, when a group from Plymouth established a trading post along the Connecticut River (near present-day Windsor). In competition with the Dutch for land claims and control of the fur trade, an influx of people from both Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay converged on the river valley soon after. As with previous footholds in the region, it appeared that the “hand of God” had once again cleared the way for English settlement after the scourge of pestilence devastated the resident tribal communities. The natives died “like rotten sheep,” according to Bradford, while “by the marvelous goodness and providens of God not one of the English was so much as sicke, or in the least measure tainted with disease.”<sup>262</sup> Although weakened by the small pox epidemic, the Pequots remained the dominant tribe in the area.

Declining broader partnership with Plymouth, Massachusetts Bay treated directly with the Pequots in November 1634. At the time the tribe was in conflict with Dutch colonial traders (who murdered Tatobem, their chief sachem) and looking to establish new European allies. As part of the negotiations, the colony pressed for the ceding of more Connecticut lands and an exclusive trade agreement. The treaty, however, was never ratified by the tribal elders and diplomatic relations soon

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260. Ronald Dale Karr, ““Why Should You Be So Furious?": The Violence of the Pequot War,” *The Journal of American History* 85, no. 3 (1998): 907-09. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2567215>; Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973), 77-78; Johnson, *Johnson's Wonder-working providence*, 151.

261. Thomas Shepard, *The Works of Thomas Shepard: First Pastor of the First Church, Cambridge, Mass.: with a Memoir of His Life and Character; Volume II* (Boston: Doctrinal Tract and Book Society, 1853), 376.

262. Silva, *Miraculous Plagues*, 102-103; Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation, Volume II*, 164-67, 194-95.

began to suffer. Among the unfulfilled demands, the Pequots failed to turn over the individuals under their jurisdiction who were responsible for the killing of Captain John Stone, an English merchant of dubious reputation, and eight of his crew members earlier that year. The Pequot's perceived insolence was compounded by rumors of planned treachery, as Uncas, the sachem of the rival Mohegans, sent word to Fort Saybrook of an alleged conspiracy against the English. Once again, the spectre of a diabolically-inspired native uprising loomed heavy in the minds of the frontier settlers. When John Oldham, another English trader, was killed off the coast of Block Island (an act likely perpetrated by members of the eastern Niantics, tributaries of the Narragansetts) in July 1636, colonial authorities used the incident as a pretext to take action against the Pequots. By the following spring, a full-scale war was underway.<sup>263</sup>

Colonial authorities later claimed that the catalyst for war rested entirely on the belligerent actions of the Pequots, who “grew to an excess of violence and outrage, and proudly turned aside from all the ways of justice and peace, before the sword was drawne or any hostile attempts made against them.”<sup>264</sup> Writing in 1670, Captain John Mason, who led Connecticut's armed forces during the conflict, still maintained that the tribe had represented “a TERROR to all that were round about them [and] resolved to Destroy all the ENGLISH and to Root their very Name out of this Country.”<sup>265</sup> Revisionist historians have since offered a more balanced understanding of the circumstances that precipitated the war, which included shifting trade relations, inter-tribal competition and dynastic

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263. Steven T. Katz, “The Pequot War Reconsidered,” *The New England Quarterly* 64, no. 2 (June 1991): 208-10. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/366121>; Neal Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans, and the Making of New England, 1500-1643* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 207-12, 215-18; Cave, *The Pequot War*, 69-72, 98-99, 104-09.

264. Commissioners for the United Colonies at Boston, “A Declaration of former Passages and Proceedings betwixt the English and the Narragansetts with their Confederates, wherein the Grounds and Justice of the ensuing Warre are opened and cleared, June 11, 1645,” in Thomas Hutchinson, ed., *A Collection of Original Papers: Relative to the History of the Colony of Massachusetts-bay*, Reprint (Carlisle, MA: Applewood Books, 2010), 138.

265. John Mason, *A Brief History of the Pequot War: Especially Of the Memorable Taking of their Fort at Mystick in Connecticut*, Paul Royster, ed., (Boston: Printed by S. Kneeland & T. Green, 1736; reprinted by Electronic Texts in American Studies, 2007), 13-14. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/etas/42>.

politics, colonial expansionism, and failed diplomacy.<sup>266</sup> However, the defensive justification of the colonists provides important insight into the fearful and uncertain Puritan mindset that shaped Anglo-Indian relations during this period.

The English Protestant tradition imbued the religious culture of the New England Puritans with a deep sense of persecution and martyrdom; an identity that allowed them to “distance themselves from responsibility for the violent actions they were committing, [as a] martyr was, by definition, not a persecutor.”<sup>267</sup> Despite the lack of any real threat to regional security, the decision to wage genocidal warfare against the Pequots was genuinely considered to be a defensive act that found biblical justification in the the dual narrative of sacred agency and cosmic struggle. The Pequots were viewed as a hostile threat to the growing presence of frontier settlers in the Connecticut River Valley and an obstruction to the further expansion of Reformed Anglo-Protestant social order in the region. Interpreting their “pride and insolence” as displays of antichristian aggression, Puritan colonists found themselves compelled to take decisive action against the offending tribe.<sup>268</sup>

The aggressive policies employed against the Pequots additionally reflected deep anxieties fueled by internal divisions, religious uncertainties, and a heightened sense of vulnerability to the dark forces that resided within the New England Wilderness. As with the earlier Pilgrim assault at Wessagussett, the violent offensive waged against the Pequots “was governed by the assumption that a satanically inspired Indian war of extermination against the Saints was a very real possibility and could be averted only by constant intimidation of potential adversaries.”<sup>269</sup> Writing to John Winthrop for military aid, John Higginson, the chaplain at Fort Saybrook, warned,

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266. Katherine A. Grandjean. “New World Tempests: Environment, Scarcity, and the Coming of the Pequot War,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 1 (2011): 75-100. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5309/willmaryquar.68.1.0075>; Cave, *The Pequot War*, 5-7; Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, 186-201.

267. Weimer, *Martyrs' Mirror*, 119.

268. Charles Segal and David Stineback, eds., *Puritans, Indians & Manifest Destiny* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1977), 105-112; Cave, *The Pequot War*, 171-74.

269. Cave, *The Pequot War*, 168.

the eyes of all the Indians of the country are upon the English. If some serious and very speedie course not be taken to tame the pride and take down the insolency of these now insulting Pequots [...] we are like to have all the Indians in the country about our ears.<sup>270</sup>

By implementing this heavy-handed military strategy the colonists sought to achieve both immediate and long term regional objectives. In addition to eliminating the Pequot threat, it was meant to secure the frontier by striking “trembling terror into all the Indians round about.”<sup>271</sup> However, there was also a deeper ritual significance attributed to these extreme acts of violence. As a form of sacred bloodletting, the slaughter of Devil's servants provided a symbolic means to cleanse Puritan communities of past errors and reaffirm their covenant with God.<sup>272</sup>

The first engagement of war was initiated by General John Endecott, a Puritan leader known for his volatility and abrasive demeanor, who led a punitive expedition against the inhabitants of Block Island (in retaliation for Oldham's murder) in August 1636. Unable to engage the retreating inhabitants, the militia company set fire to their wigwams and corn fields. They then sailed for Fort Saybrook with orders to force the Pequots into compliance with the treaty demands of Massachusetts Bay. Failing to resolve the diplomatic impasse, Endecott laid siege to nearby tribal villages. In total, the group killed thirteen native residents and burned sixty wigwams to the ground. The Pequots retaliated by harassing the newly established English settlements along the Connecticut River in the months that followed.<sup>273</sup>

In April 1637, a band of warriors escalated their attacks with a full-scale assault on the town of Wethersfield. Nine colonists were killed (including three women), the town's livestock was slaughtered, and two young girls were taken captive.<sup>274</sup> Celebrating their victory, the group traveled

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270. John Higginson to John Winthrop, May 1637, in Winthrop, *Papers of the Winthrop Family, Volume III*, 404-405.

271. Johnson, *Johnson's Wonder-working providence*, 170.

272. Johnson, *Johnson's Wonder-working providence*, 166. According to Johnson, one Puritan minister proclaimed to a militia company gathered at Hartford, “the Lord hath prepared this honour for you, oh you couragious Souldiers of his, to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and correction among the people.”

273. Karr, ““Why Should You Be So Furious?” The Violence of the Pequot War,” 901-03; Cave, *The Pequot War*, 108-19; Oberg, *Dominion & Civility*, 106-07..

274. Karr, ““Why Should You Be So Furious?” The Violence of the Pequot War,” 904; Cave, *The Pequot War*, 134-36.

down river and taunted the weak garrison at Saybrook. “They blasphemed the Lord, saying [the] Englishmans God was all one Flye,” according to Edward Johnson, a devout Puritan from Woburn and official chronicler of the history of Massachusetts Bay. Having tested the faith of the godly colonies, he anticipated the full might of God to be on side of the English as the conflict intensified, speculating,

by their horrible pride [the Pequots] fitted themselves for destruction. The English hearing [of this outrage] were now full assured that the Lord would deliver them into their hands to execute his righteous judgment upon these blasphemous murtherers; and therefore raised fresh Soldiers for the warre.<sup>275</sup>

A formal war declaration was issued by the newly founded Connecticut colony. Serving under Captain John Mason, Connecticut's “Fellow-Souldiers, Country-men, and Companions in this Wildernesse worke” were called upon “to execute those who God, the righteous Judge of all the world, hath condemned for blaspheming his sacred Majesty, and murthering his Servants.”<sup>276</sup>

In fiery sermons, Puritan divines framed the Pequot War as part of the broader “cosmic battle between the saints and the satanic minions of Antichrist.”<sup>277</sup> Direct exposure to previously unfamiliar elements of native warcraft only served to reinforce this diabolic portrayal. In studying the clash of military cultures during the Pequot War, Adam Hirsch writes,

Never did an Indian appear so “savage” as when he took to the warpath. Indian braves advancing into battle sported war paint “to make them more terrible to their foes” and howled war cries alternately described as “dreadful” and “horrid.” [...] Pequot warriors also boasted of their power in words the Puritans interpreted as blasphemous. Such brash assurances, flung across the battlefield like so many gauntlets, constituted merely another ritual of native warfare. Unacquainted with this ritual, Puritans read them as literal pledges of allegiance to the devil.<sup>278</sup>

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275. Johnson, *Johnson's Wonder-working providence*, 164.

276. Vaughan, “Pequots and Puritans,” 261; Johnson, *Johnson's Wonder-working providence*, 165.

277. Weimer, *Martyrs' Mirror*, 120.

278. Adam J. Hirsch, “The Collision of Military Cultures in Seventeenth-Century New England,” *The Journal of American History* 74, no. 4 (1988): 1207. [www.jstor.org/stable/1894407](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1894407).

Diabolic themes can be found throughout contemporary war accounts. Thomas Hooker denounced the tribe as “Emissaryes [of the] divell.” Captain John Underhill, in turn, referred to Pequot warriors as “wicked imps growne, that like the divell their commander, they runne up and downe as roaring Lyons [...] seeking whom they might devoure.”<sup>279</sup> As the colonists' first encounter with Algonquian ceremonial torture, the conflict also provided renewed tales of native depravity and barbarism. Nathaniel Morton recounted how they “tortured [captured settlers], in putting them to death in the most barbarous manner, and most blasphemously, in this their cruelty, bade them call upon their God, or mocked and derided them when they so did.”<sup>280</sup>

As unsettling as these displays of “diabolic savagery” were in the Puritan mind, the malevolent nature of the Pequots went beyond their “antichristian” aggression on the battlefield. The tribe was also considered to be proficient in the use of black magic. In a letter to John Winthrop, Roger Williams warned that “the Pequits hear of your preparations and comfort themselves in this that a witch amongst them will sinck [your ships], by diving under water and making holes.”<sup>281</sup> Edward Johnson also made reference to the feared Pequot powwaws, claiming they “could work strange things with the help of Satan.” Additionally, he relayed reports of the enchanted warrior-class of pnieses, “whose bodyes [could] not to be pierced by [our] sharp rapiers or swords.”<sup>282</sup> John Hull, an official from Massachusetts Bay, corroborated these rumors. “It was credibly reported,” according to Hull, “that these Indians had gotten such a power from Satan, by God's permission, that an arrow should not pierce their skin.”<sup>283</sup>

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279. Thomas Hooker to John Winthrop, December 1638, in Winthrop, *Papers of the Winthrop Family, Volume III*, 405; John Underhill, *Newes from America; Or, A New and Experimentall Discoverie of New England; Containing, A Trve Relation of Their War-like Proceedings These Two Yeares Last Past, with a Figure of the Indian Fort, or Palizado* (London: Printed by J. D. for Peter Cole, 1638), 20. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/etas/37>.

280. Morton, *New England's Memorial*, 126.

281. Andrea Robertson Cremer, “Possession: Indian Bodies, Cultural Control, and Colonialism in the Pequot War,” *Early American Studies* 6, no. 2 (Fall 2008): 322. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23546576>; Roger Williams to John Winthrop, September 1636, in Winthrop, *Papers of the Winthrop Family, Volume III*, 298.

282. Johnson, *Wonder-working providence*, 168.

283. John Hull, “The Diary of John Hull,” in *Archaeologia Americana: Transactions and Collections of the American Antiquarian Society, Volume III* (American Antiquarian Society, 1837), 171.

The diabolic portrayal of the Pequots continued to escalate as the war dragged on; a process of dehumanization that allowed for increasingly greater atrocities to be carried out against them.<sup>284</sup> The mounting violence came to a devastating climax when the colonial forces led by Mason and Underhill, along with allied bands of Mohegan and Narragansett warriors, laid siege to the Pequot village of Mystic, in May 1637. The entire complex was surrounded and set aflame. Those who tried to flee the chaotic scene were cut down by the awaiting lines of English soldiers and native warriors that surrounded the village outskirts. According to scholars, between 400 to 700 Pequots were killed in the massacre (the majority of them women, children and elderly men).<sup>285</sup>

Despite misgivings from native allies, and even some fellow colonists, the extreme and indiscriminate violence unleashed upon the people of Mystic was justified as having been divinely sanctioned in this “just war” against so “proud, insulting and blasphemous an enemy.”<sup>286</sup> In the aftermath, Captain John Underhill cited Old Testament precedent to defend the military action, arguing,

I would referre you to Davids warre, when a people is growne to such a height of bloud, and sinne against God and man, and all confederates in the action, there hee hath no respect to persons, but harrowes them, and sawes them, and puts them to the sword, and the most terrible death that may bee: sometimes the Scripture declareth women and children must perish with their parents; some-time the case alters: but we will not dispute it now. We had sufficient light from the word of God for our proceedings.<sup>287</sup>

Once again the biblical conquest of Canaan became the narrative in which the subjugation of native peoples was justified in order to advance the Kingdom of Christ in New England. As a providentially ordained event, the Mystic massacre marked the point in which the conflict had been transformed from

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284. Pearce, *Savagism and Civilization*, 20-22; Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 221-22.

285. Michael Freeman, “Puritans and Pequots: The Question of Genocide,” *The New England Quarterly* 68, no. 2 (1995): 288. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/366259>; Vaughan, “Pequots and Puritans,” 256; Oberg, *Dominion & Civility*, 109-10.

286. Katz, “The Pequot War Reconsidered,” 220-21; G.E. Thomas, “Puritans, Indians, and the Concept of Race,” *The New England Quarterly* 48, no. 1 (1975): 15-16. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/364910>; Karr, ““Why Should You Be So Furious?” The Violence of the Pequot War,” 907; Morton, *New England's Memorial*, 128.

287. John Underhill, *Newes from America*, 35-36.

a series of raids and skirmishes into an all-out war of extermination with apocalyptic overtones. It also provided a deeper acknowledgment of sacred purpose for the Puritan elect, as the hand of God had proved to be undeniably in support of their cause. Memorializing the event as a prodigious display of promise and redemption, Captain John Mason proclaimed,

GOD was above them, who laughed [at] his Enemies and the Enemies of his People to Scorn, making them as a fiery Oven. [...] Thus did the LORD judge among the Heathen, filling the Place with dead Bodies! [...] Let the whole Earth be filled with his Glory! Thus the LORD was pleased to smite our Enemies in the hinder Parts, and to give us their Land for an Inheritance: Who remembered us in our low Estate, and redeemed us out of our Enemies Hands.<sup>288</sup>

The remaining Pequots were hunted down and killed, captured and enslaved, or else absorbed into the Mohegan, Niantic, or Narragansett tribes in the months that followed. The war officially ended with the signing of the Treaty of Hartford, in September 1638. The Pequots, however, were left out of the treaty signing. Their lands were forcibly ceded to the Massachusetts Bay and Connecticut colonies “by just title of conquest.”<sup>289</sup> Surviving Pequots were forbidden to return to their villages or use the tribal name, leaving them a conquered people who ceased to exist as a social and political entity in the region. As it was later declared by an anonymous Puritan chronicler, “in that warre we made against them God's hand from heaven was so manifested, [in victory] the name of the Pequits (as of *Amaleck*) is blotted out from under heaven.”<sup>290</sup>

The events that precipitated the Pequot War are complex and continue to be debated by scholars. Although largely overlooked, the cultural-religious component of this conflict was one of the leading factors that contributed to the onset and escalation of hostilities. Whereas the initial waves

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288. Mason, *A Brief History of the Pequot War*, 17, 21.

289. Oberg, *Dominion & Civility*, 111; Massachusetts General Court, “A Declaration sent to Connecticut about the Pecoits Country, and Quinaplack,” in *Historical Collections; consisting of State Papers, and other Authentic Documents, Volume I*, Ebenezer Hazard, ed. (Freeport, NY: Books for Library Press, 1969), 427.

290. Cave, *The Pequot War*, 161; *New England's First Fruits: With Divers Other Special Matters Concerning that Country* (New York: Reprinted for Joseph Sabin, 1865), 37-38.

of nonconforming religious exiles arrived in New England with a pronounced sense of religious confidence and sacred purpose, the envisioned social body that lay at the heart of the “Errand into the Wilderness” proved highly susceptible to both internal and external pressures. As religious uncertainty took hold of the colonies during the mid-1630s, Puritan anxieties were heightened regarding the diabolic threat represented by the powerful Pequot tribe – who held dominion over the Connecticut River Valley and commanded by the Devil to represent the hinder the further advancement of Christ's Kingdom in the region. For devout colonial religionists, the early ruptures in cohesion and orthodoxy that came in the wake of the Antinomian Controversy signaled the potential waning of providential favor for the New England elect and war with the Pequots offered a means of sacred redemption.

By all accounts the Pequot War marked a major shift in the region's early Anglo-Indian relations. In sacred crisis and vulnerability, colonial authorities abandoned diplomatic precedent and chose a reactionary course to “execute vengeance against the heathen,” in part, as a means of reasserting their covenant with God.<sup>291</sup> In his literary study of Edward Johnson's *Wonder-Working Providence of Sions Saviour in New England* (1654), Edward Gallagher notes,

Puritan theologians regularly delineated temporal signs by which the individual could reasonably recognize his eternal condition, and one of the reliable signs ubiquitous in their writings is an intense internal combat, the result of God and Satan struggling within the soul. [...] Thus, Satan's Pequod Indians batter[ed] the holy common wealth, just as Satan himself batter[ed] the individual soul. New England, therefore [was] consoled; to war in God's name [was] to be at peace with God.<sup>292</sup>

For New England's devout colonial religionists, “Wherever the Indian opposed the Christian, there Satan opposed God.”<sup>293</sup> John Underhill encapsulated this mindset when he refers to the Pequots as the

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291. Johnson, *Johnson's Wonder-working providence*, 165.

292. Edward J. Gallagher, “An Overview of Edward Johnson's “Wonder-Working Providence,”” *Early American Literature* 5, no. 3 (1971): 42. [www.jstor.org/stable/25070481](http://www.jstor.org/stable/25070481).

293. Roy Harvey Pearce, *The Savages of America: A Study of the Indian and the Idea of Civilization* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), 22.

“devil's instruments [who] the old serpent, according to his first malice, stirred [...] against the church of Christ.”<sup>294</sup> By weaponizing the dual narrative of sacred agency and cosmic struggle, a relatively minor regional conflict was transformed into a violent conquest of extermination that followed Old Testament precedent. Indeed, as Neal Salisbury notes, “[t]he rhetoric and imagery of the Pequot slaughter was deliberately reminiscent of the Old Testament, particularly of the Israelites “smiting” the Canaanites and driving them from the Promised Land.”<sup>295</sup> As such, the subjugation of the Devil's prideful Pequot servants was considered a purifying act of redemption that absolved New England's colonists of past “Errors” and solidified their claim to the sacred inheritance they had been promised.

The Puritan-conceived “just warre” that came to define this regional conflict was an ideological construct framed by the dual narrative of sacred agency and cosmic struggle, which served as justification for the extreme violence used against the offending tribe within a broader eschatological context. Edward Johnson, more than any other chronicler from this period, popularized this worldview. The military campaign against the Pequots, in his mind, was part of the broader cosmic struggle “as antient as Adams time, propagated from old enmity between the Seede of the Woman, and the Seed of the Serpent, who was the grand signor of this war.” In victory, the “faithful Souldiers of Christ” had fulfilled their sacred destiny “in pulling downe the Kingdome of Anti-Christ” and further advancing the “Blessed Reformation” in the Wilderness of the New World.<sup>296</sup> It was a powerful narrative, rooted in biblical prophecy and apocalyptic expectation, that offered a preview of further battles to come as the anticipated Final Days unfolded around the Puritan elect.

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294. Underhill, *Newes from America*, 5.

295. Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 225.

296. Johnson, *Johnson's Wonder-working providence*, 30, 148.

## V. The Long Peace Reconsidered: Conquest, Subjugation, and the Protracted Struggle Against Algonquian Religiosity, 1638-1675

The “sacred mission” of New England's devout colonial religionists was tested by the desolation, dissension, and extremities of war experienced during the early decades of colonial settlement. Having suppressed the internal Antinomian heresy and subdued the Pequot threat along the southern frontier, an extended period of relative peace, stability, and cohesion began; a dynamic shift that allowed for the consolidation of cultural-religious dominance and hegemonic influence across the region. These decades of “peace” allowed for the establishment of generally cooperative relations between New England's colonial authorities and the region's major tribal confederations. However, the underlying cultural-religious antagonisms that existed throughout these interwar years proved to be detrimental for regional stability in the long term.<sup>297</sup>

The policies and relations established by the Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, and Connecticut colonies during this period reflected the real-world application of sacred and cosmic narratives that continued to bring them into conflict with the native peoples that shared in their world.<sup>298</sup> Largely taking place under banners of peace, the protracted struggle to assert dominance over the surrounding indigenous populations relied on a combination of official policies, dynamic shifts in relations, and the promise of apocalyptic prophecy. As an exploration of the impact that cultural-religious ideology had over the colonial process during these years of “peace,” this chapter focuses on the four areas that

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297. Katherine A. Grandjean, “The Long Wake of the Pequot War,” *Early American Studies* 9, no. 2 (2011): 383. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23547653>; Alden T. Vaughan, *New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians, 1620-1675, Third Edition* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995) 150-54; Samuel Eliot Morison, *Builders of the Bay Colony* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1930), 294. Morison's classic work provides an often repeated reductionist view of this period, claiming that “from the savage warfare [of the Pequot War] the land had peace [for nearly] forty years.”
298. Neil Salisbury, “Indians and Colonists in Southern New England after the Pequot War,” in Laurence Hauptman & James Wherry, eds., *The Pequots in Southern New England: The Fall and Rise of an American Indian Nation* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 81-95; Alfred A. Cave, *The Pequot War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), 174.

proved to be the most consequential in the further development of Anglo-Indian relations in the region: early native servitude; frontier expansion (and related anxieties); restrictive laws and cultural segregation; and the introduction of systematic missionary efforts among the Algonquian tribes.

When acknowledged by revisionist scholars, the underlying antagonistic dynamics of this inter-war period have generally been depicted as a “contest of cultures.”<sup>299</sup> However, this portrayal understates the centrality that religion – or, more specifically, cultural-religious ideology – played in driving the conquest for Reformed Anglo-Protestant hegemonic supremacy and the inevitable clash it set into motion. Beyond advancing material interests and political authority, there was a concerted effort to undermine Algonquian religiosity as part of the prophesied “Errand” to bolster the “true church” in the New World Wilderness. Rooted in biblical narratives and apocalyptic expectation, it was a colonial process that further entangled the native peoples in a cosmic struggle where they were conceived of as a diabolic adversary to be assimilated, or else subdued, in the necessary preparation for the coming of Christ's millennial kingdom.<sup>300</sup>

The restructuring of post-war regional power coincided with the codification of Puritan orthodoxy, which emboldened a sacred narrative of struggle and conquest that framed the major “Indian policies” that followed. The first New England synod gathered in Newtowne (Cambridge), in September 1637.<sup>301</sup> Called in response to the Antinomian Controversy, the gathering not only took measures to curtail further “radical and lay creativity” in the churches, but also “succeeded in

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299. Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 254-61; Neal Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans, and the Making of New England, 1500-1643* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 236-39.

300. Charles Segal and David Stineback, eds., *Puritans, Indians & Manifest Destiny* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1977), 111-12; Steven D. Neuwirth, “The Images of Place: Puritans, Indians, and the Religious Significance of the New England Frontier,” *American Art Journal* 18, no. 2 (1986): 51. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1594449>.

301. David D. Hall, *The Puritans: A Transatlantic History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 321-22; Stanley Perkins, “Puritan Movements Toward Centralization in Church Government 1630-1730: Tensions and Contentions Between Presbyterians and Congregationalists,” *Graduate Student Theses* (Missoula: University of Montana, 1974), iv. <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd/5580>. A “synod” was a general assembly that invited representatives from the various congregations to discuss matters of common concern, such as issues of doctrine or administration.

instituting a recognizable, relatively coherent version of godly, state-supported Christianity” in the Massachusetts Bay and Connecticut colonies.<sup>302</sup> The synod concluded just as the war ended in Pequot defeat; an indisputable sign of God's favor that provided a renewed sense of covenant and confidence for the New England elect. For leading Puritan ideologues, such as John Cotton, the institutionalization of Puritan orthodoxy was nothing short of the fulfillment of eschatological promise. In triumph, he proclaimed, the saints “shall [now] reigne in the Church, and have the Judicature and Government of the Church together with these Angells or Messengers, and Ministers of God, that have the keys in their hands, they shall execute spirituall Judgement according to the will of Christ, for a thousand yeares.”<sup>303</sup>

Reinforced by this renewed sense of sacred confidence, the victorious Puritans of Massachusetts Bay established themselves as the dominant military power in the region. Having secured the Connecticut River Valley, they placed a series of provisions on their tribal allies to further consolidate their authority along the southern frontier.<sup>304</sup> The most consequential provision of 'The Hartford Treaty' stipulated that the Mohegan, Niantic, and Narragansett sachems were obligated “to submit all inter-tribal conflicts to the English and abide by their decisions,” thereby establishing permanent colonial dominance over native affairs across southern New England.<sup>305</sup> Additionally, tribes seeking to maintain friendly relations were obligated to deliver the heads and hands of any Pequot warrior who sought refuge among them to colonial authorities and former tributaries were

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302. Michael P. Winship, *Making Heretics: Militant Protestantism and Free Grace in Massachusetts, 1636-1641* (New Brunswick: Princeton University Press, 2002), 232; Vincent Stine, “A Church-State Partnership in Defense of the Puritan National Covenant,” *Journal of Church and State* 56, no. 3 (2014): 493-94. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23923112>.

303. John Cotton, *The Churches Resurrection, or the Opening of the Fifth and sixth verses of the 20th Chap. of the Revelation* (London: Printed by R. O. & G. D. for Henry Overton, 1642), 6.

304. Jenny Hale Pulsipher, *Subjects unto the Same King: Indians, English, and the Contest for Authority in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 22-24.

305. Cave, *The Pequot War*, 162-63; Segal and Stineback, *Puritans, Indians & Manifest Destiny*, 111-12; Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 222-25.

required to pay their annual wampum tribute to Boston as compensation for the war effort.<sup>306</sup> And lastly, captive Pequots were treated as spoils of war and divided between tribal allies or else forced into colonial servitude.

### EARLY NATIVE SERVITUDE

The self-designation as God's covenant people allowed the Puritans to cite sacred agency and biblical precedence in the further subjugation of Pequot war captives, establishing the precedence for the later introduction of slavery to the New England colonies. From the founding of Massachusetts Bay, indentured servitude existed as a class of unfree laborers made up by those who were either bound to wealthy emigrant families by contract, exchanged their services as compensation for transatlantic passage, or else, to a lesser extent, were convicted criminals forced to toil as part of their sentence.<sup>307</sup> It began as a fairly informal system that only became codified following the Pequot War with the passage of *The Code of Fundamentals, or Body of Liberties of the Massachusetts Colony in New England* (1641). The document regulated temporary servitude and, for the first time, outlined conditions that allowed for permanent enslavement. Using Old Testament Mosaic justification as legal basis, it stipulated that “[t]here shall never be any bond slaverie villinage or Captivitie amongst us, unles it be lawfull Captives taken in just warres, [and] these shall have all the liberties and Christian usages which the law of god established in Israell concerning such persons doeth morally require.”<sup>308</sup>

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306. Andrew Lipman, “‘A Meanes to Knitt Them Together’: The Exchange of Body Parts in the Pequot War.” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 65, no. 1 (2008): 20. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25096768>; Vaughan, “Pequots and Puritans;,” 261-62.

307. Joseph A. Conforti, *Saints and Strangers: New England in British America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 69-71; Margaret Ellen Newell, *Brethren By Nature: New England Indians, Colonists, and the Origins of American Slavery* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2015), 72-73.

308. G.E. Thomas, “Puritans, Indians, and the Concept of Race,” *The New England Quarterly* 48, no. 1 (1975): 25-26. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/364910>; S. Whitmore, *Bibliographical Sketch of the Laws of Massachusetts Colony: From 1630 to 1686* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1890), 53. <https://archive.org/details/bibliographical00whit>.

The inclusion of this statute defined the legal status of the hundreds of Pequot captives claimed as spoils during the “just warre” to “[pull] downe the Kingdome of Anti-Christ” in the Connecticut River Valley.<sup>309</sup> Not including those who were turned over to native allies as tribute, scholars estimate that over three-hundred Pequots were taken captive between 1636 and 1638. The majority of men were sent to Barbados, Bermuda, or the short lived Puritan slave colony of Providence Island, where they were forced to toil on sugar plantations. Women and children were distributed among the Massachusetts, Plymouth, and Connecticut colonies to live among English families as domestic servants or laborers.<sup>310</sup>

Removed from their traditional societies and living in close proximity to Puritan families, it is from these bonded Pequots that some of the earliest attempts at religious conversion took place. *New England's First Fruits*, an early promotional tract to highlight the progress of colonial evangelism among the natives, included the personal stories of several captive converts. “[C]onvinced of their sinful and miserable Estates, and affected with the sense of God's displeasure,” the authors claimed that “the Indians Children, Boyes and Girles we have received in our houses, who are long since civilized, and in subjection to us, [are beginning] to understand in their measure, the grounds of the Christian Religion.”<sup>311</sup> These accounts offered a cautiously optimistic assessment of these initial religious conversions. For many Puritans, even these modest examples of missionary progress justified the captivity of native peoples. Cultural isolation within English households, it was argued, provided the most effective means for preparing them “for tangible progress toward salvation, moral reformation, and civility.”<sup>312</sup>

309. Newell, *Brethren By Nature*, 6; Edward Johnson., *Johnson's Wonder-working providence, 1628-1651*, edited by J. Franklin Jameson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), 30.  
<http://library.si.edu/digital-library/book/johnsonswonderw00john>.

310. Newell, *Brethren By Nature*, 56-57; Michael L. Fickes, “‘They could Not Endure that Yoke’: The Captivity of Pequot Women and Children after the War of 1637,” *New England Quarterly* 73, no. 1 (2000): 61.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/366745>;

311. *New England's First Fruits: With Divers Other Special Matters Concerning that Country* (London: Printed by R.O. & G.D., 1643; reprint, New York: Printed for Joseph Sabin, 1865), 6-7.

312. Newell, *Brethren By Nature*, 87.

From the beginning, a determined cultural resistance to this forced Christianization existed. The murder of Wequash, a minor Pequot sachem who pledged his allegiance to the English, provides one of the more dramatic examples. After living among the English and growing “greatly in his knowledge of Christ,” the native convert began “instructing [neighboring tribes] in the knowledge of the true God” and called upon them to repent for their “sinnes and wickednesse.” Despite the fact that Wequash won over few, if any, converts, that the threat of his missionary efforts “did so disturb the Devill” that the angered deity directed native conspirators to poison the preacher.<sup>313</sup> Thomas Shepard later proclaimed Wequash to be the first Christian native martyr.<sup>314</sup>

Among the bonded Pequots, particularly young males, there was also more subtle forms of resistance to religious indoctrination. According to colonial records, some claimed to see visions of Hobbomock while in captivity. John Winthrop, himself, remarked on this phenomenon, noting how his own native servants “were much frightened by Hobbomock (as they call the devil) appearing to them in diverse shapes, and persuading them to forsake the English, and not to come [to] assemblies, nor to learn to read.”<sup>315</sup> As spiritual communion with this powerful native deity featured prominently in Algonquian male puberty rites, it stands to reason that these visionary dreams had a powerful psychological effect on those who experienced them. As historian Margaret Ellen Newell explains,

Visions regarding Hobbomock might therefore have signaled a form of cultural resistance to Christianity and psychological regrouping on the captives' part, or the emergence of new leaders within the captive community, or even the influence of non-captive Indians and visitors from nearby communities, since sources allude to pressures from free Indians to resist Christianization.<sup>316</sup>

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313. *New England's First Fruits*, 12-13.

314. Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana: or, The ecclesiastical history of New-England, from its first planting in the year 1620. unto the year of Our Lord, 1698, Volume VII* (London: Printed for Thomas Parkhurst, 1702; digital edition by Internet Archive), 43. <https://archive.org/details/magnaliachristia00math/>.

315. John Winthrop, *The History of New England From 1630 to 1649, I*, edited by John Savage (Boston: Phelps & Farnham, 1825), 305.

316. Newell, *Brethren by Nature*, 91.

Diabolically-inspired or not, the “prideful and insolent nature” of the Pequots persisted in captivity. Court records indicate that insubordination and escape from captivity were fairly widespread. As John Mason noted, “[t]he Captives we took [...] whom we divided, intending to keep them as Servants, but they could not endure that Yoke; few of them continuing any considerable time with their masters.”<sup>317</sup> John Winthrop corroborates this claim, making note of Pequot captive runaways who “were brought [back to Boston] by the Indians our neighbors, and [...] branded on the shoulder.”<sup>318</sup> For those who were successful in evading their captors, most sought refuge among sympathetic tribes to the south where they were able “to hide themselves among the numerous Pequots already living with local Indian groups, who had received the tributaries and adoptees in payment for assisting colonial authorities during the war.”<sup>319</sup> In competition for colonial favor, local sachems accused rivals of harboring runaways while denying their own culpability. The Narragansett sachem Miantonomo, in particular, was repeatedly accused of “allureing harbouring and withholding sevall Pecott captives fled from the English, and making proud and insolent returnes when they were redemanded.”<sup>320</sup>

Despite continued troubles, the Puritan colonies capitalized on Pequot ruin for their own material benefit. War captives helped alleviate the demand for laborers with women, in particular, valued as domestic workers during a time where there was a rising scarcity of English migrants to perform “housewifery duties.”<sup>321</sup> Likewise, the exchange of captured warriors to Bermuda and the West Indies allowed for the coastal settlements to enter into the Atlantic trading system. However, in

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317. John Mason, *A Brief History of the Pequot War: Especially Of the Memorable Taking of their Fort at Mystick in Connecticut*, Paul Royster, ed., (Boston: Printed by S. Kneeland & T. Green, 1736; reprinted by Electronic Texts in American Studies, 2007), 17. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/etas/42>.

318. John Winthrop, James Savage, et al., eds., *The Journal of John Winthrop, 1630-1649* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 225.

319. Fickes, “They could Not Endure that Yoke,” 75.

320. New Plymouth Colony, David Pulsifer, ed., *Records of the colony of New Plymouth in New England, Vol. IX* (Boston: Press of William White, 1859), 50. <https://archive.org/details/recordsofcolonyo0910newp/mode/2up>.

321. Fickes, “They could Not Endure that Yoke,” 63-64. According to Fickes, “[b]ased on his analysis of forty-six lists of passengers bound for New England between 1620 and 1638, [it is] estimated that the percentage of women among the earliest generation of New England immigrants was about 38.8 percent. And among the migrating servant population, women were even scarcer.”

recognizing the exploitation of Pequots to further colonial labor and exchange needs, colonial historians have largely downplayed the biblical mandates that justified their captivity. Old Testament precedents not only “resolved the moral ambiguities” and provided a legalistic framework in support of forced servitude, as recent scholars have argued.<sup>322</sup> They also shaped the Puritan-envisioned sacred drama that cast the Pequot peoples as “Amalekites,” the accursed heathen tribe of the Old Testament who had been seduced by the Devil into waging war against the Israelites in the Wilderness. In drawing these parallels, military and legal conduct was shaped by God's demands of his chosen people to “put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.”<sup>323</sup> Pequot enslavement was a partial fulfillment of these providential dictates, with Christian conversion and English acculturation providing a means of to further suppress tribal identity, kinship ties, and historical memory.

Large scale conflicts were avoided in the decades following the decisive victory over the Pequots. However, cosmic struggle narratives and biblical justification both continued to be invoked in an effort to advocate for further “just warres” against the powerful Narragansett tribe. Writing to John Winthrop in 1645, Emmanuel Downing, his brother-in-law and a spokesmen for Massachusetts Bay, pressed for “warr with the Narraganset” that would prove to be “verie considerable to this plantation [in terms of] gaynefull pillage.” Justified as a means to “suffer them to maynteyne the worship of the devill,” Downing argued that “[i]f upon a Just warre the lord should deliver them into our hands, wee might easily have men, woemen and Children enough to exchange for Moores.” Seeing prosperity in the burgeoning slave trade, Downing argued that the New England colonies would not be able to remain competitive within the transatlantic market “untill we gett into a stock of slaves suffitient to doe all our busines.”<sup>324</sup> Although this envisioned crusade went unfilled, such diabolic portrayal continued to

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322. Newell, *Brethren by Nature*, 36, 53-54.

323. Deuteronomy 25:19, *The 1599 Geneva Bible* (White Hall, WV: Tollege Press, 2010).

324. Andrea Robertson Cremer, “Possession: Indian Bodies, Cultural Control, and Colonialism in the Pequot War,” *Early American Studies* 6, no. 2 (Fall 2008): 344-45. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23546576>; Emmanuel Downing to John Winthrop, August 1645, in John Winthrop, W. Still, et al., eds., *The Winthrop Papers, Volume V: 1645-1649* (Boston: The Massachusetts Historical Society, 1949), 38-39.

frame the tense relations with – and, occasionally, swift actions taken against – the remaining southern New England tribes as frontier expansion invited increasingly antagonistic relations.

### A PERVASIVE CULTURE OF FEAR

The Pequot War may have realigned New England's power dynamics in colonial favor, but it failed to bring about a secured peace along the southern frontier. Instead the post-war period ushered in a new wave of instability, antagonizing relations between the dominant Narragansett and Mohegan confederations and fueling fears of (diabolically-inspired) native conspiracies throughout these uncertain years. Both tribal confederations had allied themselves with the Puritan colonies during the conflict. However, upon its conclusion they found themselves in hostile competition to assert control over former Pequot lands, refugees, and tributaries. Rapid colonial expansion along the Connecticut River Valley only served to heighten these regional tensions, which in turn fueled frontier anxieties and cosmic-based fears among those outlying colonial religionists who considered themselves to be living at the edge of the Devil's unconquered dominion.<sup>325</sup>

The volatile situation along the southern frontier was further compounded by rumors of surviving Pequots regrouping to plot attacks against these outlying English settlements. Writing to John Winthrop in August 1637, Israel Stoughton warned that “we and our friends will suffer much by the scattered wretches, if they be not closely followed.”<sup>326</sup> Philip Vincent, a chronicler of the Pequot War, shared this foreboding sentiment, arguing, “[i]t is not good to give breathing to a beaten enemy,

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325. Pulsipher, *Subjects unto the Same King*, 24-27; Katherine A. Grandjean, “The Long Wake of the Pequot War,” *Early American Studies* 9, no. 2 (2011): 390-91. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23547653>; Richard S. Ross, *Before Salem: Witch Hunting in the Connecticut River Valley, 1647-1663* (New York: McFarland & Company, 2017), 68. As Ross notes, “because of their relationship to Satan, [the resident native tribes] were a constant destabilizing force” for Puritan settlements along the Connecticut frontier and a “reminder of the Devil and his works that operated as a continuing psychological weight on the settlers as they attempted to come to terms with a variety of other life and death issues affecting their communities.”

326. Israel Stoughton to John Winthrop, August 9, 1637, in Allyn B. Forbes et al., eds., *The Winthrop Papers, Volume IV: 1638-1644* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1929-92), 479.

lest he returne armed if not with greater puissance, yet with greater despight and revenge.”<sup>327</sup> Reports from the frontier indicated that bands of Pequots were, indeed, planting in their old territories with the knowledge of the Mohegans and Narragansetts. An attack by a band of Pequot warriors on two English trading vessels, in May 1639 – which, according to Roger Williams, was known (and tacitly supported) by the Narragansett sachem Miantonomo – only served to heighten these concerns.<sup>328</sup> The Pequot threat to colonial interests may have been temporarily subdued by their war defeat, but, as John Mason later wrote, “the devill hath [since] taught [them] to worke under ground” through hidden channels across the region.<sup>329</sup>

It was this post-war climate of fear and uncertainty that compelled the formation of the United Colonies of New England, in May 1643. “When Gods Israel hath to doe with many potent, subtil, most wicked and desperate enemies,” preached William Hooke, of Taunton, it became necessary “to enter into a covenant of mutuall help and assistance [in order to not be] vanquished.”<sup>330</sup> The confederation brought together the “godly colonies” of Massachusetts Bay, New Plymouth, Connecticut, and New Haven for the purposes of diplomacy, mutual defense, and “to advance the Kingdome of our Lord Jesus Christ [and] enjoy the liberties of the Gospell in puritie with peace.”<sup>331</sup> Although primarily founded for purposes of regional security, the United Colonies also “represented an effort to redefine Puritan identity in New England.” As Neil Salisbury explains,

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327. Philip Vincent, Paul Royster, ed., *A True Relation of the Late Battell fought in New England, between the English, and the Salvages: With the present state of things there* (London: Printed by M. P. for Nathanael Butter and Iohn Bellamie, 1637; digital reprint by Electronic Texts in American Studies, 2007), 15. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/etas/35/>.

328. James A. Warren, *God, War, and Providence: The Epic Struggle of Roger Williams and the Narragansett Indians against the Puritans of New England* (New York: Scribner Publishing, 2008), 105-06; Williams to Winthrop, Providence, April 16, 1638, and Williams to Winthrop, Providence, May 9, 1639, in John Russell Bartlett, ed., *Letters of Roger Williams, 1632-1682* (Providence: The Narragansett Club, 1874), 92, 133. <https://archive.org/details/lettersofrogerwi00will>.

329. John Mason to John Allyn, July 4, 1669, Connecticut Archives, Yale Indian Papers Project, vol. 1, doc. 12, Connecticut State Library, Hartford. <http://findit.library.yale.edu/yipp/catalog/digcoll:2564370>.

330. William Hooke, *New-Englands Sence, of Old-England and Irelands Sorrowes a Sermon Preached Upon a Day of Generall Humiliation in the Churches of New-England* (London, 1645), 111. <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/A44327.0001.001>.

331. Warren, *God, War, and Providence*, 97-98; Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, 265-66; “Articles of Confederation,” in *Records of the colony of New Plymouth of New England, Vol. IX*, 3.

Whatever their differences, the four member colonies were all governed by men who had passed mutually acceptable tests for sainthood and by principles that carefully defined and enforced orthodoxy in religious, political, and social practice. The Commission was, in short, the closest approximation to a “City upon a hill” that could be obtained in a rapidly expanding society of independent farmers.<sup>332</sup>

The Puritan “Errand” had entered a new phase, consolidated and politicized through the United Colonies, as it continued to provide biblical justification for further expansion and settlement across the southern frontier (ie, “Indian country”). In claiming these contested tracts of land as a sacred “Inheritance,” aggressive colonial expansion invited continued challenges to stability in the region. The Narragansetts, in particular, grew increasingly discontent after having failed to secure a greater claim in Pequot spoils following the war as the rival Mohegan tribe enjoyed greater favor with colonial authorities. By the early 1640s, persistent rumors of a pan-Indian conspiracy began to circulate. The threat of coordinated inter-tribal plots against the colonies was made clear in the founding articles of the commission, where it was claimed that “the Natives [who] have formerly committed sondry insolences and outrages [upon the English] have of late combined themselves against us.”<sup>333</sup>

Isolated native transgressions combined with a general frontier paranoia as the threat of renewed military conflict loomed heavily during this period, all of which was framed by the dual narrative of sacred agency and cosmic struggle in the Puritan mind. According to native informants, Miantonomo had rallied tribal allies against the English by proclaiming that “with [their] Sithes [they] cut downe the grass, and with axes fell the trees their Cowes & horses eat the grass, and their hoggs spoyle our Clambanks, [and soon the native peoples] Shall be starved.”<sup>334</sup> Fearful authorities, in turn,

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332. Neal Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans, and the Making of New England, 1500-1643* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 233-34.

333. Pulsipher, *Subjects unto the Same King*, 24-27; Warren, *God, War, and Providence*, 116; “Articles of Confederation,” in *Records of the colony of New Plymouth of New England, Vol. IX*, 3.

334. Michael Leroy Oberg, *Dominion & Civility: English Imperialism & Native America, 1585-1685* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 117-18; Lion Gardiner, “Relation of the Pequot Warres,” *Early American Studies* 9, no. 2 (2011): 484. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23547657>.

accused the Narragansett leader of “treacherous plots [to] engage all the Indians at once to cutt off[f] the whole body of the English in these parts.”<sup>335</sup> In fact, the assassination of Wequash, the native Christian missionary, was considered to be the first act of war, “which intended the destruction of all the English, and of their Indian allies.”<sup>336</sup> However, rather than risk open conflict with the formidable Narragansett tribe, responsibility for executing the troublesome sachem was given to the Mohegans after he was captured in a failed raid on their territory, in August 1643.<sup>337</sup>

Ninigret, the new grand sachem, vowed revenge and was believed to be fomenting a renewed pan-Indian alliance against the Mohegans and their Puritans allies. There were even rumors that the Dutch colonists of New Amsterdam had been supplying arms for the mounting war effort. Despite clearly stated material and inter-tribal grievances, the continued tension with the Narragansetts was understood to be the work of “Sathan [who intends to] stir up and combyne many of his Instruments against the Churches of Christ,” according to a United Colonies commission.<sup>338</sup> When questioned by colonial authorities in early 1645, the fiery young sachem threatened to “lay the English cattell on heapes as heigh as their houses [and vowed] that no English should stir out of his doore to pisse” without being killed if they persisted in their support of the rival Mohegan tribe.<sup>339</sup> Later, in 1650, an armed expedition was sent to confront the ongoing belligerence of the Narragansett leadership. However, open conflict was narrowly avoided through the diplomatic efforts of Roger Williams.

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335. Julie Fisher and David Silverman, *Ninigret, Sachem of the Niantics and Narragansetts: Diplomacy, War, and the Balance of Power in Seventeenth-Century New England and Indian Country* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), 52; Warren, *God, War, and Providence*, 48-50; “Acts of the Commissioners of the United Colonies,” in *Records of the colony of New Plymouth, Vol. IX*, 10; “

336. Edward Atwater, *History of the Colony of New Haven to its Absorption into Connecticut* (Meriden, CT: Journal Publishing Company, 1902), 344.

337. Fisher and Silverman, *Ninigret, Sachem of the Niantics and Narragansetts*, 118-19.

338. Peter Carroll, *Puritanism and the Wilderness: The Intellectual Significance of the New England Frontier, 1629-1700* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 78; “A Declaration of former passages [...] betwixt the English and the Narrohiggansetts,” in David Pulsifer, ed., *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth, in New England: Acts of the Commissioners of the United Colonies of New England, Volume I* (Boston: Printed by William White, 1859), 55-56.

339. Francis J. Bremer, *Building a New Jerusalem: John Davenport, a Puritan in Three Worlds* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 246-48; “Acts of the Commissioners,” in *Records of the colony of New Plymouth, Vol. IX*, 54.

Frustrated commissioners renewed attempts to have Ninigret apprehended four years later, only to discover that he and his men had escaped into the swamps. Taking advantage of the known Puritan fear of such “dark, devilish places,” he avoided capture once again.<sup>340</sup>

The more closely allied Mohegans posed their own challenges to colonial security, particularly against the newly established Connecticut River Valley settlements. In 1646, the Mohegan sachem Uncas launched a violent campaign of intimidation against the town of New London. A raiding party of three-hundred warriors laid siege to the plantation and harassed former native tributaries who took refuge among the English, resulting in the abduction of native guest-residents and destruction of their wigwams. English colonists also fell victim to the hostilities as houses were pillaged, crops were stolen, and cattle were driven away. Despite Uncas' pleas of justification to a United Colonies commission, the raid was meant to intimidate the new settlement and assert Mohegan dominance in the area.<sup>341</sup> That same year a plot was uncovered in Hartford, where a native assassin had been hired by Sequassen, a lesser sachem of the river valley, to murder several prominent town magistrates.<sup>342</sup>

Directly corresponding with these mounting challenges were renewed fears of the dark supernatural forces associated with the Algonquian peoples that threatened to undermine the fledgling Christian presence along the frontier. In September 1639, Reverend Ephraim Huit, of Windsor, preached of the diabolic nature of the surrounding natives, who he deemed to be in the service of “the devil” and “an enemy to the holy colony.” In the broader cosmic struggle, these outlying Puritan

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340. Fisher and Silverman, *Ninigret, Sachem of the Niantics and Narragansetts*, 71-73, 80-81; Warren, *God, War, and Providence*, 177-85.

341. Walter Woodward, *Prospero's America: John Winthrop Jr., Alchemy, and the Creation of New England Culture, 1606-1676* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 115-18; “Petition of the Inhabitants of New London to the Commissioners of the United Colonies, September 15, 1646,” in Allyn B. Forbes et al., eds., *The Winthrop Papers, Volume V* (Boston: The Massachusetts Historical Society, 1947), 111.

342. Fisher and Silverman, *Ninigret, Sachem of the Niantics and Narragansetts*, 69-70; Benjamin Trumbull, *A complete history of Connecticut, civil and ecclesiastical, from the emigration of its first planters from England* (Hartford: Hudson & Goodwin, 1797). 161. <https://archive.org/details/completehistoryo97trum/mode/2up/search/haynes>.

communities had been provocatively established on the edge of the Devil's dominion and were considered to be especially vulnerable to diabolic assault and corruption. John Warham, another local Puritan minister, elaborated on this theme the following year. In a sermon based around Christ's temptation by the Devil in the Wilderness, he warned his frontier congregants, “[the] devil is the great tempter of the world [...] unto the men of the earth; for the devil is amongst thee now, he doth as well tempt to sin as raise it [as he carries] irrecoverable hatred against the body of Christ [and] community of saints.”<sup>343</sup> The preaching of Huit and Warham reinforced anxieties regarding the precariousness of frontier life and a generalized fear of the surrounding unknown. Doubly threatened by regional tensions with the natives and what was believed to be a higher concentration of malevolent forces, it was among these outlying Puritan settlements that New England's earliest witch panics took place.

A general colonial belief in witchcraft can be traced to the cultural-religious ideology of the Reformed Anglo-Protestant traditions that identified its alleged practice as “a wicked Arte, serving for the working of wonders, by the assistance of the Devil, so farre forth as God shall in justice permit.” More tangibly, it served as “the most conspicuous manifestation of Satan's presence” which offered proof of his existence and “a demonstration of his substantial powers.”<sup>344</sup> The primary difference between this Reformed conception of witchcraft and pre-modern witch-beliefs was in its heretical character, from which a criminal designation was applied. Based upon an allegiance with Devil, formalized in a pact, “[w]itchcraft had become a Christian heresy, the greatest of all sins, because it

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343. Ross, *Before Salem: Witch Hunting in the Connecticut River Valley*, 8; Philip F. Gura, *A Glimpse of Zion's Glory: Puritan Radicalism in New England, 1620-1660* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1984), 132. As Gura notes, Ephraim Huit preached a number of apocalyptic sermons during this period that were published as *The Whole Prophecie of Daniel explained* (1644); Douglas H. Shepard, “The Wolcott Shorthand Notebook Transcribed,” *PhD dissertation* (Ames, IA: State University of Iowa, 1957) 332, 335. <http://hdl.handle.net/11134/40002:102093>.

344. Richard Weisman, “Witchcraft and Puritan Beliefs,” in Elaine G. Breslaw (ed.), *Witches of the Atlantic World* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 80-81; William Perkins, *A discourse of the damned art of witchcraft so farre forth as it is revealed in the Scriptures, and manifest by true experience* (Cambridge: Printed by Cantrel Legge, 1610; digital reprint by Text Creation Partnership: Early English Books Online, 2011), 3-4. <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/A09402.0001.001>.

involved the renunciation of God and deliberate adherence to his greatest enemy.” Following Old Testament precedent, it was a crime that was punishable by death in all of the New England colonies.<sup>345</sup>

From the late 1640s through the 1660s, thirty-five Connecticut and New Haven colonists (mostly women) stood trial for the crime of witchcraft, resulting in eleven executions.<sup>346</sup> Of particular interest to this study is the case of Elizabeth Godman, a New Haven woman who had the dubious distinction of being one of the few colonists to stand trial for witchcraft on multiple occasions. Godman, a widow, was said to have exhibited eccentric public behavior that included communicating with unseen figures and unprovoked outbursts. During her first trial, in August 1653, she was accused of bewitching members of the community and, according to one neighbor, boasting that “Hobbomocke was her husband.”<sup>347</sup> A similar theme surrounds the case of Mary Staples, of Fairfield, who was suspected of witchcraft the following year. Stories circulated that a native powwow had visited Staples and gifted her certain enchanted items (“two little things brighter than the light of day [...] Indian gods, as the Indians call them”) with promises that she would become wealthy if she kept them in her possession.<sup>348</sup>

Regardless of the veracity of these accounts, the accusations betray the sense of heightened anxieties during this period. For outlying colonial religionists, close proximity to the “ritual conjurations” of the surrounding natives exposed them to greater diabolic influence.<sup>349</sup> In the

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345. Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Penguin Books, 1971), 521; James Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness: Witchcraft in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 75-79; David D. Hall, *Witch-Hunting in Seventeenth-Century New England* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 9-12; Richard Godbeer, *The Devil's Dominion: Magic and Religion in Early New England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 156-60; Elaine G. Breslaw, *Tituba, Reluctant Witch of Salem: Devilish Indians and Puritan Fantasies* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 108.

346. Cynthia Wolfe Boynton, *Connecticut Witch Trials: The First Panic in the New World* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2014), 115-17; Woodward, *Prospero's America*, 210.

347. Ross, *Before Salem: Witch Hunting in the Connecticut River Valley*, 67, 156-64; Charles J. Hoadly, ed., *Records of the Colony or Jurisdiction of New Haven, Volume II* (Hartford: Case, Lockwood and Company, 1858), 31. <https://archive.org/details/recordscolonyor01congog/page/n14/mode/2up>.

348. Ross, *Before Salem: Witch Hunting in the Connecticut River Valley*, 188-90; Hall, *Witch-Hunting in Seventeenth-Century New England*, 74-86; Hoadly, *Records of the Colony, Volume II*, 80.

349. Roy Harvey Pearce, *Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1953), 21-22.

Algonquian spiritual belief system, the deity Hobbomock was believed to enter the bodies of certain individuals as a guardian or familiar, granting supernatural powers in exchange for their devotion. According to native informants, it was a spiritual communion that most often took place at night and within one's dreams. Precisely the time and state when Puritans felt themselves to be at their most vulnerable.<sup>350</sup> The parallels shared with the English conception of witchcraft are obvious; and, for devout colonial religionists, it was believed that the more spiritually deficient (ie, “transgressive women”) settlers among them were particularly susceptible to this damning influence, which added an internal dimension to the native threat along the frontier.<sup>351</sup>

The nearly forty-year period between New England's two major “Indian wars” saw the expansion and consolidation of Puritan hegemony across southern New England, but the settlers were never able to fully secure peace along the frontier. The displacement of the Pequots and continued expansion into native territories instigated regional tensions that, at times, escalated hostilities and threatened to drag the colonies into open warfare once again. Edward Johnson expresses the sense of uncertainty and crisis felt by many devout Puritans during these years, lamenting,

Lord, hast thou not said, *Ask of me, and I will give thee the Heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost ends of the earth for thy possession*; and now Lord, are not these the Churches of Christ which thou hast planted for his possession[?] Then why do the Heathen rage [...] seeing the time of the Lords arising to have mercy upon Sion is come, yea his appointed time is at hand[?]<sup>352</sup>

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350. Godbeer, *The Devil's Dominion*, 192; Philip Goodwin, *The Mystery of Dreames, Historically Discoursed; or A treatise...* (London: Printed by A.M. for Francis Tyton, 1658; reprinted by Early English Books Online Text Creation Partnership, 2011), 122, 126. <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/A85424.0001.001>. As the English Puritan minister Philip Goodwin explained, “[w]hen he [the Devil] would fain so [...] catch these choice peeces the precious Saints of God, he subtilly sets upon them in the night, as his fittest time wherein to tempt and take them.”
351. Ross, *Before Salem: Witch Hunting in the Connecticut River Valley*, 66-68, 189. Ross cites the testimony evidence of the Elizabeth Godman and Mary Shaples trials, which took place during a period of heightened frontier anxieties, to note that “[t]he colonists understood the battle against Satan [as] being waged on two fronts, the invisible world of the witches and the visible world of his agents, the Indians.”
352. Edward Johnson and J. Franklin Jameson, ed., *Johnson's Wonder-Working Providence, 1628-1651* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910). 239.

The increasingly tense Anglo-Indian relations of the period were further complicated by underlying religious beliefs and popular superstitions, which added a fearful supernatural dimension to the sense of insecurity, peril, and persecution felt by many who sought to advance the “true church” into the far reaches of the unconquered Wilderness. For the beleaguered saints, frontier life offered a precarious existence in which the external security threats of the surrounding native tribes were reinforced by diabolic intrigues from within their communities and the guiding hand of God was always in question. However, they were not alone in taking precautions against this cosmic adversity as even the more established coastal settlements were compelled to act against the ever-present threat of the Devil and his worldly servants through policies of restriction and segregation.

#### THE ENFORCEMENT OF CIVILITY

The prophetic vision of leading Puritan ideologues called for the consolidation of the “rule of saints” within the confines of the “godly colonies” of New England.<sup>353</sup> As such, the political, economic, and social development of these settlements that was systematized during the 1640 to 1660s included the codification of laws that restricted the cultural autonomy and religious liberties of the native tribes that resided within Puritan jurisdiction. With the guiding assumption that “Puritan laws, based on the word of God and English experience, should prevail over un-Christian and un-civilized native customs,” resident Algonquian peoples were expected to abide by the Ten Commandments, observe the Sabbath, and refrain from “acts of blasphemy.”<sup>354</sup> Though were never fully assimilated by English society, the integration of individual natives (and later, “Praying Towns”) into the colonial legal system

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353. Vincent Stine, “A Church-State Partnership in Defense of the Puritan National Covenant,” *Journal of Church and State* 56, no. 3 (2014): 490-92. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23923112>.

354. Violet Galante, “Interpreting the Other: Natives, Missionaries, and Colonial Authority In New England, 1643-1675,” *Master's thesis* (Norfolk, VA: Old Dominion University, 2019), 58-59. [https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/history\\_etds/22](https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/history_etds/22); Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, 126-27; Vaughan, *New England Frontier*, 186.

served to “civilize the heathen” by imparting notions of Christian morality upon this minority population. On a broader cosmic level, it also played a defensive purpose by restricting the threat of “native diabolism” – that is, traditional Algonquian spiritual practices – within what was considered to be the sacred space of the biblical commonwealth.<sup>355</sup>

The expansion of intercultural authority also supported the prophetic and redemptive vision of the Errand into the Wilderness. In response to the tumultuous civil wars in England, millenarian expectations were heightened on both sides of the Atlantic – which, not only inspired a renewed missionary impulse to bring the Christian gospel to the Algonquian peoples, but also a responsibility to ensure their civil obedience under Scripture-based law.<sup>356</sup> Among the most vocal proponents of this chiliastic belief was John Eliot, the Puritan “apostle to the Indians,” who envisioned the civil polity of the purified Christian commonwealth as a means to

bring down [upon] all people, [the rule of] Institutions, Laws, and Directions of the Word of God; not only in Church-Government and Administrations, but also in the Government and Administration of all affairs in the Common-wealth. And then Christ reigneth, when all things among men, are done by the direction of the word of his mouth: his Kingdom is then come amongst us, when his will is done on earth, as it is done in heaven.<sup>357</sup>

From the earliest days of settlement laws regulated the purchase of tribal lands and prohibited the trade in firearms and “strong liquors” with native peoples. However, it was only after the Pequot

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355. Ross, *Witch-Hunting in the Connecticut River Valley*, 67-68.

356. John Eliot, *The Eliot Tracts: With Letters from John Eliot to Thomas Thorowgood and Richard Baxter*, ed. by John Royster, (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 260. In a letter to Oliver Cromwell, John Eliot declares, “The design of Christ in these daies is double, namely, First, To overthrow Antichrist by the Wars of the Lamb; and Secondly, To raise up His own Kingdom in the room of all Earthly Powers which He doth cast down [...] so the Word of Christ might rule all.”

357. John Eliot, *The Christian Commonwealth: or, The Civil Policy Of The Rising Kingdom of Jesus Christ*, ed. by John Royster, (London: Crown in Popes-Head-Alley, 1659; reprinted by Faculty Publications, University of Nebraska, 2007), iii. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libraryscience/19/>.

War that the intercultural reach of Puritan jurisdiction included matters specifically relating to Algonquian religiosity. In 1637, the Massachusetts General Court empowered towns to “restrain Indians from prophaning the Lords day.” Nearly a decade later, in 1646, a formal law was passed against “powwawing” within colonial boundaries, declaring “that no Indian shall at any time powwow, or perform outward worship to their false gods, or to the devil, in any part of our jurisdiction, whether they be such as dwell here, or shall come hither.” Similar statutes were passed soon after in the Plymouth and Connecticut colonies.<sup>358</sup> To further prevent “anti-Christian acts,” blasphemy laws were also strengthened and expanded to include resident natives. Accordingly,

any person within this Jurisdiction whether Christian or Pagan shall wittingly and willingly presume to Blaspheme the holy Name of God, Father, Son or Holy-Ghost, with direct, expresse, presumptuous, or high-handed blasphemy, either by willful or obstinate denying the true God, or his Creation, or Government of the world; or shall curse God in like manner, or reproach the holy Religion of God [...] or shall utter any other kinde of Blasphemy of the like nature & degree they shall be put to death.<sup>359</sup>

Corresponding with the legal suppression of traditional Algonquian spirituality and worship practices within Puritan jurisdiction were policies intended to discourage the adoption of native customs and cultural influences by outlying English settlers. With rapid colonial expansion it was feared that the lack of religious and civil guidance along the frontier would lead to the corrupting “Indianization” of these populations and lead them to a state of spiritual darkness. As William Hubbard decried, in the “scattering Plantations, many were contented to live without, yea, desirous to shake off

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358. Vaughan, *New England Frontier*, 189; Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, ed., *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England, Volume II, 1642-1649* (Boston: William White, 1853), 177; James Hammond Trumbull, ed., *The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut, Prior to the Union with New Haven Colony, May, 1665, Volume I* (Hartford: Brown & Parsons, 1850), 235; *The Book of the General Laws of the Inhabitants of the Jurisdiction of New-Plimouth, 1672-1685* (Boston: American Imprint Collection, 1942), 43-45.  
<https://www.loc.gov/item/2001696097/>.

359. William H. Whitmore, ed., *The Colonial Laws of Massachusetts, 1641-1672* (Boston: Boston: Rockwell & Churchill, 1889), 162-63.

all Yoake of Government, both sacred and civil,” and adopted “the Manners of the Indians they lived amongst.”<sup>360</sup> William Leverich, a Plymouth colony minister, shared these concerns as he denounced “the looser sort of English” along the frontier who were easily seduced by “one of the last but most pernicious plot[s] of the Devil to undermine all Religion, and introduce [...] Athiesme and profaneness” into their hearts.<sup>361</sup> To embrace such a “heathen state” was to court the influence of the Devil, whose presence was believed to be especially powerful outside the sacred confines of “civilized” Reformed Anglo-Protestant society.

Reports of “Indianization” became so alarming that, by the 1640s, John Cotton lobbied for a moratorium on further expansion, exhorting, “Let there then be no more Plantations erected in New England, where people professing Christianity shall live like Indians, without any solemn invocation on the name of God.”<sup>362</sup> To ensure clear lines of cultural demarcation each of the colonies passed laws to minimize informal contact and prevent close association. At a time when relations solidified between colonial officials and tribal leaders, informal contact between settlers and common natives became further restricted. The fur trade was one economic area where sustained contact was maintained, but it was highly regulated and limited to small number of licensed men. More general legal restrictions dictated that a “common person could not even trade with a Native American for corn or meat; rather, each town picked one man to carry out a communal exchange in agricultural or forest products.”<sup>363</sup>

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360. Conforti, *Saints and Strangers*, 13-14; William Hubbard, *A narrative of the troubles with the Indians in New-England, from the first planting thereof in the year 1607, to this present year 1677* (Boston: Printed by John Foster, 1677; digital reprint by Text Creation Partnership: Evan Early American Imprint Collection, 2011), 257. <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/N00171.0001.001>.

361. William Leverich to John Eliot, September 22, 1651, in Henry Whitfield, *Strength out of Weakness: or A Glorious Manifestation of the Further Progress of the Gospel Among the Indians in New England* (New York: Reprinted for Joseph Sabin, 1865), 31. <https://archive.org/details/cu31924028652224>.

362. Increase Mather, *An Earnest Exhortation to the Inhabitants of New-England to Hearken to the Voice of God in His Late and Present Dispensations As Ever They Desire to Escape Another Judgement, Seven Times Greater Than Any Thing Which as Yet Hath Been*, ed. by Reiner Smolinski, (Boston: Printed by John Foster, 1676; reprinted by Electronic Texts in American Studies, 1998), 30. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/etas/31/>.

363. William John Burton, *Hellish Fiends and Brutish Men: Amerindian-Euroamerican Interaction in Southern New England, An Interdisciplinary Analysis, 1600-1750*, PhD dissertation (Kent, OH: Kent State University, 1976). 82.

A greater concern to the colonial religious social order were those frontier settlers reported to have “gone native” and took up residence within tribal societies. One example involved William Baker, who lived among the Mohegans and, it was rumored, “turned Indian in nakedness and cutting of hair.” According to one report, he was “notorious in [his] villainry, and strongly affected by those wretches.” Baker was eventually apprehended and brought to Hartford where he was punished for engaging in “uncleanness with an Indian Squaw.” He received a public whipping and was exiled back to England.<sup>364</sup> In 1642, a formal law was passed in Connecticut that punished “persons [who], depart from amongst us, and take up their abode with the Indians, in a profane course of life.”<sup>365</sup>

For the Puritans, intercultural temptation represented the most egregious threat to one's spiritual welfare. As far as it is known by record, intercultural marriage was entirely nonexistent in New England society. Although technically legal, there are no legal documents or recorded accounts to indicate that any colonial official ever sanctioned such a union. It can be reasonably assumed that powerful religious and social stigmas prevented the devout from crossing that cultural boundary.<sup>366</sup> However, there are reports of renegade frontiersmen marrying into native societies. The previously mentioned Baker was rumored to have acquired two Mohegan wives, with one he shared a child. Decades later, in 1676, an English runaway named Joshua Tift was apprehended while pillaging a farm with a group of natives in the midst of King Philip's War. It was claimed that he “turned Indian, married one of the Indian Squaws, [and] renounced his Religion, Nation and natural parents.” His punishment was “the Death of a Traitor” by hanging and quartering.<sup>367</sup>

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364. Roger Williams to John Winthrop, October 26, 1637, in *The Winthrop Papers: Volume III, 1631-1637* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1863-92), 500-01.

365. James Axtell, *The European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 280.

366. Ann Marie Plane, *Colonial Intimacies: Indian Marriage in Early New England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 146.

367. Roger Williams, *The Complete Writings of Roger Williams, Volume 6: The Letters of Roger Williams* (New York: Russell & Russell Publishing, 1963), 84-85; William Hubbard, *The History of the Indian Wars in New England* (Roxbury, MA: Printed for W. Elliot Woodward, 1865), 162.

Informal sexual relations between the cultures were a far more common occurrence, with court records showing that these acts not only took place along the frontier but also within established coastal settlements where they were punished with equal severity. John Josselyn reported one such case from Massachusetts Bay where, in 1638, “an English woman suffer[ed] an Indian to have carnal knowledge of her.” Her punishment was one of public ridicule that required her to wear a piece of red cloth, cut in the shape of an native man, on her sleeve for twelve months.<sup>368</sup> The following year Mary Mendame, of Plymouth, was convicted of committing “an act of uncleanness” with a Wampanoag tribesman. Both were sentenced to public whipping, however, Mendame was further humiliated by being paraded through the town streets and then made to wear a badge identifying her crime. Failure to comply was punishable by a hot-iron branding on the cheek.<sup>369</sup>

During the earliest years of settlement, legal restrictions placed upon native inhabitants residing within colonial jurisdiction were in some ways similar to those expected of the English themselves. Christian law, supported by the King's patent, provided the basis for the system of jurisprudence that applied to all residents. Comparative to other colonial endeavors, native peoples enjoyed a relatively high degree of legal protection under New England authority. The Separatist and Puritan notion of Christian charity further instilled a sense of idealistic paternalism that translated into relatively fair treatment under the law. As historian Yasuhide Kawashima notes, “[a]lthough expansion of English law over the Indians was the general pattern throughout English North America, the Puritans, more than other colonists, earnestly believed in it for the benefit of the Indians and could positively justify it as part of God's design.”<sup>370</sup> However, as in other areas of Anglo-Indian relations, the cosmic rupture of the Pequot War marked a major turning point in this legal culture.

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368. John Josselyn, *An Account of Two Voyages to New-England: Made During the Years 1638, 1663* (Boston: W. Veazie, 1865), 137.

369. Nathaniel Shurtleff, ed., *Records of Plymouth Colony, Volume I: 1633-1640* (Boston: Press of William White, 1855), 132. <https://archive.org/details/recordsofcolonyo0102newp>.

370. Yasuhide Kawashima, *Puritan Justice and the Indian: White Man's Law in Massachusetts, 1630-1763* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1986), 9.

By mid-century a more systematic pattern of laws evolved; while, simultaneously, relations towards the neighboring Algonquian tribes began to harden. It was during this period that stricter obligations were applied to both resident natives and English settlers alike. It has been argued that this was simply a reflection of the inevitable process of codification and consolidation as colonial authority developed over time.<sup>371</sup> In part that is true, but it ignores the guiding influence of leading Puritan divines who saw specific millennial purpose behind these legal strictures. The promise of Christ's millennial reign ultimately depended upon the will of God, but the self-professed elect had an important role to play. They not only expected to see these cataclysmic events unfold within their lifetimes, but considered themselves to be harbingers tasked with preparing for their actualization through the purification of the churches and establishment of a civil polity based on the Word of God.<sup>372</sup>

The colonial religious social order envisioned by Separatist and Puritan leaders not only applied to the community of “visible saints,” always a minority in New England, but was intended to bring all residents “into a sweet harmony of obedience and subjection to Christ.”<sup>373</sup> John Cotton argued decisively for the uplifting of the unregenerate “from a State of sinne to a state of life and Grace” as a necessary precondition from which

the Lord will send forth such a bright and cleare knowledge of his Christ, and Church, and Saints, and holy things which will prevaile so far, as to dispell all the fogs and mists of darknesse, not alone in the Antichristian chate, but in all the World: so that all Nations shall be brightened with the knowledge of God.<sup>374</sup>

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371. Vaughan, *New England Frontier*, 209-10.

372. Eliot, *The Christian Commonwealth*, iii; James Hammond Trumbull, ed., *The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut, Volume III* (Hartford: Brown & Parsons, 1859), 484. <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/010488165>. For Puritan millennialists like John Eliot, “human and rational meanes are to be used in promoting God's works among mankind.”

373. Daniel Waite Howe, *The Puritan Republic of the Massachusetts Bay in New England* (Indianapolis: Bowen-Merrill Company, 1899), 195; Eliot, *The Christian Commonwealth*, xiii-xiv.

374. John Cotton, “Seventh Viall,” in *The Powring Out of the Seven Vialls* (London: 1642), 4.

The laws passed during this period intended to uplift the morality, civility, and religious guidance of both resident natives and backsliding colonists. In doing so, they provided a model of religious purity for all the world to emulate in preparation for the Last Judgment. It was this same millennial promise that provided the visionary framework for expanded missionary efforts among the Algonquian peoples.

### THE CONQUEST OF NATIVE SOULS

The relative peace and stability that followed the Pequot War allowed for the widespread Christian indoctrination of native populations, which served to establish dominion over those who accepted conversion and undermine the influence of traditional Algonquian religiosity across the region. Signaling both a new stage of cosmic struggle against the forces of darkness and the acceleration of sacred historical promise, the intercultural evangelism that took place between the 1640s and 1670s expanded upon the original “Errand into the Wilderness.” The conquest of native lands had allowed the founding generation of Separatist and Puritan colonists to establish their model Christian society in the desolation of the New World. Guided by biblical prophecy and purpose, the leading missionaries of the mid-century decades saw apocalyptic overtones in their further conquest of native souls. Henry Whitfield, a Connecticut minister and member of the Puritan Missionary Society, encapsulated this vision in proclaiming “First, [...] *the Kingdome of Christ is enlarged*, [and then] *The glorious Gospel of Christ is hereby Propagated, which is the Scepter of his Kingdome, the Rod of his Power.*” He believed the dedicated missionaries to be “Souldiers of Christ” on the cosmic front lines; holy “conquerors” who sought the “Conversion of [native] Soules” in order to further expand “[Christ’s] *Dominion [...] from Sea to Sea, and from the floud unto the Worlds end.*”<sup>375</sup>

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375. Kristina Bross, *Dry Bones and Indian Sermons: Praying Indians in Colonial America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 56; Whitfield, *Strength out of Weakness*, IX-X, 4.

At first these evangelistic efforts were modest in their aims. The authors of *New England's First Fruits* (1643), an early promotional tract, offered a fairly pessimistic assessment of what could be expected from the early native missions, stating, “(mistake us not) we are wont to keep [the indigenous tribes] at such a distance, (knowing they serve the Devill and are led by him) as not to imbolden them too much, or trust them too farre; though we do them what good we can.”<sup>376</sup> However, with the use of enslaved Pequot war captives, critically important translations of Christian texts were produced and religious instruction was provided for an increasing number of aspiring native converts. The introduction of “Praying Towns” helped consolidate these evangelistic efforts and created a systematic means for Christianizing native peoples – and, in turn, fracturing tribal kinship networks and cultural influence – across the region.<sup>377</sup>

Despite an extensive body of scholarship devoted to these Puritan missionary efforts, few studies have fully appreciated the millenarian framework that guided this work.<sup>378</sup> In particular, the identification of the American natives with the prophesied Lost Tribe of Israel proved to be a central motivating factor for the leading native evangelists. Influenced by Thomas Brightman's apocalyptic writings (which were banned in England until the 1640s), Puritan millennialists on both sides of the Atlantic considered the conversion of the Jews as a necessary prelude to the Second Coming of Christ.<sup>379</sup> By mid-century, Puritan intellectuals put forward theories that cast the Algonquian peoples as descendants of this lost tribe of Old Testament. Earlier claims of these “Hebrew origins” had been made based on anecdotal cultural and linguistic evidence. However, it was only after the publication of

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376. *New England's First Fruits: With Divers Other Special Matters Concerning that Country* (New York: Reprinted for Joseph Sabin, 1865), 16.

377. Neal Salisbury, “Red Puritans: The “Praying Indians” of Massachusetts Bay and John Eliot,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (January, 1974): 40. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1918981>.

378. Segal and Stineback, *Puritans, Indians & Manifest Destiny*, 141-43; Bross, *Dry Bones and Indian Sermons*, 12-21. As Bross emphasizes in her work, “colonial evangelism and the Praying Indians it produced are part and parcel of a divine plan that included England and America.”

379. Hall, *The Puritans: A Transatlantic History*, 216-17.

*Hope of Israel* (1650) by Manesseh ben Israel, a Hispano-Dutch rabbi, and *Jews in America; or Probabilities that the Americans are of that Race* (1650) by Thomas Thorowgood, an influential English Puritan scholar, that this theory gained broader acceptance in Puritan circles.<sup>380</sup>

For the more radical minded, the events of this period signaled the onset of the Middle Advent (ie, the “phase of redemption history that marked the beginning of the recovery of true Christianity”).<sup>381</sup> The unfolding of this sacred historical phase not only anticipated the prophesied thousand year reign of Christ, but also renewed struggle against the forces of Satan in the immediate days ahead.<sup>382</sup> Despite the evangelical promises of the founding Puritan settlers, very little missionary activity had taken place among the native peoples until the mid-1640s. It was only after apocalyptic expectations were stoked by the English Civil War that colonial evangelists saw real urgency in these efforts. In fact, it was considered by some to be the “farther Arrand” – not simply in the conquest of native lands, but also native souls – in which they had been tasked by God to advance the Church in the Wilderness.<sup>383</sup> In her study *Dry Bones and Indian Sermons*, historian Kristina Bross provides insight into the apocalyptic mindset of this period, with Puritan millennialists speculating,

If Indians were Jews and their conversion could be documented, then the Praying Indian would serve as confirmation that the civil wars, regicide, and Commonwealth government were indeed blessed by God, as progress toward the millennium would be indicated by the New World advance in Christ's dominions.<sup>384</sup>

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380. Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Settling With The Indians: The Meeting of English and Indian Cultures in America, 1580-1640* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1980), 110; Bremer, *Building a New Jerusalem*, 111-12.

381. David D. Hall, *Puritans in the New World: A Critical Anthology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 257; Bremer, *Building a New Jerusalem*, 171-72, 352-53; Hall, *The Puritans: A Transatlantic History*, 217.

382. Timothy J. Sehr, “John Eliot, Millennialist and Missionary,” *The Historian* 46, No. 2 (February 1984): 189. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24446382>.

383. Thomas Shepard, “Clear Sun-shine of the Gospel,” in *Tracts Relating to the Attempts to Convert to Christianity the Indians of New England* (London: Printed by Richard Cotes, 1647), 29.

384. Bross, *Dry Bones and Indian Sermons*, 13.

Among the most influential evangelical figures to embrace these millenarian beliefs was John Eliot.<sup>385</sup> Born in Essex County, England, Eliot was educated at the Jesus College at Cambridge before emigrating to Boston in November 1631. He began serving as minister at the First Church in Roxbury the following year.<sup>386</sup> In his study “John Eliot, Millennialist and Missionary,” historian Timothy Sehr notes the influence of John Cotton on the millenarianism of the young minister. Similar to Cotton, Eliot “believed that he lived at a time when the Lord was beginning to offer his grace in abundance and that this was the prelude to the millennium.” In his mind it was a “day of small things” (a phrase he took from Zechariah 4:10), which “suggest[ed] that something large can have very small beginnings.” It was a theme that inspired his missionary activities with millennial purpose throughout his life.<sup>387</sup>

Assisted by Cockenoe, an enslaved Pequot captive, Eliot studied the Algonquian language and produced rough translations of the Commandments, Lord's Prayer, and various texts of Scripture. By 1646, he preached to small groups of Massachusetts natives in their own tongue.<sup>388</sup> At first there were few converts to show for his efforts, but by mid-century he was receiving substantial financial backing and a steady increase in native supporters. In large part this was due to the passage of the *Act for the Promoting and Propagating of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in New England* (1649). The act was passed by a Puritan-controlled English parliament and empowered the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, a charitable body, to solicit and distribute funds that were used to print Christian texts in the Algonquian language in order to compel New England's indigenous peoples to forsake “their

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385. Bross, *Dry Bones and Indian Sermons*, 34, 48-49, 68-69; Gura, *A Glimpse of Sion's Glory*, 134-36. As Gura notes, “[i]n addition to his compulsive attempts to understand his Gospel labors in relation to the prophetic books, Eliot attempted to establish among the tribes he converted a form of government based exclusively on scriptural law, a fact that distinguished his evangelical labors from those of his co-workers in the native American vineyards.”

386. Convers Francis, *Life of John Eliot: The Apostle to the Indians* (Boston: Hilliard, Gray & Company, 1836), 3-13

387. Sehr, “John Eliot, Millennialist and Missionary,” 189.

388. William Wallace Tooker, *John Eliot's first Indian teacher and interpreter, Cockenoe-de-Long Island: and the story of his career from the early records* (New York: F.P. Harper, 1896), 12-14.

accustomed Charms and Sorceries, other Satanical Delusions” and embrace the Reformed Anglo-Protestant faith.<sup>389</sup>

It was Eliot's belief, however, that overseas support alone did not account for the increased success of his mission. He proclaimed that “the Lord had bowed the hearts of [these natives]” and was “pleased to send his spirit so among them,” inducing ever greater numbers to follow the Word of God.<sup>390</sup> Fellow missionary Thomas Mayhew made similar claims, as he enthusiastically witnessed

these poore naked sonnes of Adam and slaves of the Devill from their birth [suddenly] come toward the Lord as they did, with their joynts shaking, and their bowells trembling, their spirits troubled and their voyces with much fervency, uttering words of sore displeasure against sin and Satan, [who] they had imbraced from their Childhood with so much delight.<sup>391</sup>

For Eliot, “[t]he conversion of Indians [was] proof of the outpouring of grace that is the prelude to the millennium [and that] God's kingdom would include all nations, and therefore the regenerate among the Indians would begin to feel the movement of saving grace within them if the last days had begun.”<sup>392</sup> In his mind this was the historical dawning of the Middle Advent. However, despite these radical convictions he remained pragmatic in his evangelism. Having “so newly come out of that great depth of darknesse, and wild course of life,” he was cautious in ensuring his new heathen converts would not “defil[e] the name of Christ among their barbarous Friends and Country-men.” In order to better promote English notions of civility and advance “the holinesse and honour of Jesus Christ among them,” he established permanent “Praying Towns.”<sup>393</sup>

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389. William Kellaway, *The New England Company, 1649-1776* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1962), 83; C.H. Firth & R.S. Rait, eds., *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660, Volume II* (London: Wyman and Sons, 1911), 197.

390. Frederick J. Powicke, ed., “Some Unpublished Correspondence of the Rev. Richard Baxter and the Rev. John Eliot, “The Apostle of the the American Indians,” 1656-1682.,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 15 (1931): 158. <https://philpapers.org/rec/POWSUC-4>.

391. Letter of Thomas Mayhew, in Whitfield, *Strength out of Weakness*, 42.

392. Sehr, “John Eliot, Millennialist and Missionary,” 188-90.

393. John Eliot, *A Late and Further Manifestation of the Progress of the Gospel Amongst the Indians in New-England Declaring their Constant Love and Zeal to the Truth* (London: Printed by M. S., 1655), 21. <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/A39229.0001.001>.

Massachusetts Bay authorities set aside land for Natick, the first native praying town, in 1651. By the outbreak of King Philip's War, nearly a quarter century later, Eliot had assisted in the formation of fourteen native praying towns, which were “administered by rulers of tens, fifties, and hundreds, as Jethro suggested to Moses in Exodus 18.”<sup>394</sup> Additionally, six “Indian churches” had been organized along congregational lines and served a praying population of over 2,000 people (including 350 baptized church members).<sup>395</sup> Each praying town not only functioned as a means to consolidate religious indoctrination, but also as a controlled social environment designed to induce English acculturation by removing converts from the influence of traditional Algonquian customs and culture. Convinced that “Indian culture was nothing more nor less than the product of their corruption by Satan,” English missionaries “insisted that converts renounce completely all aspects of their former Indian identity” before they could fully receive the Word of God.<sup>396</sup>

Eliot, himself, established a “Rules of Conduct” to facilitate this Reformed Anglo-Protestant “civilizing” process. In addition to following the Ten Commandments, observing the Sabbath, and denouncing “the wiles of Satan,” native converts were held to rigorous English cultural standards. They were expected to renounce their former social ties and “fined or punished if they did not work, committed fornication, beat their wives, or wandered between wigwams instead of setting up their own.” Additionally, men were forbidden to keep their long hair, women were required to dress “modestly” (i.e., cover their breasts) and, of the more bizarre stipulations, residents were prevented from “cracking lice between [their] teeth.”<sup>397</sup> In the minister's estimation such strict cultural guidance

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394. Salisbury, “Red Puritans,” 31.

395. James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 239-40.

396. Alfred A. Cave, “New England Puritan Misperceptions of Native American Shamanism,” *International Social Science Review* 67, no. 1 (1992): 24. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41882032>; David Bushnell, “The Treatment of the Indians in Plymouth Colony,” *The New England Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (1953): 208-09. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/362450>.

397. Zubeda Jalalzai, “Race and the Puritan Body Politic,” *Melus* 29, no. 3/4 (2004): 262. [www.jstor.org/stable/4141854](http://www.jstor.org/stable/4141854); Henry M. Knapp, “The Character of Puritan Missions: The Motivation, Methodology, and Effectiveness of the Puritan Evangelization of the Native Americans in New England,” *The Journal of Presbyterian History* (1997-) 76, no. 2 (1998): 123. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23335366>.

was welcomed, as residents of the praying towns “[had] a deep sense of their own darkness and ignorance, and a reverent esteem of the light and goodness of the English.”<sup>398</sup> However, as ethnohistorians have argued, the obvious result of these mandates was a destructive impact on Algonquian cultural identity, traditional customs, and social cohesion across the region.<sup>399</sup>

With the perceived onset of the Middle Advent and a the resulting steady increase in native converts the cosmic struggle had entered a new phase for the Puritan devout. A series of promotional tracts were published by the New England Company that highlighted the evangelical successes of John Eliot, Thomas Mayhew, Thomas Shepard, and others.<sup>400</sup> Appealing to English supporters, the authors framed these missionary efforts as tangible spiritual victories over the diabolic forces that permeated the Wilderness of the New World. In *Strength out of Weakness*, a widely-read promotional tract, Henry Whitfield claimed the work of the Puritan missionaries to be “the rescuing of deluded Soules out of the snares of the Devill” and optimistically proclaimed that “[as] Our Lord Christ and his truth gets ground, and the Devill loseth, they daily break from him, and renounce him, and all his cursed works of darknesse.”<sup>401</sup> Shepard went further, assured that in the Christianization of the Algonquian people, “Lord Jesus [will not] lose an inch of ground [...] untill hee hath won the whole field, and driven the Prince of darknesse out of it.”<sup>402</sup>

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398. John Eliot, “An Account of Indian Churches in New-England,” in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Volume X* (Boston: Munroe, Francis & Parker, 1809), 127.

399. Neal Salisbury, “Conquest of the ‘Savage’: Puritans, Puritan Missionaries, and Indians, 1620-1680,” *PhD Diss.* (Los Angeles: University of California, 1972), 201. As Salisbury notes, “In requiring the potential convert to reside in a praying town, Puritan missionaries demanded nothing less than a complete repudiation of not only his culture but his community.”

400. John Eliot, et al, *The Eliot Tracts: With Letters from John Eliot to Thomas Thorowgood and Richard Baxter* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2003; digital edition by The Internet Archive).  
<https://archive.org/details/eliottractswith1000unse>.

401. Henry Whitefield, “To The Christian Reader,” in John Eliot, et al., *Strength Out of Weakness, Or A Glorious Manifestation of the Further Progress of the Gospel Among the Indians in New England* (New York City: Reprinted for Joseph Sabin, 1865); Henry Whitfield, “The Epistle Dedicatory,” in *Tracts Relating to the Attempts to Convert to Christianity the Indians of New England* (London: Printed by Richard Cotes, 1647), 105.

402. Thomas Shepard, “The Clear Sunshine of the Gospel Breaking Forth upon the Indians in New England (1674)” in *The Works of Thomas Shepard: First Pastor of the First Church, Cambridge, Mass: With a Memoir of His Life and Character, Volume III* (Boston: Doctrinal Tract and Book Society, 1853), 482.

To underscore the prodigious consequences of this evangelistic activity, missionary tracts dramatized conflicts with the diabolic forces that held dominion over the unregenerate native peoples. Repeating previous Separatist and Puritan claims, readers were reminded that that native Christian converts had been permeated by the Devil in all areas of their lives prior to the intervention of the English missionaries. Eliot elaborated on how

[t]he Devil also with his Angels had his Kingdom among them, in them; account him they did, the terror of the Living, the god of the Dead, under whose cruel power and into whose deformed likeness they conceived themselves to be translated when they died; by him they were often hurt in their Bodies, distracted in their Minds; [and] to pacifie the Devil [they made] their Sacrifice [to] get deliverance from their evil. [...] This Diabolical way they were in, giving heed to a multitude of Heathen Traditions of their Gods, [...] they with much slavery were held, and abounding with sins.<sup>403</sup>

Although optimistic of the advances made among the Massachusetts, Nipmuc, and Pennacook tribes, Eliot understood the cosmic threat that continued to impede his efforts. He warned that “the Devil is the maker of strife, and he is alwayes so doing, sometimes in one place, sometimes in another, and so he is labouring to do in all the Towns of the praying Indians.”<sup>404</sup> Thomas Mayhew, who led the evangelical mission among the Wampanoags of Martha's Vineyard, wrote similarly, believing that these missionary advances had unleashed a determined resistance, as the Devil, “fearing the ruine of his Kingdome, [betook] to himself to his wonted practice of stirring up oppositions to this work with his Instruments.”<sup>405</sup>

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403. John Eliot and Thomas Mayhew, “Tears of Repentance: Or, A Further Narrative of the Progress of the Gospel Among the Indians on New England” (1653), in *The Eliot Tracts*, 253-54.

404. John Eliot, “A further account of the progress of the Gospel amongst the Indians in New England,” in *The Eliot Tracts*, 138.

405. Mayhew, *Stregnth out of Weakness*, 35.

Restating earlier denunciations of traditional spiritual leaders, the leading Puritan evangelists considered the powwaws to be the Devil's loyal "instruments" among the Algonquian tribes. Through fear, deceit, and black magic, they represented the most serious obstacle to native Christianization. As Daniel Gookin, superintendent of native affairs in Massachusetts Bay, stated, "[t]hese powwaws are reputed, and I conceive justly, to hold familiarity with the devil [and are] great hinderers of the Indians embracing the gospel."<sup>406</sup> Eliot acknowledged this threat, which was represented either "by outward and bodily hurt, or inward pain, torture, and distraction of mind."<sup>407</sup> In 1650, he wrote of the powerful influence that the powwaws still had over the newly minted Christian converts of a Nipmuc village in central Massachusetts. In Eliot's winter absence from preaching to them, "Sathan [had] taken this advantage" and emboldened the local shamans to undermine his missionary efforts by reviving traditional worship practices among the fearful residents.<sup>408</sup>

Although Eliot generally downplayed the supernatural abilities of powwaws, other missionaries used the perceived threat they represented as a means to propagate the strength of the Reformed gospel. On Martha's Vineyard, Mayhew and his son, Thomas Jr., achieved their initial evangelical success in 1645, when "an epidemic swept the island and the failure of the powwaws to cure the sick touched off a rapid series of conversions."<sup>409</sup> However, despite the courage of some to "renounce the Pawwawes help in time of sicknesse," the majority "found it hard to get from under the yoake of cruelty that they and their forefathers had so long groaned under" due to the persistent fear they would be harmed by supernatural means. To undermine this psychological stranglehold, Mayhew mythologized the experience of the island's first and boldest convert, a Wampanoag man named Hiacoomes. In his

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406. Daniel Gookin, "Historical Collections of the Indians in New England," in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Volume I* (New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1968), 154.

407. Eliot and Mayhew, "Tears of Repentance," in *The Eliot Tracts*, 254.

408. John Eliot, "The light appearing more and more," in *The Eliot Tracts*, 198.

409. James Ronda, "Generations of Faith: The Christian Indians of Martha's Vineyard," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 38 no. 3 (July 1981): 370. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1921953>.

telling, the island's vengeful shamans plotted “by their witchcrafts to kill [Hiacoomes],” but his faith in Christ proved so strong that he was able to “silence the Pawwawes devillish spirit.”<sup>410</sup> The story had the intended effect and native conversions proliferating in the decades that followed.

Despite the progress made by Puritan missionaries between the 1640s and 1660s, these efforts were challenged at every level. For colonists, this was largely based on ethnochauvinist prejudices, expansionist desires, and a general belief in the inherently (and unreformable) diabolical nature of the Algonquian peoples. Protests were raised by adjacent English colonial townships that competed for land claims and remained antagonistic towards the close proximity of these “savage” native Christian communities.<sup>411</sup> Additionally, Eliot's evangelical model came under official scrutiny following the restoration of the Stuart monarchy. In 1665, a Royal Commission accused the minister of “convert[ing] Indians by hiring them to come & heare Sermons; by teaching them not to obey their Heathen Sachims, & by appointing Rulers amongst them.” In closing, the body concluded that the “lives, Manners & habits of those, whom they say are converted, cannot be distinguished from those who are not, except it be by being hyred to heare Sermons, which the more generous natives scorn.”<sup>412</sup>

Praying towns also invited the hostility of neighboring tribal communities. Christian native populations were primarily comprised of refugees from tribes that had been weakened by war or disease. Unsurprisingly, it was the powerful native confederations that were most successful in repelling Christianization efforts and safeguarding traditional Algonquian identity – or, as Puritan detractors would have it, “refus[ing] the Glad tidings of Salvation by Jesus Christ, [and] praeferring

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410. Thomas Mayhew, “The light appearing more and more towards the perfect day. Or, a farther discovery of the present state of the Indians in New-England, concerning the progresse of the Gospel amongst them” in *The Eliot Tracts*, 181-82.

411. Salisbury, “Red Puritans,” 40-41. In particular, Salisbury notes the objections raised in the General Court by the towns of Dedham and Marlborough. Eliot, in turn, called on the colonies to better accommodate these native populations.

412. James Phinney Baxter, *Documentary History of the State of Maine, Volume IV* (Portland: Brown Thurston & Company, 1889), 294.

their own devillish Rites & gods.”<sup>413</sup> None of the leading sachems who maintained diplomatic ties with the English colonies tolerated Puritan missionary activities in the territories under their control. They also remained an important sphere of influence that proved difficult for native Christian converts to break from. Particularly in difficult times, such as in 1658, when excessive rains and crop failures led to widespread famine and outbreaks of disease swept through the praying towns. After Christian prayers and fasting had failed it was reported that a number of “Praying Indians” turned to neighboring powwaws and re-embraced traditional religious practices in hopes of alleviating hardship.<sup>414</sup>

Scholars estimate that less than a quarter of southern New England's native population converted to Christianity during the seventeenth-century; and of those who did, countless many eventually abandoned the faith. Cotton Mather, the leading Puritan intellectual of his generation, later voiced criticism of the entire missionary endeavor. In his estimation, failure resided in the degraded nature of the native peoples who were unable “to respond to the uplifting presence of the Saints.”<sup>415</sup> Reflecting the antagonistic chauvinism that pervaded colonial society in the wake of King Philip's War, he derisively claimed, “[t]o humanize these miserable *Animals*, and in any measure to [tame] them & *Civilize* them, were a work of no little Difficulty,” and compared the efforts to “bring[ing] an idiot unto the use of reason.”<sup>416</sup> However, regardless of the long term failure of the praying town model, the missionary advances of these efforts represented the front lines of cosmic struggle during these inter-war decades of “peace.”

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413. Salisbury, *Red Puritans*, 38; Cotton Mather, “Mantissa,” in *The wonderful works of God commemorated. Praises bespoke for the God in heaven in a thanksgiving sermon; delivered on December 19, 1689* (Boston: Printed by S. Green, 1690; digitized by Text Creation Partnership: Evans Early American Imprint Collection, 2011), 3. <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/N00431.0001.001>.

414. Violet Galante, “Interpreting the Other: Natives, Missionaries, and Colonial Authority In New England, 1643-1675,” *Masters thesis*, Old Dominion University, Norfolk (2019), 86-88. [https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/history\\_etds/22](https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/history_etds/22).

415. Cave, “New England Puritan Misperceptions,” 24.

416. Cotton Mather, *India Christiana. A discourse, delivered unto the Commissioners, for the Propagation of the Gospel among the American Indians* (Boston: Printed by B. Green., 1721; digital reprint, Text Creation Partnership, 2011), 29. <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/N01899.0001.001>.

Having erected congregational churches in the New World Wilderness during the initial years of settlement, the establishment of native praying towns became the next logical step in the “sacred Errand” that the Puritans considered themselves to have been tasked with by God. For John Eliot and his contemporaries, the conquest of native souls not only served to “civilize” the savage natives and advance the Reformed Protestant cause. In millenarian anticipation, they considered it “the duty of the saints to work actively at converting the heathen throughout the world as a prelude to Christ’s rule in His Kingdom,” and envisioned their efforts as being grounded in the dawning of the Middle Advent.<sup>417</sup> Richard Mather, the influential Puritan minister, encapsulates this sentiment when he proclaimed, “that the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus [...] doth so much desire to see enlarged, is now beginning to be set up where it never was before, even amongst a poor people, forlorn kind of Creatures in times past, who have been without Christ, and without God in the world.”<sup>418</sup>

The millennialist pretensions of the leading evangelists guided their missionary efforts among the region's weakened natives, just as those of the leading Puritan divines ultimately guided the course of Anglo-Indian relations throughout “the Long Peace.” Generally denoted as a period of cooperative relations between the cultures, these inter-war years allowed for rapid colonial expansion and the consolidation of Puritan authority which gave rise to greater stability, prosperity, and social-religious cohesion. The ambitious campaign to Christianize the resident natives represented a culmination of Puritan hegemony; however it was, in large part, from these efforts that the seeds of cultural-religious undoing had been sewn. The outbreak of King Philip's War, in June 1675, marked the definitive end of this period of relative stability and civil coexistence and brought about a new, and fearfully uncertain, set of colonial realities for the remainder of the seventeenth-century.

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417. William Charles Eamon, “Kingdom and church in New England; Puritan eschatology from John Cotton to Jonathan Edwards” (1970), *Masters' thesis*, (Missoula: University of Montana, 1968), 45.  
<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd/5529>.

418. Richard Mather, “To the Christian Reader,” in *The Eliot Tracts*, 263.

To understand the historical circumstances that gave rise to Metacom's pan-Indian resistance movement one must reexamine the colonial policies, attitudes, and intercultural relations that developed during the preceding years of “peace.” The majority of critical or revisionist studies that focus on this period treat this as a “contest of cultures” and downplay the powerful influence of Puritan religiosity in framing the course of events that transpired. The cultural-religious ideology of the colonial Separatists and Puritans served to not only dehumanize native peoples, but cast them as actors in a sacred drama of which they had little understanding. It was from within this cosmic framework that New England's religious and civil authorities justified enslavement, encouraged colonial expansion, heightened frontier anxieties, enacted legal restrictions, and launched an aggressive missionary campaign to “civilize” native populations. However, in attempting to “conquer the heathen” (ie, liberate both their lands and souls from the Devil) the religious-minded colonists only served to escalate regional tensions and invite the devastating “Indian Wars” that followed.

## VI. “The Rigor of Such Hellish Foes”: The Cosmic Significance of King Philip's War, 1675-1677

The turbulent final decades of the seventeenth-century were marked by the fracturing of New England's Congregationalist cultural-religious hegemony, which brought about a definitive end to the idealized “rule of saints” that lay at the heart of the “Errand into the Wilderness.” In the sacred and cosmic narratives of leading Puritan ideologues the consequences of this general decline in “godliness” were far-reaching, manifested most significantly in the brutal and costly “Indian Wars” of the 1670s to 1690s – which, in turn, led to the revocation of the original colonial charters by royal decree. Reflecting on the destructive impact of prolonged warfare and the crippling loss of sovereignty, Increase Mather lamented these collective signs of God's disfavor as “poor New-England's Calamity.”<sup>419</sup> It was within this context of spiritual despair and renewed cosmic rupture that, in the fearful Puritan mind, the Devil intensified efforts to reclaim his Wilderness dominion.

Prior to these calamitous events, however, the living example of Christ's Kingdom on earth was believed to be firmly in the reach of New England's first and second generation of saints. Despite challenges, the years of relatively civil coexistence that followed the Pequot War allowed for stability, expansion, and development for the fledgling colonies. It was within these favorable conditions that cultural-religious orthodoxy reached its hegemonic apex in the region with the passage of *A Platforme of Church Discipline Gathered Out of the Word of God* – or, “The Cambridge Platform” – in 1648.<sup>420</sup> Significantly, the final session of the Cambridge synod tasked with compiling the platform was

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419. Increase Mather *A Brief History of the Warr with the Indians in New-England (1676): An Online Electronic Text Edition*, edited by Paul Royster (Lincoln: Faculty Publications, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries, 2006), 55. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libraryscience/31>.

420. David D. Hall, *The Puritans: A Transatlantic History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 330-33; Michael P. Winship, *Hot Protestants: A History of Puritanism in England and America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 175-77; Robert Middlekauff, *The Mathers: Three Generations of Puritan Intellectuals, 1596-1728* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 47-48.

imbued with powerful religious symbolism. As the minister John Allen was preaching on the biblical basis of the synod, “a large snake slithered into the crowded building” towards a group of men in attendance. According to witnesses, one minister “stepped forward, put his foot on the snake's head, and impaled it with a pitchfork.” For those in attendance, the revelatory significance of this event was understood, as

[t]he minister and the snake [acting] out the prophecy in Genesis 3:15 [where] the serpent who had just lured Adam and Eve into sin (ie, the devil) would eventually have his head crushed. The minister represented Christ's New England churches who were crushing the devil through their outline of the kind of churches that would triumph over him.<sup>421</sup>

The Cambridge Platform outlined a common church polity that was heralded as “a type of church government unrecognized by the Christian world since the days of the primitive church,” establishing cohesion and unity between a number of formerly disparate congregations from the Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, Connecticut, New Haven, and New Hampshire colonies.<sup>422</sup>

The Congregationalist polity expressed in the platform (also known as “The New England Way”) primarily reflected John Cotton's teachings, particularly those of his most important treatise, *The Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven* (1644).<sup>423</sup> It was Cotton's belief that “a new estate of visible Saints [had] gathered out of the world both of Antichristians and of Pagans” to establish the Kingdom of Christ in the New World. Towards this end the platform further bound them in covenant, “which God made with the Nationall Church of Israel [and now] maketh with any Congregationall Church and

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421. Winship, *Hot Protestants*, 176.

422. Henry Wilder Foote, “The Significance and Influence of the Cambridge Platform of 1648,” *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 69 (1947): 96. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25080408>; Hall, *The Puritans: A Transatlantic History*, 330-31.

423. Larzer Ziff, *The Career of John Cotton: Puritanism and the American Experience* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), 227-229; Foote, “The Significance and Influence of the Cambridge Platform of 1648,” 88.

[their] Seed.”<sup>424</sup> John Eliot, among others, shared in this millennialist enthusiasm and claimed “the New-English churches [to be] a preface to the New Heavens” on earth, a belief that provided biblical urgency for his missionary efforts among the native tribes of Massachusetts Bay.<sup>425</sup> The consolidation of “godliness” invited controversy, however, as full church membership was restricted to those who had proven themselves to be regenerate saints and shared in the covenant of grace. It was in these rigid demands for church purity that the initial fractures in cultural-religious hegemony first emerged.

### THE TRUE CHURCH IN DECLINE

Similar to the contentious days of heresy and dissension that preceded the Pequot War, the internal challenges faced by the second and third generation elect were perceived to be connected to the devastating “Indian Wars” of the following decades. By the 1660s, New England's Congregational churches suffered internal controversies and a declining membership while sinful behavior appeared to be on the rise across the broader colonial social sphere. Debates over church policy and doctrine became most pronounced in the sharp divide over the sacrament of baptism that culminated in the passage of the “Halfway Covenant,” in 1662, which was considered by many devout leaders to be a dangerous step towards secularization.<sup>426</sup> Complacency, disunity, and material pursuits were all claimed to have given rise to spiritual degeneration, which, according to Samuel Torrey, Puritan

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424. John Cotton, *Certain Queries Tending to Accommodation and Communion of Presbyterian & Congregationall Churches* (London: Printed by M. S., 1654; Reprinted by Early English Books Online Text Creation Partnership, 2011), 3-4, 13. <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A34669.0001.001>.

425. This quote was attributed to Eliot in Samuel Sewall, *Phaenomena quaedam Apocalyptica Ad Aspectum Novi Orbis configurata. Or, Some few lines towards a description of the New Heaven as it makes to those who stand upon the New Earth* (Boston: Printed by Bartholomew Green and John Allen, 1697; digital reprint by Text Creation Partnership: Evans Early American Imprint Collection, 2011), 2. <http://olivercowdery.com/texts/1697Sew1.htm>.

426. Edmund S. Morgan, *Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1965), 113-15; Middlekauff, *The Mathers: Three Generations of Puritan Intellectuals*, 55-57, 85-86, 93; Philip F. Gura, *A Glimpse of Zion's Glory: Puritan Radicalism in New England, 1620-1660* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1984), 324-25; Hall, *The Puritans: A Transatlantic History*, 333-34; Vincent Stine, “A Church-State Partnership in Defense of the Puritan National Covenant,” *Journal of Church and State* 56, no. 3 (2014): 494. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23923112>.

minister of the Church of Christ in Weymouth, threatened to “destroy our very Religion, and reduce this Wilderness-People unto a kind of Heathenism.”<sup>427</sup>

The toll of these contentious years on the church was further compounded by a series of external threats against godly rule in the region. Politically, the English restoration of the Stuart monarchy brought an end to Puritan-led parliamentary rule under Cromwell's Protectorate. It was an event that cast a long shadow across the Atlantic, jeopardizing the status of colonial governance and provoking a cosmic crisis for devout Congregationalists. With the passage of the Act of Uniformity (1662) it was feared that conformity would be imposed upon the increasingly isolated colonies, bringing an end to New England's utopian cultural-religious experiment. Puritan intellectuals responded by reassessing the “Errand in the Wilderness” in which they had been tasked, as their prophetic role as harbingers to the dawning of millenarian promise came increasingly into question.<sup>428</sup>

It was during this period of crisis that Increase Mather delivered a series of apocalyptic sermons, later published as *The Mystery of Israel's Salvation, Explained and Applied* (1669), that sought to reassert colonial confidence in the sacred historical agency of the New England elect. Although clearly a setback for the transatlantic Puritan cause, the “earthquake” of England's Restoration was interpreted as part of the “desolations” foretold in Scripture that signaled “that the Mysteries of God, even that Mystery which hath been hid in God, as the Apostle speaketh, is fulfilling and finishing.” In his estimation, “[t]he final ruine of Antichrist cannot be far off.”<sup>429</sup> Despite

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427. Samuel Torrey, *An exhortation unto reformation amplified, by a discourse concerning the parts and progress of that work, according to the word of God* (Cambridge: Printed by Marmaduke Johnson, 1674; reprinted by Text Creation Partnership Early English Books, 2011), 23. <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/A62960.0001.001>.

428. Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad: Anniversary Edition* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), 64-73; David D. Hall, ed., *Puritans in the New World: A Critical Anthology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 336-37; Joseph A. Conforti, *Saints and Strangers: New England in British North America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 99.

429. William J. Scheick, ““The Captive Exile Hasteth”: Increase Mather, Meditation, and Authority,” *Early American Literature* 36, no. 2 (2001): 189-93. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25057230>; Increase Mather, *The Mystery of Israel's Salvation, Explained and Applied: or, A Discourse Concerning the General Conversion of the Israelitish Nation* (London: Printed for John Allen, 1669; reprinted by Early English Books Online Text Creation Partnership, 2011), 143, 158-59. <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/evans/N00091.0001.001>; Mather was referencing Psalms 46:8 (“Come and behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth.”).

these prophetic assurances, however, the uncertain path toward eternal salvation proved to be a perilous journey for the apostolic champions of Christ as the cosmic struggle intensified around them. Tempering confidence with caution, Mather warned of increasing diabolic threats leading up to the final days, noting how “Satan when he knoweth that his time is but short [...] rageth exceedingly, and doth more mischief than ordinary.”<sup>430</sup>

Among the varied ways these threats manifested against New England's cultural-religious social order was through the influx of schismatic and heretical beliefs. Just as internal contradictions exposed the weaknesses of Congregational orthodoxy in the 1660s the first Baptist churches were established in the Massachusetts Bay and Plymouth colonies. The introduction of this denominational faith into the region's sectarian religious landscape was met with controversy, particularly as they attracted greater numbers of disaffected Separatists and Puritans. The Baptists were “looked at by the Godly Leaders [...] as a Scab” and “an engine framed to cut the throat of the Infantry of the Church.”<sup>431</sup> John Cotton went further, claiming Baptist doctrine to be an instrument of the Devil. In his mind, “by urging [their] Argument against the Baptisme of children, Satan transformeth himselfe into an Angell of light.”<sup>432</sup> To combat this corrupting influence on the Congregationalist social body, meeting houses were shut down and those accused of harboring Baptist sympathies were punished with fines, imprisonment, or banishment.<sup>433</sup>

The schismatic doctrine of the Baptists was joined by the more dangerous heretical beliefs of the Quakers in what was perceived to be a general subversion of the biblical commonwealth. Emerging

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430. Mather, *The Mystery of Israel's Salvation*, 47.

431. Thomas Shepard, Jr., *Eye-salve, or A watch-word from our Lord Iesus Christ unto his churches: especially those within the colony of the Massachusetts in New England to take heed of apostacy* (Cambridge: Printed by Samuel Green, 1673; reprinted by Evans Early American Imprint Collection, 2011), 25. <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/N00127.0001.001>.

432. John Cotton, *The grounds and ends of the baptisme of the children of the faithfull* (London,: Printed by R.C., 1646; reprinted by Early English Books Online Text Creation Partnership, 2011), 3. <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A80622.0001.001>.

433. Thomas E. Buckley, “Church and State in Massachusetts Bay: A Case Study of Baptist Dissenters, 1651,” *Journal of Church and State* 23, no. 2 (1981): 312-13. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23916221>; Adrian Chastain Weimer, *Martyrs' Mirror: Persecution and Holiness in Early New England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 82-84, 96.

out of England's civil war period, Quaker missionaries began filtering into the Massachusetts Bay colony in the 1650s. They preached “that the spirit of God (what was referred to as the inner light) lay within each person” and rejected the established Congregational church. Whereas the Baptists were considered to be a dissenting faction from within, the Quakers represented a radical challenge to the very foundations of New England's Reformed Anglo-Protestant social order. In their anticlericalism, practice of lay exhorting, and central “belief in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and its supremacy over Scriptural law,” the troublesome sect struck at “[t]he gathered church, the patriarchal family, the calling, and, above all, the rule of the elect” in the colonies.<sup>434</sup>

For the sectarian Puritans, there was little doubt that the Quakers were agents of the Devil intent on undermining godly institutions. The fact that they expressed common cause with the Algonquian peoples and their spiritual beliefs further confirmed these diabolic allegations, which came as no coincidence to those who viewed them as interconnected cosmic threats. As Cotton Mather later wrote,

while the Indians have been thus molesting [our frontier settlements], we have suffered Molestations of another sort, from another sort of Enemies, [...] the Quakers have chosen the very same Frontiers, and Out-Skirts, [...] to Enchant and Poison the Souls of poor people, in the very places, where the Bodies and Estates, of the people have presently after been devoured by the Salvages.<sup>435</sup>

Puritan detractors further pointed to the close similarities between the ritual worship practices of the Quakers and those of the native powwaws, which included nocturnal meetings, trance-like meditation,

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434. Weimer, *Martyrs' Mirror*, 106-08; Gura, *A Glimpse of Zion's Glory*, 150; Carla Gardina Pestana, “The City upon a Hill under Siege: The Puritan Perception of the Quaker Threat to Massachusetts Bay, 1656-1661,” *The New England Quarterly* 56, no. 3 (1983): 327-29. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/365396>,

435. Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600–1860* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), 130-31; Cotton Mather, *Decennium luctuosum. An history of remarkable occurrences, in the long war, which New-England hath had with the Indian savages, from the year, 1688. To the year 1698.* (Boston: Printed by B. Green & J. Allen, 1699; digital reprint by Text Creation Partnership: Evans Early American Imprint Collection, 2011), 162. <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/N00725.0001.001>

and “fasting to induce demonic visitations.” Some adherents were further accused of witchcraft. In response, a series of harsh laws were enacted in an effort to suppress the sectarian (and potentially diabolic) threat, with punishments that included whippings, mutilations, and even death.<sup>436</sup>

Amid these religious tensions and sacred uncertainties a series of ominous “portents” revealed themselves to the devout. “The Great Earthquake of 1663” rattled the coastal settlements in an event that was thought to “portend the Lords shaking the foundations of our Churches and of our civil state.” A further earthquake struck on April 3, 1668, in which “parts of the Countrey were [again] terribly shaken.” Commenting on a comet that blazed across the night sky in December 1664, Samuel Danforth, of Roxbury's First Church, proclaimed that “[the] Blazing Star being in conjunction with diverse other awful Providences and Tokens of Wrath, calls upon us to awake out of security, and to bring forth fruits meet for Repentance.” These “Tokens of Wrath” included drought, unseasonable frosts, destructive fires, and crop failures.<sup>437</sup> Unexplained phenomenon, natural afflictions, and personal tragedies were additionally given cosmic significance as lay people collected and retold wonder tales and Puritan divines attempted to decipher signs of providential revelation or disfavor.<sup>438</sup>

The pervasive theme of the 1660s and 1670s was one of repentance, with backsliding colonists called upon to redeem the “sacred Errand” of New England's mythologized founding generation through moral and religious reform. Failure to do so would “prompt God’s punitive wrath and lead to spiritual and civil degeneration,” leaving the biblical commonwealth in peril. The sinful colonists could

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436. Alison Games, *Witchcraft in Early North America* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012), 45; Pestana, “The City upon a Hill under Siege,” 336-37.

437. Samuel Danforth, *An astronomical description of the late comet or blazing star, as it appeared in New-England in the 9th, 10th, 11th, and the beginning of the 12th moneth, 1664; Together with a brief theological application thereof* (Cambridge: Printed by Samuel Green, 1665; digital reprint by Evans Early American Imprint Collection, 2011), 19-20. <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/N00059.0001.001>; Increase Mather, *An essay for the recording of illustrious providences wherein an account is given of many remarkable and very memorable events which have hapned this last age, especially in New-England* (Boston: Printed by Samuel Green, 1684; digital reprint by Text Creation Partnership: Early English Books Online, 2011), 323. <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/A50202.0001.001>.

438. David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder; Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 82-83; Francis J. Bremer, *Building a New Jerusalem: John Davenport, a Puritan in Three Worlds* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 348.

expect the loosening of restraint over the Devil who, in turn, would unite the native Algonquians against them in order to “lay waste [to] this vineyard, and turn it into a wilderness again.”<sup>439</sup> The most popular sermons during this period were “jeremiads,” a form of Puritan preaching that was rooted in the prophetic books of the Old Testament and generally “described a declining present contrasted with a better past, the days of the “fathers,” and prophesied a better future to come.”<sup>440</sup> In *The American Jeremiad*, Sacvan Bercovitch elaborates on the broader significance of these sermons as a “ritual designed to join social criticism to spiritual renewal, public to private identity, [and] the shifting 'signs of the times' to certain traditional metaphors, themes, and symbols.”<sup>441</sup> They also provided an effective symbolic mode for reinforcing cultural-religious ideology and prophetic expectation at a time when church membership was in decline.

Reverend Samuel Danforth, of The First Church in Roxbury, typified the jeremiad form with his *A Brief Recognition of New-England's Errand into the Wilderness* (1671). He chastised the colonies for falling short of the “pure and faithful dispensation of the gospel and kingdom of God” that defined the sacred mission of the founding fathers. Pointing to “Signes in the Heavens and in the Earth” (which included “severe Drought, sometimes great Tempests, Floods, [...] Blazing-Stars, Earthquakes, dreadful Thunders and Lightenings, [and] fearful Burnings”), he implored his followers to repent and reform in hopes that they may one day “sit at Christ’s feet and hear his word.”<sup>442</sup> By 1674, Increase Mather believed divine punishment to be imminent against the backsliding colonists, “[who] hath not so pursued, as ought to have been, the blessed design of their Fathers, in following the Lord into this

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439. Gregory Michna, ““A Prey to Their Teeth”: Puritan Sermons and Ministerial Writings on Indians During King Philip’s War,” *Sermon Studies* vol 1 no. 1 (2017) : 28. <http://mds.marshall.edu/sermonstudies/vol1/iss1/3/>; Shepard, *Eye-Salve, Or a Watch-Word From our Lord Jesus Christ unto His Church*, 34.

440. Hall, *Puritans in the New World*, 336.

441. “Preface to the 1978 Edition,” in Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad*, xli.

442. Samuel Danforth, *A Brief Recognition of New-Englands Errand into the Wilderness*, edited by Paul Royster (Cambridge: Printed by S.G., 1671; online reprint by Libraries at University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2006), 20-21, 25. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/librарyscience/35/>.

Wilderness.”<sup>443</sup> Citing the “great decay as to the power of godliness amongst us,” he proclaimed,

Wherefore, as long as there is a Devil out of Hell [...] we may be sure that there will be dayes of trouble to the Church of God. If strange Prodigious Wickednesses are breaking forth, that's a sign that strange Punishments are at hand: but especially if it be thus amongst a Professing People; [...] we have heard a noise, and a dismall din hath been in our ears, but now the Sword seems to be facing and marching directly towards us: yea, we see Jerusalem compassed about with Enemies. [...] Truly so it is at this day, the Heavens are black over our heads. The Clouds begin to gather thick in our Horizon: yea, there is a Cloud of Blood, which begins to drop upon us.<sup>444</sup>

With the Book of Ezekiel as his guiding reference, Mather warned his followers: “The day of Trouble is near.”<sup>445</sup> Within a year this pessimistic forecast proved to be prophetic as native Algonquian tribes across southern New England banded together and unleashed the Devil's fury upon the sinful colonies.

#### THE SPECTRE OF ALGONQUIAN REVITALIZATION

According to the exhortations of Increase Mather, the adverse climate of internal church discord and broader existential challenges allowed the Devil to raise his heathen armies against the “godly colonies” of New England.<sup>446</sup> While devout colonial religionists invoked the righteous glory of the founding patriarchs to inspire redemption, native leaders launched a parallel cultural-religious revitalization movement to reclaim their own traditional customs and spiritual beliefs. Portrayed as a diabolic resurgence among the Algonquian peoples, the revitalization movement brought

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443. Mather, *A Brief History of the Warr*, 10.

444. Increase Mather, *The Day of Trouble is Near. Two sermons wherein is shewed, what are the signs of a day of trouble being near. And particularly, what reason there is for New-England to expect a day of trouble* (Cambridge, MA: Printed by Marmaduke Johnson, 1674; digital reprint by Evans Early American Imprint Collection), 5, 7, 22-23, 26. <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/N00137.0001.001>.

445. Kenneth Silverman, *The Life and Times of Cotton Mather* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 19; Ezekiel 7:7, *The 1599 Geneva Bible* (White Hall, WV: Tollege Press, 2010). In this bleak passage the Israelites were warned, “the time is come, the day of trouble is near.”

446. Mather, *A Brief History of the Warr with the Indians in New-England*, 9-10.

together the major tribes of southern New England in a series of cultural and diplomatic gatherings that took place throughout the 1660s and 1670s. Cultural revivalism, in and of itself, did not provide a direct catalyst for Metacom's rebellion. However, it did inspire a sense of shared cultural identity, pan-Indian unity, and motivation to fight for greater native autonomy and independence across the region.

The revitalization movement developed in response to the stark realities of native life under increasing colonial dominance. Declining from an estimated 90,000 in 1600 to only 10,750 in 1674, the combined Algonquian peoples accounted for only 25% of southern New England's overall population by the outbreak of war.<sup>447</sup> Traditional native culture and society had become severely fragmented after a half century of sustained contact with Europeans, with even the strongest tribes assuming a subservient or dependent role toward English colonial power. Similar to the Puritan divines who responded to the misfortunes bestowed upon their own religious communities by calling for religious reform, the increasingly marginalized powwaws interpreted this somber trajectory of decline and crisis as having resulted from a cultural alienation that undermined traditional native religiosity and angered their gods. Revitalization was deemed necessary for the survival of the Algonquian peoples.

Honoring the spirit of cultural resistance espoused by Miantonomo a generation earlier, the Narragansetts, under the leadership of Ninigret, hosted a series of “great dances” with the participation of tribal dignitaries from across southern New England. The grand sachem was called before General Council of Rhode Island after one such gathering, in July 1669, to respond to charges that the cultural events were intended to foment unrest.<sup>448</sup> The Wampanoags, in turn, held inter-tribal gatherings of their

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447. Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 29; James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 239-40. Jennings and Axtell both use figures compiled by Daniel Gookin, the magistrate of Indian Affairs for Massachusetts Bay during the 1660-70s.

448. Lisa Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin: A New History of King Philip's War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 69-70; Testimony of Goodwife Osborn, July 20, 1669, Grant-Costa, Paul, et al., eds., Yale Indian Papers Project, Yale University. <http://hdl.handle.net/10079/digcoll/2996>.

own. Benjamin Church, a military ranger from Plymouth colony, witnessed one such ceremony that gathered hundreds of participants at Sakonnet, east of Narragansett Bay, in frenzied ritual dance. Noting the diplomatic significance of such occasions as a “custom of that Nation when they advise about Momentous Affairs,” it was feared that the rise in great dances were part of broader anti-English conspiracy spreading among the southern New England tribes.<sup>449</sup> For the more Puritan-minded, these ritual dances were also steeped in the diabolic. Increase Mather denounced the “Paganish, Heathenish customs” of Algonquian dance that brought native peoples together to “honour the Devils, whom they served in this way.” Mary Rowlandson, a captive during King Philip's War, was later witness to a Wampanoag ritual dance and made note of “the roaring, and singing and danceing, and yelling of those black creatures in the night, which made the place a lively resemblance of hell.”<sup>450</sup>

It was during these years of cultural revitalization and rising anti-colonial tension that, according to Puritan myth, an “Apparition” appeared among the tribes of southern New England; a wandering Algonquian prophet who, using the language and form of Puritan sermons, preached for a return to traditional religious observances and customs, abstinence from drinking alcohol, and an end to inter-tribal conflict or else the native peoples would “descend unto miseries.” The malevolent nature of “the Apparition” was later highlighted by Cotton Mather, who emphasized that “all the while [he] never said one word about Christ” in his preaching. Likely conflating the native revitalization movement with the diplomatic missions sent by Metacom to rally local native leaders to his insurgent cause, Mather

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449. Christine DeLucia, “The Sound of Violence: Music of King Philip’s War and Memories of Settler Colonialism in the American Northeast,” *Common-place: The Journal of Early American Life* 13, no. 2 (Winter 2013). <http://commonplace.online>; Benjamin Church, *Entertaining passages relating to Philip's War which began in the month of June, 1675* (Boston: Printed by B. Green, 1716; reprint by Evans Early American Imprint Collection, 2011), 2. <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/N01515.0001.001>.
450. Increase Mather, *An arrow against profane and promiscuous dancing. Drawn out of the quiver of the Scriptures* (Boston: Printed by Samuel Green, 1684; reprint by Evans Early American Imprint Collection, 2011), 8-10. <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/N00292.0001.001>; Mary White Rowlandson, *A True History of the Captivity & Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson, a Minister's Wife in New England* (London: Printed by Joseph Poole, 1682; digital reprint by University of Michigan, 2018), 3.

described the prophet as a “Daeman” sent “to prejudice the Pagans against the Gospel” and instill hatred for the English in their hearts.<sup>451</sup>

As with other aspects of Anglo-Indian relations, the native revitalization movement was interpreted through a cosmic narrative that framed these efforts as the work of the Devil. Mather's reference to the “Apparition” was published years after the war's conclusion, but it was based on rumors that circulated during the conflict as pious soldiers sought to make sense of the “antichristian” violence unleashed upon their settlements. Relying on established cultural-religious beliefs, this shadowy figure was portrayed as the Devil's emissary, perhaps even the Antichrist himself, tasked with disrupting the work of Christian missionaries among the Algonquian tribes and reawakening their satanic allegiances. Revitalization emboldened cultural resistance at a time when anti-English sentiment was on the rise among the varied tribes, all of which was interpreted as diabolic intrigues against the “rule of saints” in the region. After decades of millennialist anticipation, the prophesied final days appeared to be unfolding around the “godly colonies” at an accelerated pace as the Devil's legions gathered to wage a war of apocalyptic proportions.

### KING PHILIP'S WAR

In the typological exegesis of contemporary Puritan divines, biblical parallels between the devastating pan-Indian uprising that came to be known King Philip's War (or “Metacom's Rebellion”) and the battles of the Old Testament were self-evident. The fourteen month conflict remains one of the bloodiest ever in American history in terms of casualties per capita; a cataclysmic event that permanently reshaped Anglo-Indian relations in the region and undermined the accepted sacred and

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451. Cotton Mather, *The triumphs of the reformed religion, in America. The life of the renowned John Eliot...* (Boston: Printed by Benjamin Harris, & John Allen, 1691; digital reprint by Evans Early American Imprint Collection, 2011), 107-08. <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/N00446.0001.001>.

cosmic narratives that provided the basis of the prophetic mission of the New England elect. The unprecedented ferocity of native attacks upon the region's Christian population and the sheer scale of destruction left behind signaled the long anticipated cosmic rupture prophesied in the book of Revelation. It appeared that the Devil had, indeed, been “loosed out of his prison” to gather the heathen armies of Gog and Magog and strike against the apostolic guardians of Christ's “true church” in the Wilderness.<sup>452</sup> “Thus hath the Enemy done wickedly in the Sanctuary, they have burnt up the Synagogues of God in the Land,” lamented Increase Mather. “[T]hey have cast fire into the Sanctuary, they have cast down the dwelling place of his name to the Ground.”<sup>453</sup>

The circumstances that culminated in war are complex, resulting from a combination of factors that led to the increasing disenfranchisement of the region's native populations in the previous decades of “peace.” The uprising began in Plymouth colony, where Anglo-Indian relations had rapidly deteriorated following the deaths of William Bradford (d. 1657) and Massasoit (d. 1660). A new generation of leaders emerged on both sides of the cultural divide who were far less committed to civil coexistence than their predecessors and external pressures guided them towards confrontation. The collapse of the wampum-based economy left the region's tribes with little to trade beyond their labor and land, bringing them under increased colonial exploitation and dominance. Tensions increased as Plymouth's jurisdiction further expanded into Wampanoag territory, resulting in the forfeiture of traditional hunting grounds through often unfair or illicit means; the destruction of native crops and foraging areas by freely grazing English livestock; and the codification of systemic inequality through judicial imbalances prejudiced against native peoples – all of which was cited by Metacom, the Wampanoag grand sachem known to the English as “King Philip,” as major tribal grievances.<sup>454</sup>

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452. Revelation 20:7-8, *The 1599 Geneva Bible* (White Hall, WV: Tollege Press, 2010).

453. Mather, *A Brief History of the Warr with the Indians*, 41.

454. Daniel R. Mandell, *King Philip's War: Colonial Expansion, Native Resistance, and the End of Indian Sovereignty* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 27-31, 38.

Hostility towards the work of English missionaries was another important factor that contributed to the rise in intercultural hostilities. With the Algonquian revitalization movement came cultural resistance to Christian indoctrination, as “powwaws among the Narragansetts, Nipmucks, Pocumtucks, and Wampanoags [counseled their people] that war was the only means available to preserve their way of life.” Metacom was one of many native leaders who felt compelled to act against the further undermining of traditional culture and spirituality among his people.<sup>455</sup> By the early 1670s, John Eliot voiced concerns over the discernible rise in “such violent opposition by Satan” to the English Christianization efforts as native converts were routinely harassed and pressured into renouncing their newly adopted faith.<sup>456</sup> Daniel Gookin noted similarly, describing

the malice of Satan against Christ's work among those Indians [seeking] to hinder their progress in religion; for they finding Englishmen, professing Christian religion, so enraged against them, and injurious to them without cause [that they pressured native converts] to apostasy, and if the devil by this stratagem could have prevailed, then the whole work of Christ among them [...] would have been utterly overthrown; this would have gratified Satan and his instruments greatly.<sup>457</sup>

When anti-colonial tensions finally erupted into open warfare it became a multidimensional conflict that included civil war between Christian and non-Christian natives, with Praying Towns routinely attacked by Metacom's rebel forces. Those captured were additionally singled out for special tortures.<sup>458</sup>

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455. Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999), 101; John Easton, *A Narrative of the Causes which Led to Philip's Indian War, of 1675 and 1676*, edited by Franklin Hough (Albany: J. Munsell, 1858), 10. Among the grievances voiced to John Easton, the deputy governor from Rhode Island who attempted to negotiate peace with the Wampanoags just prior to the outbreak of war, Metacom expressed a “great Fear to have ani of ther Indians should be caled or forced to be Christian Indians.”

456. Harold W. Van Lonkhuizen, “A Reappraisal of the Praying Indians: Acculturation, Conversion, and Identity at Natick, Massachusetts, 1646-1730,” *The New England Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (Sept. 1990): 420. [www.jstor.org/stable/366370](http://www.jstor.org/stable/366370); John Eliot to Richard Baxter, June 27, 1671, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 15 (1931): 462.

457. Daniel Gookin, *An Historical Account of the Doings and Sufferings of the Christian Indians in New England, in the Years 1675, 1676, 1677, Volume II* (Manuscript, 1831; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1972), 454.

458. Van Lonkhuizen, “A Reappraisal of the Praying Indians,” 420.

It was within this increasingly antagonistic climate that John Sassamon, a “Praying Indian” leader from Natick who worked closely with John Eliot and acted as a translator and scribe for Metacom, was found dead in January 1675. Sassamon was rumored to have been murdered after warning Josiah Winslow, the governor of Plymouth, of the grand sachem's planned uprising. However, there was further speculation that he was targeted (“martyred”) for his missionary activities.<sup>459</sup> Three Wampanoag warriors, all close to Metacom, were found guilty of the murder and executed by the Plymouth authorities. In Puritan myth, when one of the accused men approached Sassamon's decaying corpse upon its discovery “it fell a bleeding as if it had been newly slain; albeit it was buried a considerable time before,” a miraculous sign from God that cast undeniable guilt upon him as a perpetrator of this “antichristian” crime.<sup>460</sup> Regardless of these wondrous claims, the dubious trial and conviction of Metacom's men proved to be the flash point that ignited King Philip's War.

Metacom, the youngest son of Massasoit, became grand sachem of the Pokanokets following the suspicious death of his brother Wamsutta, in July 1662. Often portrayed as a young and petulant leader, in reality Metacom inherited an eroding dominion and found himself under intense pressure to serve the economic, political, and cultural interests of his increasingly dispossessed people. The continued failure of diplomatic efforts with the Plymouth authorities, particularly under the governorship of Winslow, left him with few options beyond armed resistance. It was not long before the Wampanoag sachem came to be the subject of inquiries into various rumors that he was conspiring

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459. Lepore, *The Name of War*, 21-26; Weimer, *Martyrs' Mirror*, 131-33; Mather, *A Brief History of the Warr with the Indians in New-England*, 11; according to Mather, there was “but one reason why the Indians murdered John Sausaman, [it] was out of hatred for him for his Religion, for he was Christianized, and baptiz'd, and was a Preacher amongst the Indians.”

460. James P. Ronda and Jeanne Ronda, “The Death of John Sassamon: An Exploration in Writing New England Indian History,” *American Indian Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (1974): 96. [www.jstor.org/stable/1183890](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1183890); Increase Mather, *A Relation of the Troubles which have Hapned in New-England, by reason of the Indians there. From the year 1614 to the year 1675* (Boston: Printed by John Foster, 1677; online reprint by Text Creation Partnership: Evans Early American Imprint Collection, 2011), 75. <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/N00179.0001.001>; Lepore, *The Name of War*, 24; as Lepore notes, there is little doubt that Sassamon was murdered, however, the evidence against Tobias, Wampapaquan, and Mattashunannamo (the accused Wampanoag men) remains unconvincing.

anti-colonial unrest. In 1667, he was accused of disloyalty and joining with the Dutch and French to plot attacks on English settlements. Four years later he was called before colonial authorities (in the town of Taunton) following reports of a planned Wampanoag-Narraganset uprising. The murder of Sassamon was considered to be yet another example of the rebellious leader's intrigues and provocations against colonial rule.<sup>461</sup>

In June 1675, following the conviction of Metacom's men, a band of Wampanoag warriors attacked the recently established settlement of Swansea while residents were observing a religious "Day of Humiliation." The anticipated uprising had begun. Nine people were killed, others left mortally wounded, with chilling descriptions of "brutish barbarities" that included "beheading, dismembering, and [the] mangling [of townspeople] in a most inhuman way."<sup>462</sup> Properties were also pillaged and burned. Nathaniel Morton, on behalf of Plymouth's Council of War, responded by warning that "the awful hand of God [is] upon us [and has permitted] the heathen to carry it with great insolency and rage against us." In preparing for war, he called for collective repentance so "that the Lord would be intreated to go forth with our forces and bless, succeed, and prosper them, delivering them from the hands of his & our enemies."<sup>463</sup>

English settlements across southern Massachusetts fell victim to fearsome guerrilla tactics throughout the summer as bands of warriors from neighboring tribes joined in the uprising.<sup>464</sup> Colonial accounts of these raids detailed acts of savagery and torture, underscoring the diabolic nature of

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461. Eric Shultz and Michael J. Tougias, *King Philip's War: The History and Legacy of America's Forgotten Conflict* (New York: The Countryman Press, 2017), 24-25; Julie A. Fischer and David J. Silverman, *Ninigret, Sachem of the Niantics and Narragansetts: Diplomacy, War, and the Balance of Power in Seventeenth-Century New England and Indian Country* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), 104-06; Bourne, *Red King's Rebellion*, 98-106.

462. Lepore, *The Name of War*, 23, 78; Mather, *A Brief History of the Warr with the Indians in New-England*, 12; Benjamin Church, *Diary of King Philip's War, 1675* (Tiverton, RI: Lockwood Publications, 1975), 75-77.

463. Nathaniel Morton, "To The Elders of the [Churches of] Plymouth," June 22, 1675, in Leonard Bliss, *The History of Rehoboth, Bristol County, Massachusetts: Comprising a History of the Present Towns of Rehoboth, Seekonk, and Pawtucket, from Their Settlement to the Present Time* (Boston: Otis, Broaders, and Company, 1836), 79-80.

464. Lepore, *The Name of War*, xi-xii; Mandell, *King Philip's War*, 71-77; Schultz and Tougias, *King Philip's War*, 43-52. Early support for the rebellion included factions of Narragansetts, Pocumtucs, Nipmucks, and remnants of the Massachusetts, including a number of Christian Indians who abandoned their Praying Towns.

Metacom's rebellion. Thomas Wheeler, a Puritan militia captain ambushed during the siege of Brookfield, Massachusetts, solidified this portrayal in describing the antichristian taunts used by native combatants who “blasphem[ed] the Name of the Lord, and reproach[ed] us his Afflicted Servants, scoffing at our prayers” as they laid siege to the town.<sup>465</sup> The attack signified the dangerous expansion of the insurgency beyond the confines of Plymouth colony. In Puritan mythology, it also marked the first instance of divine intervention on behalf of the English. As native combatants set fire to much of the settlement they were “miraculously defeated of their purpose by the immediate hand of God,” as an unexpected rainstorm thwarted their “devilish stratagem” by extinguishing the flames and allowing for the embedded militia company to escape.<sup>466</sup>

The participation of “Praying Indians” in these attacks was particularly troubling and confirmed the innate diabolic nature of even supposedly Christian-reformed Algonquians in the minds of Puritan detractors. In their defense, Daniel Gookin argued that the violence of “barbarous heathens” should not be blamed on “the poor Christian Indians” who had “acquitted themselves courageously and faithfully.”<sup>467</sup> For most colonists, however, this line of distinction proved naive as more Christianized natives participated in the rebellion. Reflecting on their treachery, chronicler Nathaniel Saltonstall derided the Nipmuc and Massachusetts defectors who “[wore] the Name of *Praying-Indians*, but [...] have made Preys of much *English* blood.” A number of “Praying Indians,” in turn, fell victim to English lynch mobs.<sup>468</sup> Massachusetts Bay authorities responded by confining all Christian natives to

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465. Bourne, *Red King's Rebellion*, 118; Weimer, *Martyr's Mirror*, 122; Thomas Wheeler, *A thankfull remembrance of Gods mercy to several persons at Quabaug or Brookfield...* (Cambridge: Printed by Samuel Green, 1676; digital reprint by Evans Early American Imprint Collection, 2011), 7. <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/n00167.0001.001>.

466. William Hubbard, *A Narrative of the Troubles with the Indians In New-England, from the First Planting thereof in the Year 1607. to this Present Year 1677* (Boston: Printed by John Foster, 1677; reprint, Worcester: Printed by Daniel Greenleaf, 1801), 79-80. <https://archive.org/details/narrativeofindia00inhubb>.

467. Gookin, *An Historical Account of the Doings and Sufferings of the Christian Indians, Volume I*, 37.

468. Nathaniel Saltonstall, *The present state of New-England, with respect to the Indian War.: Wherein is an account of the true reason thereof...* (London: Printed at the King's Arms in the Poultry, 1676; digital reprint by Internet Archive, 2012), 19. <https://archive.org/details/presentstateofne00nsra>; G.E. Thomas, “Puritans, Indians, and the Concept of Race,” *The New England Quarterly* 48, no. 1 (1975): 19-20. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/364910>.

their Praying Towns and, due to continued support for the uprising, eventually concluded that “all the praying Indians, except those secured on the islands, [were] with the enemy,” with even those who remained loyal to the English Crown viewed as potential enemy combatants.<sup>469</sup>

War was formally declared against “King Philip” and his insurgent followers in September 1675. Violence had engulfed much of the region by mid-fall, with some of the worst attacks involving Nipmuc and Pocumtuc warriors who pillaged English settlements along the Connecticut River.<sup>470</sup> Deemed a “just warre” by leading religious figures, from the beginning King Philip's War was portrayed in dramatic biblical terms with saintly English soldiers “fighting a holy war against the Antichristian enemies of the true church.” In the confident words of Josiah Winslow, “our god will get himself a glorious name, by the overthrow of his blasphemous enemies.”<sup>471</sup> Native combatants, in turn, demonstrated their diabolic allegiances by the “antichristian” nature of their attacks – which, in a number of instances, deliberately took place on days of religious observation or involved overt acts of blasphemy. In one such incident, a Springfield family was murdered by “these devillish Enemies of Religion” as they approached the town meeting house for church services. More dramatically, a pious soldier named Goodman Wright was reportedly attacked by a group of native warriors who then “rippe[d] him open and put his Bible in his Belly.”<sup>472</sup>

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469. Edward Rawson, “At a Council Held in Boston, August 30, 1675,” in Saltonstall, *The present state of New-England, with respect to the Indian War.*, 7-8; Kristina Bross, *Dry Bones and Indian Sermons: Praying Indians in Colonial America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 155; Noel Sainsbury, ed., *Calendar of State Papers: Colonial Settlers – America and West Indies* (London: Eyre & Spottiswode, 1893), 351.

470. Mandell, *King Philip's War*, 71-77.

471. Weimer, *Martyrs' Mirror*, 124; “To Honored Sir,” July 18, 1675, in the *Winslow Family Papers II, 1638-1760*, Massachusetts Historical Society; Jenny Hale Pulsipher, *Subjects unto the Same King: Indians, English, and the Contest for Authority in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 191.

472. Lepore, *The Name of War*, 105; *News from New-England: Being a True and Last Account of the Present Bloody Wars...* (London: Printed by J. Coniers, 1676; reprinted, Boston: Coolidge & Wiley, 1850), 16; Nathaniel Saltonstall, *A new and further narrative of the state of New-England: being a continued account of the bloody Indian-war, from March till August, 1676*, in Charles H. Lincoln, ed., *Narratives of the Indian Wars, 1675-1699* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1952), 85-86.

As in the Pequot War, the weaponization of biblical typologies and cosmic narratives elevated King Philip's War from a struggle for regional power to a prophesied battle of apocalyptic proportions. Framed as a crusading holy war, the pronounced sense of righteousness and martyrdom of the English colonists served to intensify the “defensive” violence unleashed against their native foes (as an act of sacred bloodletting) and allowed soldiers to “imagine themselves as linked to the holiness of times past and times eternal.”<sup>473</sup> The war reached its bloody apex at the onset of winter with the “Great Swamp Fight,” a preemptive strike upon the formally neutral Narragansett tribe in southern Rhode Island. Accused of harboring Wampanoag refugees and assisting in anti-English raids, the “prideful insolence” of the Narragansetts was swiftly punished. A joint colonial-native militia band massacred an estimated three hundred warriors and unknown number of women and children, most burned alive when their fortified village was set aflame. Although victorious, it proved to be a costly battle for the English with nearly two hundred militia casualties and many surviving Narragansett warriors compelled to join Metacom's rebellion in the months that followed.<sup>474</sup>

As the war dragged on the lines between the corporeal and cosmic planes of battle continued to blur, with fallen soldiers celebrated as “Christian martyrs” and the New England elect cast as the apocalyptic “Witnesses” of Revelation in foreboding religious exhortations.<sup>475</sup> The “Wilderness,” in particular, played a prominent role in the wartime consciousness as the more traumatic events involved forest ambushes or raids against isolated frontier settlements. The faith of outlying colonial religionists

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473. Alfred A. Cave, *The Pequot War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1989), 171-73; Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad*, 80-83; Weimer, *Martyrs' Mirror*, 121-25, 141.

474. Mandell, *King Philip's War*, 87-89; Schultz and Tougias, *King Philip's War*, 249; Fischer & Silverman, *Ninigret, Sachem of the Niantics and Narragansetts*, 127-28; Bourn, *The Red King's Rebellion*, 157-59. In retaliation, the Narragansett sachem Canonchet led a campaign that consisted of 2,000 warriors from southern Rhode Island and another 1,500 warriors from various tribes of central Massachusetts to engage in anti-English raids throughout the spring of 1676.

475. Weimer, *Martyr's Mirror*, 127; Increase Mather, Reiner Smolinski, ed., *An Earnest Exhortation to the Inhabitants of New-England to Harken to the Voice of God in His Late and Present Dispensations As Ever They Desire to Escape Another Judgment, Seven Times Greater Than Any Thing Which as Yet Hath Been* (Boston: Printed by John Foster, 1676; reprinted by Electronic Texts in American Studies, 1998), 23-24, 26. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/etas/31/>.

was continually tested by the dark expanses of unconquered woodlands as a generalized fear was shared by all who lived “in [constant] danger of being seized upon by the ravening Wolves, who lye in wait to shed blood.”<sup>476</sup> In their mastery of the unfamiliar terrain it was even believed that the Algonquian peoples possessed the supernatural ability “to communicate and conspire with the natural environment against the English advances.”<sup>477</sup>

Each native victory further empowered the Devil, with a number of frontier Christian footholds uprooted and reconquered in his name. As in the Pequot War, rumors of black magic also accompanied the powwaws who aligned themselves with the uprising. In one such example, Tispaquin, the “Black Sachem of Assawamset” (now Middleboro), was said to have been accompanied by “the Devil [who] appeared in the Shape of a Bear walking on his 2 hind feet” during an attack on Bridgewater, Massachusetts.<sup>478</sup> Another instance of native diabolism was relayed by Mary Rowlandson. Prior to an attack on the town of Sudbury, she recounted a predawn ritual led by a powwaw whose face was painted “as black as the devil.” Kneeling on a deer-skin, this mysterious shamanic figure entranced the gathered warriors and proclaimed that “the Devil had told [him in a vision] that they should gain the victory” over the besieged frontier settlement.<sup>479</sup>

Despite sustaining terrible losses the war eventually shifted in colonial favor. After eluding authorities for over a year, Metacom was tracked down and killed in a swamp near his home village at Mount Hope (located in modern-day Bristol, Rhode Island), in August 1676. He was shot “through his Venomous and Murderous Heart” by a Christian native named John Alderman. Benjamin Church,

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476. Mather, *An Earnest Exhortation to the Inhabitants of New-England*, 11.

477. Alan Heimert, “Puritanism, the Wilderness, and the Frontier,” *The New England Quarterly* 26, no. 3 (1953): 372. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/362849>.

478. William S. Simmons, “Southern New England Shamanism: An Ethnographic Reconstruction,” *Papers of the 7th Algonquian Conference* (1975): 231. <https://ojs.library.carleton.ca/index.php/ALGQP/article/view/337>; Ezra Stiles, *Extracts from the itineraries and other miscellanies of Ezra Stiles, D. D., LL. D., 1755-1794* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1916), 232.

479. Simmons, “Southern New England Shamanism,” 233-34; Mary Rowlandson, *A Narrative of the Captivity, Sufferings, and Removes, of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson Who was Taken Prisoner by the Indians; with Several Others...Written by Her Own Hand* (London: Printed by Joseph Peele, 1682; reprint, Boston: Printed by Thomas and John Fleet, 1791) 90.

the captain who led the military expedition, adhered to English law regarding traitors by beheading and quartering (“hewed in pieces before the Lord”) the grand sachem's corpse. As a final act of righteous vengeance, Church declared that “forasmuch as he had caused many an Englishman's body to lie unburied and rot above ground, that not one of his bones should be buried.” Metacom's right hand was given to Alderman as a reward; his left hand was then sent to Boston, where it was received as a war trophy. The rest of the dismembered remains were strung from the trees in the swamp, with the exception of his head, which was sent to Plymouth and paraded through the streets to proclaim “victory of the saints' God over the Indians' devil” on a day of thanksgiving.<sup>480</sup> In celebrating this macabre event, Increase Mather praised the

wonderful success against the Enemy, which the Lord hath blessed them with, *ever since they renewed their Covenant with him*; and that so they might have hearts raised and enlarged in ascribing praises to God, he delivered *Philip* into their hands. [...] Thus did God break the head of that Leviathan, and gave it to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness.<sup>481</sup>

Although insurgent native leaders continued to be hunted down and sporadic fighting took place along both the northern and western frontiers for at least another year, the killing of Metacom – “that Blasphemous Leviathan” and “worshipp[er] of the Devil” who incited “cruel depredations upon the poor English planters” – marked the symbolic end of “The Great Indian War” for southern New England.<sup>482</sup>

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480. Martha Finch, *Dissenting Bodies: Corporealities in Early New England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 58-59; Mather, *A Brief History of the Warr with the Indians in New-England*, 72; Church, *Diary of King Philip's War, 1675*, 156; Lepore, *The Name of War*, 173-75; Mandell, *King Philip's War*, 124-27; James Drake, “Restraining Atrocity: The Conduct of King Philip's War,” *The New England Quarterly* 70, no. 1 (1997): 40. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/366526>.

481. Mather, *A Brief History of the Warr with the Indians in New-England*, 73.

482. Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana: Or the Ecclesiastical History of New-England* (London: Printed for Thomas Parkhurst, 1702; reprint, Hartford: Silas Andrus & Son, 1855), 183, 566. <http://name.umd.umich.edu/AFK3754.0001.001>.

## COSMIC STRUGGLE AND THE COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS

The leading contemporary narratives of King Philip's War were Increase Mather's *A Brief History of the Warr with the Indians in New-England* (1676) and William Hubbard's *A Narrative of the Indian Wars in New England* (1677). Although each differed in emphasis and interpretation, both placed the conflict within the dual narrative of sacred agency and cosmic struggle. Mather, in particular, unequivocally stated the cosmic significance of the conflict. He believed that Metacom's rebellion was meant to strike at the heart of the "Errand into the Wilderness," describing how "the Heathen People amongst whom we live, and whose Land the Lord God of our Fathers hath given to us for a rightful Possession, have [plotted] mischievous devices against that part of the English Israel which is seated in these goings down of the Sun."<sup>483</sup> The extent to which native insurgents were able to act against the "godly colonies" of New England on the Devil's behest, however, reflected God's rising animosity towards his chosen people.

Mather's work relies heavily upon Old Testament narratives as a means to interpret the war as God's wrathful chastisement for the declining religious and moral standards of the colonies. Drawing biblical parallels with the heathen "Philistines [who] proved a sore scourge to the Children of Israel," Metacom's uprising represented "a dreadfull Token of the Displeasure of God," with native insurgents cast as "the perfect children of the Devill." Having tested and renewed the sacred covenant, God's glory of grace was once again (albeit temporarily) extended to the New England elect as "a divine hand beyond all expectation manifested [and] wasted the Heathen, by sending the destroying Angell [to consume them] by the Sword, & by Famine and by Sickness." For Mather this was no military

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483. Increase Mather and Royster, Paul (editor), *A Brief History of the Warr with the Indians in New-England (1676): An Online Electronic Text Edition*, Faculty Publications, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries, 9. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/librarscience/31>.

victory; but rather an act of deliverance, as he proclaimed, “for it is God which hath thus saved us, and not we our selves.”<sup>484</sup>

William Hubbard, a rival Puritan minister from the Congregational Church of Ipswich, Massachusetts, offered a less damning interpretation of the war. Rather than a reflection of moral and spiritual failure, he saw the conflict as an inevitable cultural-religious clash between a “Christian people” and their “Pagan neighbors [who] still inhabited a moral Region of darkness.” Placed within the English Protestant tradition of martyrdom and persecution, his *Narrative* framed King Philip's War as a defensive holy war against the Devil's provocations in the region. In Hubbard's words, “the Devil, who was a Murderer from the beginning, had so filled the heart of this salvage Miscreant [Metacom] with envy and malice against the English, that he was ready to break out into open war against the Inhabitants of Plimouth.”<sup>485</sup> By “casting Indian enemies as demonic heathens,” Hubbard “reinforced the righteousness of [colonial military] actions and suggested that Englishmen fought and died martyrs’ deaths in God’s plan to wrest New England from the Devil himself.”<sup>486</sup>

The prominence of Mather and Hubbard in colonial Puritan society ensured a wide readership for their competing historical accounts and cosmic interpretations. The influence of these tracts proved far-reaching, as reflected in the works of other contemporary war chroniclers during this period. In *Abraham in Arms* (1678), Samuel Nowell, a Puritan chaplain during the war, combined the earlier militancy of Edward Johnson with the biblical references of Mather. The conflict was framed as a “just warre” between the “Souldiers of Christ” and “allied forces of Antichrist,” as Nowell

projected Old Testament typologies [...] and encouraged puritan listeners and readers to imagine themselves in the company of Abraham and other

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484. Mather, *A Brief History of the Warr with the Indians in New-England*, 24, 45, 75-77.

485. Matthew H. Edney and Susan Cimburek, “Telling the Traumatic Truth: William Hubbard's "Narrative" of King Philip's War and His "Map of New-England";” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 61, no. 2 (2004): 328-29. [www.jstor.org/stable/3491788](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3491788); William Hubbard, *A Narrative of the Troubles with the Indians In New-England*, 71.

486. Michna, “A Prey to Their Teeth,” 36.

biblical warriors who engaged in holy wars against heathen enemies over land that was theirs by right of solemn covenant with God.<sup>487</sup>

“God by his providence keeps some Nations and peoples unsubdued, as he did with Israel of old [in order] to teach Israel War,” Nowell further exhorted. The Algonquian tribes were “the Nations which the Lord hath left to prove Israel [ie, New England] by, those that had not known the War of Canaan.” He emphasized the apocalyptic dimension of Anglo-Indian hostilities, proclaiming that “when our Saviour tells us in the latter dayes there shall be Wars and Rumors of Wars [...] it is to teach us that wisdom, that we may be found fitted and prepared to act our parts” against those “that shall oppose the advancement of the Kingdome of Christ.”<sup>488</sup>

The militantly apocalyptic rhetoric of Nowell, as extreme as it seems, was based upon a commonly accepted Puritan cosmic and typological framework for interpreting King Philip's War.<sup>489</sup> In an election day sermon delivered at Hartford in May 1677, Samuel Hooker drew similar biblical parallels between Metacom's uprising (a conflict that was “made to appear against his wilderness people”) and God's use of the heathen Assyrians and Moabites as “the rod of his anger” against the sinful Israelites.<sup>490</sup> Daniel Gookin, a generally sympathetic chronicler of native peoples, used similar typological points to decipher providential meaning from these tumultuous events. He interpreted the war's “holy ends” as multi-purpose: God's intention was “to make a rod of the barbarous heathen to

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487. Gregory Alan Michna, “A Communion of Churches: Indian Christians, English Ministers, and Congregations in New England, 1600-1775,” *Graduate thesis* (Morgantown: Eberly College of Arts and Sciences at West Virginia University, 2016), 202. <https://researchrepository.wvu.edu/etd/6229>.

488. Samuel Nowell, *Abraham in Arms, Or The First Religious General With His Army Engaging in A War For which He had Wisely Prepared*, in Slotkin & Folsom, *So Dreadfull a Judgment*, 267, 283-86.

489. Michna, “A Prey to Their Teeth,” 30-43. A number of prominent New England Puritan ministers incorporated apocalypticism, cosmic narratives, and biblical parallels into their sermons during this period, including John Eliot, Edward Bulkley, Joshua Moody, John Richardson, and Samuel Willard.

490. Samuel Hooker, *Righteousness rained from heaven, or A serious and seasonable discourse exciting all to a serious enquiry after, and continued waiting for the effusions of the spirit, unto a communication and increase of righteousness* (Cambridge: Printed by Samuel Green. 1677; digital reprint, Text Creation Partnership: Evans Early Imprint Collection, 2011), 1. <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/N00170.0001.001>.

chastise and punish the English for their sins,” while, simultaneously, “purging and trying the faith and patience of the Godly English and Christian Indians.” The conflict further provided a sacred test of “courage and valor” in Christian warfare; a disciplining opportunity for the younger generation to meet “Satan's instruments” in battle and further advance the Gospel among their vanquished ranks.<sup>491</sup>

In her captivity narrative, Mary Rowlandson likewise found cosmic meaning in the hardship she endured. Her tribal captors were described in both savage and diabolic terms: “merciless heathens,” “wolves,” “infidels,” “hell-hounds,” and “black creatures [who] rejoiced in their inhumane, and many times devilish cruelty to the English.” However, as a devout Puritan, she understood these servants of the Devil to be subservient to “the strange providence of God.” Religious declension had invited divine retribution against the sinful colonies and “instead of turning His hand against [Metacom's forces], the Lord feeds and nourishes them up to be a scourge to the whole land,” similar to the biblical chastisement of the sinful Israelites.<sup>492</sup> As John David Miles notes, Rowlandson's tract both popularized and reinforced the message of the wartime jeremiads by “offering a fall from English civilization, “punishment” at the hands of heathen Indian “devils,” redemption (a word with religious connotations), and return to the fold of Lord (as symbolized by the English towns and church congregations) as a powerful metaphor for the Puritan church in the wilderness of religious tumult.”<sup>493</sup>

Cosmic interpretation and typological parallels also found their way into the pages of other popular war-time tracts. Philip's Walker's epic poem “Captan Perse & his coragios Company” (1676) portrays the conflict in unmistakably apocalyptic terms, proclaiming that “The vials of thy wrath appear for thine / Lett all the pours of heaven & earth Combin[e] / Let hell know it is Curbd by pours devine.”

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491. Daniel Gookin, *An Historical Account of the Doings and Sufferings of the Christian Indians in New England in the Years 1675, 1676, 1677* (1677) reprinted in *Archæologia Americana: Transactions and Collections of the American Antiquarian Society, Volume 2* (Cambridge: American Antiquarian Society, 1836; digitized, 2007), 437-40, 454.

492. Rowlandson, *A Narrative of the Captivity, Sufferings, and Removes, of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*, 7-11, 106.

493. John David Miles, “The Afterlives of King Philip’s War: Negotiating War and Identity in Early America,” *Doctoral diss.* (Durham: Duke University, 2009), 130. <https://dukespace.lib.duke.edu/dspace/handle/10161/1572>.

As biblical antagonists in this sacred drama, native combatants were described as “helish satyrs,” the “rablment of Divels,” and “monsterus beasts [...] who atend only an evil speritt sugested by satan.” The same narrative accompanied their ferocity in battle. “[T]hrough Hell thay raysd the spirits Infernall” against the godly colonies, proclaimed Walker; a “savig race” who thirsted for the “blud” of saints.<sup>494</sup> Likewise, Benjamin Tompson's “New England Crisis” (1676) portrayed the uprising in similarly diabolic terms, noting “the rigour of such hellish foes [...] who lust to make a Christian bleed.” Influenced by the wartime Puritan jeremiads, Tompson called upon New England's third generation colonists to repent or else face further calamity at the hands of God, warning: “If daily whippings once reform our wayes / These all will Issue in our Fathers Praise / If otherwise, the sword must never rest / Till all New-Englands Glory it divest.”<sup>495</sup>

An extensive body of scholarship devoted to King Philip's War exists, including a number of recently published works.<sup>496</sup> However, the focus of these studies has generally revolved around the war's material impact on native autonomy, colonial governance, and European expansion in the region. By comparison, relatively little has been said about the cosmic paradigm in which the conflict was interpreted by many of the period's leading voices and the lasting effect that such narratives had upon New England's colonial process (particularly in influencing Anglo-Indians relations during the last decades of the century). Apocalyptic prophecy, Old Testament typologies, and the diabolic

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494. Philip Walker and Diane Bornstein, ed., “Captan Perse & his coragios Company,” in *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 83, Part 1 (April 1973): 81-89.

495. Benjamin Tompson, *New England's crisis, or, A brief narrative of New-England's lamentable estate at present, compar'd with the former (but few) years of prosperity* (Boston: Printed by John Foster, 1676; digital reprint by Text Creation Partnership: Evans Early American Imprint Collection, 2011), 10-21.  
<http://name.umd.umich.edu/N00166.0001.001>.

496. With the notable exception of Jill Lepore's *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (1998), all of the major revisionist histories of King Philip's War have largely downplayed the influence of sacred and cosmic narratives in the colonial interpretation of this native uprising. However, there has been a wealth of new critical contributions and intercultural analysis provided, particularly in James Drake's *King Philip's War: Civil War in New England, 1675-1676* (1999), Eric Schultz and Michael Tougias' *King Philip's War: The History and Legacy of America's Forgotten Conflict* (2000), Lisa Brooks' *Our Beloved Kin: A New History of King Philip's War* (2018), and Christine Delucia's *Memory Lands: King Philip's War and the Place of Violence in the Northeast* (2018).

portrayal of the Algonquian peoples reinforced existing ideological worldviews and provided an intellectual framework for deciphering providential meaning in the cataclysmic trauma of King Philip's War. It also gave powerful justification for further expansionist policies, which was accompanied by the increased marginalization and subordination of native peoples in the conflict's aftermath.

Cotton Mather, the preeminent Puritan minister of the late seventeenth-century, looked back on the war as an inevitability; the culmination of over fifty years of cultural-religious antagonism between the exiled English saints who laid claim their sacred inheritance and the diabolically-inspired natives who remained defiant to the rule of Christ. In his ecclesiastical history of New England, he reasoned,

these Parts were [originally] covered with nations of barbarous Indians and Infidels, in whom the Prince of the Power of the Air did work as a Spirit; nor could it be expected that the nation of Wretches, whose whole Religion was the most explicit sort of Devil-Worship, should not be acted by the devil to engage in some early and bloody action, for the extinction of the Plantation so contrary to his Interests, as that of New-England was.<sup>497</sup>

Based on a familiar narrative derived from earlier generations of Puritan divines, Mather asserted that the underlying diabolic nature of the Algonquian race invited perpetual struggle – and the occasional call for sacred bloodletting – over the region's contested Wilderness. For New England's devout colonial religionists, this was an integral part of the sacred drama that continued to define their higher sense of identity, place, and purpose in the New World. It also marked a caustic turning point for Anglo-Indian relations across the region. As historian Douglas Leach notes, in the wake of King Philip's War “many of the settlers were convinced that the Indians were actually tools of Satan, temporarily unleashed by God to punish His erring children, but nonetheless legitimate objects for all the hatred and destruction which the English could bring to bear upon them.”<sup>498</sup>

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497. Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, 479-80.

498. Douglas Edward Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk: New England in King Philip's War* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1958), 194.

## VII. From the Promise of a New-Jerusalem to a Revealed Gog and Magog: The End of Days for the Biblical Commonwealth, 1677-1693

In the sacred history of New England, King Philip's War represented an important cosmic rupture by which God both chastised and tested his chosen elect; the first major battle in the Devil's multi-front campaign to overthrow the weakened Kingdom of Christ and return the Wilderness to its original state of spiritual darkness. The colonies may have prevailed over the diabolically-inspired native insurgents who sought to “drive [the English] into the Sea, or make them flie the Countrey,” but Puritan divines foresaw peril in victory and warned against religious complacency.<sup>499</sup> Preaching on the need for covenant renewal, Increase Mather referenced the Book of Nehemiah to remind his followers that Israel was “delivered from the Heathen Nations, who had sorely wasted and destroyed them, in order to [enact] a *Reformation* of those evils that had provoked the Lord against them.”<sup>500</sup>

It was a message that resonated with those who bore witness to the conflict's destructive impact and understood the consequences of God's wrath. All told, nearly nine thousand people were killed during the conflict (out of an estimated total population of eighty thousand people); two-thirds of which reflected native casualties, one-third sustained by the English. Of the native survivors, thousands were enslaved or driven from their ancestral lands in the war's aftermath. For the colonists, the material impact was unprecedented. Fifty-two (out of ninety) towns were attacked, with twenty-five pillaged and seventeen completely destroyed. Thousands of people became refugees or wards of the state.<sup>501</sup>

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499. Mary White Rowlandson, *The sovereignty & goodness of God, together, with the faithfulness of his promises displayed; being a narrative of the captivity and restauration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (Cambridge: Printed by Samuel Green, 1682; digital reprint, Text Creation Partnership: Evans Early American Imprint Collection, 2011), 63. <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/B09906.0001.001>.

500. Increase Mather, *Renewal of covenant the great duty incumbent on decaying or distressed churches. A sermon concerning renewing of covenant with God in Christ, preached at Dorchester in New-England, the 21. day of the 1. moneth 1677. being a day of humiliation there, on that occasion* (Boston: Printed by John Foster, 1677; digital reprint, Text Creation Partnership: Evans Early American Imprint Collection, 2011), 1. <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/N00180.0001.001>.

501. Russell Bourne, *The Red King's Rebellion: Racial Politics in New England, 1675-1678* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 36.

Despite a decisive victory over Metacom's insurgency, it took years for the colonies to recover from their losses. The total cost of the war effort is estimated to have been in excess of £100,000, with a further £150,000 worth of property destroyed (“there having been about twelve hundred houses burnt, eight thousand head of Cattle great and small killed, and many thousand bushels of wheat, pease, and other grain burnt”) during the conflict.<sup>502</sup> The consequences proved far-reaching, resulting in an increased dependency on England that invited greater scrutiny. In a scathing report presented to the Crown, Edward Randolph made no effort to hide his contempt for the religious zealotry of the Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay authorities which, he argued, directly contributed to the break-down of Anglo-Indian relations and invited the catastrophic war.<sup>503</sup>

The colonies were left in disarray in the aftermath of King Philip's War, but it was the Algonquian tribes of southern New England who paid the heaviest toll. Upon the war's conclusion an estimated 60-80% of the native insurgents who joined in the uprising either perished, were sold into slavery, or else fled their ancestral lands.<sup>504</sup> As a result, the balance of power shifted dramatically east of the Connecticut River. The surviving Wampanoags were largely scattered and forced to vacate their lands; those who remained within Plymouth's colonial jurisdiction “were placed under a biblical tithing system, with every nine Indians being watched by a tenth who was responsible to the authorities.” In Massachusetts Bay, the remnants of the Nipmuc and Massachusetts tribes were also kept under strict surveillance. Even the once dominant Narragansett confederation was toppled as Rhode Island

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502. James Drake, *King Philip's War: Civil War in New England, 1675-1676* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 168; Edward Randolph, *The Causes and Results of King Philip's War (1675)*, in John Gould Curtis, ed., *American History Told by Contemporaries, vol. 1, Era of Colonization, 1492-1689* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1910; Google Books, 2007), 460.

503. Randolph, *The Causes and Results of King Philip's War (1675)*, 458-59. Among other points of criticism, Randolph condemned “the imprudent zeal in the magistrates of Boston to christianize” among the Algonquian tribes and those who “for their profit, put the lawes severely in execution against the Indians.”

504. Sherburne F. Cook, “Interracial Warfare and Population Decline among the New England Indians,” *Ethnohistory* 20, no. 1 (1973): 12-13, 17-21. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/481423>. In addition to the direct casualties of war, thousands of natives were displaced and succumbed to starvation and disease; others were hunted down and captured. Those found guilty of anti-English violence were sentenced to death or sold abroad into slavery.

authorities assumed control over much of their former territories. And the Mohegans, despite their pro-English allegiances, eventually relinquished their autonomy in eastern Connecticut and accepted colonial governance over tribal affairs.<sup>505</sup>

New England's Anglo-Indian relations were forever shattered by the wartime hostilities, with the innate “savagery” of the Algonquian peoples cited as justification for policies that ensured their general subjugation. Even formally sympathetic missionaries, such as Edmund Browne, a Sudbury Puritan minister, spoke against further Christianization efforts among the region's tribes, arguing, “great care and paynes hath bin taken by us to effect [native conversion], but after many years' indeavors, their aversion from the Gospel, their deriding yea blaspheming the blessed name of Christ and his wayes declare such unworthy of the grace of the Gospel.”<sup>506</sup> In May 1677, the Massachusetts General Court required that all remaining natives in the Bay colony who were not directly employed by an English family be resettled in the four remaining Praying Towns. In the years that followed these confined native townships acted as reservations that combined both “Christian” and “heathen” populations with few attempts at religious instruction.<sup>507</sup>

### A DARK CLOUD RISING FROM THE EAST

Rather than ending in defeat, the interconnected threat of diabolic intrigue and native unrest continued in the wake of King Philip's War as the theater of war shifted from the heart of the “biblical

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505. Douglas Edward Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk: New England in King Philip's War* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1958), 245; Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999), 183-84.

506. Edmund Browne to Massachusetts Magistrates, [1677?], Middlesex County Court, Folio Collection, 1677, Folio 78; quoted from Jenny Hale Pulsipher, “‘Our Sages are Sageles’: A Letter on Massachusetts Indian Policy after King Philip's War,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 58, No. 2 (Apr., 2001): 446. <http://www.jstor.com/stable/2674192>.

507. Jenny Hale Pulsipher, *Subjects unto the Same King: Indians, English, and the Contest for Authority in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 242-43; Pulsipher, “‘Our Sages are Sageles;” 437. Freedom of movement was allowed outside of the Praying Towns, however, it “require[d] a magistrate's certificate with which [native residents] could prove their fidelity to any English person coming upon them in the woods.”

commonwealth” to the decidedly less godly (and therefore more vulnerable) frontier settlements to the north. Metacom's rebellion may have been quelled in southern New England, but the spirit of native resistance continued to spread among the tribes of Maine and New Hampshire as they raided outlying English settlements and continued to threaten regional stability. Anticipating further cosmic challenges, Increase Mather spoke ominously of “a dark Cloud rising from the East in respect of Indians in those parts, yea a Cloud which streameth forth blood.”<sup>508</sup>

Prior to the war, Anglo-Indian relations remained generally peaceful along the northeastern (also referred to as “The East”) frontier. In part this was due to a more balanced ratio between native and colonial populations. More importantly, the antagonistic reach of Puritanism was relatively weak in these parts as the predominately Anglican settlers were more concerned with secular pursuits (fishing, fur trading, timber) than the propagation of the Gospel among the neighboring tribes. However, unfair trade practices, occasional cruelties, and a general encroachment invited local tensions – which, in turn, ignited into a wave of anti-English violence as neighboring colonists demanded the disarming of the area's native populations and militia bands from Massachusetts Bay pursued the fleeing Wampanoags, Narragansetts, and Nipmucs who took refuge among them.<sup>509</sup>

For three years the coastal English settlements of Maine were raided in campaigns launched by the confederated Wabanaki tribes (Mi'kmaqs, Maliseets, Passamaquoddies, Abenakis, and Penobscots) as scores of frontier colonists were maimed, killed, or taken captive. Relatively isolated and lacking a coordinated defense, the English presence in the area proved highly vulnerable to native assaults that

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508. Increase Mather and Royster, Paul (editor), *A Brief History of the Warr with the Indians in New-England (1676): An Online Electronic Text Edition*, Faculty Publications, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries, 75. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libraryscience/31>

509. Jenny Hale Pulsipher, ““Dark Cloud Rising from the East”: Indian Sovereignty and the Coming of King William's War in New England,” *The New England Quarterly* 80, no. 4 (2007): 591. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20474581>; Margaret Ellen Newell, *Brethren by Nature: New England Indians, Colonists, and the Origins of American Slavery* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015), 190; Daniel Mandell, *King Philip's War: Colonial Expansion, Native Resistance, and the End of Indian Sovereignty* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 130-31.

left a trail of destruction comparable to Metacom's attacks upon Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay. By late 1676, a number of garrisons had been overtaken and much of the settled areas east of the Kennebec River had been abandoned as colonial refugees streamed south into Massachusetts Bay. As one militia officer noted, "it is hardly imaginable the pannick and fear that is upon our upland plantations and scattered places [as people desert] their habitations." However, the Wabanaki resistance did not end there. Bands of warriors engaged in a series of brazen naval assaults the following summer, seizing dozens of English fishing vessels and crippling economic interests along the coast.<sup>510</sup>

As in past conflicts with tribal adversaries, Puritan chroniclers made propagandist note of the powwaws and sagamores who worked among the Wabanakis in the service of the Devil.<sup>511</sup> In his narrative of the "Indian Wars," William Hubbard cited the example of Squando, a formerly Christianized sagamore of the Saco tribe, who he denounced as a "Diabolical Miscreant" and "Minister of Satan." It was claimed that the powerful native leader not only "laugh[ed] at the English" and mocked their claims of God's favor, but was said to receive "Visions and Revelations" from "the Prince of darkness" who appeared to him as "an Angel of Light" with orders "to carry on the designs of his Kingdome."<sup>512</sup> Increase Mather corroborated the rumors of Squando's diabolism, albeit in a modified version where the Devil instead appears to him "in the form of a tall Man, in black Cloaths."<sup>513</sup> The antichristian nature of the Wabanaki resistance was also seemingly confirmed by their

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510. Pulsipher, *Subjects unto the Same King*, 228; Mandell, *King Philip's War*, 130-34; Schultz and Tougias, *King Philip's War*, 49-50, 70-73; Mary Beth Norton, *In the Devil's Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003), 83-93; Daniel Denison to Governor Leverett, October 28, 1675, in John Albion Andrew, ed., *The New-England Historical & Geological Register and Antiquarian Journal, Volume XXIII* (Boston: David Clapp & Son, 1869), 327.

511. Cotton Mather, *Decennium luctuosum. An history of remarkable occurrences, in the long war, which New-England hath had with the Indian savages, from the year, 1688. To the year 1698.* (Boston: Printed by B. Green & J. Allen, 1699; digital reprint by Text Creation Partnership: Evans Early American Imprint Collection, 2011), 103.  
<http://name.umdl.umich.edu/N00725.0001.001>.

512. William Hubbard, *A narrative of the troubles with the Indians in New-England, from the first planting thereof in the year 1607, to this present year 1677* (Boston: Printed by John Foster, 1677; digital reprint by Text Creation Partnership: Evan Early American Imprint Collection, 2011), 48-49, 61-62.  
<http://name.umdl.umich.edu/N00171.0001.001>.

513. Mather, *An History of the Warr with the Indians in New-England*, 26.

actions, with accounts relaying how “Our Enemies proudly exult over us and Blaspheme the name of our blessed God; Saying, *Where is your God?* [while] they cruelly Torture [their victims] to Death.” Frontier ministers, in particular, feared they would be singled out and forced “by torture to blaspheme Christ.”<sup>514</sup> The Wabanakis, like other insurgent tribes, undoubtedly learned to exploit the religious vulnerabilities of the English colonists as an effective form of psychological warfare.<sup>515</sup>

Nearly every town of Maine and New Hampshire had been attacked by the war's conclusion, with an estimated 260 English settlers left dead or missing (out of a population of approximately 3,500). Following a series of negotiations and the intervention of the English Crown, the conflict ended with the Treaty of Casco, in April 1678.<sup>516</sup> However, the uneasy peace only lasted a decade, when King William's War – also known as “The Second Indian War” – unleashed a new wave of native resistance against English territorial incursions and treaty violations. Renewed hostilities began in April 1688, when a provocative colonial expedition into Maine was launched after a series of minor native raids had taken place. Wabanaki settlements were attacked, captives were taken, and the French Saint-Castin Trading House at Penobscot Bay was destroyed. In response, warrior bands plundered English settlements along the northeastern frontier. By the following year the Nine Years War had begun in Europe, entangling these regional hostilities in a broader transatlantic conflict.<sup>517</sup>

King William's War pitted volunteer and impressed militia bands from Massachusetts Bay and their Iroquois allies against the professional soldiers of New France who made common cause with the

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514. *A farther brief and true narration of the great swamp fight in the Narragansett country December 19, 1675* (London: Printed by J.D., 1676; reprinted, Providence: Society of Colonial Wars in the state of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, 1912), 4. <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000560939>; Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, 486.

515. Pulsipher, *Subjects unto the Same King*, 190-92.

516. John Nobel, “King Philip's War in Maine,” *Master's thesis* (Orono, ME: University of Maine, 1970), 7. <https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/etd/3256>; Mandell, *King Philip's War*, 6-7, 130-34; William D. Williamson, *The History of the State of Maine, 1620-1820* (Hallowell, ME: Glazier, Masters & Co., 1832), 553. <https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mainehistory/34>.

517. Pulsipher, “Dark Cloud Rising from the East,” 598-601; Charles Starbird, *The Indians of the Androscoggin Valley: Tribal History, and their Relations with the Early English Settlers of Maine* (Lewiston: Lewiston Journal Printshop, 1928), 59-60

confederated Wabanaki tribes.<sup>518</sup> In large part this was a regional struggle over land and resources, broken treaties, and competing colonial-native ambitions that was complicated by European politics. However, as in past Anglo-Indian conflicts, devout colonial religionists saw broader cosmological significance in these events. For the Puritans, the alliance between the Catholic French settlers and Wabanaki tribes signaled a gathering of antichristian forces (“Daemons, in the Shape of Armed Indians and French-men”) in an effort to rout the English from the New World.<sup>519</sup>

Franco-Indian relations had remained consistently favorable in this part of the region throughout the seventeenth-century, which included successful missionary efforts by Jesuit priests – who, according to their Puritan detractors, filled native minds with “French Poisons, that have made such Raging Devils of them.”<sup>520</sup> The association between Roman Catholicism and Antichrist can be traced to the rhetoric of the early Protestant reformers, from which the nefarious intent of the French (who incited the “North Indians” against the English) fell within a long history of sectarianism and perceived cosmic intrigue. Denounced as a “deceptive, corrupting, Babylonish, and anti-christian” religion, the very nature of the Catholic faith was believed to impel its adherents to “partake in the curse pronounced in Revelation on the beast, which makes war with the Lamb, and with the saints.”<sup>521</sup> In that light, King Williams War represented the culmination of a grand diabolic conspiracy and the prophesied acceleration of apocalyptic events yet to come.

Cotton Mather's *Decennium Luctuosum* (1699) provides the most vivid historical account of this “mournful decade” of war. In his narrative, King William's War pointed to God's disapproval of the

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518. Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk*, 244-45. Mutual jealousy and suspicion compromised the effective functioning of the United Colonies of New England during this period, which fractured in the aftermath of King Philip's War. Refusing to back Massachusetts Bay, both Plymouth and Connecticut offered no military support in quelling the native threat to the north.

519. Mather, *Decennium luctuosum*, 112.

520. Mather, *Decennium luctuosum*, 216.

521. Cotton Mather, *Hannah Swanton, the Casco captive, or, The Catholic religion in Canada and its influence on the Indians in Maine* (Boston: Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, 1837; digitized by Internet Archive), 60-61. [https://archive.org/details/cihm\\_45552](https://archive.org/details/cihm_45552).

sinful and materialistic lives led by the frontier colonists. He proclaimed “the Lord is punishing of us, for our Leaving of His Ordinances, and removing to a place of no Gospel for larger Accommodations in the World, and Exposing our Children to be bred up like the very Indians, into whose Hands we are fallen!”<sup>522</sup> However, within the tragedy of war he saw the seeds of reform as he “sought to forge a collective memory out of the trauma experienced [...] that would reunite and redeem New England by transposing the suffering of those individual Puritans on the Maine frontier onto all Puritans.”<sup>523</sup> In a nod to the Protestant martyrologists of past generations, Mather provided visceral imagery of the suffering endured by captive settlers at the hands of the native “Devils Incarnate,” who

Tyed their Captives unto Trees, and first cutting off their Ears, have made them to Eat their own Ears, and then have broyled their whole Bodies, with slow Fires, dancing the mean while about them, and cutting out Collops of their Flesh, till with lingring Tortures they have Martyred them to Death!<sup>524</sup>

As an appeal to New England's godly communal experience, the accounts of martyrdom in Mather's work served to connect the wartime suffering “to times past and times eternal” (sacred history) by providing an implicit means to identify the victims with the “persecuted true church.” Additionally, cosmic emphasis was given to these traumatic events “as an attack on the innocent saints, propelled by the machinations of Satan and Antichrist.”<sup>525</sup> In his estimation the trail of death, destruction, and dislocation left by the French-Wabanaki raiding parties was the work of “the Devil and his Agents, [who] were the cause of all the Molestation.”<sup>526</sup>

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522. Mather, *Decennium luctuosum*, 206.

523. Kathleen Kennedy, “On Writing the History of So Much Grief: Cotton Mather’s *Decennium Luctuosum* and the Trauma of Colonial History,” *The Eighteenth Century* 58, no. 2 (2017): 220. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/90010496>.

524. Mather, *Decennium luctuosum*, 224.

525. Adrian Chastain Weimer, *Martyrs' Mirror: Persecution and Holiness in Early New England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 140-41.

526. Mather, *Decennium luctuosum*, 111.

Hostilities continued unabated for nearly a decade, with over sixty attacks on English settlements during this time and an estimated 500-600 colonists left dead or missing.<sup>527</sup> Beyond the immediate threat of these raids, all who resided along the region's northeastern frontier were subjected to the psychological torments of a people under siege. Captive-taking became far more prevalent than in past conflicts as the war came to be “distinguished by the breaking of family ties [and] separation of parents and children,” the horrors of which struck at the very heart of the Puritan patriarchal order. There were also rumors of ghastly rituals that included cannibalism, rape, and torture that accompanied the raiding campaigns, leaving vulnerable populations in a constant state of terror.<sup>528</sup> “In light of the perceived alliance between Satan and the Wabanakis,” historian Mary Beth Norton notes, “such suffused dread could easily have been vocalized in what became the commonplace description of the devil's threats to “tear [the afflicted] to pieces” if they did not comply with his demands.”<sup>529</sup> Drovees of refugees flooded into Massachusetts Bay during these war-torn years, haunted by the traumatic experiences of the embattled frontier – and as the “godly colonies” descended into a renewed state of sacred crisis, Puritan divines warned that the Devil followed closely behind...

## NEW ENGLAND FORSAKEN

From the earliest period of settlement, the cyclical relationship between sacred confidence and despair had informed the worldviews of the New England elect – and, by extension, guided the dynamic shifts in Anglo-Indian relations across the region. Whereas the jeremiads of the 1670s signaled hope for redemption and reform as a means to reclaim the prophetic mission of the founding

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527. George Plummer Hadley, *History of the Town of Goffstown, 1733-1920* (Concord, NH: The Rumford Press, 1922), 86.

528. Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973), 121-26.

529. Norton, *In the Devil's Snare*, 135-36.

fathers, the dominant religious forecast for the 1680s and 1690s was far less optimistic. Cotton Mather encapsulated this millenarian despair in a foreboding thanksgiving sermon where he proclaimed

our little New-England [...] shall soon be Forsaken by that God, Whom our Fathers followed hither, when it was a land not sown; and Christianity [...] will Return to the old World again, leaving here, not a New-Jerusalem [...] but a Gog and Magog, as Master [Joseph] Mede feared; for the last of the Latter dayes.<sup>530</sup>

For devout colonial religionists, the final decades of the seventeenth-century marked the downfall of the biblical commonwealth and a permanent fracturing of Congregationalist cultural-religious hegemony that had dominated regional governance, civic life, and intercultural relations. More and more the dismissive interpretations of Joseph Mede, who assigned the role of “Gog and Magog” to the Americas in his apocalyptic theories, appeared to be substantiated by a series of ominous events.<sup>531</sup>

As in past times of spiritual crisis, a deepened interest in “prodigious events” – that is, “occurrences [in which] God had manifested himself more directly than he did in the ordinary course of nature” – occupied the imaginations of Puritan intellectuals in these later decades.<sup>532</sup> The first systematic attempt at recording and deciphering the “lore of portents” took place at a gathering of prominent ministers on May 12, 1681, from which Increase Mather compiled reports for his *An Essay for the Recording of Illustrious Providences* (1684).<sup>533</sup> Damning signs of “Divine Judgement” included “Tempests, Floods, Earth-quakes, Thunders as are unusual, strange Apparitions, [and]

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530. Cotton Mather, “The Way to Prosperity,” in *The wonderful works of God commemorated. Praises bespoke for the God in heaven in a thanksgiving sermon; delivered on December 19, 1689* (Boston: Printed by S. Green, 1690; digitized by Text Creation Partnership: Evans Early American Imprint Collection, 2011), 34-35.

<http://name.umdl.umich.edu/N00431.0001.001>.

531. Richard Godbeer, *The Devil's Dominion: Magic and Religion in Early New England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 75-77.; Jeffrey K. Jue, *Heaven Upon Earth: Joseph Mede (1586-1638) and the Legacy of Millenarianism* (Heidelberg: Springer Publishing, 2006), 185.

532. Michael P. Winship, “Prodigies, Puritanism, and the Perils of Natural Philosophy: The Example of Cotton Mather,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (1994): 94. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2947006>.

533. Richard Weisman, *Witchcraft, Magic, and Religion in 17<sup>th</sup> Century Massachusetts* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts, 1984), 31-32; Perry Miller, *The New England Mind, From Colony to Province* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1953), 180.

Diabolical Possessions” – violent, unsettling, or seemingly paranormal events where “the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against [the] ungodliness and unrighteousness of Men.”<sup>534</sup> New England appeared to be rife with such phenomenon during this troubled period.<sup>535</sup>

The later publication of Cotton Mather's *Memorable Providences, Relating to Witchcraft and Possessions* (1689) and *The Wonders of the Invisible World* (1693) provided a more explicit “cosmological explanation of [this] inexplicable phenomena in the context of his millennialist expectations of the imminent Second Coming.” Believing the world to be on the cusp of eschaton, the younger Mather recognized the increasingly heterogeneous New England population to be unprepared for the sacred task at hand during these final days, if not entirely forsaken by God. As such, he viewed the rise in wondrous “Prodigies” as “Diabolical Spectacles;” indications that the Devil was “making one Attempt more upon us; an Attempt more Difficult, more Surprizing, more snarl’d with unintelligible Circumstances than any that we have hitherto Encountred.” Predicting greater calamities to come, he warned, “Great WO proceeds from the Great WR ATH, with which the DEVIL, towards the End of his TIME, will make a DESCENT upon a miserable World.”<sup>536</sup>

Amid these ominous signs of providential disfavor and diabolic intrigue the provincial autonomy of the New England colonies came to an end in June 1684. The fallout from King Philip's War had dire political consequences, with the losses sustained during the conflict serving as an excuse for the English crown to revoke the original colonial charters. Further turmoil struck the following year

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534. Increase Mather, *An essay for the recording of illustrious providences wherein an account is given of many remarkable and very memorable events which have hapned this last age, especially in New-England* (Boston: Printed by Samuel Green, 1684; digital reprint by Text Creation Partnership: Early English Books Online, 2011), preface, 339-40. <http://name.umd.umich.edu/A50202.0001.001>.

535. Mather, *An essay for the recording of illustrious providences*, 86, 161, 311. Examples of the judgmental acts of “Illustrious Providence” Mather cited in his study included a freak lightning storm that struck down a great number of livestock on June 8, 1682 in Norwalk, Connecticut; “A strange Whirl-wind in Cambridge 1680. Another in New-Haven Colony 1682. Another at Springfield [also in 1682];” and, on June 11, 1682, what can only be described as violent poltergeist activity that occurred at the Inn House and Tavern in the town of Great Island, New Hampshire.

536. Cotton Mather, *The Wonders of the Invisible World. Observations as Well Historical as Theological, upon the Nature, the Number, and the Operations of the Devils*, edited by Reiner Smolinski (Boston: Printed by Benjamin Harris, 1693; reprint by Electronic Texts in American Studies, 1998), ix, xii, 5, 41. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/etas/19>.

when James II, a devout Catholic, ascended the throne. Within his short reign the new king issued a Proclamation of Indulgence, which extended rights to Catholics and Dissenters, and ordered a regional restructuring to form the “Dominion of New England” under the imperial governorship of Sir Edmund Andros.<sup>537</sup> The unpopular governor was soon deposed in the wake of England's “Glorious Revolution” (1688-89) and the Dominion was disbanded. However, when a new charter was issued by King William III, in October 1691, it retained de facto royal authority over colonial affairs and imposed a policy of religious toleration – which struck at the heart of New England's covenant with God as it “removed Puritanism from the center of public life and relegated it to personal practice.”<sup>538</sup>

New colonial realities necessitated the reexamination of past biblical assurances. For the dwindling faithful, cosmic adversity appeared to be closing in from from all sides. “The DEVIL,” according to Cotton Mather, had made plain his desire “to Regaine poor *New England*” from the godly elect.<sup>539</sup> While the forces of Antichrist (in the guise of Frenchmen and Wabanakis) attacked the northeastern frontier and the Provincial charter effectively dissolved the “biblical commonwealth,” colonists were subjected to a period of harsh winters and summers marked by drought as the worst decades of the “Little Ice Age” were underway. Crops failed, livestock perished, and scarcity led to widespread famine across the region. Troubles worsened when a new smallpox epidemic ravaged the area between 1689 and 1690, in which time “one thousand of our neighbors have been carried to their long home.”<sup>540</sup> It was during this time that New England's largest witch panic unfolded.

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537. Kenneth Silverman, *The Life and Times of Cotton Mather* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 64; Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, 324-25.

538. Monica Fitzgerald, *Puritans Behaving Badly: Gender, Punishment, and Religion in Early America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 67; Joseph Conforti, *Imagining New England: Explorations of Regional Identity from the Pilgrims to the Mid-Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 59-60.

539. Silverman, *The Life and Times of Cotton Mather*, 130; Cotton Mather, *The short history of New-England. A recapitulation of wonderful passages which have occur'd, first in the protections, and then in the afflictions, of New-England* (Boston: Printed by B. Green, 1694; digital reprint by Text Creation Partnership: Evans Early American Imprint Collection, 2011), 37. <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/N00570.0001.001>.

540. Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana, Or, The Ecclesiastical History of New England, Volume I* (Hartford: Silas Andrus & Son, 1855; digitized by Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Library, 2005), 92. <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/AFK3754.0001.001>.

## THE SALEM AFFAIR

The most extensively documented and studied instance where the nonconforming Reformed Anglo-Protestant narrative of cosmic struggle shaped the course of events in the region was in the experience of the Salem Witch Trials. Taking place during a late period where the mass witch hunts of England had all but ceased, nearly two hundred people were accused of the crime of witchcraft in Essex County, Massachusetts, between February 1692 and May 1693. More than fifty individuals confessed to their participation in this purported grand conspiracy; of which, twenty-eight were convicted, nineteen were executed by hanging, and one elderly man was pressed to death by large boulders.<sup>541</sup> It is beyond the scope of this study to provide a full account of the events surrounding the Witch Trials or explore the complex set of social, religious, patriarchal, psychological, legal, and economic factors involved in this tragic ordeal.<sup>542</sup> There are, however, relevant aspects of “the Salem affair” that intersect with Puritan-conceived sacred and cosmic narratives and the associated diabolic portrayal of the region's Algonquian tribes.

For ecclesiastical authorities, the purported demonic possessions, spectral hauntings, and acts of diabolic subversion that took place in Salem Village had obvious cosmic significance that related to New England's covenantal crisis – and for some, the coming apocalypse.<sup>543</sup> “The awful hand of God [is] now upon us,” warned Increase Mather, and “evil Angels [have been let loose] among us to perpetrate such horrid Mischiefs; and suffering of Hells instruments, to do such fearfull things as have

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541. David D. Hall, *Witch-Hunting in Seventeenth-Century New England: A Documentary History, 1638-1693, Second Edition* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 280-81; Benjamin C. Ray, *Satan & Salem: The Witch Hunt Crisis of 1692* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2015), 1; Margo Burns and Bernard Rosenthal, “Examination of the Records of the Salem Witch Trials,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 65, no. 3 (2008): 401-22. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25096805>.

542. Benjamin C. Ray, ““The Salem Witch Mania”: Recent Scholarship and American History Textbooks,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 78, no. 1 (2010): 40-64. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40666461>.

543. Richard Weisman, *Witchcraft, Magic, and Religion*, 120-23.

bin scarce heard of” in the region's colonial history.<sup>544</sup> It was clear to Deodat Lawson, a former Salem minister, why this crisis centered around Salem (one of the region's original “godly settlements”), since “[t]he Covenant People of God, and those that would Devote themselves Intirely to his Service, are the Special Objects of Satan's Rage and Fury.” Having failed to fulfill the sacred mission of the founding generation, God was compelled to “lengthen the Chain of the Roaring Lyon [...] so that the Devil is come down in great wrath” upon the backsliding colonists.<sup>545</sup>

Rather than view the afflicted as chastised victims, Samuel Parris, minister of the Salem Village Church during the time of these events, saw them as active participants in a broader diabolic conspiracy that spread far beyond Essex County. He denounced the “lamentable harmony between wicked men and devils, in their opposition of God's kingdom and interests,” and claimed that “[i]f ever there were Witches, Men & Women in Covenant with the Devil, here are Multitudes in New-England.” The scale of the trials provided ample proof of “[t]he Devil's prevalency in this Age;” a recognition that the third generation of English colonists were living in a late stage of sacred history that heralded Christ's prophesied return.<sup>546</sup>

Cotton Mather offered a more explicit millennialist dimension to the dark forces that had been unleashed upon Salem Village, which, he believed, marked “a decisive turning point in world history” that went beyond “ordinary judgment against God's chosen people.”<sup>547</sup> In *Wonders of the Invisible World*, he connected these events to the impending apocalypse, explaining,

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544. Increase Mather, *Cases of Conscience concerning evil Spirits Personating Men, Witchcrafts, infallible Proofs of Guilt in such as are accused with that Crime* (Boston: Printed by Benjamin Harris, 1693; digital reprint by Text Creation Partnership: Evans Early American Imprint Collection, 2011), ii. <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/N00531.0001.001>.

545. Weisman, *Witchcraft, Magic, and Religion*, 127; Deodat Lawson, *Christ's fidelity the only shield against Satans malignity. Asserted in a sermon delivered at Salem-village, the 24th of March, 1692* (Boston: Printed, by B. Harris, 1693; digital reprint by Text Creation Partnership: Evans Early American Imprint Collection, 2011), 26, 46. <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/N00515.0001.001>.

546. Samuel Parris, “Sermons of Rev. Samuel Parris of Salem Village, 1689-1694,” in *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register, Volume XII* (Boston: Printed by Samuel Drake, 1858), 122, 127.

547. Weisman, *Witchcraft, Magic, and Religion*, 130.

If the Devils *Time* were above a *Thousand Years ago*, pronounced, *Short*, What may we suppose it now in *Our Time*? Surely *We* are not a *Thousand Years* distant from those *Happy Thousand Years* of rest and peace [...] reserved for the people of God in the latter days; [In fact] there is cause to think, that we are not an *Hundred*. [...] *We do not see the Devil bound*; No, the Devil was never more let *Loose* than in our Days [which] proves the *Thousand Years* of Prosperity for the Church of God [...] is not very *Far Off*.<sup>548</sup>

The Algonquian peoples, as expected, featured prominently in Mather's cosmic narrative. Affirming the fearful reality of “Devils and Witches,” he pointed to the “Wigwams of Indians, where the pagan Powaws often raise their masters, in the shapes of Bears and Snakes and Fires” as their likely point of origin.<sup>549</sup> Although largely pushed to the edges of the colonial frontier by this period, the remaining powwaws still represented dangerous conduits for satanic power in the region. In his estimation, “the Prodigious *War* made by the *Spirits* of the *Invisible World* upon the People of New-England, in the year 1692 [...] have some of its [origin] among the *Indians*, whose chief *Sagamores* are well known [to be] horrid *Sorcerers*, and hellish *Conjurers*, and such as *Conversed* with *Daemons*.”<sup>550</sup>

The gathered testimonies and reoccurring motifs presented during the trials seemingly confirmed the connection between traditional Algonquian religious practices and the Salem events. Mather chronicled one such case, involving Mercy Short, a young servant girl who was tormented by fits and hallucinations construed as signs of bewitchment. Prior to her residence in Essex County, Short lived in the besieged Maine settlement of Salmon Falls. After witnessing the torture and execution of her family she was captured and taken to Quebec, where she was exposed to the spiritual practices of Sokoki tribesmen. Clearly traumatized by the ordeal, her testimony drew parallels between these former native captors and the supernatural afflictions she claimed to endure. She confessed to

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548. Mather, *The Wonders of the Invisible World*, 27-28.

549. Cotton Mather, “The Introduction,” in *Memorable providences relating to witchcrafts and possessions: a faithful account of many wonderful and surprising things that have befallen several bewitched and possessed person in New-England...* (Boston: Printed by R.P., 1689; digital reprint by Text Creation Partnership: Early English Books Online, 2011), [page unnumbered]. <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/A50139.0001.001>.

550. Mather, *Decennium luctuosum*, 102-03.

having been in the company of “the Diver” and described him as a short, dark figure, “not of a Negro, but of a Tawney, or an Indian colour [who] wore an high-crowned Hat, with straight Hair; and had one Cloven-foot.” It was further claimed that the figure spoke to her “in a foreign tongue” and asked that she “sign a book in red characters.”<sup>551</sup>

The details of Mercy Short's confession aligned with other storied accounts of native diabolism that were relayed during the trials: Sarah Osborne, one of the first to be accused, testified to a spectral assault where a “thing like an Indian, all black” dragged her out of bed. Samuel Wardwell confessed to having witnessed “spectral meetings attended by both Indians and witches.” It was alleged that Abigail Williams had been tormented by two spectral beings, which appeared as “a black woman and [an] Indian.” George Burrows, a minister with ties to Falmouth, was accused of conducting black masses and serving as “a spiritual agent of the French and Indians, who were still killing New England Christians.” Abigail Hobbs, another former resident of Maine, claimed to have met with the Devil at the edge of native territory while conspiring with Burroughs.<sup>552</sup> And, of course, there is the damning confession of Tituba, the enslaved Arawak native who served Reverend Samuel Parris's family and found herself at the center of the initial controversy. As historian Elaine Breslaw argues, Tituba's testimony directly fueled the witch panic as her native identity, “long associated with Satanic practices, not only predisposed her tormentors to accept her confession as truth but it also encouraged

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551. Deborah Kelly Kloepfer, “Cotton Mather's “Dora”: The Case History of Mercy Short,” *Early American Literature* 44, no. 1 (2009): 18-21. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27750112>; John McWilliams, “Indian John and the Northern Tawnies,” *The New England Quarterly* 69, no. 4 (Dec., 1996): 602-03. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/366555>; Cotton Mather, “A Brand Plucked out of the Burning” (1693) in George Lincoln Burr, ed., *Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases, 1648-1706* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914; digital reprint by Internet Archives, 2008), 288-89. <https://archive.org/details/narrativeswitch01burrgoog>.

552. Sarah Elizabeth Junod, “Manly Martyrs and Pitiful Women: Negotiating Race, Gender, and Power in Salem Witchcraft Tourism Since 1880,” *PhD dissertation* (Riverside, CA: University of California, 2020), 83-84. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0c55n489>; “Examination of Sarah Osborn as Recorded by John Hathorne,” *Salem Witch Trials Documentary Archive and Transcription Project*, University of Virginia, <http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/n95.html>; Norton, *In the Devil's Snare*, 301; “Testimony of Benjamin Hutchinson v. George Burroughs,” *Salem Witch Trials Documentary Archive and Transcription Project*, University of Virginia, <http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/n22.html>; Norton, *In the Devil's Snare*, 120-122; McWilliams, “Indian John and the Northern Tawnies,” 591-93.

others to incorporate selective elements of her exotic fantasy into their own confessions and beliefs of an evil presence.”<sup>553</sup>

Given the established cultural-religious beliefs of the Puritans and the traumatic frontier raids taking place just north of Essex County, it comes as no surprise why the diabolic motif of “the Indian” featured so prominently in these court testimonies. Highlighting the impact that war-time violence, captivity, and displacement had upon the residents of Salem Village, both Mary Beth Norton's *In The Devil's Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692* and John McWilliams' article “Indian John and the Northern Tawnies” offer a revised analysis of the witch panic. Through “a dual narrative of war and witchcraft,” Norton explains the intimate ties between Essex County and the embattled frontier settlements of Maine and New Hampshire: As men and supplies were shipped north from Salem's port the returning vessels carried refugees who fled the conflict and sought safe haven among relatives in the surrounding towns. The trauma of war ran deep in these communities and the “fears of Indian attack were ever-present, reviving terrifying memories of sudden raids that had killed relatives and friends and obliterated prosperous settlements.”<sup>554</sup> Obviously these interconnected events do not explain the full scope of the Essex County witch panic, however, as McWilliams contends, “neither the extent nor the intensity of Salem's experience of witchcraft is explicable without reference to the northern war and the communal spectre of the Indian devil.”<sup>555</sup>

In the narratives of contemporary Puritan leaders, the Salem events signaled a climax in the great cosmic struggle that shaped New England's early colonial period. “Our Land is Darkned indeed; since the Powers of Darkness are turned in upon us,” warned Cotton Mather, who reasoned that “[i]t is not without the wrath of the Almighty God Himself, that the Devil is permitted thus to come down

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553. Elaine G. Breslaw, *Tituba, Reluctant Witch of Salem: Devilish Indians and Puritan Fantasies* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 169; McWilliams, “Indian John and the Northern Tawnies,” 586-88.

554. Norton, *In the Devil's Snare*, 5, 12.

555. McWilliams, “Indian John and the Northern Tawnies,” 604.

upon us in wrath.” Called forth during the final days of sacred history and emboldened by “the Declining State of the Power of Godliness in [the] Churches,” the Devil unleashed a multi-front campaign of conquest to return New England's Wilderness to its original state of darkness.<sup>556</sup> Amid crop failures, pestilence, and ominous signs of God's displeasure, the forces of Antichrist brought terror to the northeastern frontier; while, simultaneously, war debts crippled the colonial economy and a new era of imperial governance undermined the “rule of saints.” It was then that the Devil attempted to subvert the weakened commonwealth from within through witchcraft and deceit, turning “the First-born of our English Settlements” against itself and instigating a wave of panic and persecution.<sup>557</sup>

Reason eventually prevailed as the witch trials that consumed Essex County came to an end fifteen months after this traumatic ordeal began. However, war with the Wabanakis and their French allies persisted for years to follow. Over time stability returned to the region, but the “glory of Scion” sought after by past generations continued to haunt the minds of devout colonial religionists. No longer a “preface to the New Heavens,” the once potent Congregationalist churches were reduced to modest houses of worship; and, rather than fulfill their destiny as “Witnesses” to the apocalyptic Second Coming of Christ, all but the most zealous Puritan ideologues accepted that the “Errand in the Wilderness” – the sacred mission that lay at the heart of their utopian-religious experiment in the New World – had come to an end, giving way to a decidedly more secular phase of colonial development.<sup>558</sup>

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556. Mather, *The Wonders of the Invisible World*, 32, 40.

557. Miller, *The New England Mind, From Colony to Province*, 202; Mather, *The Wonders of the Invisible World*, xii.

558. Thomas S. Kidd, “What Happened to the Puritans?,” *Historically Speaking* 7, no. 1 (2005): 32-34.

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/423170>; Karen Halttunen, “Cotton Mather and the Meaning of Suffering in the 'Magnalia Christi Americana',” *Journal of American Studies* 12, no. 3 (1978): 327-29. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27553427>.

## VIII. Conclusion

From William Bradford's claims of swamp-gathered Wampanoag black magicians who sought to obstruct initial English settlement in the region to Cotton Mather's fateful reflections that accompanied the final days of decline for the “godly commonwealth,” the dual narrative of sacred agency and cosmic struggle featured prominently in the annals of New England's early colonial history.<sup>559</sup> Accompanying the cultural-religious ideology of the dominant Separatist and Puritan settlers, these sacred and cosmic narratives provided a powerful framework for interpreting identity, place, and purpose in the New World – not only in the extreme dislocation of transatlantic exile or unfamiliar environment that surrounded their remote settlements, but also in the broader course of sacred history that framed their worldviews and guided their everyday lives. Most dramatically, it influenced the broader colonial process and dynamic shifts in relations with the Algonquian peoples of the region, which ultimately provided the underlying basis for the later doctrines of Manifest Destiny and American Exceptionalism.<sup>560</sup>

The self-assigned “Errand into the Wilderness” beckoned these nonconforming religious exiles to the region; an “inherited” estate that offered the sacred promise of deliverance, while subjecting them to the diabolic perils designed to test their faith in God. Through existential trials and hardships devout colonists prepared for the prophesied millennial Kingdom of Christ, using cosmic narratives to explain the rise and fall of their colonial-religious endeavor. The esoteric complexities of Calvinist

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559. William Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation, 1620-1647, Volume I*, edited by Worthington Chauncey Ford (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1912), 211-12. <https://archive.org/details/historyplymouth01socioog>; Cotton Mather., *The Wonders of the Invisible World. Observations as Well Historical as Theological, upon the Nature, the Number, and the Operations of the Devils*, edited by Reiner Smolinski (Boston: Printed by Benjamin Harris, 1693; reprint by Electronic Texts in American Studies, 1998), 31. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/etas/19>; In Mather's words, “there never was a poor Plantation, more Pursued by the *Wrath* of the *Devil*, than our poor New-England.”

560. Charles M. Segal and David C. Stineback, *Puritans, Indians & Manifest Destiny* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1977), 29; Philip F. Gura, *A Glimpse of Zion's Glory: Puritan Radicalism in New England, 1620-1660* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1984), 11.

cosmology, typological exegesis, and the English apocalyptic tradition were likely lost on the majority of New England's common settlers. Nonetheless, as part of a broader cultural-religious ideology they influenced the worldviews of ecclesiastical and civil authorities who actively guided the colonial process for all.<sup>561</sup> Far from representing a marginal religious fringe, these were the leading lights of their day; men who actively shaped the region's religious culture, civil polity, social discourse, legal systems, and intercultural relations throughout the early colonial period.

Highly influential cultural-religious ideologues such as John Cotton or Increase Mather were unambiguous in the beliefs regarding the sacred and cosmic dimension of the New England colonial endeavor – which, in turn, contributed to the tumultuous relationship with the neighboring indigenous populations. Fulfilling the role of cosmic adversaries, the region's Algonquian tribes played a central role in the colonial religionist belief system. The unique circumstances that accompanied initial contact between the early Separatist/Puritan settlers and the resident native peoples invited a cosmic clash from the beginning. Having suffered through the recent trauma of “The Great Dying” epidemic that decimated tribal populations along the Massachusetts coast, a greater emphasis was placed on the ritual appeasement of Hobbomock – a deity within the Algonquian spiritual pantheon associated with darkness, disease, and death – at the time of early English contact and permanent settlement. Inevitably, devout colonists interpreted the mysterious figure of Hobbomock as “the Devil” (as conceived of in the Reformed Anglo-Protestant tradition) and considered the native veneration of this god to be confirmation of his dominion over the New World's unconquered Wilderness.

The diabolic portrayal of New England's indigenous populations served varied purposes that closely corresponded with the cyclical nature of colonial-religious confidence and despair. During

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561. Among the most consequential figures of New England's early colonial period who broadly adhered to this ideological framework were William Bradford, Edward Winslow, John Winthrop, John Cotton, Thomas Shepard, Richard Mather, John Davenport, Thomas Hooker, Edward Johnson, Nathaniel Morton, John Eliot, Increase Mather, William Hubbard, Samuel Danforth, and Cotton Mather.

the earliest period of settlement, when the coastal tribes were still weakened by disease and faith in God's favor was strong, the prevailing relations of the day allowed for relative civility, reciprocity, and peace. Despite the ever-present potential for native attacks, the “diabolic savagery” of the surrounding tribes represented a theoretical designation (rather than a direct spiritual threat) that served to reinforce Reformed Anglo-Protestant identity in the desolation of the New World. As the colonies expanded, however, it proved impossible to maintain the idealistic vision of the founding religious ideologues. Internal tensions and material interests challenged social cohesion and religious orthodoxy, inviting providential disfavor for the New England colonial endeavor. It was in this state of spiritual crisis and vulnerability that Anglo-Indians relations dramatically shifted, as native adversaries were not only viewed as impediments to colonial expansion but “antichristian enemies” of the “true church.”

The first major conflict in the region was waged against the formidable Pequot tribe, which took place amid a climate of religious divisions that culminated in the Antinomian Controversy. Compromised by heresy and disunity, fearful colonists saw within the war effort a promise of redemption in the eyes of God. The war waged upon the Pequots was framed in biblical terms, imbued with great cosmic significance, and seemingly confirmed the preexisting conceptions and worldviews of New England's devout colonial religionists. As Alfred Cave explains, both Separatist and Puritan settlers shared in the same cultural-religious ideology that envisioned

the New World as a spiritual battleground between the Elect and the Forces of Darkness [with] the survival of the New World Zion requir[ing] decisive action [against] Indian conspiracies whose existence, though intangible, was necessary to fulfill [their] ideological expectations. [From] the beginning, they regarded armed confrontations with savage peoples in league with Satan as predictable, necessary events.<sup>562</sup>

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562. Alfred A. Cave, *The Pequot War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), 10-11.

In challenging English settlement in the Connecticut River Valley, the Pequots revealed themselves to be “antichristian forces” under the direction of the Devil to impede the advancement of the purified biblical commonwealth. The Pequots, themselves, understood the religious-based beliefs of the English Puritans and readily exploited them as an added psychological component to their battle tactics. Viewed as an act of sacred bloodletting, the extremities of war used against the offending tribe were justified both as a means of reasserting New England's covenant with God and ensuring colonial-religious dominance over the prophetically significant region.

Having proved victorious over both the divisive Antinomians and hostile Pequots, religious confidence was once again restored to the “godly colonies” as an era of stability and prosperity began. Relative civil coexistence was maintained between the region's fledgling English settlements and neighboring tribal confederations throughout this nearly forty-year period of “peace.” However, the diabolic portrayal of the Algonquians continued to impact the colonial process in a number of ways. The dual narrative of sacred agency and cosmic struggle provided a means by which cultural-religious hegemony was further consolidated (in a fairly systematic manner) across the region, to the detriment of the resident native tribes. Using Old Testament precedent, captives of the Pequot War were forced into domestic servitude or bonded slavery. A self-perceived sense of “sacred inheritance” invited conquest and expansion while, simultaneously, the supposed innate diabolism of native peoples contributed to the persistent frontier anxieties. A fear of traditional Algonquian religiosity and the ideological need for enforced Reformed Anglo-Protestant notions of “civility” motivated many of the legal statutes, segregationist policies, and common prejudices that developed. And it was also during this period of renewed sacred confidence that systematic missionary efforts among the Algonquian peoples began, arguably leading to the greatest assault upon traditional native culture in the region.

The consolidation of cultural-religious hegemony reached its apex following the broad acceptance of “The Cambridge Platform,” which codified New England Congregationalist polity and

orthodoxy. However, it was not long before corruption, internal dissension, and heresy invited providential disfavor once again. For many devout Puritans, King Philip's War represented a cosmic rupture that allowed for the Devil's native proxies to be unleashed (with God's permission) in order to challenge the religious complacency of the elect and chastise sinful colonists. The wartime jeremiad sermons, captivity narratives, and popular poetry of this period reflect this common theme of the “godly colonies” in crisis as the sacred covenant became further compromised through the back-sliding of the third generation. The war itself also marked a significant downward shift in New England's Anglo-Indian relations, from which there would be no return.

Unlike the general optimism that accompanied the earlier triumph over the Pequots, the military victory over Metacom's rebellion only brought further unease as perceived signs of God's waning favor continued unabated. Amid ominous portents and wrathful signs of judgment, further skirmishes took place along the northeastern frontier with vulnerable English settlements falling prey to the terror of the combined “antichristian forces” of the native Wabanakis and their Catholic French allies. Although the unraveling of apocalyptic prophecy never materialized, it was during these later decades that the “rule of saints” in the region came to an end with the revocation of the original New England colonial charters by royal authorities – which ushered in a new colonial era of religious tolerance and secular material pursuit. The “Errand into the Wilderness” that lay at the heart of the colonial religionist vision for transatlantic exile and new world settlement had ended in failure.

Existing scholarship has primarily focused on the religious idealism or material interests of the early English settlers as the defining factors in the colonization of New England. There is merit in both these main areas of thought, as each factor greatly contributed to the a complex and multilayered colonial process. However, historians have largely ignored the role played by the cultural-religious ideology (and associated narratives) of the nonconforming Reformed Anglo-Protestant traditions. Self-

perceived as a people in covenant with God, the influentially dominant minority of devout Separatist and Puritan settlers shaped nearly every aspect of New England's early colonial process. It was from within this “community of visible saints” that the dual narrative of sacred agency and cosmic struggle came to be applied to the settlement, governance, expansion, development, and, most significantly, relations with the resident Algonquian peoples in the region. In exploring the real-world impact (and resulting cultural-religious clashes) of these ideological beliefs and worldviews, it is hoped that the underlying psychological/religious motives that shaped the colonial process of seventeenth-century New England will find greater appreciation among future scholars in this area of study.

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