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Early Colonial Period in the History of American Literature

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I. INTRODUCTION

American Literature: Prose, fiction and nonfiction of the American colonies and the United States, written in the English language from about 1600 to the present. This literature captures America's quest to understand and define itself. From the beginning America was unique in the diversity of its inhabitants; over time they arrived from all parts of the world.

Although English quickly became the language of America, regional and ethnic dialects have enlivened and enriched the country's literature almost from the start. Today American prose encompasses a variety of traditions and voices that share a common context: the geographical region now known as the United States. Native American literatures, which were largely oral at the time of colonial settlement, stand apart as a separate tradition that is itself strong and varied.

For its first 200 years American prose reflected the settlement and growth of the American colonies, largely through histories, religious writings, and expedition and travel narratives. Biography also played an important role, especially in America's search for native heroes. Fiction appeared only after the colonies gained independence, when the clamor for a uniquely American literature brought forth novels based on events in America's past. With a flowering of prose in the mid-1800s, the young nation found its own voice. By then fiction had become the dominant literary genre in America. In the 20th century, American literature took its place on the world stage and began to exert influence on other literatures

Topicality of the research can be explained by the necessity of studying American literature and its history. The period of American literature which is called colonial period is very interesting in its exploration and pioneering of genres. This period of history of American literature is topical to explore because the roots of purely American literature lie lean on this period. The work on this topic will help to widen the knowledge and material for study regarding colonial period of American literature.

The aim of the qualification paper is to study the characteristic features of colonial period of American literature.

The tasks of the research include:

- studying the peculiarities, social condition, history and political views of the period;
- exploring the place of the period on the development of American literature;
- reviewing related literature on the peculiarities of the period;
- studying the works of representatives of the period and giving the overall background to the literature of the period.

Results and novelty of the qualification paper: Social and political condition along with the literary movements of the period were studied in the qualification paper. In studying the paper we approached to the colonial history of American literature as a separate period and studied the members of the period within the period. We also tried to give brief definition and description to the period with the help of works of representatives of the period.

Practical value of the qualification paper. Materials presented in the qualification paper are useful for the students of foreign languages departments in studying the history of American literature and its development stages. Qualification paper may serve as an additional source for doing self-study tasks, reports and other assignments in the History of English and American Literature.

Objects and methods of the research. Colonial period of American literature was taken as an object of our research. In doing the work we used the method of literature review in working with materials, literary analysis method in analyzing peculiar features of works of the period.

Structure of the qualification paper. The qualification paper consists of introduction, main part and its chapters, a conclusion and the list of used literature.

Introduction mainly deals with the research specifications and considers briefly the research aims, tasks, topicality and value.

The first chapter of the work is on the literature review about the colonial and early history of American literature.

The second chapter is devoted to the analysis of works of representative of colonial period of American literature.

THE MAIN PART

Chapter 1. Literature Review on the Place of Colonial Literature in the History of American Literature

1.1 Overview of American History and Literature

The immigration of the Pilgrims to New England occurred in stages. But that they had to go somewhere became apparent soon enough. Theirs was the position of the Separatist: they believed that the reforms of the Anglican church had not gone far enough, that, although the break with Catholicism in 1535 had moved some way toward the Puritan belief in and idea of religious authority grounded solely in Scripture, by substituting king for pope as the head of the church, England was only recapitulating an unnecessary, corrupt, and even idolatrous order [4]. In one basic respect, the Pilgrims are a logical outcome of the Reformation. In its increasing dissemination of the Bible, the increasing emphasis on it as the basis of spiritual meaning, the subsequently increasing importance of literacy as a mode of religious authority and awareness, a growing individualism was implicit. This individualism may then have easily led to an atomization or dispersion of authority that the monarchy duly feared, and that later generations of Americans could easily label democratization. As a writer in 1921 put it, "They accepted Calvin's rule, that those who are to exercise any public function in the church should be chosen by common voice" (Wheelwright, vii). However much this might emphasize the democratic qualities of the Pilgrims, as dissenters they do suggest at some level the origins of democratic society, in its reliance upon contending and even conflicting points of view, and in its tendency toward a more fluid social structure. [5]

But theirs was a religious, not a political agenda; moral and theological principles were involved, and from their perspective, there could be no compromise. For them 2 Corinthians made it clear: "Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord." To achieve and preserve a simplicity and

'purity' that they felt had been lost amid the some of the surviving features of Catholicism -- the rituals which continued through into the Anglican Church and were epitomized in its statement, "'I believe in...the holy Catholick Church'" (Gill, 19). To establish themselves as rightful interpreters of the Bible independent of an inherited social and cultural order, they removed from the Anglican Church in order to reestablish it as they believed it truly should be. This of course meant leaving the country, and they left for Holland in 1608. [5]

After 12 years, they decided to move again. Having gone back to England to obtain the backing of the Virginia Company, 102 Pilgrims set out for America. The reasons are suggested by William Bradford, when he notes the "discouragements" of the hard life they had in Holland, and the hope of attracting others by finding "a better, and easier place of living"; the "children" of the group being "drawne away by evill examples into extravagence and dangerous courses"; the "great hope, for the propagating and advancing the gospell of the kingdom of Christ in those remote parts of the world" [15]. In these reasons, the second sounds most like the Pilgrims many Americans are familiar with -- the group that wants to be left alone and live in its own pure and righteous way. Behind it seems to lie not only the fear of the breakdown of individual families, but even a concern over the dissolution of the larger community. [5] The concern seems to be that their split with England was now only effecting their own disolution into Dutch culture. But it is also interesting to note the underlying traces of evangelism in, if not the first, certainly the last of the reasons. On the one hand, this strain would find its later expression (and perversion) in such portrayals of the Pilgrims as the Rotunda fresco, where the idea of conversion is baldly fashioned within the image of conquest; here, the Indian is shown as subdued before the word of the "kingdom" even as the Pilgrims are landing, and the Pilgrim is seen as an agent of domination, a superior moral force commanding by its sheer presence. On the other hand, such a portrayal suggests an uneasy tension with the common (and seemingly accurate) conception of the Pilgrims as a model of tolerance. Indeed, the first of their reasons

for sailing to America is fairly passive – – they want to "draw" others by the example of their prosperity, not necessarily go conquer and actively convert. Such an idea reflects the one that would be expressed explicitly by the Puritan John Winthrop, where the New World would become a beacon of religious light, a model of spiritual promise, a "citty upon a hill." [11]

In any case, from their own point of view, they are 'agents' only insofar as they are agents of Providence, and as Bradford strives to make clear throughout, the narrative of their actions is only an interpretation of the works of God. Thus, in a remarkable instance when a "proud and very profane yonge man" who "would curse and swear most bitterly" falls overboard from the Mayflower and drowns, it is seen as "the just hand of God upon him" [11]. So too when a member of their party is saved from drowning, or when the initial landing party finds the corn and beans for seed, or with their safe arrival at Plymouth Bay in general, is the "spetiall providence of God" evinced. And Bradford seems to selfconsciously maintain this version of the Christian perspective as an historical one, never allowing the reader or student of the Pilgrims to forget that their story is one with a trajectory – – coming from its beginnings England, and moving through the beginnings of the 'New World'. This is an emphasis that will serve histories and memories alike, especially in viewing the Revolution and the increased democratization of the United States as some necessary fulfillment of the Pilgrim promise. [12]

Naturally, the primary text for later interpreters would be the Mayflower Compact, which Bradford gives:

In the name of God, Amen. We whose names are underwriten, by the loyall subjects of our dread soveraigne Lord, King James, by the grace of God, of Great Britaine, Franc, and Ireland king, defender of the faith, etc. [12]

Haveing undertaken, for the glorie of God, and advancemente of the Christian faith, and honour of our king and countrie, a voyage to plant the first colonie in the Northerne parts of Virginia, doe by these presents solemnly and mutually in the

presence of God, and one another, covenant and combine our selves togeather into a civill body politick, for our better ordering and preservation and furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by vertue hereof to enacte, constitute and frame shuch just and equall lawes, ordinances, acts, constitutions, and offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meete and convenient for the generall good of the Colonie, unto which we promise all due submission and obedience. In witness whereof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cap ‑ Codd the .11. of November, in the year of the raigne of our soveraigne lord, King James, of England, France, and Ireland, the eighteenth, and of Scotland the fiftie ‑ fourth. Anno Dom. [8]

Bradford writes of the Compact, that it developed partly in response to "the discontented and mutinous speeches" of some of the "strangers" ‑ ‑ colonists who had travelled with them but who "were uncommitted to church fellowship" ‑ and

that it asserted and firmed the Pilgrims' "owne libertie; for none had the power to command them, the patente they had being for Virginia, and not for New england...." The Compact thus arose out of a need to maintain social and civic coherence, to ensure that the officials elected and the group as a whole would have some legitimation against challenges to its "legal authority" [8]. Michael Kammen, however, notes a "tradition" in the early 19th century "in which the Compact was viewed as part of the repudiation of English domination" [8]. Surely there are evident democratic tendencies in the text, wherein a code established from the consent of the people becomes the underpinning of a society of "just and equall lawes," where the officials and figures of authority are all elected. But as "loyall subjects" to the "dread soveraigne Lord, King James," their task is twofold: to maintain a degree of independence that would allow them to live in accordance with their Separatist views, but also to keep the ties to England strong enough so that those who did not share their religion nevertheless would be bound by an order ultimately traceable to the Crown. [18]

The misreadings that Kammen notes will be discussed further in following sections.

1.2 Early Colonial Period in American Literature

The story of a nation's literature ordinarily has its beginning far back in the remoter history of that nation, obscured by the uncertainties of an age of which no trustworthy records have been preserved. [18] The earliest writings of a people are usually the first efforts at literary production of a race in its childhood; and as these compositions develop they record the intellectual and artistic growth of the race. The conditions which attended the development of literature in America, therefore, are peculiar. At the very time when Sir Walter Raleigh - a type of the great and splendid men of action who made such glorious history for England in the days of Elizabeth – was organizing the first futile efforts to colonize the new world, English Literature, which is the joint possession of the whole English – speaking race, was rapidly developing. Sir Philip Sidney had written his Arcadia, first of the great prose romances, and enriched English poetry with his sonnets; Edmund Spenser had composed The Shepherd's Calendar; [18] Christopher Marlowe had established the drama upon heroic lines; and Shakespeare had just entered on the first flights of his fancy. When, in 1606, King James granted to a company of London merchants the first charter of Virginia, Sidney and Spenser and Marlowe were dead, Shakespeare had produced some of his greatest plays, the name of Ben Jonson, along with other notable names, had been added to the list of our great dramatists, and the philosopher, Francis Bacon, had published the first of his essays. [18] These are the familiar names which represent the climax of literary achievement in the Elizabethan age; and this brilliant epoch had reached its full height when the first permanent English settlement in America was made at Jamestown in 1607. On New Year's day, the little fleet commanded by Captain Newport sailed forth on its venturesome and romantic enterprise, the significance of which was not altogether unsuspected by those who saw it depart. Michael

Drayton, one of the most popular poets of his day, later poet laureate of the kingdom, sang in quaint, prophetic verses a cheery farewell:

"You brave heroic minds,
Worthy your country's name,
That honor still pursue,
Go and subdue,
Whilst loitering hinds
Lurk here at home with shame.
"And in regions farre,
Such heroes bring ye forth
As those from whom we came;
And plant our name
Under that star
Not known unto our north.
"And as there plenty grows
Of laurel everywhere,
Apollo's sacred tree,
You it may see,
A poet's brows
that may sing there."

This little band of adventurers "in regions farre" disembarked from the ships Discovery, Good Speed, and Susan Constant upon the site of a town yet to be built, fifty miles inland, on the shore of a stream as yet unexplored, in the heart of a vast green wilderness the home of savage tribes who were none too friendly. It was hardly to be expected that the ripe seeds of literary culture should be found in such a company, or should germinate under such conditions in any notable luxuriance. [11] The surprising fact, however, is that in this group of gentlemen adventurers there was one man of some literary craft, who, while leading the most strenuous

life of all, efficiently protecting and heartening his less courageous comrades in all manner of perilous experiences, compiled and wrote with much literary skill the picturesque chronicles of the settlement. [12]

Captain John Smith, the mainstay of the Jamestown colony in the critical period of its early existence, was a true soldier of fortune, venturesome, resolute, self‑reliant, resourceful; withal a man of great good sense, and with the grasp on circumstances which belongs to the man of power. His life since leaving his home on a Lincolnshire farm at sixteen years of age had been replete with romantic adventure. He had been a soldier in the French army and had served in that of Holland. He had wandered through Italy and Greece into the countries of eastern Europe, and had lived for a year in Turkey and Tartary. [13]

He had been in Russia, in Germany, in Spain, and in Africa, and was familiar with the islands of the Mediterranean and those of the eastern Atlantic. Smith afterward wrote a narrative of his singularly full and adventurous life, not sparing, apparently, the embellishment which in his time seems to have been reckoned a natural feature of narrative art. The honesty of his statements has been doubted, perhaps to the point of injustice; and at the present time a reaction is to be seen which presents the writings of the sturdy old adventurer in a more favorable light. [6]

It was natural enough that such a daring rover should catch the spirit of enthusiasm with which the exploration and settlement of the New World had inflamed Englishmen of his time and type. And it was a recognition of his experience and practical sagacity which led to his appointment as a member of the Council at the head of affairs in the Jamestown colony. [12]

In so far as the literary accomplishments of Captain John Smith have any immediate connection with American history, our interest centres upon his True Relation of such occurrences and accidents of noate as hath hapned in Virginia since the first planting of that Collony, which is now resident in the South part thereof, till the last returne from thence (London, 1608).

Smith's writings are plain, blunt narratives, which please by their rough vigor and the breezy picturesqueness of his rugged, unaffected style. Hardly to be accounted literature except by way of compliment, the True Relation is not unworthy of its place in our literary record as the first English book produced in America. It supplies our earliest chronicle of the perils and hardships of our American pioneers. The romantic story of Pocahontas is found in its pages, briefly recounted by the writer in terms which hardly warrant its dismissal as a myth; and many another thrilling incident of that distressing struggle with the wilderness which makes a genuine appeal to the reader now, as it undoubtedly did to the kinsmen of the colonists in England for whom the book was originally prepared.

Other writings. [18]

Smith was the author of several other narrative and descriptive pamphlets in which he recounted the early history of the colonies at Plymouth and on Massachusetts Bay. Indeed, it was the redoubtable Captain who first gave to that part of the country the name New England; and to the little harbor on Cape Cod, before the coming of the Puritans, Smith had already given the name of Plymouth. In 1624, he published A General History of Virginia, a compilation edited in England from the reports of various writers. [18]

The record of Virginia's early struggles, its difficulties with the Indians, its depletion by illness and famine, its losses due to the incapacity of leaders and policies ill adapted to the conditions of a true colonial life, its reinforcements, its acquisition of colonists, its advancement in wealth and importance, ‑ ‑ this is familiar history. The remarkable fact is the rapidity with which the colony developed. In 1619, twelve hundred settlers arrived; along with them were sent one hundred convicts to become servants. Boys and girls, picked up in the London streets, were shipped to Virginia to be bound during their minority to the planters. In the same year a Dutch man ‑ of ‑ war landed twenty negroes at Jamestown, who were sold as slaves ‑ ‑ the first in America. The cultivation of tobacco became

profitable, the plantations were extended, and new colonists were brought over in large numbers. Following the execution of Charles I, and the establishment of the Puritan Protectorate, hundreds of the exiled Cavaliers migrated to Virginia with their families and traditions. These new colonists stamped the character of the dominion that was to be. The best blood of England was thus infused into the new enterprise, and the spirit of the South was determined. In 1650, the population of Virginia was 15,000; twenty years later, it was 40,000. [6]

Yet the southern soil did not prove favorable to literary growth. English books were, of course, brought into the colony, and private libraries were to be found here and there in the homes of the wealthy. There were no free schools in Virginia, and but few private schools. The children of the planters received instruction under tutors in their own homes, of were sent to England for their education. For fear of seditious literature, printing‑presses were forbidden by the king. In 1671, Governor Berkeley declared: [7]

1.3 Early American and Colonial Period to 1776

American literature begins with the orally transmitted myths, legends, tales, and lyrics (always songs) of Indian cultures. [4]

There was no written literature among the more than 500 different Indian languages and tribal cultures that existed in North America before the first Europeans arrived. As a result, Native American oral literature is quite diverse. Narratives from quasi‑nomadic hunting cultures like the Navajo are different from stories of settled agricultural tribes such as the pueblo‑dwelling Acoma; the stories of northern lakeside dwellers such as the Ojibwa often differ radically from stories of desert tribes like the Hopi. [4]

Tribes maintained their own religions ‑‑ worshipping gods, animals, plants, or sacred persons. Systems of government ranged from democracies to

councils of elders to theocracies. These tribal variations enter into the oral literature as well. [4]

Still, it is possible to make a few generalizations. Indian stories, for example, glow with reverence for nature as a spiritual as well as physical mother. Nature is alive and endowed with spiritual forces; main characters may be animals or plants, often totems associated with a tribe, group, or individual. The closest to the Indian sense of holiness in later American literature is Ralph Waldo Emerson's transcendental "Over‐Soul," which pervades all of life. The Mexican tribes revered the divine Quetzalcoatl, a god of the Toltecs and Aztecs, and some tales of a high god or culture were told elsewhere. However, there are no long, standardized religious cycles about one supreme divinity. [5] The closest equivalents to Old World spiritual narratives are often accounts of shamans initiations and voyages. Apart from these, there are stories about culture heroes such as the Ojibwa tribe's Manabozho or the Navajo tribe's Coyote. These tricksters are treated with varying degrees of respect. In one tale they may act like heroes, while in another they may seem selfish or foolish. Although past authorities, such as the Swiss psychologist Carl Jung, have deprecated trickster tales as expressing the inferior, amoral side of the psyche, contemporary scholars‐ some of them Native Americans ‐point out that Odysseus and Prometheus, the revered Greek heroes, are essentially tricksters as well. [4]

Examples of almost every oral genre can be found in American Indian literature: lyrics, chants, myths, fairy tales, humorous anecdotes, incantations, riddles, proverbs, epics, and legendary histories. Accounts of migrations and ancestors abound, as do vision or healing songs and tricksters' tales. Certain creation stories are particularly popular. In one well known creation story, told with variations among many tribes, [3] a turtle holds up the world. In a Cheyenne version, the creator, Maheo, has four chances to fashion the world from a watery universe. He sends four water birds diving to try to bring up earth from the bottom. The snow goose, loon, and mallard soar high into the sky and sweep down in a

dive, but cannot reach bottom; but the little coot, who cannot fly, succeeds in bringing up some mud in his bill. Only one creature, humble Grandmother Turtle, is the right shape to support the mud world Maheo shapes on her shell - hence the Indian name for America, "Turtle Island." [3]

The songs or poetry, like the narratives, range from the sacred to the light and humorous: There are lullabies, war chants, love songs, and special songs for children's games, gambling, various chores, magic, or dance ceremonials. Generally the songs are repetitive. Short poem‑songs given in dreams sometimes have the clear imagery and subtle mood associated with Japanese haiku or Eastern‑influenced imagistic poetry. A Chippewa song runs:

A loon I thought it was
But it was
My love's
splashing oar.

Vision songs, often very short, are another distinctive form. Appearing in dreams or visions, sometimes with no warning, they may be healing, hunting, or love songs. Often they are personal, as in this Modoc song: [3]

I the song
I walk here.

Indian oral tradition and its relation to American literature as a whole is one of the richest and least explored topics in American studies. The Indian contribution to America is greater than is often believed. The hundreds of Indian words in everyday American English include "canoe," "tobacco," "potato," "moccasin," "moose," "persimmon," "raccoon," "tomahawk," and "totem." Contemporary Native American writing also contains works of great beauty. [2]

After 1680 large numbers of immigrants came from Germany, Ireland, Scotland, Switzerland and France; and England ceased to be the chief source of immigration. Again, the new settlers came for various reasons. Thousands fled from Germany to escape the path of war. Many left Ireland to avoid the poverty

induced by government oppression and absentee‑landlordism, and from Scotland and Switzerland, too, people came fleeing the specter of poverty. By 1690, the American population had risen to a quarter of a million. From then on, it doubled every 25 years until, in 1775, it numbered more than two and a half million. [4]

For the most part, non‑English colonists adapted themselves to the culture of the original settlers. But this did not mean that all settlers transformed themselves into Englishmen. True, they adopted the English language and law and many English customs, but only as these had been modified by conditions in America. The result was a unique culture‑a blend of English and continental European conditioned by the environment of the New World. [5]

Although a man and his family could move from Massachusetts to Virginia or from South Carolina to Pennsylvania, without making many basic readjustments, distinctions between individual colonies were marked. They were even more marked between regional groups of colonies. [6]

The settlements fell into fairly well‑defined sections determined by geography. In the south, with its warm climate and fertile soil, a predominately agrarian society developed. New England in the northeast, a glaciated area strewn with boulders, was inferior farm country, with generally thin, stony soil, relatively little level land, short summers, and long winters. Turning to other pursuits, the New Englanders harnessed water power and established gristmills and sawmills. [7]

Good stands of timber encouraged shipbuilding. Excellent harbors promoted trade, and the sea became a source of great wealth. In Massachusetts, the cod industry alone quickly furnished a basis for prosperity. [6]

Settling in villages and towns around the harbors, New Englanders quickly adopted an urban existence, many of them carrying on some trade or business. Common pastureland and common wood‑lots served the needs of townspeople, who worked small farms nearby. Compactness made possible the village school,

the village church, and the village or town hall, where citizens met to discuss matters of common interest. Sharing hardships, cultivating the same rocky soil, pursuing Had history taken a different turn, the United States easily could have been a part of the great Spanish or French overseas empires. Its present inhabitants might speak Spanish and form one nation with Mexico, or speak French and be joined with Canadian Francophone Quebec and Montreal. [14]

Yet the earliest explorers of America were not English, Spanish, or French. The first European record of exploration in America is in a Scandinavian language. The Old Norse Vinland Saga recounts how the adventurous Leif Eriksson and a band of wandering Norsemen settled briefly somewhere on the northeast coast of America ‑ probably Nova Scotia, in Canada - in the first decade of the 11th century, almost 400 years before the next recorded European discovery of the New World. [14]

The first known and sustained contact between the Americas and the rest of the world, however, began with the famous voyage of an Italian explorer, Christopher Columbus, funded by the Spanish rulers Ferdinand and Isabella. Columbus's journal in his "Epistola," printed in 1493, recounts the trip's drama - the terror of the men, who feared monsters and thought they might fall off the edge of the world; the near ‑ mutiny; how Columbus faked the ships' logs so the men would not know how much farther they had travelled than anyone had gone before; and the first sighting of land as they neared America. [15]

Bartolomé de las Casas is the richest source of information about the early contact between American Indians and Europeans. As a young priest he helped conquer Cuba. He transcribed Columbus's journal, and late in life wrote a long, vivid History of the Indians criticizing their enslavement by the Spanish.

Initial English attempts at colonization were disasters. The first colony was set up in 1585 at Roanoke, off the coast of North Carolina; all its colonists disappeared, and to this day legends are told about blue ‑ eyed Croatan Indians of

the area. The second colony was more permanent: Jamestown, established in 1607. It endured starvation, brutality, and misrule. [15]

However, the literature of the period paints America in glowing colors as the land of riches and opportunity. Accounts of the colonizations became world‑renowned. The exploration of Roanoke was carefully recorded by Thomas Hariot in A Briefe and True Report of the New‑Found Land of Virginia (1588). Hariot's book was quickly translated into Latin, French, and German; the text and pictures were made into engravings and widely republished for over 200 years. [15]

The Jamestown colony's main record, the writings of Captain John Smith, one of its leaders, is the exact opposite of Hariot's accurate, scientific account. Smith was an incurable romantic, and he seems to have embroidered his adventures.

To him we owe the famous story of the Indian maiden, Pocahontas. Whether fact or fiction, the tale is ingrained in the American historical imagination. The story recounts how Pocahontas, favorite daughter of Chief Powhatan, saved Captain Smith's life when he was a prisoner of the chief. Later, when the English persuaded Powhatan to give Pocahontas to them as a hostage, her gentleness, intelligence, and beauty impressed the English, and, in 1614, she married John Rolfe, an English gentleman. The marriage initiated an eight‑year peace between the colonists and the Indians, ensuring the survival of the struggling new colony. [17]

In the 17th century, pirates, adventurers, and explorers opened the way to a second wave of permanent colonists, bringing their wives, children, farm implements, and craftsmen's tools. The early literature of exploration, made up of diaries, letters, travel journals, ships' logs, and reports to the explorers' financial backers ‑‑ European rulers or, in mercantile England and Holland, joint stock companies ‑‑ gradually was supplanted by records of the settled colonies.

Because England eventually took possession of the North American colonies, the best‐known and most‐anthologized colonial literature is English. As American minority literature continues to flower in the 20th century and American life becomes increasingly multicultural, scholars are rediscovering the importance of the continent's mixed ethnic heritage. [17]

Although the story of literature now turns to the English accounts, it is important to recognize its richly cosmopolitan beginnings.

1.4 The Colonial Period in New England

It is likely that no other colonists in the history of the world were as intellectual as the Puritans. Between 1630 and 1690, there were as many university graduates in the northeastern section of the United States, known as New England, as in the mother country ‐‐ an astounding fact when one considers that most educated people of the time were aristocrats who were unwilling to risk their lives in wilderness conditions. The self‐made and often self‐educated Puritans were notable exceptions. They wanted education to understand and execute God's will as they established their colonies throughout New England. [17]

The Puritan definition of good writing was that which brought home a full awareness of the importance of worshipping God and of the spiritual dangers that the soul faced on Earth. Puritan style varied enormously ‐‐ from complex metaphysical poetry to homely journals and crushingly pedantic religious history. Whatever the style or genre, certain themes remained constant. Life was seen as a test; failure led to eternal damnation and hellfire, and success to heavenly bliss. This world was an arena of constant battle between the forces of God and the forces of Satan, a formidable enemy with many disguises. Many Puritans excitedly awaited the "millennium," when Jesus would return to Earth, end human misery, and inaugurate 1,000 years of peace and prosperity. [16]

Scholars have long pointed out the link between Puritanism and capitalism: Both rest on ambition, hard work, and an intense striving for success. Although individual Puritans could not know, in strict theological terms, whether they were "saved" and among the elect who would go to heaven, Puritans tended to feel that earthly success was a sign of election. [16]

Wealth and status were sought not only for themselves, but as welcome reassurances of spiritual health and promises of eternal life.

Moreover, the concept of stewardship encouraged success. The Puritans interpreted all things and events as symbols with deeper spiritual meanings, and felt that in advancing their own profit and their community's well‐being, they were also furthering God's plans. They did not draw lines of distinction between the secular and religious spheres: All of life was an expression of the divine will ‐‐ a belief that later resurfaces in Transcendentalism. [16]

In recording ordinary events to reveal their spiritual meaning, Puritan authors commonly cited the Bible, chapter and verse. History was a symbolic religious panorama leading to the Puritan triumph over the New World and to God's kingdom on Earth.

The first Puritan colonists who settled New England exemplified the seriousness of Reformation Christianity. Known as the "Pilgrims," they were a small group of believers who had migrated from England to Holland ‐‐ even then known for its religious tolerance ‐‐ in 1608, during a time of persecutions.

Like most Puritans, they interpreted the Bible literally. They read and acted on the text of the Second Book of Corinthians ‐ "Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord." Despairing of purifying the Church of England from within, "Separatists" formed underground "covenanted" churches that swore loyalty to the group instead of the king. Seen as traitors to the king as well as heretics damned to hell, they were often persecuted. Their separation took them ultimately to the New World. [17]

The Dutch possessed New Netherland, later to be called New York, for 40 years. But thev were not a migrating people. Colonizing offered them neither political nor religious advantages that they did not already enjoy in Holland. In addition, the Dutch West India Company found it difficult to retain competent officials to administer the colony. in 1664, with a revival of British interest in colonial activity, the Dutch settlement was taken by conquest. [14]

Long after this, however, the Dutch continued to exercise an important social and economic influence. Their sharp‑stepped, gable roofs became a permanent part of the scene, and their merchants gave the city its bustling commercial atmosphere.

The Dutch also gave New York a style of life quite different from that in Puritan Boston. In New York, holidays were marked by feasting and merrymaking. And many Dutch traditions ‑ such as calling on one's neighbors on New Year's Day and celebrating the visit of Saint Nicholas at Christmastime ‑ survived for many years. [15]

With the transfer from Dutch authority, an English administrator, Richard Nicolls, set about remodeling the legal structure of New York. He did this so gradually and with such wisdom that he won the respect of Dutch as well as English. Town governments had the autonomous characteristics of New England towns, and in a few years there was a workable fusion between residual Dutch law and customs and English practices. [13]

By 1696 nearly 30,000 people lived in the province of New York. In the rich valleys of the Hudson, Mohawk, and other rivers, great estates flourished. Tenant farmers and small independent farmers contributed to the agricultural development of the region. Rolling grasslands supplied feed for cattle, sheep, horses, and pigs; tobacco and flax were planted; and fruits, especially apples, grew in abundance. The fur trade also contributed to the growth of the colony. From Albany, 232

kilometers north of New York City, the Hudson River was a convenient waterway for shipping furs to the busy port. [13]

In contrast to New England and the middle colonies were the predominantly rural southern settlements, Virginia, Maryland, the Carolinas, and Georgia. Jamestown, in Virginia, was the first English colony to survive in the New World.

Late in December 1606, a group of about a hundred men, sponsored by a London colonizing company, had set out in search of great adventure. They dreamed of finding gold; homes in the wilderness were not their goal. Among them, Captain John Smith emerged as the dominant figure, and despite quarrels, starvation, and Indian attacks, his will held the little colony together through the first years. [13]

In the earliest days, the promoting company, eager for quick returns, required the colonists to concentrate on producing lumber and other products for sale in the London market, instead of permitting them to plant crops for their own subsistence. After few disastrous years the company eased its requirements and distributed land to the colonists. [17]

In 1612, a development occurred that revolutionized the economy of Virginia. This was the discovery of a method of curing Virginia tobacco to make it palatable to the European taste. The first shipment of this tobacco reached London in 1614, and within a decade it had become Virginia's chief source of revenue.

The cultivation of tobacco exhausted the soil after several crops. Breaking new ground, planters scattered up and down the numerous waterways. No towns dotted the region, and even Jamestown, the capital, had only a few houses. [17]

Though most settlers had come to Virginia to improve their economic position, in Maryland the neighboring colony, religious as well as economic motives led to settlement. While seeking to establish a refuge for Catholics there, the Calvert family was also interested in creating estates that would bring profits. To that end, and to avoid trouble with the British government, the Calverts encouraged Protestant as well as Cathoiic immigration. [17]

In social structure and in government the Calverts tried to make Maryland an aristocratic land in the ancient tradition, which they aspired to rule with all the prerogatives of kings. But the spiritof independence ran strong in this frontier society. In Maryland, as in the other colonies, the authorities could not circumvent the settlers' stubborn insistence on the guarantees of personal liberty established by English common law and the natural rights of subjects to participate in government through representative assemblies. [17]

Maryland developed an economy very similar to that of Virginia. Devoted to agriculture with a dominant tidewater class of great planters, both colonies had a back country into which yeomen farmers steadily filtered. Both suffered the handicaps of a one‑crop system. And before the midpoint of the 18th century, both were profoundly affected by black slavery. In these two colonies the wealthy planters took their social responsibilities seriously, serving as justices of the peace, colonels of the militia, and members of the legislative assemblies. But yeomen farmers also sat in popular assemblies and found their way into political office. Their outspoken independence was a constant warning to the oligarchy of planters not to encroach too far upon the rights of free men. [17]

By the late 17th and early 18th centuries, the social structure in Maryland and Virginia had taken on the qualities it would retain until the Civil War. Supported by slave labor, the planters held most of the political power and the best land, built great houses, adopted an aristocratic way of life, and kept in touch with the world of culture overseas. Next in the socioeconomic scale were the farmers, placing their hope for prosperity in the fresh soil of the back country. Least prosperous were the small farmers, struggling for existence in competition with slave‑owning planters. in neither Virginia nor Maryland did a large trading class develop, for the planters themselves traded directly with London. [17]

It was reserved for the Carolinas, with Charleston as the leading port, to develop into the trading center of the south. [16]

There the settlers quickly learned to combine agriculture and commerce, and the marketplace became a major source of prosperity. Dense forests also brought revenue; lumber, tar, and resin from the longleaf pine provided some of the best shipbuilding materials in the world. Not bound to a single crop as was Virginia, the Carolinas also produced and exported rice and indigo. By 1750, more than 100,000 people lived in the two colonies of North and South Carolina. In the south, as everywhere else in the colonies, the growth of the back country had special significance. Men seeking greater freedom than could be found in the original tidewater settlements pushed inland. Those who could not secure fertile land along the coast, or who had exhausted the lands they held, found the hills farther west a bountiful refuge. [21]

Soon the interior was dotted with thriving farms. Humble farmers were not the only ones who found the hinterland attractive. Peter Jefferson, for example, an enterprising surveyor ‑ father of Thomas Jefferson, third President of the United States ‑ settled in the hill country by acquiring 160 hectares of land for a bowl of punch. [23]

Living on the edge of the Indian country, making their cabins their fortresses, and relying on their own sharp eyes and trusty muskets, frontiersmen became, of necessity, a sturdy, selfreliant people. They cleared tracts in the wilderness, burned the brush, and cultivated maize and wheat among the stumps. The men wore buckskin, the women garments of cloth they had spun at home. Their food was venison, wild turkey, and fish. They had their own amusements ‑ great barbecues, housewarmings for newly married couples, shooting matches, and contests where quilted blankets were made.

Already lines of cleavage were discernible between the settled regions of the Atlantic seaboard and the inland regions.

Men from the back country made their voices heard in political debate, combatting the inertia of custom and convention.

A powerful force deterring authorities in the older communities from obstructing progress and change was the fact that anyone in an established colony could easily find a new home on the frontier. Thus, time after time, dominant tidewater figures were obliged, by the threat of a mass exodus to the frontier, to liberalize political policies, land‑grant requirements, and religious practices. Complacency could have small place in the vigorous society generated by an expanding country.

The movement into the foothills was of tremendous import for the future of America. [23]

Of equal significance for the future were the foundations of American education and culture established in the colonial period. Harvard College was founded in 1636 in Massachusetts. Near the end of the century, the College of William and Mary was established in Virginia. [13] A few vears later, the Collegiate School of Connecticut (later to become Yale College) was chartered. But even more noteworthy was the growth of a school system maintained by governmental authority. In 1647 the Massachusetts Bay Colony, followed shortly by all the other New England colonies except Rhode Island provided for compulsory elementary education.

In the south, the farms and plantations were so widely separated that community schools like those in the more compact northern settlements were impossible. Some planters joined with their nearest neighbors and hired tutors for their children; other children were sent to England for schooling.

In the middle colonies, the situation varied. [13] Too busy with mater1al progress to pay much attention to educational matters, New York lagged far behind. Schools were poor, and only sporadic efforts were made by the royal government to provide public facilities. The College of New Jersey at Princeton, King's College (now Columbia University) in New York City, and Queen's College (now Rutgers) in New Brunswick, New Jersey, were not established until the middle of the 18th century.

One of the most enterprising of the colonies educationally was Pennsylvania. The first school there, begun in 1683, taught reading, writing, and keeping of accounts. Thereafter, in some fashion, every Quaker community provided for the elementary teaching of its children. More advanced training - in classical languages, history, literature - was offered at the Friends Public School, which still operates in Philadelphia as the William Penn Charter School. The school was free to the poor, but parents who could were required to pay tuition.

In Philadelphia, numerous private schools with no religious affiliation taught languages, mathematics, and natural science, and there were night schools for adults. Women were not entirely overlooked, for private teachers instructed the daughters of prosperous Philadelphians in French, music, dancing, painting, singing, grammar, and sometimes even bookkeeping.

The intellectual and cultural development of Pennsylvania reflected, in large measure, the vigorous personalities of two men: James Logan and Benjamin Franklin. Logan was secretary of the colony, and it was in his fine library that young Franklin found the latest scientific works. In 1745, Logan erected a building for his collection and bequeathed both building and books to the city. Franklin contributed even more to the intellectual activity of Philadelphia. He formed a club known as the Junto, which was the embryo of the American Philosophical Society. His endeavors led, too, to the founding of a public academy that later developed into the University of Pennsylvania. He was also a prime mover in the establishment of a subscription library - which he called "the mother of all North American subscription libraries." [23]

In the south, volumes of history, Greek and Latin classics, science, and law were widely exchanged from plantation to plantation. Charleston, South Carolina, already a center for music, painting, and the theater, set up a provincial library before 1700. In New England, the first immigrants had brought their own little libraries and continued to import books from London. And as early as the 1680s, Boston booksellers were doing a thriving business in works of classical literature,

history, politics, philosophy, science, theology, and belles- lettres. The desire for learning did not stop at the borders of established communities. On the frontier, the hardy Scotch- Irish, though living in primitive cabins, were firm devotees of scholarship, and they made great efforts to attract learned ministers to their settlements. [23]

Literary production in the colonies was largely confined to New England. Here attention was concentrated on religious subjects. Sermons were the most common products of the press. A famous "hell and brimstone" minister, the Reverend Cotton Mather, authored some 400 works, and his masterpiece, Magnalia Christi Americana, was so prodigious that it had to be printed in London. In this folio, the pageant of New England's history is displayed by the region's most prolific writer. [23]

But the most popular single work was the Reverend Michael Wigglesworth's long poem, The Day of Doom, which described the Last Judgment in terrifying terms.

Cambridge, Massachusetts, boasted a printing press, and in 1704 Boston's first successful newspaper was launched.

Several others soon entered the field, not only in New England but also in other regions. In New York, freedom of the press had its first important test in the case of Peter Zenger, whose New York Weekly Journal, begun in 1733, was spokesman for opposition to she government. After two years of publication, the colonial governor could no longer tolerate Zenger's satirical barbs and had him thrown into prison on a charge of libel. Zenger continued to edit his paper from jail during his nine- month trial, which excited intense interest throughout the colonies. Andrew Hamilton, a prominent lawyer defending him, argued that the charges printed by Zenger were true and hence not libelous. The jury returned a verdict of not guilty, and Zenger went free. This landmark decision helped establish in America the principle of freedom of the press.

In all phases of colonial development, a striking feature was the lack of controlling influence by the English government. [23]

During their formative period, the colonies were, to a large degree, free to develop as circumstances dictated. The English government had taken no direct part in founding any of the colonies except Georgia, and only gradually did it assume any part in their political direction. [23]

The fact that the King had transferred his immediate sovereignty over the New World settlements to stock companies and proprietors did not, of course, mean that the colonists in America would necessarily be free of outside control. Under the terms of the Virginia Company and Massachusetts Bay charters, complete governmental authority was vested in the companies involved, and it was expected that these companies would be resident in England. Inhabitants of America, then, would have no more voice in their government than if the King himself had retained absolute rule.

In one way or another, however, exclusive rule from the outside was broken down. The first step was a decision by the London (Virginia) Company to grant Virginia Colonists representation in the government In 1618 the Company issued instructions to its appointed governor providing that free inhabitants of the plantations should elect representatives to join with the governor and an appointive council in passing ordinances for the welfare of the colony.

This proved to be one of the most far- reaching events in the entire colonial period. From then on, it was generally accepted that the colonists had a right to participate in their own government. In most instances, the King, in making future grants, provided in the charter that freemen of the colony involved should have a voice in legislation affecting them. Thus, charters awarded to Cecil Calvert of Maryland, William Penn of Pennsylvania, the proprietors of the Carolinas, and the proprietors of New Jersey specified that legislation should be with "the consent of the freemen."

In only two cases was the self- government provision omitted. These were New York, which was granted to Charles II's brother, the Duke of York, later to become King James II; and Georgia, which was granted to a group of "trustees." In both instances the provisions for governance were short- lived, for the colonists demanded legislative representation so insistently that the authorities soon yielded. [23]

At first, the right of colonists to representation in the legislative branch of the government was of limited importance. Ultimately, however, it served as a stepping stone to almost complete domination by the settlers through elective assemblies, which first seized and then utilized control over financial matters. In one colony after another, the principle was established that taxes could not be levied, or collected revenue spent - even to pay the salary of the governor or other appointive officers - without the consent of the elected representatives. Unless the governor and other colonial officials agreed to act in accordance with the will of the popular assembly, the assembly refused to appropriate money for vital functions. Thus there were instances of recalcitrant governors who were voted either no salary at all or a salary of one penny. In the face of this threat, governors and other appointive officials tended to become pliable to the will of the colonists.

In New England, for many years, there was even more complete self- government than in the other colonies. If the Pilgrims had settled in Virginia, they would have been under the authority of the London (Virginia) Company. However, in their own colony of Plymouth, they were beyond any governmental jurisdiction. They decided to set up their own political organization. Aboard the Mayflower, they adopted an instrument for government called the “Mayflower Compact” to "combine ourselves together into a civil body politic for our better ordering and preservation... and by virtue hereof (to) enact, constitute, and frame much just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions, and offices... as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the colony...." Although there was no legal basis for the Pilgrims to establish a system of self- government,

the action was not contested and, under the compact, the Plymouth settlers were able for many years to conduct their own affairs without outside interference. A similar situation developed when the Massachusetts Bay Company, which had been given the right to govern, moved bodily to America with its charter, and thus full authority rested in the hands of persons residing in the colony. The dozen or so original members of the company who had come to America at first attempted to rule autocratically. But the other colonists soon demanded a voice in public affairs and indicated that refusal would lead to a mass migration. [23]

Faced with this threat, the company members yielded, and control of the government passed to elected representatives.

Subsequent New England colonies - New Haven, Rhode Island, and Connecticut - also succeeded in becoming self-governing simply by asserting that they were beyond any governmental authority and then setting up their own political system modeled after that of the Pilgrims of Plymouth.

Chapter 2. Representatives of Colonial American Literature and Their Works

2.1 William Bradford – His Life, career as a Writer and Explorer

William Bradford was born in 1590 in Austerfield, Yorkshire, as the only son of William Bradford and Alice Hanson and was baptized on March 19 of the same year. His father, who was a yeoman farmer, died when William was but a year old. His mother, who was the daughter of a village shopkeeper, remarried, and care for the young William fell to his grandfather and uncles. [23]

When he reached the age of 12, William joined a group of Separatists led by William Brewster, who would later be a founding member of the Plymouth Colony. William expressed an earnest desire to read the Bible, and in his writings, such as Of Plymouth Plantation, he would often quote from the Geneva version. As Brewster was in the nearby village of Scrooby, the young Bradford soon moved there. His involvement in the Separatist Church, later called the Congregational Church, would continue throughout his lifetime and would deeply influence his view of himself and the colony in New England. In his biography of Bradford, Cotton Mather reports that Bradford's relatives scorned and scoffed at the young man for becoming a church member in 1606. [33]

When the church, following the leadership of John Smith, John Robinson, and William Brewster, quit England to seek out religious freedom in Amsterdam, Bradford set sail with them. He used the money he had inherited from his family to purchase a home in Leyden, where the church remained for 12 years before journeying to what is currently the United States. During his time in Amsterdam, Bradford earned a living as a weaver and taught himself Dutch in order to communicate with the locals. In his religious pursuits, Bradford worked assiduously on Latin and Hebrew, languages deemed essential for religious leaders and scholars. His appetite for knowledge led him to acquire a considerable library, which he took aboard the Mayflower. By the time of his death in 1657, Bradford's

library had grown to nearly 400 volumes, including John Foxe's Acts and Monuments, John Speed's Prospects of the Most Famous Part of the World, Peter Martyr's De Orbe Novo, Jean Bodin's De Republica, and Pierre de la Primauday's

French Academy (Morison xxxvi). [24]

While in Amsterdam in 1613, Bradford met and married his fi rst wife, Dorothy May. She accompanied him in 1617 on their famed voyage and died by drowning while their ship was anchored in Provincetown Harbor. Although Bradford does not mention her death in Of Plymouth Plantation, he learned of it during his absence from the Mayflower when he joined an expedition to explore Cape Cod. She had accidentally fallen overboard and drowned before anyone could offer her help. Historians such as Samuel Eliot Morison attribute the silence surrounding Dorothy Bradford's death to the belief that it was suicide rather than accident (xxiv). Probably the rumor of Dorothy's suicide originates in an article written in Harper's New Monthly Magazine in June 1869, entitled "William Bradford's Love Life." This article, essentially a historical romance, begins with the theory that William Bradford was originally in love with the woman who would become his second wife, Sarah Carpenter Southworth. As the story begins, Bradford is in London awaiting departure for Holland, has already proposed to Alice, and is impatiently waiting for her response. Alice, however, described as a "spoiled little beauty," artfully demurs, postponing her decision until the following morning. She even belittles Bradford when he remains at her house awaiting her answer, teasing him, "Truly the elders of your church did ill to entrust their mission to such a dreamer and laggard as yourself" (135). He responds seriously, describing "our people [as] mindful to remove to some country over seas where shall be room for all and opportunity for all to thrive by honest labor" (136). Bradford's dedication to the church prevails over his own love life, as evidenced from his absence the following days from dear Alice's home. She learns through her father that Bradford and "the deputies from the dissenting folk at Leyden had

returned thither," and heartbroken, Alice readily agrees to marry Edward Southworth (136). [24]

Bradford learns that Alice is married and, as she has, he quickly marries the next available woman, Dorothy May. She agrees to marry him even though she is aware of his recent heartbreak about Alice. When they make their fated trip to America aboard the Mayflower, Bradford requests that May and their newborn baby join him. Initially, Dorothy was to remain behind with her mother, only to join Bradford in the future after she and the baby were well and sturdy enough for the journey. When Bradford learns that Alice's husband has passed away, and that she will be traveling to America to join her father, Bradford requests that Dorothy join him and leave their child behind with her mother. [24]

In true melodrama form, the Harper's Monthly author writes, "and that day she began to die." In one of the last sections of the story, entitled "Dorothy Bradford's Journal," she documents repeated nightmares of her dead baby and reports that Bradford has been dreaming about Alice. These fictional journal entries abruptly end, followed by a love letter from Bradford to his beloved Alice, reminding her of his first proposal and expressing his interest in her as a future wife. It is quite interesting that the unnamed author of this fictional tale should turn to the tale of William Bradford, a leading Puritan figure, and address him as a character second to the two women in his life—Alice Carpenter Southworth and Dorothy May. It is also quite telling that the author follows the same format Bradford does in Of Plymouth Plantation: She incorporates letters and journal entries. Perhaps because of this element of the story, or perhaps because of the popular interest in the fate of Bradford's first wife, this fictional tale has become part of the lore associated with the arrival of the Mayflower. In 1621, when Bradford was 31, he was elected governor of Plymouth Colony. His election followed the death of its first governor, John Carver.

Bradford remained governor, being reelected 30 times to the offi ce, until 1656. The only gap in his 30-year span as governor was a five-year period in which Edward Winslow and Thomas Prence served. [24]

In 1623, when additional members of the Leyden church sailed for the colony, Bradford met his second wife, a widow named Alice Southworth, who had two sons by her previous marriage. Together the two bore a family of three additional children, two sons and a daughter.

He began his most famous work, Of Plymouth Plantation, in 1630, “sure . . . that New England would be the model for Old” [22]. The narrative recounts the rise of the Separatist Church out of the forced Catholicism under James I of England, and the rifts and divisions separated that faction even further. Critics believe that Bradford began work on his chronicle in 1630 because it was a historical moment in which he felt confident and assured of the colony’s success in fulfilling their special covenant with God as his chosen people. Just two years later, in 1632, his greatest hope would turn to despair as he was witness to a hurricane, the loss of their furs in a ship that sank, their near starvation, and the departure of the young members of the colony for Duxbury and Marshfield. Dejected, Bradford quit writing the journal in 1648 and only returned to it in 1650 to write out a list of passengers on the Mayflower.

The critic Mark Sargent believes that Bradford attempted to return to his task of recording the colony’s history with a series of three dialogues that attempted to reconcile its past with its present. Entitled “A Dialogue or the Sume of a Conference between Som Younge Men Borne in New England and Sundery Ancient Men That Came Out of Holland and Old England 1648,” the dialogues were a genre popular among Elizabethan Separatists (Sargent 390). Sargent attributes the survival of the first dialogue to Bradford’s nephew, Nathaniel Morton, who copied it into the Plymouth Church Records (391). The second dialogue has been lost, but the third was found among Thomas Prince’s collection of books and manuscripts in 1826 (391). Through an analysis of the two extant

dialogues, Sargent argues, readers can discern “many of the pressures that were diverting [Bradford’s] attention from the chronicle” (392). Among those pressures were the “signs of reconciliation between Puritan Congregationalists and Presbyterians” that began in 1648 (Sargent 400). Bradford was emboldened by the attacks on the Separatists in the late 1640s and thus took up pen again to work out the dialogues (Sargent 401). Bradford’s chief accuser was the Scottish Presbyterian minister Robert Baillie, who in 1645 published Dissuasive from the Errors of Time, which contained a direct attack on “a small company at Leyden” (reported in Sargent 402). Baillie argues that the Separatists undermined the possibility of reforming a national church. He engaged in a heated debate, through publications, with John Cotton and Edward Winslow, a chief ally to Bradford and member of the Plymouth Colony who returned to England to answer charges against the colony. [22]

2.1.1 “Of Plymouth Plantation” by Bradfrod and the History of American Colonization

Of Plymouth Plantation is Bradford’s most famous work. The narrative recounts the rise of the English Separatist Church from the time of mandated Catholicism under James I and proceeds to describe the journeys the Separatists undertook, the establishment of a new colony in Massachusetts, and the difficulties faced by the colonists. He began writing the work in 1630, probably because at this time he felt confident and assured of the colony’s success in fulfilling its promise. Just two years later, in 1632, his hopes would turn to despair, as he was to see the colonists suffer through a hurricane, the loss of their furs in a sunken ship, their nearstarvation, and the departure of the young members. [22]

Dejected, Bradford quit writing the journal in 1648 and only returned to it in 1650 to write out a list of passengers on the Mayflower. Chapter 1 of the chronicle likens the Separatist struggle against “popery,” “popish trash,” and “relics of that

man of sin" to an epic battle against Satan. As he begins the first chapter, Bradford chronicles how "Satan hath raised, maintained, and continued against the Saints, from time to time, in one sort or other" (3). The Saints, or God's chosen people, as the Puritans preferred, were martyrs and true Christians who resisted conversion to the ceremonies and rituals that were associated with Catholicism. The tale then does not pursue a "broadside at Catholicism" but rather builds a "case for Separatism" (Sargent 398). As they "shook off the yoke of Antichristian bondage," they joined to form the Separatist Church, which would be called the Congregational Church in later years (9). Bradford briefly mentions a few central leaders in the formative time of the Puritan movement and church: John Smith, John Robinson, and, most famous of the three, William Brewster (9–10). The latter formed the Separatist congregation at Scrooby, Nottinghamshire, which Bradford joined as a young man (xxiii). After meeting together in worship for a year, the group determined to fl ee to Amsterdam, where they might enjoy religious freedom (10). Chapter 2 addresses the trials the Separatists faced, both on land and at sea, once they had resolved to abandon England for Holland. The first company climbed aboard ships supposedly bound for Amsterdam only to discover that they had been betrayed when they were robbed, and their possessions rifled through and ransacked (12). Their second attempt to board ships was hurried by the unexpected appearance of an armed company, which resulted in the separation of men from their wives and children, since the men were the first to board (13). Although the families were reunited eventually, Bradford depicts the ordeals faced by the separated family members with considerable emotional resonance. [22]

While the men faced rough sea conditions and prayed for God's deliverance, the women and children, without homes to return to, were shuttled between constables, who were uncertain of where to place them. Bradford appears to undermine the wives' anxieties by writing that the constables were "glad to be rid of them in the end upon any terms for all were wearied and tired with them" (14). The women and children appear to be more a nuisance for the various constables

than the loyal and suffering male members of the Puritans who endured hardship as testimony to their faith. Oliver Cromwell's victory in England, coupled with widespread reform within the Church of England, made it rhetorically impossible for Bradford to characterize the Separatist Church against the image of a popish and religiously intolerant England. In fact, Bradford concedes this point, albeit in 1646 and on the back of one of the pages of the first chapter: "Full little did I think that the downfall of the Bishops . . . had been so near, when I first began these scribbled writings" [22].

Bereft of an image of England against which to rally his Separatists, Bradford turned instead to dissension within the group, forged by the unorthodox teachings of John Smith. The flock loyal to John Smith had "fallen into contention with the church," so the leaders Robinson and Brewster determined to remove to Leyden "before they were any way engaged with the same" (16). Having remained in Leyden for 12 years, the Separatists decide to leave and embark once again on a journey, this time to the New World. Bradford enumerates the reasons for their departure, stating that he does so to dispel the "slander" that they were importuned to remove to New Netherland, or were infl uenced by "any newfangledness or other such like giddy humor" [22, 23]. Indeed, as historians and critics alike remark, Bradford was especially sensitive to criticism launched against him and the Separatists, and it is from a defensive position that he writes his tale and resumes it after a 10-year silence. [24]

The dangers presented by a harsh environment, the brutality of savages, and that of the Spaniards, who already had colonies in Florida and the Southwest, were listed as central reasons to select Guiana over America, but ultimately, Bradford writes, they decided "to live as a distinct body by themselves under the general government of Virginia . . . and to sue His Majesty that he would be pleased to grant them freedom of religion" (29). When the king refuses to grant their request, they begin consultations with the Virginia Company directly and obtain a patent under the name of John Wincop; despite all of their effort and considerable fi

nancial loss, the Separatists did not make use of this patent [32]. Instead, they relied upon Thomas Weston, who procured a patent for them, and, after much debate over the conditions for their colony in America, they embarked. Bradford includes a list of the conditions, commenting on the two amendments from the original, as well as letters from the future governor of the colony, John Carver, and Robert Cushman, who was a chief organizer of the Mayflower expedition but who did not sail on this ship because of his disputes with Weston's articles (38, 42–46). He justifies including such correspondence and dwelling so minutely on the details leading up to their journey on the Mayflower: "I have been the larger in these things, and so shall crave leave in some like passages following . . . that their children may see with what difficulties their fathers wrestled in going through these things in their first beginnings; and how God brought them along, notwithstanding all their weaknesses and infirmities" [16].

In his description of the initial departure from Leyden to Southampton, aboard the Speedwell, Bradford refers to the colonists as "pilgrims," and historians credit this first use of the term as influencing future references to the Mayflower company as pilgrim fathers [16]. The voyage was not without incident, as leaks were discovered twice in the lesser of the two boats, causing delays in Dartmouth and in Plymouth. Eventually, the smaller ship was deemed unseaworthy, and its passengers and their luggage were removed to London while the Mayflower set sail alone. Among those who voluntarily quit the voyage were Mr. Cushman and his family, whose absence from the enterprise Bradford seems to deal with in an especially harsh manner, including an admission that those reading the enclosed letter written by Cushman while the ship was being repaired will "discover some infirmities in him (as who under temptation is free)". In dealing so roughly with Cushman, Bradford reveals a tendency to punish and publicly humiliate those who have disappointed him in one manner or another; this pattern of ridicule will continue throughout the narrative, most especially when the colony finds itself challenged economically, politically, and religiously.

Chapter 9, which details their landing at Cape Cod, contains the most famous passage from Of Plymouth Plantation and provides a singular reading of the American wilderness that the critic David Laurence believes was nearly two centuries before its time. “The depiction of the Pilgrims’ landing at Cape Cod stands out almost freakishly within Bradford’s writing and also from the entire seventeenth-century context. No mere backdrop to the event, the setting functions as the crucial figure that reveals the Pilgrims’ relation to spirit” [16].

2.2 Anne Bradstreet – the First American Women Writer of the Colonial Period

In the same year that the poet Anne Bradstreet (née Anne Dudley) contracted smallpox and nearly died, she also married. She was 16. We know this because years later she wrote about the illness in “To My Dear Children,” a memoir she left her children to aid in their spiritual development after her death: “About sixteen, the Lord laid his hand upon me and smote me with the smallpox. When I was in my affliction, I besought the Lord and confessed my pride and vanity, and He was entreated of me and again restored me.” Had Bradstreet not listed her age, we would have only known that she suffered from the illness sometime around the year she married, or we might not have known at all. [24]

There are no records of her birth. We do know that in 1630, when she was about 18 years old, she left the England she knew to board the ship Arbella with her parents, siblings, and new husband, Simon Bradstreet. Under the reign of Charles I, there was growing threat of excess taxation to pay for the king’s military exploits in Europe. According to Rosamond Rosenmeier, Anne’s father felt the growing tension directly. Founding members of the Massachusetts Bay Company, her father and new husband had worked out a plan to emigrate to New England as part of the new venture, but also in order to escape political and religious persecution [27].

Their sea voyage across the Atlantic was to last six weeks. When they landed in Massachusetts Bay, Anne and her family had their fi rst taste of “the blazing heat of an American June” (Rich ix). They also had their fi rst glimpse of the immensity of the American wilderness, the close quarters of a Salem home, and their first understanding of meager provisions. [24]

In England Anne Bradstreet’s father, Thomas Dudley, had been a steward to the earl of Lincoln. The Dudley family lived at the earl’s manor house in Sempringham, where Anne had access to the earl’s sizable library. She read the great Renaissance poets Sir Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, and probably John Milton, Ben Jonson, and William Shakespeare (Martin 21). It would be an understatement to say that her life in the New World offered fewer comforts than what the family had left behind. While her family held no tremendous stature, their needs were met, and they lived on a large estate. As the poet Eavan Boland writes, in England, for a time, the Dudleys “lived in the shadow and peace of greatness” [22]. Contrast this image to the one painted in a letter Thomas Dudley sent from America to the countess of Lincoln in England: There is not a house where is not one dead, and some houses many . . . the natural causes seem to be in the want of warm lodging and good diet, to which Englishmen are habituated at home, and the sudden increase of heat which they endure that are landed here in summer . .for those only these two last years died of fevers who landed in June or July, as those of Plymouth, who landed in winter, died of the scurvy. (Cited in Rich x)

In the same letter Dudley also complains that in their fi rst Salem home, there was no table or desk to compose the letter he was writing, and that the Dudleys and the Bradstreets, all living under one roof, were cramped into one room with a fi replace. Even though her father and husband were founding members of the Massachusetts Bay Company and would each eventually become governor and lead a prosperous life, the initial move to New England took them to an environment that was more confined indoors and vaster than they had ever imagined outside.

For the young Anne Bradstreet, this was quite a change, tempered perhaps only by the lengthy sea journey's poor conditions, which offered a brief period of adjustment. Of her first response to America she would later write, "I found a new world and new manners, at which my heart rose. But after I was convinced it was the way of God, I submitted to it and joined the church at Boston." Rosenmeier is careful to point out that "new manners" are not necessarily bad manners, but that they represent new habits and ways of living that were foreign to Anne Bradstreet: the ways people kept house, their responses to tight quarters, their basic coping mechanisms in such a wild and unpredictable terrain [13]. Critics agree that Bradstreet's phrase "at which my heart rose" refers not to any welcoming feeling, but to feelings of rebellion and disgust: Her heart rose against these new manners. After reflection, Bradstreet resigns herself to her situation because "it is the way of God." Note her use of the word submitted. A theme that arises often in Bradstreet's poetry is that of resistance followed by resignation—to death, to her husband's absence, to the patriarchy, and to God. A woman often visited by sickness and lameness (her first poem we know of, written at the age of 19, was entitled "Upon a Fit of Sickness, Anno. 1632") now living in a land plagued by death and hardship, Anne Bradstreet in some ways needed to give up her own control over her body and life to that higher power, if only to maintain a sense of structure and reason. Adrienne Rich posits that "in a society coarsened by hardship and meager in consolations, any religious doubt must at times have made everything seem dubious" (x). It is indeed arguable that Bradstreet herself would have had to struggle to locate some control over her own life, being passed, as young women were, from father to husband. Even her first book was published without her control or knowledge. Raised a Puritan, Bradstreet practiced a religion that encouraged the belief in which every affliction, every woe, every setback was an opportunity for a lesson and an exercise of God's will upon his chosen people.

There is a tension, however, always at play in Bradstreet's life and work, etween what she observes in the world around her and what she is told, and much

energy is spent trying to reconcile the two. She acknowledges the times she was “sitting loose from God”: finding joy in the physical world, questioning Puritan doctrine or the existence of God, privately musing that Catholicism might have the same merit as the Puritan order. In her poetry, this too plays a role alongside the twin impulses to resist and to yield. The critic Wendy Martin makes note of these tensions: Although she played the role of a dedicated Puritan and a dutiful daughter and wife, Bradstreet often expressed ambivalence about the male authorities in her life, including God, her father and husband, and the literary critics and authors whose models she initially copied. On one hand, she very much wanted their approval and, on the other, she was angered by their denial of the value of her experience and abilities. [16]

Critics’ responses to Bradstreet’s relationships with men are as varied and complex as her own formulation of resistance and resignation. Even though her husband was 11 years her senior and a man she married when she was, even by the standards of the time, a bit young to marry, she loved him passionately, or grew to. This love is evidenced by her marriage poems. Rosenmeier speculates that the marriage was something planned by her family. Anne’s husband, Simon, was almost like a son to the Dudleys, having been orphaned at 14 and taken to work under Anne’s father for the earl, and the difference in their ages meant that he was equipped to take care of her (Rosenmeier 38). Anne Bradstreet is a complex figure; she took pleasure in her life as a wife and mother of eight, and, unlike many other

Puritan women, she was given the space to read, write, and reflect—and was essentially respected for it by both men and women. Although Anne had no formal education, her father made sure to expose her to language and literature. Lacking a university education himself, Thomas Dudley was tutored in England by an Oxford graduate. According to biographers, he encouraged his daughter to read and probably taught her Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and French. Equipped with these tools, a motivated reader of the era could approach any text and understand it. Her father valued books so much he took his library along with him to the New World. Anne

had access to all his books and absorbed their breadth and style in her own early poetry.

2.2.1 Bradstreet's "Prologue" and "To the Memory of My Dear and Ever Honored Father"

"The Prologue" (1650)

"The Prologue" introduces readers to Bradstreet's feminism and her subtle deployment of humility. This poem is a prime example of her ability to criticize the patriarchy while appealing to it through consistent claims of inferiority as a female poet. The first four stanzas lure the reader through repeated claims of imperfection in the face of the great poets she admires. Bradstreet assures the reader that her "obscure lines," her lack of skill, and her "foolish, broken, blemished Muse" make her inferior simply because nature made her a woman. Unlike Demosthenes, who overcame a speech impediment through his art, she suggests her "weak or wounded brain" cannot be cured and is unable to compete with the poetry of men. Then the tone shifts dramatically:

"I am obnoxious to each carping tongue

Who says my hand a needle better fits." [21]

Comparing the needle associated with domesticity to the typically masculine pen, she reveals the attitudes she anticipates from male readers. They will think either that she is lucky or that she stole the ideas. In a way, that is how Nathaniel Ward portrays her in his verse introduction to her own book. Following the vein of her feminist argument, Bradstreet is still able to maintain the charming modesty of the early stanzas, but she also suggests that her poetry is more earthy and real than the overpolished work of men. Refusing the traditional laurel wreath ("I ask no bays"), she prefers the domestic herbs of here and now: "thyme or parsley," wholesome, humble. By maintaining her humility throughout the poem, she

highlights the “pomposity and cruelty of those male writers and critics who disdain women” (Martin 32).

“To the Memory of My Dear and Ever Honored Father” (1653) [21]

As Bradstreet notes in the full title of the poem, her father, Thomas Dudley, passed away on July 31, 1653, at the age of 77. He had been the governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony for four separate terms and had served as deputy governor under JOHN WINTHROP, with whom he had several conflicts. In her elegy, Bradstreet acknowledges both aspects of her father’s identity. She refers to his key role in the founding of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the following lines: “One of thy Founders, him New England know” and “True Patriot of this little Commonweal” (23, 27). Because of her father’s notoriety, Bradstreet writes in the poem:

“Nor was his name, or life lead so obscure
That pitty might some Trumpeters procure.
Who after death might make him falsly seen
Such as in life, no man could justly deem” (13–16). [22]

The lines work in two ways: They assure the reader that Dudley’s fame and reputation will shield him from any other characterization, either by a devoted daughter or by those filled with “malice” and “envy” (11). In other words, Dudley’s prominence, which makes him the target of those animated by “malice” and “envy,” also protects him from them because he is too well known for false tales about him to be believed. That said, Bradstreet, too, is hampered in her elegy for her father; she cannot praise him too much for the same reason that others cannot chastise him or cast dispersions on his character. Bradstreet eschews the traditional aspect of an elegy, which is to offer praise in remembrance and honor of the person who died. She does so not only because such a turn is in keeping with Puritan tradition, but also because it helps to temper the feelings held by those who believed Dudley to be too desirous of the power that John Winthrop wielded over the Massachusetts Bay Colony. She writes:

"Nor honour pufft him up, when he had part;
Those titles loathed, which some do too much love
For truly his ambition lay above" (36–38). [22]

Bradstreet's father, a good Puritan, sets his sights above worldly accomplishments and rewards, for "he a Mansion had, prepar'd above" [22].

2.3 Charles Brockden Brown as a Representative of Purely Colonial Literature

Born on January 17, 1771, to Quaker parents in Philadelphia, Charles Brockden Brown grew up in a liberal household filled with books. Because of his poor health, he was oftentimes indoors during his childhood and expressed an early penchant for writing essays and poetry. Writing would be the dominant force in Brown's life, which he referred to as a means of expressing a "soaring passion and intellectual energy" (Watts 2). His father, Elijah, and mother, Mary Armitt Brown, enrolled him in the Friends Latin School at the age of 11, and he studied with Robert Proud. Six years later, at the age of 17, he graduated. [22]

Because Quakers were opposed to college education, Brown honored his parents' request and worked for six years in the law offices of Alexander Wilcocks. Brown vented his frustration over his obligation to study a career that he deemed to narrow his intellect: "I should rather think that he can only derive pleasure, and consequently improvement, from the study of laws, who knows and wishes to know nothing else" (Watts 32). However, he ultimately disappointed them when he decided not to pursue a legal career (Korobkin 723). He explained to his family about his moral objections to working in a profession that would have him defending guilty parties or furthering unjust causes.

Although Brown did not pursue a career as a lawyer, the critic Laura Korobkin believes that Brown's legal work signifi cantly informed his fiction writing. More specifi cally, Korobkin argues that Brown's familiarity with the law

shaped Wieland, not only in its meditations on questions of judgment, but also in its very structure of Clara's functioning as both a lawyer and a witness. The legal cases presented in Sir William Blackstone's Commentaries on the Laws of England and Sir Geoffrey Gilbert's The Law of Evidence create the foundation for Brown's fictional treatment of the laws of evidence and the fallibility of eyewitnesses and their testimony (Korobkin 724–725). Many critics believe Brown drew on the gruesome tale of James Yates, a religious fanatic who under God's guidance killed his wife and four children in 1781, as the basis for Wieland. The law and its processes of determining truth and guilt would be the topic for other novels that attempted to plumb the psychological depths of its characters such as Arthur Meryn and the deceitful Welbeck. [21]

In 1787, at the age of 16, Brown began the first of what would become a series of efforts undertaken throughout his short life to cultivate and support the talents of budding writers. This first endeavor, called the Belles Letters Club, sought to foster and support the literary talents of its members. When he delivered the keynote address for the club, Brown spoke of reason as "the authority which exerts over obedience" but insisted that it needed to be tempered by "the invigorating influence of the fancy" (Watts 29). His biographer Steven Watts believes that Brown's advice regarding the balance between reason and fancy was quite personal. According to Watts, Brown was prone to "attention-seeking, despairing outbursts [that] seem to have become an emotional habit by his early twenties" [24]. These feelings of despair affected his writing, as he repeatedly boasted to friends about various literary projects that he would begin and then promptly abandon [20]. In his correspondence, Brown first addresses the concept of a divided self, a private versus a public, that would manifest itself in his first novel, Skywalker [20]. Brown's letters also reveal the deep anxiety he suffered around writing. Of the young writer's emotional vacillations, Watts writes that "Brown's frustrated psychological energy, literary commitments, and desire for

social success comprised a coiled motivational spring. Its release powered a tremendous outpouring of fiction during the last two years of the century" (80).

When Brown left Philadelphia and moved to New York in 1796, he relied upon the introductions made by his dear friend Dr. Elihu Hubbard Smith. Smith had met Brown in his hometown of Philadelphia and suggested that when Brown moved to New York, he consider joining a group of liberal minded individuals called the Friendly Club. The chief pastime of the Friendly Club was to discuss the works of many of the radical authors of his time, such as Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin's Political Justice and Caleb Williams (Ringe 19).

Aside from the friendships Brown made through this club, he could rely upon the playwright William Dunlap, who would later write the first biography of Brown, to offer him support in launching his literary career. Indeed, the combined support of these two close friends, Dr. Smith and Mr. Dunlap, encouraged Brown to write his first book, Alcuin: A Dialogue, which advocated women's rights [19].

Smith was Brown's publisher for this two-part text that appeared in April 1798. Both Brown and Smith fell ill with yellow fever, contracted from an Italian physician who lived briefly in Smith's home. Dr. Smith's exposure proved fatal. Brown's good friend Dunlap provided him with a place to mourn their mutual friend's death, as well as recover from the fever. Remarkably, in that same year (1798), Brown published Wieland and seems to have written most, if not all, of Arthur Mervyn. The following year he began publishing and editing the Monthly Magazine and American Review. In the same year, Brown renamed the magazine The American Review and Literary Journal, and it remained in print under this new title until 1802. In the following year, he published two political pamphlets opposing the Louisiana Purchase. These notable pamphlets gave him the kind of public attention that he had previously failed to garner for his literary works. In this pamphlet, Brown assumes the persona of a French counselor of state who writes to Napoléon about the strategic and economic advantages of the Louisiana territory [21].

In that same year (1803), Brown launched a new periodical, the Literary Magazine and American Register. In his “Editor’s Address to the Public,” he proclaimed the goals of his work: “In ages like this, when the foundations of religion and morality have been so boldly attacked, it seems necessary . . . to be particularly explicit as to the path which the editor means to pursue. He therefore avows himself to be, without equivocation or reserve, the ardent friend and willing champion of the Christian religion . . . [and] shall scrupulously aim at the promotion of public and private virtue”. The morally ambiguous eponymous character, Arthur Mervyn, seemed a figure of the past in Brown’s dedication to promoting and publishing works that contained moral virtues. His often anthologized short story “Somnambulism, a Fragment,” fi rst appeared in this new magazine in 1805. In that tale, the narrator finds himself lacking the kind of self-control that Brown earnestly pursued in his own life and in his courtship of his future wife, Elizabeth. Watts traces the arc in Brown’s politics from “youthful utopian radical to stodgy middle-age conservative” [25]. These political positions, Watts believes, follow the national trends as America transitioned from its days as an early republic into a nation shaped by a rising bourgeois and the emergence of liberal capitalism [25].

2.3.1 About William Brockden Brown’s Gothic Tale “Wieland”

Brown’s gothic tale “Wieland” of infanticide and patricide, “Wieland” of infanticide and patricide, aided by religious fanaticism and the practiced arts of a rogue, is in many ways a meditation on the unforeseen impact that people’s actions can have on others. [23]

Told retrospectively from the diary of Wieland’s sister, Clara, this novel is an American gothic tale of extraordinary events that befall one family after its encounters with Carwin. The novel opens with a tale of the patriarch, who is nearly maniacally taken up with his own sense of sin and desire for constant study of

Scriptures. Although the father does not belong to any organized religion, he does remain faithful to his own form of worship, which involves spending the Sabbath in an outdoor church of sorts. It is this outdoor site that proves a source of mysterious power and ultimate madness and death for the family. While he is attending his own private worship, members of the family see a bright light, hear the discharge of a gun or cannon, and hear the moans of their father. He appears mangled, somewhat in shock, and delivers what seems to be a half-truth of the source of his injuries. A few days later, he dies. [14]

Wieland himself hears the voice of his wife, Catherine, telling him that he is wanted back at home. Wieland's dear friend and brother-in-law Pleyel also learns from the disembodied voice of his sister that his beloved, Baroness Theresa de Stolberg from Germany, has died. Wieland's sister hears voices, too, that sound like murderers plotting her death from her nearby closet. Wieland and Pleyel, however, are awakened from their slumber and rush to her aid not because of anything that she said or did, but because they hear a voice warning them to awake and aid one of their own who is dying. [14]

The same voice of the murderer who suggested running her through with his sword awakens her as she sleeps outdoors near a stream on the family designs for her murder and warns her to stay away from the exact location for fear of death. The voice intimates that her fate, should she divulge this warning to anyone else or should it be unheeded, will be similar to her father's.

A bedraggled stranger, whom Clara spots wandering near her home, produces an uncommon reaction in her. She finds herself crying and unable to keep the man's face out of her mind. Indeed, she feels compelled to commit it to memory by drawing a portrait of him. Even the portrait seems to exude some unexplained power over her. When she shows it to Pleyel, he playfully promises to discover who this man whom Clara has clearly fallen in love with is. While in a coffeehouse in town, Pleyel espies Carwin, having known him previously when the two met in Spain. Although a native of England, Carwin had taken a Spanish surname,

converted to Catholicism, and declared that he would live out his days in his newly adopted country. [14]

Carwin assiduously defl ects all of Pleyel's inquiries into Carwin's current habiliment as a rustic and his return to America. Carwin quickly becomes a frequent visitor to Wieland's house, and once they feel comfortable enough in his presence, they begin to recite the tales of disembodied voices heard by Wieland, Pleyel, and Clara. To their surprise, Carwin does not appear disjointed or shocked by their tales; rather, he becomes an animated and gifted storyteller, weaving tale after tale of similar extraordinary events eventually attributed to human agency rather than to God or some supernatural phenomenon.

When Carwin appears in Clara's closet near midnight and vaguely threatens to rob her of her virtue, Pleyel believes Carwin and Clara are lovers. As he approaches the house at night, he hears what he takes to be the voices of Carwin and Clara, which are really just a trick of Carwin's ventriloquism. The next morning, Pleyel upbraids Clara for what he imagines to be the loss of her virginity to such a fiend as Carwin and informs her that he is known to be a thief and a murderer. While Clara goes into town to plead her innocence to Pleyel, Wieland goes to Clara's abandoned house and is visited by a veiled specter, who orders him to take his wife to the house in order to kill her. When his servant gives him a packet of letters, Pleyel flies for Europe. Only after the deaths of Catherine and her children does Clara learn from her uncle that Pleyel fled to Europe in search of his love, Baroness Theresa de Stolberg, who had reported her own death in order to conceal herself in her pursuit of Pleyel in America. [14]

The novel reaches its dramatic peak when Wieland, hearing voices that he believes to be divine, agrees to take his wife to Clara's empty house and murder her. Their children soon follow as victims of Wieland's madness. In courtroom testimony, Wieland calmly relays the tale of bloody murders by characterizing his actions as sanctioned by God. While confi ned, Wieland twice breaks out of his shackles and travels to the houses of Clara and Pleyel, intent on completing his

sacrifi ces to God. Wieland escapes from custody and arrives at his sister's house, intent on fulfi lling his "divine calling" and adding her to the list of the dead. Just prior to his arrival, Carwin confesses to Clara his powers of ventriloquism and his morbid curiosity in determining how virtuous and brave she was, as well as plumbing the depths of Wieland's religious fanaticism. When Wieland threatens Carwin, he makes a hasty retreat, and Clara is left alone with her mad brother. Carwin returns to the house and hurries upstairs, where he speaks to Wieland as if he were the disembodied celestial voice who first bid him to sacrifice his family. Carwin commands Wieland to return to a rational state, recognize that he alone is responsible for the murders of his family members, and desist in his current plans of killing his own sister. Briefl y restored to himself, Wieland grabs the penknife that Clara had recently been holding and stabs himself in the neck. The novel concludes after a three-year break in which Clara and her uncle have moved to Montpellier and been joined by Pleyel, after the death of his wife, the baroness. Clara also relates the story of how Louisa Conway was orphaned. As Carwin affected her own family, Louisa's parents, the Stuarts, were likewise unduly influenced by a malevolent character named Maxwell, who, failing in a duel against Louisa's father, contrived his revenge by attempting to seduce his wife, Louisa's mother.

In order to flee Maxwell's influence, and the loss of her reputation, Louisa's mother disguises herself and travels with her daughter to America. Clara concludes that people should be cautious about the amount of influence they allow another person to exercise over them; had this admonition been heeded, she argues, Wieland, his wife and children, and both of Louisa's parents might all be alive.

III. CONCLUSION

My qualification paper is dedicated to the study of early colonial period of American literature which is special in its own way.

In doing my research work I analyzed and overviewed many related literature on the history of American literature, especially, early history of American literature.

According to the results of the qualification paper we may conclude with the below given statements:

Owing to the large immigration to Boston in the 1630s, the high articulation of Puritan cultural ideals, and the early establishment of a college and a printing press in Cambridge, the New England colonies have often been regarded as the center of early American literature.

During the colonial period, the printing press was active in many areas, from Cambridge and Boston to New York, Philadelphia, and Annapolis. The dominance of the English language was hardly inevitable.

We are now aware of the wealth of oral literary traditions already existing on the continent among the numerous different Native American groups.

Back then, some of the American literature were pamphlets and writings extolling the benefits of the colonies to both a European and colonist audience. Captain John Smith could be considered the first American author with his works: *A True Relation of Such Occurrences and Accidents of Noate as Hath Happened in Virginia*... (1608) and *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles* (1624). Other writers of this manner included Daniel Denton, Thomas Ashe, William Penn, George Percy, William Strachey, Daniel Coxe, Gabriel Thomas, and John Lawson.

Poetry also developed in colonial period. One type of the poetry which was famous during the period was puritan poetry. Puritan poetry was highly religious in nature, and one of the earliest books of poetry published was the *Bay Psalm Book*, a set of translations of the biblical Psalms; however, the translators' intention was

not to create great literature but to create hymns that could be used in worship. Among lyric poets, the most important figures are Anne Bradstreet, who wrote personal poems about her family and homelife; pastor Edward Taylor, whose best poems, the *Preparatory Meditations*, were written to help him prepare for leading worship; and Michael Wigglesworth, whose best-selling poem, *The Day of Doom*, describes the time of judgment. Nicholas Noyes was also known for his doggerel verse.

Other late writings described conflicts and interaction with the Indians, as seen in writings by Daniel Gookin, Alexander Whitaker, John Mason, Benjamin Church, and Mary Rowlandson. John Eliottranslated the Bible into the Algonquin language.

Of the second generation of New England settlers, Cotton Mather stands out as a theologian and historian, who wrote the history of the colonies with a view to God's activity in their midst and to connecting the Puritan leaders with the great heroes of the Christian faith. His best-known works include the *Magnalia Christi Americana*, the *Wonders of the Invisible World* and *The Biblia Americana*.

Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield represented the Great Awakening, a religious revival in the early 18th century that asserted strict Calvinism. Other Puritan and religious writers include Thomas Hooker, Thomas Shepard, John Wise, and Samuel Willard. Less strict and serious writers included Samuel Sewall (who wrote a diary revealing the daily life of the late 17th century), and Sarah Kemble Knight.

As the colonies moved towards their break with England, perhaps one of the most important discussions of American culture and identity came from the French immigrant J. Hector St. John de Crèvecœur, whose *Letters from an American Farmer* addresses the question what is an American by moving between praise for the opportunities and peace offered in the new society and recognition that the solid life of the farmer must rest uneasily between the oppressive aspects of the

urban life (with its luxuries built on slavery) and the lawless aspects of the frontier, where the lack of social structures leads to the loss of civilized living.

This same period saw the birth of African American literature, through the poetry of Phillis Wheatley and, shortly after the Revolution, the slave narrative of Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*. This era also saw the birth of Native American literature, through the two published works of Samson Occom: *A Sermon Preached at the Execution of Moses Paul* and a popular hymnbook, *Collection of Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, "the first Indian best-seller".

The revolutionary period also contained political writings, including those by colonists Samuel Adams, Josiah Quincy, John Dickinson, and Joseph Galloway, a loyalist to the crown. Two key figures were Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Paine. Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanac* and *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* are esteemed works with their wit and influence toward the formation of a budding American identity. Paine's pamphlet *Common Sense* and *The American Crisis* writings are seen as playing a key role in influencing the political tone of the period.

During the 18th century, writing shifted focus from the Puritanical ideals of Winthrop and Bradford to the power of the human mind and rational thought. The belief that human and natural occurrences were messages from God no longer fit with the new human centered world. Many intellectuals believed that the human mind could comprehend the universe through the laws of physics as described by Isaac Newton. The enormous scientific, economic, social, and philosophical, changes of the 18th century, called the Enlightenment, impacted the authority of clergyman and scripture, making way for democratic principles. The increase in population helped account for the greater diversity of opinion in religious and political life as seen in the literature of this time.

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