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Puritan and Yankee Rediviva: Recent Writings on Early New England of Interest to Atlantic Scholars

New England continues to be the most-studied and written-about region in early North America, and it may well be that early New England studies represent the greatest single bulk of scholarly production of any specialized field in North America generally. The point about the quantity (not to mention quality) of the writings on early New England cannot be overemphasized, since it has important repercussions for the nature of what is studied and what questions can be asked.[1] New England specialists can no longer get away with producing pedestrian and unimaginative accounts of *terra incognita*; such works have long since been prepared. The scholar of New England can indulge himself in the luxury of revisionism, of questioning other scholar's interpretations, and of engaging in disagreements with others who are genuinely familiar with the sort of work he is doing. There is something to be said for the frequent observation of authors of essays like the present one that the very richness of the published literature — instead of deflecting bright younger scholars into other areas — has been a magnet drawing them to match their wits and skills against the older boys and each other.

At the same time that early New England studies is a much (some would say over) studied field, it is curiously enough one of the few which has for a scholarly generation or more had the general shape and tone of its interpretation not only dominated but set by a single scholar. Perry Miller stands as a giant in the field. Most of the recent works on New England in one way or another challenge his version — some commentators, drawing from the philosophy of science, have called it a paradigm — of the New England experience.[2] We seem to be currently in a state quite familiar to the historians of science; many small parts of the existing truth or paradigm have been modified, redefined,

1 This point has been made by Edmund S. Morgan, "The Historians of Early New England," in Ray Allen Billington, ed., *The Reinterpretation of Early American History: Essays in honor of John Edwin Pomfret* (San Marino, Calif., 1966), pp. 41-63.

2 The term "paradigm" has been popularized by Thomas Kuhn in his *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago, 1962).

questioned, denied, but the dominant formulation has not yet been completely overturned, much less replaced by an alternative.[3] And so, any essay on early New England scholarship, even one concerned with very recent writings, must begin with Perry Miller, who died nearly a decade ago. This is not the place to add to an already substantial critical literature on Perry Miller, but it is important to outline which features of Miller's paradigm (and there is some disagreement over precisely what Miller intended) have come under attack implicitly or explicitly in recent scholarship.[4]

Perhaps the most important influence Miller has had on New England studies has been to identify the early history of the region with the early history of American Puritanism. "Puritan New England" has become an almost inescapable label, though a large part of the latest writing has undertaken to avoid it by dealing with the New England population as settlers rather than as Puritans. Moreover, Miller's insistence on organizing his narrative in terms of the intelligent and articulate members of the community not only had the effect of concentrating on the Puritan clergy, but of emphasizing the views of the clergy in Massachusetts, particularly in Boston. There is an implicit metropolitanism in Miller's writings. Finally, by viewing the history of early New England largely through the eyes of its Puritan clergy, which has been questioned, Miller in essence accepted their version of its development.[5] The first thrust of settlement, under the influence of strong religious idealism and consensus, became the high point of the history, and everything thereafter (as the clergy themselves saw it) was, in one of Miller's famous phrases, "Declension in a Bible Commonwealth." Not surprisingly, Miller's New England tended to focus in the 17th century, neglecting the 18th except as a further diffusion of older values of community and broken only by the one attempt to arrest the disintegration – the Great Awakening.[6]

Miller's dismissal of "ship, trade routes, currency, property, agriculture, town government and military tactics" as "at their worst mere tables of statistics, on the average meaningless inventories, and at their best only a series of monographs," is well-known.[7] But his point that such studies "are not, and

3 Michael McGiffert, "American Puritan Studies in the 1960's," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., XXVII (1970), pp. 36-67, esp. pp. 64-67.

4 Among a large number of critiques see particularly David A. Hollinger, "Perry Miller and Philosophical History," *History and Theory*, VII (1968), pp. 189-202; Gene Wise, "Implicit Irony in Perry Miller's New England Mind," *Journal of the History of Ideas* (1968), pp. 579-600; Robert Middlekauf, "Perry Miller," in M. Cunliffe and R. W. Winks, eds., *Pastmasters: Some Essays on American Historians* (New York, 1969), pp. 167-190.

5 McGiffert, "Puritan Studies," p. 40ff.

6 Miller's major works on Puritanism are *Orthodoxy in Massachusetts 1630-1650* (1933, reprinted Boston, 1959); *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (1939, reprinted Boston, 1961); *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province* (1953, reprinted Boston, 1961); *Jonathan Edwards* (1949, reprinted New York, 1959).

7 Perry Miller, "Preface" to *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province* (Boston, 1961).

cannot be made, the central theme of a coherent narrative" has not yet been denied.[8] So far all we have is a series of monographs. At the same time we must emphasize that Miller's paradigm has not yet been overturned, it must also be noted that Miller's emphases were, in a very real sense, *sui generis.* In terms of the quantity and quality of articulate intelligence to be found and studied, New England was unique in early North America, and what Miller and those who mine the same veins have done is unportable both substantively and methodologically. Scholars working in other regions could hardly plug their work into the New England Mind, and could only sit envious of the richness of the intellectual and literary record of New England and especially Puritanism. Those working in the Middle Colonies, the South, French Canada, and particularly in terms of this essay, the Atlantic Provinces, can utilize a good deal more of the post-Miller scholarship on New England than it ever could of the substantial achievements of Perry Miller. The sorts of questions being asked and sources being utilized in recent New England studies have considerable relevance for those of us working in early Canadian history.

Before discussing the utility of the New England scholarship for early Canadian specialists, especially those working in the Atlantic region, I would be remiss if I did not note the dangers inherent in such an approach. These pitfalls are a product of spatial and temporal limitations of both the scholar and of his material. In one way or another, most of the recent writings on New England reflect the contemporary conditions in the United States within which they have been produced. It seems a legitimate question to ask the extent to which those conditions also prevail in contemporary Canada. Put simply, would we be importing questions and methods from American scholarship which are not entirely relevant to Canadian circumstances? The problems raised by this question have surfaced in a host of hotly-debated issues within historical scholarship, the general academic profession, and the nation at large, and I have no answers.[9] But one cannot be insensitive to the issues involved. Each individual must ultimately decide for himself how a way of examining a problem — and the problem itself — has been generated, and whether the process of generation is acceptable to him philosophically.

Moving from the historian to the material, the problems of transferrance of conceptualization and methodology remain equally difficult. The difficulty here is that the development of early Nova Scotia or Newfoundland is not identical either spatially or temporally with that of New England. There is an obvious affinity between the Atlantic region and northern New England, but as I shall indicate, very little adventurous work has been done on New England

8 *Ibid.*

9 Canadian resistance to American scholarly revisionism, especially in the social science area, has seldom been explicit but has always been present. It seems to me part of a general unstated cultural nationalism, but this is a point requiring further investigation and analysis. But see Ken Dewar, "History in Canada," *This Magazine is about Schools*, V (1971), pp. 49-58.

north of Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The result is that we are frequently left with the problem of fitting findings and approaches into a very different historical situation. Southern New England was by the time of the settlement of the Atlantic region far more sophisticated in economic, social and religious terms. In some senses, work on 18th-century New England is probably more relevant for the history of the Atlantic region in the 19th century than for its own time period. But, at the same time, a good deal had changed by the nineteenth century, and the amount of change may balance out or even negate the possibility of transferral. Work on 18th-century Georgia and the Carolinas would, it seems to me, be more comparable to the 18th-century Atlantic region. In terms of the recentness of settlement, the newness of political institutions, the inchoate character of most communities, the absence of well-organized churches, the economic emphasis on subsistence agriculture and extractive industry with no manufacturing, and the lack of articulate intellectual activity, the Atlantic area and the deeper South have a good deal in common. The presence of Negro slavery and its effects on economy and social structure provide seemingly obvious differences between the regions, but this is more apparent than real, since in the eighteenth century, most of Georgia and the Carolinas, particularly away from the coastal plain, was peopled by white subsistence farmers not very different from those in Nova Scotia. Indeed, the problems of the backcountry man in the Carolinas which produced the Regulator movement were little different from those in Nova Scotia. But it seems fair to say if these are the comparable regions, the influence should go the other way, for Atlantic historians are far more sophisticated in their work than are those of the lower southern colonies for a similar time period.[10] In several senses, then, we must treat gingerly and cautiously the business of relating our own work to that done on New England. Methodology, conceptualization, and even substantive findings cannot be moved wholesale from one region to another. Nevertheless, within the burgeoning body of New England scholarship are a number of developments which Atlantic historians can at least examine and consider as potentially relevant to their own work.

Perhaps the most important aspect of recent New England scholarship has been its emphasis on community or local studies, a point which James Lemon and I discussed in a review article a few years ago.[11] Since the publication of that piece, which dealt primarily with periodical literature, a number of full-scale studies have been published, most of them elaborations of previously published articles. The emphasis upon community has both methodogical and thematic significance. Methodologically, it permits the exploration in depth,

10 Compare, for example, the state of Atlantic scholarship with that discussed by Clarence L. Ver Steeg, "Historians and the Southern Colonies," in Ray Allen Billington, ed., *The Reinterpretation of Early American History*, pp. 81-100.

11 J. M. Bumsted and J. T. Lemon, "New Approaches in Early American Studies: The Local Community in New England," *Social History/Histoire Sociale*, No. 2 (1968), pp. 98-112.

particularly through quantitative techniques, of questions which are simply too monumental to be studied in aggregate terms, given the absence of government and other agencies collecting quantifiable data in the colonial period. Thematically, it represents a re-examination (though in a new context) of one of the traditional themes of New England history — the fate of the community in New England. For the most part, however, recent research and writing has only seemed to confirm Perry Miller's assertion that non-intellectual questions cannot serve as a general organizing principle for writing about New England. Each of the above points must be discussed in some depth.

The major topics which have been explored in quantitative terms have been demography (especially the dynamics of population growth in colonial New England), economic patterns (particularly in landholding, commercial activity and wealth), and class structure (including the question of who governed and why). In most of the community studies, these topics have not been studied independently, but rather the attempt has been made to emphasize relationships between them. To some extent, therefore, it is artificial to separate them. I do so for the sake of exposition, and in order to emphasize that there have been some common findings. Given the apparent local differences, it is reassuring to find some similarities, even if only in limited areas.

A good deal of general agreement has been reached, for example, among those who have dealt with population patterns. One general fact seems to be that earlier assumptions about marriage patterns in colonial New England, following contemporary comments like that of Benjamin Franklin in his *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind* that ". . . Marriages in America are more general, and more generally early, than in Europe," have not been upheld.[12] Franklin — and he has been followed by countless others — emphasized that it was the availability of land and the moving frontier which produced more and earlier marriages than in Europe.[13] Greven, Lockridge and Bumsted, whose findings in different areas have been very similar, have thus not simply disputed an arcane demographic assumption of the past, but have called into question larger points about the uniqueness of the American experience and the connection of that uniqueness with land and settlement.[14]

12 Benjamin Franklin, "Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind," 1751, reprinted in L. W. Labaree *et al.*, eds., *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* (New Haven, 1961), IV, pp. 229-234.

13 See, for example, Harvey Wish, *Society and Thought in Early America* (New York, 1950), pp. 131-132, or Oscar T. Barck and Hugh T. Lefler, *Colonial America* (2nd ed., New York, 1968), p. 301.

14 Philip J. Greven, Jr., "Family Structure in Seventeenth-Century Andover," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., XXIII (1966), pp. 234-256, and *Four Generations: Population, Land, and Family in Colonial Andover, Massachusetts* (Ithaca, 1970); Kenneth A. Lockridge, "The Population of Dedham, Massachusetts 1636-1736," *Economic History Review*, 2nd Ser., XIX (1966), pp. 318-344, and *A New England Town: The First Hundred Years: Dedham, Massachusetts, 1636-1736* (New York, 1970); J. M. Bumsted, "Religion, Finance, and Democracy in Massachusetts: The Town of Norton as a Case Study," *Journal of American History*, LVII (1971), pp. 817-831. In general, see James H. Cassedy, *Demography in Early America* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969).

Both Lockridge and Greven have emphasized that many rural New Englanders preferred to accept traditional European mores, delaying marriage for economic reasons, rather than moving into new territory. It must be added that the difficulty of generating data for those who did move may mean that those on the frontier did marry earlier, but the point remains that many did not move and delayed marriage. Lockridge, particularly, has related this delay to the relative closing of available land in New England in the mid-18th century.[15] In this sense, pre-revolutionary Nova Scotia becomes the frontier, since it was part of new territory for settlement which opened during and after the Seven Years War. The considerable genealogical interest of Nova Scotians in their ancestors, enshrined in countless local histories, could thus be exploited in this context. Did those who came to Nova Scotia marry early, or did they follow more traditional European patterns? Answering this question would not only contribute to the North Americanization discussion, but might also say a good deal about the expectations about the future which Maritimers held, since early marriages in general represent an optimistic assessment not only of one's individual future, but of the opportunities foreseen for the society. One would expect that any shifts in patterns would relate to economic expectations; that, for example, a change might occur around 1840, when economic prospects seemed particularly bright. In any event, the demographic patterns of the Atlantic region seem a particularly fruitful field for research.

Quantification in economic matters seems an equally obvious and productive area for Atlantic scholars, not only historians but geographers and economists as well. In a society which has a substantial rural agrarian element, landholding patterns are particularly vital, indicative of all sorts of larger questions. Land, after all, constitutes the basic component of wealth, and wealth an essential (though not the only) component of social class in a newly or recently-settled country. The Atlantic region has been studied by geographers in terms of landholding, but in a gross rather than a precise sense.[16] The New England community studies are illustrative of some of the subtleties which can emerge from careful community reconstruction, based largely on recorded deeds and wills. While precise answers will inevitably vary from community to community and region to region, it would be worthwhile to have some notion of the typical size of the viable farmstead, of the relative incidence of land transfer, of the changes in land prices over time, of the degree of absentee landholding. Occasionally such information can be related to specific events, as I have tried to do in a study of Norton, Massachusetts, or to larger movements, as Lock-

15 Kenneth A. Lockridge, "Land, Population and the Evolution of New England Society 1630-1790," *Past and Present*, XXXIX (1968), pp. 62-80. See also Philip J. Greven, Jr., "Historical Demography and Colonial America," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., XXIV (1967), pp. 438-454.

16 Particularly by Andrew Clark in his two pioneering works, *Three Centuries and the Island; A Historical Geography of Settlement and Agriculture in Prince Edward Island, Canada* (Toronto, 1959), and *Acadia; The Geography of Early Nova Scotia to 1760* (Madison, Wisc., 1968).

ridge has done in his article on land availability.[17] And such material can produce suggestive insights into other matters. Greven, for example, has emphasized the continuation of European peasant traditions of land inheritance, and Grant has suggested that a newly-settled frontier community is not necessarily radical in political or social terms.[18] The latter point seems particularly interesting in terms of Nova Scotia during the era of the American Revolution.

Interesting, though perhaps not conclusive, results can be generated through analysis of three readily-available kinds of records — tax lists, probate records, and shipping records. There is considerable disagreement over the significance of the findings of the sort of analysis carried out by William Davisson for early Essex County or James Henretta for Boston, chiefly related to the extent to which the historian can extrapolate from available probates or tax lists to the society at large.[19] Nevertheless, even if Lockridge is correct in asserting that all we can say about the property of those whose estates are probated is that these were the findings for those whose estates are probated, such results represent additional precise information on personal wealth for at least some of the population.[20] Quantitative analysis is perhaps most useful in questioning existing assumptions based upon impressions of material which can be subjected to counting techniques, a point made in an article on quantitative history by William Davisson and Marshall Smelser, a colleague whose work has been more traditionally historical.[21] This is obviously the case with shipping records, which for colonial America, at least, can be found in many places, including the pages of local newspapers.[22] More precise data on the maritime activity of any number of Atlantic ports would certainly be most welcome.

It would certainly be misleading to argue that the introduction of precise quantitative techniques have been the major thrust of community studies — or of more general studies — for the New England region in the colonial period.

17 Bumsted, "Religion. Finance and Democracy"; Lockridge, "Land, Population and the Evolution of New England Society."

18 Philip J. Greven, Jr., "Old Patterns in the New World: The Distribution of Land in 17th Century Andover," *Essex Institute Historical Collections,* CI (1966), pp. 113-148, and *Four Generations;* Charles S. Grant, *Democracy in the Connecticut Frontier Town of Kent* (New York, 1961). Compare Edward S. Perzel, "Land Holding in Ipswich," *Essex Institute Historical Collections*, CIV (1968), pp. 303-328.

19 William I. Davisson, "Essex County Wealth Trends: Wealth and Economic Growth in 17th Century Massachusetts," *Essex Inst. Hist. Coll.*, CIII (1967), pp. 291-342; James Henretta, "Economic Development and Social Structure in Colonial Boston," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., XXV (1968), pp. 75-92.

20 Kenneth A. Lockridge to Editor, *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., XXV (1968), pp. 516-517.

21 Marshall Smelser and William I. Davisson, "The Historian and the Computer: A Simple Introduction to Complex Computation," *Essex Inst. Hist. Coll.*, CIV (1968), pp. 109-128.

22 The classic study is Bernard and Lotte Bailyn, *Massachusetts Shipping, 1697-1714, A Statistical Study* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959). See also Gary M. Walton, "New Evidence on Colonial Commerce," *Journal of Economic History*, XXVIII (1968), pp. 363-389.

Perhaps more important has been a significant shift, partly the result of new procedures but more of new questions, in the schemes of conceptualization employed by many scholars. This seems most obvious in terms of a new concentration upon the family and concepts growing out of it, particularly the dynamics of generational development, and models of psycho-social analysis based upon the family.[23] It is here rather than in quantification that one can find the germs, perhaps, of alternative paradigms to that of Perry Miller. Although Miller himself did not particularly concern himself with the family, one of his students, Edmund S. Morgan, concentrated on that subject thirty years ago.[24] But as the title of Morgan's study — *The Puritan Family* — suggests, it was done in the context of Miller's general emphases, assuming that the operative principles of family organization and life were inherent in articulated Puritanism and that one went from the general organizing principles of New England society, which were Puritan, to the particular, which was the family. Instead of reading out of Puritanism the meaning of the family, implicit in recent studies has been a tendency to begin with the family, and to read out of that basic social unit the organizing principles and the developing tensions and patterns of the society.

The shift from Puritanism to the family as a conceptual framework has been rather more prevalent in recent scholarship on New England than has generally been recognized. Most of the family literature has fit into the generally-understood patterns of New England development articulated by Miller, particularly the declension model, but there is no inherent reason why it should fit, and there are some hints of other possibilities. One of the earliest generational studies, clearly transitional, was Richard Dunn's study of the Winthrop family.[25] Dunn's presentation of three generations of the Winthrops, spanning the 17th century, fell neatly into a declension pattern, perhaps because Miller had families like the Winthrops in mind in his own work on the seventeenth century. Through the Winthrops, Dunn was able to trace decline — both of Puritan fervor and idealism and of ability to dominate the society — and to document the 17th-century shift presented by Miller, to use the sub-title of another recent study, "From Puritan to Yankee."[26] But once one accepts the notion that New England was composed of communities and families, some great and some ordinary, the possibilities for questioning the declension model become considerable.

23 In general, see David J. Rothman, "A Note on The Study of the Colonial Family," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., XXIII (1966), pp. 627-634.

24 Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan Family: Religion and Domestic Relations in Seventeenth-Century New England* (rev. ed., New York, 1966).

25 Richard S. Dunn, *Puritans and Yankees: The Winthrop Dynasty of New England, 1630-1717* (Princeton, N.J., 1962).

26 Richard S. Bushman, *From Puritan to Yankee: Character and the Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1765* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967).

One possibility is to extend Dunn's pattern for the Winthrops into a general model of its own, which seems to have happened in a fair bit of the recent literature, including some of my own. Lemon and I discussed this model in our *Histoire Sociale* article several years ago.[27] What one gets is a cyclical generational model, tied to the settlement of new communities. The first generation is the one which has the imagination, energy, and idealism to venture into new settlement, while the second generation consolidates and the third disintegrates, separating into those who remain committed to the status quo and those with the imagination and energy to form new settlements. This generational pattern is inherent in many of the recent community studies, and has been criticized by a number of specialists, including Edmund S. Morgan.[28] Actually, the three-generation model integrates fairly well into Miller's work, as Dunn's study indicates, although its cyclical nature could be seen as indicating a constant declension and rebirth as New England settlement expands outward from the seacoast. It does represent a change in emphasis, since it is not Puritanism which is declining but the energy of new settlement. Early New England *happened* to be Puritan, but only coincidentally.

But a generational settlement model is not the only possibility, as other family studies have been suggesting. Robert Middlekauf's recent study of three generations of the Mather family certainly does not emphasize decline and disintegration, but rather a process of consolidation and building.[29] Unlike third generation Winthrops (or third generation Cottons, who fit the Winthrop pattern very well), the third generation Mather — Cotton — is hardly a disintegrating figure, although elements of disintegration are there. Middlekauf clearly sees Cotton Mather as representing — in the third generation — the climax of his family's development rather than its zenith, although it is interesting that the Mathers, like the Winthrops and the Cottons, *are* a three-generation family. Who has ever heard of Cotton Mather's sons or daughters? If Middlekauf suggests one alternative dynamic to the three-generation declension family, John Waters suggests another, perhaps related, pattern.[30] Waters' study is of the Otis family — an 18th rather than a 17th-century family — but his emphasis is not upon a family in decline but rather of a family on the make; it may be that this is what Middlekauf was trying to get at as well. Waters' account documents a family dynasty slowly building and consolidating. Perhaps this is the process that the ancestors of the Winthrops, Cottons, and Mathers underwent in England, so that with the 17th-century New England families we begin some-

27 Bumsted and Lemon, "The Local Community in New England," pp. 109-111.

28 Morgan, review of Greven's *Four Generations*, *Journal of American History*, LVII (1970), pp. 686-688.

29 Robert Middlekauf, *The Mathers: Three Generations of Puritan Intellectuals, 1596-1728* (New York, 1971).

30 John J. Waters, Jr., *The Otis Family in Provincial and Revolutionary Massachusetts* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1968).

where in the middle of a dynastic process which is longer than three generations. In any event, the organization of studies around generational developments is well advanced in New England studies, both for important individual families and aggregate families. Both of these approaches could be carried over into the Atlantic region. Important families like the Wentworths, Haliburtons, and Winslows could be studied, as could generational developments on the community level.

As I have suggested, the possibilities of family-oriented studies are considerable. Yet another approach has been used by John Demos in one of the most stimulating and imaginative of recent works, *A Little Commonwealth*, which discusses every-day life — particularly family life — in Plymouth Colony.[31] *A Little Commonwealth* and Darrett Rutman's *Husbandmen of Plymouth*, by the way, are good illustrations of the contribution to scholarship which can be made by private historical societies and historical reconstruction sites.[32] The sponsoring agency for the Demos and Rutman books was Plimoth Plantation, the organization which has recreated and operates the reconstruction of the initial settlement of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, Massachusetts. The two books are also valuable for early Atlantic region scholars because they are readings of a fairly limited amount of written evidence, of a quantity and quality far more like that of early Canada than the wealth of material available for Massachusetts-Bay, or even Connecticut.

What Demos has set out to do in *A Little Commonwealth* is to investigate the social consequences of living conditions, family organization, and child-rearing practices upon the larger community. Rather unusually for a historian, Demos begins with artifacts: housing, furnishings, and clothing. This analysis, particularly of the physical conditions of living, is not simply descriptive, but essential to his overall interpretation:

> Most Old Colony dwellings were extremely small by our own standards, and even so parts of them were not usable during the long winter months. Thus there was little privacy for the residents, and little chance to differentiate between various portions of living space. Life in these households was much less segmented, in a formal sense, than it usually is for us; individuals were more constantly together and their activities meshed and overlapped at many points.[33]

Given the smallness of the living quarters, and the size of the semi-extended families which inhabited them, Demos asks a critical question: what sorts of behavioural values did the families hold and inculcate to prevent destructive

31 John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (New York, 1970).

32 Darrett B. Rutman, *Husbandmen of Plymouth: Farms and Villages in the Old Colony 1620-1692* (Boston, 1967).

33 Demos, *A Little Commonwealth*, p. 181.

internal conflicts for which there is little documentable evidence, although the outer life of the colonists was clearly one of "contention, of chronic and sometimes bitter enmity."[34] To answer this question, Demos turns to child-rearing practices, which he controversially places in the model of Erik Erikson's "eight stages of man."[35] His conclusion, stated baldly, is that child-rearing practices emphasized the repression of conflict within the home, thus turning it outside to the community at large. Evidence of a similar nature to that analyzed by Demos, particularly of housing and living conditions, is readily available for the Atlantic region. One wonders what the effects of harsher climatic conditions than in Plymouth, longer winters forcing the family to live together even more intensely, had upon the values and behaviour of the Nova Scotia or Newfoundland population? Perhaps — and this is said only half-facetiously — the Northern-ness of Canada so dear to many of those searching for a distinct Canadian identity can be directly related to other psychological traits — such as self-discipline, respect for law and order, nonagressiveness — in terms of the values necessary to prevent explosive social conflicts in an essentially indoor society. In these terms, one supposes, the call of the wilderness and the outdoors could be seen as the necessary safety valve.[36] In any event, Demos has raised some terribly suggestive problems.

While Demos has emphasized the reduction of conflict within the home in 17th-century Plymouth, Michael Zuckerman in *Peaceable Kingdoms* has stressed the efforts of the community — the town in 18th-century New England — to reduce conflict outside it.[37] Zuckerman points out that the community also attempted to reduce disputations and irreparable internal divisions by insisting on the maintenance of values of peace and harmony, at the obvious expense of individual self-expression, except in certain socially-approved areas, particularly litigation in the courts. Zuckerman's emphasis upon the drive for harmony has been less controversial than his insistence that, by and large, the New England towns achieved it.[38] The point will never be satisfactorily settled, since conflict is what produces records and evidence, and the question of its relative importance is a moot point. One has only to look today at the debate over the media's emphasis upon violence and extremism and the insistence of many that this does not fairly reflect the society to understand the nature of the problem. Do we take the criminal act or the thousands of non-criminal acts as representative?

Despite internal disagreements among the specialists, there remains an insistence in recent studies that the town as community was an important social

34 *Ibid.*, p. 136.

35 See Erik Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle* (New York, 1959).

36 Compare W. L. Morton, *The Canadian Identity* (Toronto, 1961), esp. pp. 89-93.

37 Michael Zuckerman, *Peaceable Kingdoms: New England Towns in the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1970).

38 See comments in Lockridge, *A New England Town*, pp. 167-177.

unit for New Englanders. We still do not entirely understand the effects of the migration of New Englanders upon the institution of the town, nor do we really know what, if anything, the migrants put in its place. Certainly the town is a less important institution in the Atlantic region than it was for those Yankees who settled what is now northern New England and are discussed in Charles Clark's *The Eastern Frontier.*[39] But it is not enough to document the demise of the town meeting, which for Zuckerman was the principal agent of enforcing community consensus. More significantly, we need a lot more imaginative discussion of its effects, both socially and psychologically.

Some of the criticisms of Zuckerman's work, which has been an attempt to look at community developments in the 18th-century in terms of the larger society, are indicative of the present state of the New England studies.[40] As one who has been as earnest an advocate of the community study as anyone, I think I am entitled to raise what now seems to me the crucial question. Or really, to reraise it, since it was advanced by Perry Miller some years ago. The ultimate justification for producing a community study has always been the hope that, when enough were done, a synthesis would emerge. While we have not yet reached the point where every community has been carefully reconstructed, enough have been done to lead one to query the assumption of eventual synthesis. Despite some substantive points of agreement, what we have produced is a relatively unassimilable batch of community studies, which no-one seems able to generalize about satisfactorily. Under the microscope, the amount of community uniqueness within some common patterns seems virtually overwhelming. One synthesizes the common patterns only at the expense of ignoring significant differences, and in the long run, perhaps we can make better sense out of the past by reading down to individual cases rather than by attempting to read up from them. If we are to read down, some unifying construct is needed, and so far, no-one has succeeded in suggesting one which encompasses more than Miller's intellectual life of Puritanism.[41] This is not to say that the raising of new questions and new areas of research has been unproductive, or to despair of a new paradigm. But, I would suggest, it will come deductively rather than inductively, and will probably emerge out of the sorts of psycho-social questions raised by scholars like Demos rather than out of the socio-demographic ones raised by others, including myself.

In terms of new organizing questions, one of the most prevalent themes of recent New England studies, including a number of the community studies

39 *The Eastern Frontier: The Settlement of Northern New England 1610-1763* (New York, 1970).

40 For example, see reviews of *Peaceable Kingdoms* by David H. Flaherty in *Journal of American History*, LVII (1970), pp. 688-689, and T. H. Breen in *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., XXVII (1970), pp. 664-666.

41 Even Darrett Rutman, once one of Miller's fiercest critics, has attempted to unite "two schools of thought . . . , one devoted to New England as a *Puritan idea*, the other devoted to the study of New England as a *society*," in a book significantly entitled *American Puritanism: Faith and Practice* (Philadelphia, 1970). The quote above is from p. vi.

already discussed, has been that of the maintenance of order in the society.[42] The problems of social order and disorder are obviously very modern ones, of concern to a generation which has seen presidents assassinated, diplomats kidnapped, and airliners hijacked, incidents perhaps only the most publicized among countless antisocial acts in our world. In many ways, the most suggestive single work here has been Kai Erikson's *Wayward Puritans*, subtitled "A Study in the Sociology of Deviance."[43] Erikson's book is one of those inter-disciplinary ones which seldom gets its proper formal recognition, but has a kind of underground influence. Erikson has viewed Puritanism not in terms of its intellectual meaning, but as an organizing set of values controlling acceptable behaviour in a community. He sees the various controversies in 17th-century Massachusetts — the antinomian upset, the Quaker invasion, the witchcraft incidents — as tests of the limits of deviance for the society within which they occurred and of its control apparatus. Concepts of social order and deviance enable him to relate the legal/political structure of the community to the ecclesiastical one, and to connect seemingly unrelated acts such as murder, religious dissent, and witchcraft, in a way which can be useful to historians of other regions at other times.

If nothing else, Erikson has highlighted and emphasized how little we know about law and judicial processes as mechanisms for the enforcement of social order. There has been a revival of interest in legal history, based upon just these questions, particularly for the New England region. Questions of an older generation of legal historians, related chiefly to the transmission and transplantation of legal concepts and procedure in new environments, seem much less productive than the new tendency to see law and the courts as part of the social process.[44] It is all part, one supposes, of the shift from intellectual to social history. One cannot help but be struck by the paucity of study of legal history in either sense for the Atlantic provinces. This is particularly unfortunate, since court records, particularly for higher courts, constitute a body of evidence which tends to be preserved.[45] The legal historian need not get bogged down in the question of whether law in the Atlantic region followed British or colonial American precedents (though this might be an interesting

42 Stephen Foster, *Their Solitary Way: The Puritan Social Ethic in the First Century of Settlement in New England* (New Haven, 1971); David H. Flaherty, *Privacy in Colonial New England* (Charlottesville, Virginia, 1972); Rowland Berthoff, *An Unsettled People: Social Order and Disorder in American History* (New York, 1971); Edwin Powers, *Crime and Punishment in Early Massachusetts, 1620-1692* (Boston, 1966).

43 Kai T. Erikson, *Wayward Puritans: A Study in the Sociology of Deviance* (New York, 1966).

44 For the older views, see George Lee Haskins, *Law and Authority in Early Massachusetts: A Study in Tradition and Design* (New York, 1960); Mary Jeanne Anderson Jones, *Congregational Commonwealth: Connecticut 1636-1662* (Middletown, Conn., 1968), esp. pp. 61-137; David Parnes, *Plymouth and The Common Law: A Legal History* (Plymouth, Mass., 1971).

45 For the New England example, see William Jeffery, Jr., "Early New England Court Records — A Bibliography of Published Materials," *American Journal of Legal History*, I (1957), pp. 119-147.

question), but can deal with the legal process as a reflection of the values and assumptions of the society in which they are found.

The new interest in deviance and its repression in terms of social process in large part explains the resurgence of scholarly interest in such hitherto bizarre matters as the Salem witchcraft trials. While too much has probably been made of the Salem events as indicative of major value shifts and/or disorientations in New England society at the end of the 17th century, they do represent social and psychological incidents worth examining.[46] Not surprisingly, the orientation of the recent scholarship has been to root the witchcraft incidents deep in the community, to see them in their local as well as their larger context.[47] Equally unsurprisingly, recent scholarship has tended to be more sympathetic to the contemporary assumptions of both accusers and accused. The severe scientific rationalism of the past several centuries with regard to witchcraft has broken down, and we can now find treatments of witchcraft which can accept it phenomonologically on psychological and emotional grounds. The whole incident becomes much more meaningful when not viewed as some sort of medieval aberration, or alternatively, some indictment of the irrationalities of Puritanism. Indeed, we can find a relatively recent acceptance of irrationality and emotionalism in many scholarly writings on a variety of fronts, particularly in the religious area.

As I have already suggested, most writings on New England Puritanism seem to me ultimately non-transportable to the Atlantic region, because the nature of the evidence available for Puritanism — both in published writings and unpublished records — is so different as to make an analysis of questions possible for Puritanism that cannot possibly be achieved elsewhere.[48] However, a shift in tone has occurred in Puritan studies which is relevant for the Atlantic provinces. This change has been to accept the emotional side of Puritanism, particularly its pietistic thrust, as both a legitimate expression of sentiment and as an influential element in the formation of American values.[49] This shift has

46 Clarence L. Ver Steeg, *The Formative Years, 1607-1763* (New York, 1964), pp. 144-146; Wesley Frank Craven, *The Colonies in Transition, 1660-1713* (New York, 1968), pp. 250-252.

47 Sanford J. Fox, *Science and Justice: The Massachusetts Witchcraft Trials* (Baltimore, 1968); Chadwick Hansen, *Witchcraft at Salem* (New York, 1969); John Demos, "Underlying Themes in the Witchcraft of Seventeenth-Century New England," *American Historical Review*, LXXV (1970), pp. 1311-1326.

48 Some of the most important recent books on Puritanism include Robert G. Pope, *The Half-Way Covenant: Church Membership in Puritan New England* (Princeton, 1969); T. H. Breen, *The Character of the Good Ruler: A Study of Puritan Political Ideas in New England, 1630-1730* (New Haven, 1970); David S. Hall, *The Faithful Shepherd: A History of the New England Ministry in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1971); Sacvan Berkovitch, *Horologicals to Chronometricals: The Rhetoric of the Jeremiad* (Madison, Wisc., 1970).

49 William G. McLoughlin, *Isaac Backus and the American Pietistic Tradition* (Boston, 1967), and "Pietism and The American Character," *American Quarterly*, XVII (1965), pp. 163-186. Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind: From the Great Awakening to the Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass., 1966).

already been parallelled by developments in Atlantic scholarship, particularly the revived interest in the pietism and evangelicalism of the New Light movement of Nova Scotia and its successors.[50] An older view of the Atlantic evangelists as scruffy oddballs seems relatively difficult to sustain these days, although most attention has focussed on the origins of the movement rather than its expansion and extension in the 19th century. We need a thorough study of the entire evangelical movement in the Atlantic region, and we seem a long way from an equivalent of Heimert's brilliant and controversial *Religion and the American Mind*, although for the 19th century the published writings of Canadian religious figures becomes much more extensive.[51]

To turn from religion to politics, a number of questions have been raised and debated which could well be asked for the Atlantic region. Zuckerman's *Peaceable Kingdoms*, already discussed in terms of its community orientation, has raised the whole matter of the extent of political centralization in New England. His argument that the provincial legislatures were dominated by the towns, rather than *vice versa,* has raised a good deal of controversy.[52] Conditions appear to have been far different in the Atlantic provinces, but one still wonders whether the explicit metropolitanism of Brebner's *Neutral Yankees* and the implicit metropolitanism of most of the other political studies in the region will stand up under closer scrutiny. We do not really know the extent to which government was actually centralized in Atlantic Canada, nor do we understand very well the processes involved. It seems clear that the township as a unit of government rapidly became unimportant, but what about the county?[53] Did the county offer an alternate political institution to the provincial government, and did it provide an alternate power base for politicians? We certainly need to know more about the relationships between the central provincial governments and the various local governments.

As far as the provincial governments are concerned, Brebner's pioneer adaptation of Namierism to 18th-century North American politics has set a high standard for political analysis which is only now being emulated for other colonies.[54]

50 See, for example, my *Henry Alline, 1748-1784* (Toronto, 1971), and Gordon Stewart and George Rawlyk, *A People Highly Favoured of God: The Nova Scotia Yankees and The American Revolution* (Toronto, 1972).

51 One example of what can be done is S. F. Wise, "Sermon Literature and Canadian Intellectual History," *The Bulletin of the Committee on Archives, The United Church of Canada* (1965), pp. 3-18.

52 Zuckerman, *Peaceable Kingdoms*, pp. 10-45.

53 In his recent book on the origins of the American Revolution, Merrill Jensen notes the growing importance of the county in New England in the 1760's: *The Founding of a Nation: A History of the American Revolution 1763-1776* (New York, 1968), p. 21. Brebner seems ambivalent about the county; see *The Neutral Yankees of Nova Scotia: A Marginal Colony during the Revolutionary Years* (1937, reprinted Toronto, 1969).

54 The pioneering nature of Brebner's work is noted by Jack P. Greene in his "Changing Interpretations of American Politics," in Ray Allen Billington, ed., *The Reinterpretation of Early American History*, p. 160.

Nevertheless, as far as the provincial legislatures are concerned, the techniques of roll-call analysis (detailed breakdowns of recorded vote divisions) and collective biography (the careers of, in this case, the legislators) could well provide some surprises for us.[55] Roll-call analysis has never been very popular in Canadian political science, largely because the parliamentary system and responsible government virtually eliminate free votes, but for the period before the introduction of responsible government in the various Atlantic provinces, a careful analysis of the divisions, when combined with a full understanding of the background of both the legislators and their constituencies, could be very productive. Robert Zemsky has attempted to do this for mid-18th-century Massachusetts in his book *Merchants, Farmers and River Gods*, and a lengthy methodological appendix deals with the theoretical and practical aspects of the technique.[56] One wonders whether the "court-country" or leadership — rank and file split which Zemsky finds for Massachusetts, and which has been seen as a feature of British politics for much of its history, has its Atlantic counterpart.

Then there is the problem of the franchise. Ever since Robert E. Brown's *Middle Class Democracy in Massachusetts*, which argued Massachusetts was democratic because most adult males could vote, New England historians have been debating issues of voting rights and democratic government in the region.[57] Much of the discussion has ultimately been non-productive, since it has revolved around definitions of democracy and philosophical questions about the political process and its relation to social dynamics.[58] In any event, Atlantic scholarship has not even reached the point of beginning such a debate. We simply do not know what effects the various provincial franchise laws had on the accessibility of the vote to the population, much less its ultimate meaning. Was Atlantic Canada a democratic system in Brown's limited sense? And even

55 For roll-call analysis, see George M. Bellemy, "A Method for Analyzing Legislative Behavior," *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, II (1958), pp. 377-402; Thomas B. Alexander, *Sectional Stress and Party Strength: A Computer Analysis of Roll-Call Voting Patterns in the United States House of Representatives, 1836-1860* (Nashville, Tennessee, 1967); and William O. Aydelotte, "Voting patterns in the British House of Commons in the 1840's," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, V (1963), pp. 134-163. For collective biography, examine P. M. G. Harris, "The Social Origins of American Leaders: The Demographic Foundations," *Perspectives in American History*, III (1969), pp. 159-343, and for legislatures in particular, D. Brunton and D. H. Pennington, *Members of the Long Parliament* (1954, reprinted Hamden, Conn., 1968).

56 *Merchants, Farmers and River Gods: An Essay on Eighteenth-Century American Politics* (Boston, 1971), "Statistical Appendix," pp. 285-328.

57 For a bibliography of the major works, see McGiffert, "Puritan Studies," 62n. See also Robert E. Brown, *Middle Class Democracy and the Revolution in Massachusetts, 1690-1765* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1955).

58 Two useful critiques are John M. Murrin, "The Myths of Colonial Democracy and Royal Decline in 18th Century America," *Cithara*, V (1965), pp. 53-69; John B. Kirby, "Early American Politics—The Search for Ideology: An Historiographical Analysis and Critique of the Concept of 'Deference'," *Journal of Politics*, 32 (1970), pp. 808-838.

if it was, what about questions of deference and social class as the real determinants of the political dynamism of the society? Who were its political leaders?

If some of the political scientist's techniques can help us understand political action, so too some of the sociologist's tools can assist in explaining ideology. At the same time, it must be added that roll-call analysis has proved a far more meaningful technique than content analysis. But while content analysis has some very definite limits, particularly in the hands of sociologists insisting on "scientific" results, as a recent piece of analysis of colonial periodicals has demonstrated,[59] in the hands of a researcher who really understands the material he is analyzing it can be quite useful. Richard Merritt's various reports of his content analysis of colonial newspapers, culminating in his *Symbols of American Community*, have dealt sympathetically but realistically with the pitfalls and the gains from the technique.[60] In the last analysis, one suspects, Merritt could have produced roughly the same conclusion — given his familiarity with his newspapers — without all the scientific apparatus. But then, he asked very gross and limited questions relating to the newspapers' perceptions of the American relationship to Britain, and there might have been some surprises in other topics. Nevertheless, the newspapers and periodicals of Atlantic Canada have never really been fully exploited in terms of their ideological assumptions or for their reflections of the society in which they were produced.

One final aspect of New England scholarship needs to be considered: work of direct relevance to Atlantic specialists. The amount of such work has been extremely limited over the past few years, partly because most early New England specialists stop at the present American-Canadian border, and partly because the Atlantic region's chief impact on early New England was in military matters, a rather unfashionable subject of late. Nevertheless, one should call attention to Charles Clark's *The Eastern Frontier*, already noted, which deals with the settlement of northern New England (New Hampshire and what is now Maine), a region geographically contiguous and part of the northern frontier which included Nova Scotia. Perhaps not surprisingly, Clark eschews models and social science conceptualization in favour of a straightforward descriptive account of the expansion of his region. He certainly does emphasize the importance of the local community, but at the same time discusses the relatively unorganized nature of life in the new settlements.[61] Also worth noting is Jere Daniell's *Experiment in Republicanism*, an account of the revo-

59 For meaningless results, see Herman R. Lantz *et al.*, "Pre-Industrial Patterns in the Colonial Family in America: A Content Analysis of Colonial Magazines," *American Sociological Review*, XXXIII (1968), pp. 413-426.

60 See especially, "Public Opinion in Colonial America: Content-Analyzing The Colonial Press," *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, XXVII (1963), pp. 356-376, and *Symbols of American Community, 1735-1775* (New Haven, 1966).

61 Clark has attempted some generalizations in "Beyond the Frontier: An Environmental Approach to the Early History of Northern New England," *Maine Historical Society Newsletter*, II (1971), pp. 5-21.

lution in New Hampshire in which perhaps the leading figure is a familiar figure to Nova Scotians – John Wentworth.[62] Finally, there is Richard Lowe's sympathetic account of the treatment received by the expelled Acadians in the province of Massachusetts, based largely on the unpublished contemporary evidence in the Massachusetts Archives.[63] Lowe's study suggests that New Englanders were prepared to treat the Acadians as innocent victims rather than as sinister enemies, and probably did better by them than by their own victimized population, particularly the Indians.

Having completed this rather breathless survey of recent writings, I am fully aware of its selective nature, both in terms of the topics and the works I have chosen to emphasize. Nevertheless, it serves its purpose if it indicates the existence of a rich literature which could prove useful to Atlantic specialists. But I cannot caution too strongly against the artificial transferral of either methodology or conceptualization simply because they have become fashionable. The study of any region's past must be rooted in some understanding of the organic developments of the region itself, and problems for investigation should grow out of native soil. If some of the work I have discussed can help to answer questions which have grown naturally out of careful investigation, this is gain for scholarship. I am not so certain about the reverse process of generating problems which can then be tested by using any region as a laboratory. I suppose this is why I am not a social scientist, but an historian.

62 Jere R. Daniell, *Experiment in Republicanism: New Hampshire Politics and the American Revolution, 1741-1794* (Cambridge, Mass., 1970).

63 Richard G. Lowe, "Massachusetts and the Acadians," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., XXV (1968), pp. 212-229.