The rhetoric of authority in the "New-England Courant" (Volumes I and II)

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The rhetoric of authority in the "New-England Courant" (Volumes I and II)

Abstract
This study analyses the themes, rhetoric and imagery in the weekly newspaper The New-England Courant published in Boston from 1721 to 1726 by James and Benjamin Franklin and examines the way in which the circle of writers who produced it presented the topic of authority in civil and church politics.

James Franklin's printing business found its niche in the already crowded world of Boston printers and booksellers by becoming the first opposition press in the American colonies. As the first printer to publish the Real Whig doctrines of Henry Care, John Trenchard, and Thomas Gordon, Franklin supplied discontented members of the bourgeoisie with rhetorical forms and an historical vision which fostered the growth of the popular or Old Charter Party in the Massachusetts legislature. By adapting the language and social attitudes of the London literary newspapers to conflict with the Eastern Indians during Dummer’s War, the Courant created a gendered rhetoric in which Native Americans, blacks, and women were identified as feminine because they relied on oral history rather than print culture. In arguing for their own inclusion in the political and cultural elite, the writers of the Courant advocated the marginalization of these feminine groups, declaring that their emotionalism and enslavement to tradition made them incapable of self-control and unfit for political autonomy.

In its reporting of doctrinal controversy within the Congregational churches and conflicts between Protestant sects in New England the Courant supported latitudinarian rationalism and condemned the efforts of Cotton Mather and his supporters to revivify the New England Way. At the same time that they criticized traditional religious practice for mingling rational analysis with emotional symbolism, writers for the paper strongly upheld the democratic traditions of Congregational polity.

This study analyzes the content of the Courant in the context of books and pamphlets printed contemporaneously in Boston to show the development of an expanding, secularized public sphere in which the new authority of the newspaper influenced historiography and altered the relationship between ministerial authors and their readership.

Keywords
History, United States, Journalism, Biography

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The rhetoric of authority in the "New-England Courant".
(Volumes I and II)

Shea, Preston Tuckerman, Ph.D.
University of New Hampshire, 1992
THE RHETORIC OF AUTHORITY IN THE NEW-ENGLAND COURANT

VOLUME I (CHAPTERS I - V)

BY

PRESTON SHEA

B.A., Brown University, 1962
A.M. Harvard University, 1965

DISSERTATION

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in

History

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This dissertation has been examined and approved.

[Signatures of committee members]

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ABSTRACT

THE RHETORIC OF AUTHORITY IN THE NEW-ENGLAND COURANT

by

Preston Shea

University of New Hampshire, September, 1992

This study analyses the themes, rhetoric and imagery in the weekly newspaper The New-England Courant published in Boston from 1721 to 1726 by James and Benjamin Franklin and examines the way in which the circle of writers who produced it presented the topic of authority in civil and church politics.

James Franklin's printing business found its niche in the already crowded world of Boston printers and booksellers by becoming the first opposition press in the American colonies. As the first printer to publish the Real Whig doctrines of Henry Care, John Trenchard, and Thomas Gordon, Franklin supplied discontented members of the bourgeoisie with rhetorical forms and an historical vision which fostered the growth of the popular or Old Charter Party in the Massachusetts legislature. By adapting the language and social attitudes of the London literary newspapers to conflict with the Eastern Indians during Dummer's War, the Courant created a gendered rhetoric in which Native Americans, blacks, and women were identified as feminine because they relied on oral history rather than print culture. In arguing for their own inclusion in the political and cultural elite, the writers of the Courant advocated the marginalization of these feminine groups, declaring that their emotionalism and enslavement to tradition made them incapable of self-control and unfit for political autonomy.

In its reporting of doctrinal controversy within the Congregational churches and conflicts between Protestant sects in New England the Courant supported latitudinarian ra-
tionalism and condemned the efforts of Cotton Mather and his supporters to revivify the New England Way. At the same time that they criticized traditional religious practice for mingling rational analysis with emotional symbolism, writers for the paper strongly upheld the democratic traditions of Congregational polity.

This study analyzes the content of the Courant in the context of books and pamphlets printed contemporaneously in Boston to show the development of an expanding, secularized public sphere in which the new authority of the newspaper influenced historiography and altered the relationship between ministerial authors and their readership.
Introduction

The newspaper which James Franklin published in Boston from 1721 until 1726 as the New-England Courant has long been recognized as one of the most significant as well as the most controversial in the history of early American journalism. From the first, historians have identified the Courant with the voice of popular opposition, a view which Thomas Hutchinson expressed with concision in discussing the political crisis in the term of Governor Samuel Shute:

By these calamities the minds of the people were prepared for impressions from pamphlets, courants, and other newspapers, which were frequently published, in order to convince them, that their civil liberties and privileges were struck at and that a general union was necessary. These did not pass without answers, attributing all the distress in public affairs to the wrath and resentment, the arts and sinister views of a few particular persons, but the voice of the people in general was against the governor.1

Historians of the Federalist era criticized the Courant for having violated the norms of both patriotism and good taste. "The design of the Franklins," wrote John Eliot in 1798, "was to write with freedom upon subjects of religion and government, in which they went too fast for their interest, and perhaps some have thought for their honour, or the reputation of the country."2 The greatest of the early historians of the American newspaper, Isaiah Thomas, also disapproved of the paper, observing that it "abounded more in severe, and not always refined satire, than in argument."3


The filiopietists of the later nineteenth century censured the Courant with increased intensity for having blackened the reputation of the founding fathers. In 1884 Delano A. Goddard recognized the paper’s role in opposing the traditional authority of the clergy but faulted the editors on matters of taste:

There had long been much restlessness under the severe censorship on the part of the clergy over individual opinions and conduct; and the Courant gave the signal for rebellion. Not satisfied with entering a protest, it assailed the most honored names and the most deeply cherished opinions without modesty, and with gross exaggeration. It was assisted by a club of writers called by some the “free thinkers,” by others the “hell-fire club.” Some of their essays showed much ingenuity humor, and good sense; but the greater number were of a very common order, and only attracted attention by their coarseness and audacity.⁴

In their indignation at the Courant’s audacity historians of the nineteenth century not only exaggerated the paper’s lack of taste — confined to John Checkley’s attacks on Cotton Mather and Thomas Walter in the first few issues — they failed to place it in the context of eighteenth-century journalism and the London papers which were its models. North, for example, accused the writers of acting “in a free-handed manner entirely out of consonance with the spirit of the age.”⁵

Early twentieth-century historians, emphasizing what they saw as the Courant’s democratic spirit, were more forgiving of the paper’s attacks on provincial leaders but continued to minimize the importance of its literary and political context. Elizabeth Cook attributed the controversy between the Courant’s writers and their Harvard adversaries to personal animosity without regard to literary convention. “There can be no doubt,” she asserted, “that educated young ecclesiastics had been teased and insulted by the Courant, to

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the point of severe retaliation. The Franklins hated and at the same time bitterly envied 'young scribbling collegians' such as Mather Byles.  

Subsequent critics saw the Courant as a champion of the common man. George Horner recognized that economic tensions underlay the paper's criticism of the mercantile elite and described the Courant as a forerunner of populism. He cited "The farmer, barred from peddling his produce on the streets and forced to sell on specified days when the quantity of produce beat down the price," and concluded that the paper appealed "to the sympathies of the unlettered, practical, rural reader." Frank L. Mott also saw the Courant as the product of "a group of men who chafed under the rule of civil and religious authorities then in control of the province," but, ignoring its scientific and literary context, criticized the paper for opposing inoculation and stooping to personal attacks.

As scholarly research increased understanding of the intricacies of Massachusetts politics in the early eighteenth century, historians began more accurately to present the Courant against the backdrop of its own time. The first to do so was Worthington Chauncy Ford in his study of Benjamin Franklin's annotated file of the Courant. A second advance was publication by the Massachusetts Historical Society of the Journals of the House of Representatives for the period of the Courant. Harold L. Dean utilized both these sources in his dissertation "The New-England Courant, 1721-1726, a Chapter in the History of Massachusetts Literature."  

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7 George F. Horner, *Franklin's Dogood Papers Re-examined,* Studies in Philology 37 (1940) 505.


tory of American Culture." 10 Using the identifications published by Ford, Dean was able to relate many of the essays in the Courant to the political activity of the popular party. He continued, however to assert the dichotomy between democracy and the Puritan tradition, claiming that in the opposition of the popular party to Governor Shute, "the student may recognize one impetus to the development of democratic processes, some of which, of course, survived the theocratic side of the original colony." 11

Perry Miller's monumental work, The New England Mind, destroyed the simplistic opposition of Puritanism versus democracy. He ascribed the defeat of the Courant to its social criticism, "a monopoly belonging to the clergy," but suggested that the paper was part of an indigenous intellectual tradition:

The sentiment which the Franklins had ventured to express shows itself here and there, but not until the ecclesiastical order was shattered by the oratory of Jonathan Edwards could it again come into the open. In that perspective, the Courant, pitiful as it was and failure though it became, is momentous; something over a century would still be needed before Dr. Holmes of Beacon Street could say that the worst affliction to fall upon a land is boredom, but the Courant had glimmerings of his perception. It grew out of disruptive forces that had long been gathering momentum; it was the first open effort to defy the norm, and though it did not succeed, it foretold a time when increasing complexity would of itself engender intellectual rebellion. 12

Miller's insight that the increasing complexity of Massachusetts's culture was responsible for the new attitude towards authority proclaimed in the pages of the Courant has been elaborated by a number of historians. John M. Murrin has demonstrated that anglicization, a self-conscious imitation of English culture, gained increasing momentum in the eighteenth century, while Jack P. Green has elaborated a general theory of colonial devel-


11 Dean, x.

opment in which replication of metropolitan norms forms the third stage of cultural evolu-
tion.\textsuperscript{13}

Recent developments in the historiography of the American Revolution have
changed our understanding of American culture in the eighteenth century, particularly as
regards the relationship between political theory and social conditions. These developments
have made the exceptional and precocious character of the \textit{Courant} more comprehensible
and increased the significance of James Franklin's contribution to American culture.

Understanding of pre-Revolutionary American culture entered a new phase with the
publication in 1962, of Bernard Bailyn's "Political Experience and Enlightenment Ideas in
six years later which more fully elaborated his theory of ideology and social change.\textsuperscript{14} As
he studied the flood of pamphlets issued by American presses from the time of the Stamp
Act through the constitutional period, Bailyn found that "Major attributes of enlightened
polities had developed naturally, spontaneously, early in the history of the American
colonies, and they existed as simple matters of social and political fact on the eve of the
Revolution."\textsuperscript{15} As he pursued the formation of the intellectual climate which led to the
Revolution, he concluded that:

the effective, triggering convictions that lay behind the Revolution were derived not
from common \textit{Lockean} generalities but from the specific fears and formulations of the
radical publicists and opposition politicians of early eighteenth-century England who

\textsuperscript{13} John M. Murrin, "Anglicizing an American Colony: The Transformation of Provincial
The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American

\textsuperscript{14} Bernard Bailyn, "Political Experience and Enlightenment Ideas in Eighteenth-Century
America." \textit{AHR} LCVII (1962): 339-351; \textit{The Origins of American Politics}, (New York:

\textsuperscript{15} Bailyn, "Experience," 349.
carried forward into the age of Walpole the peculiar strain of anti-authoritarianism bred in the upheaval of the English Civil War.\textsuperscript{16}

Tracing the flow of what he called "the radical publicists," Bailyn found that "that the configuration of ideas and attitudes I had described as the Revolutionary ideology could be found intact, completely formed, as far back as the 1730's; in partial form it could be found even earlier, at the turn of the seventeenth century."\textsuperscript{17} Bailyn's exposition of the genesis of revolutionary theory in America gives new importance to the work of Richard Franklin as the first publisher of Trenchard and Gordon's Cato Letters and of Richard Care's English Liberties in America. Bailyn described former, as "the most effective" of the radical publicists or Real Whigs; the latter set forth the Real Whig theory of the British constitution upon which later Americans were to establish their arguments for independence.\textsuperscript{18}

In his search for the origins of American politics, Bailyn went beyond the traditional techniques of earlier intellectual history, in which ideas were treated as discreet, conceptual entities capable of being transmitted almost as physical objects. From his study of Real Whig political ideas Bailyn concluded that:

\begin{enumerate}
\item\textsuperscript{16} Bailyn, \textit{Origins}, ix.
\item\textsuperscript{17} Bailyn, \textit{Origins}, x.
\item\textsuperscript{18} Bailyn states that "the most effective writers of this motley 'left-wing' group -- effective in England for a brief period, effective in America throughout the century -- were the Old Whig pamphleteer John Trenchard, active as an extreme liberal in politics as far back as the Exclusion Crisis of 1679, and Thomas Gordon, an ambitious and phenomenally successful Scots journalist many years Trenchard's junior who collaborated with him first in \textit{The Independent Whig} (1720), devoted largely to attacking the High Church, and then in the series of articles signed "Cato" that appeared in \textit{The London Journal} and \textit{The British Journal} and that were collected into a four-volume book called \textit{Cato's Letters}. These 144 pieces originally published between November 1720 and December 1723 were among the most troublesome thorns that pricked the vulnerable sides of the British ministry, and they were intellectually among the most important." (Bailyn, \textit{Origins}, 40). On Trenchard and Gordon, see Charles B. Realey, "The London Journal and Its Authors, 1720-1723," \textit{Bulletin of the University of Kansas}, XXXVI, (1935): 237.
\end{enumerate}
They became primary elements of American politics in its original, early eighteenth-century form: primary in the sense of forming assumptions and expectations, of furnishing not merely the vocabulary but the grammar of thought, the apparatus by which the world was perceived.\(^{19}\)

Bailyn's realization that republican ideas functioned not only as a series of theoretical propositions but as an epistemological syntax opened the way to a new interpretation of eighteenth-century American culture, informed by contributions from linguistic theory and cultural anthropology. The political ideas of the Real Whigs could be seen as a component of a much more general interpretive scheme whereby eighteenth-century Americans understood not just politics but their world as a whole.\(^{20}\) Following this line of inquiry, historians adopted from anthropology the concept of ideology to characterize the ontological, semantic framework which mediates between events and responses to those events.\(^{21}\)

Ideological interpretation offered eighteenth-century studies a conceptual continuum on which intellectual history and the rapidly proliferating findings of the new social history could be located simultaneously. As a general interpretive framework, an ideology is constructed from very broad convictions about the nature of human experience, convictions which respond directly to economic, social and political changes.\(^{22}\) Gary Nash has shown,

\(^{19}\) Bailyn, Origins, 53.


\(^{21}\) A seminal work for the application of the concept of ideology to history is Clifford Geertz, "Ideology as a Cultural System," in The Interpretation of Cultures (New York: Basic Books, 1973) Geertz’s finding that new ideologies emerge when a society begins "to free itself from the immediate governance of the received tradition," (219) offers a key to understanding the relationship between the appearance of the Courant and the decay of Puritan culture which Perry Miller characterized as "the splintering of a society." In this study I have followed the somewhat more psychologically oriented theories of Fred Weinstein and Gerald M. Platt’s The Wish to be Free, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969) discussed below.

\(^{22}\) Psychohistorians such as Weinstein and Platt generally interpret the breadth of ideological convictions to encompass the domain of the unconscious.
for example, that a popular ideology emerged in the major port towns of eighteenth-century America in response to distress and tension arising from economic insecurity and growing inequalities of wealth distribution. Rooted in material conditions, ideologies such as that described by Nash extend also into the domain of political discourse, where they provide a paradigm for the articulation of ideas. Linguistic science could be applied to the content of intellectual history in order to unearth the structural connections between political ideas and ideology in its broader, cultural definition.

J.G.A. Pocock, in a series of ground-breaking studies, traced the connections between the political language of eighteenth-century republicanism, the ideology of which it was an articulation, and the material conditions which influenced that ideology. Pocock advanced the idea that the conceptual language of a society gives structure to both the consciousness of the individual and his or her understanding of the world. Social theories, according to Pocock, are rooted in both linguistic experience and the political processes of a society because they serve to distribute authority. Those members of a society who share an ideological paradigm — which Pocock somewhat confusingly refers to as a “language” — create a community of ideas from which each can draw the linguistic resources necessary to articulate his or her understandings. Both experience and the reaction to experience are contained within the semantic confines of the individual’s ideological “language.” Pocock found, for example, that the Real Whigs took from Machiavelli and

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24 Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Copernican Revolution: Planetary Astronomy in the Development of Western Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985) argued that discrete ideas have meaning only as part of an ontological world view or ideology which he characterized as a paradigm.

other Renaissance theorists the concept of civic virtue upon which they erected a theory that
secure possession of property was a necessary condition to civic virtue and that only
through the efforts of virtuous men could property be made secure. Analyzed through this
concept of civic virtue, the growth of mercantile capitalism and the social transformations
which it entailed appeared not as innovatory economic developments but as a threat to that
balance between the one, the few, and the many which vouchsafed both property and
English liberties. Seen through the semantic lens of eighteenth-century republican ideology,
Pocock proclaimed, the American Revolution became a “Machiavellian Moment,” and ap-
peared “less as the first political act of revolutionary enlightenment than as the last great act
of the Renaissance.”

In its broader definition as an ideology (rather than in the narrow sense of a set of
political propositions advanced by radical publicists) republicanism offered a new concept-
tual tool by which historians might examine material and social dimensions of eighteenth-
century America. Among the most actively pursued aspects of this topic have been the role
of gender in republican ideology and the connection between that ideology and the status of
women. These studies, like the work of Bailyn and Wood, focus on the revolutionary
and federalist periods when republican ideology was ubiquitous throughout the colonies.

26 The principal works in which Pocock set forth his theories on ideology and social
change are Politics, Language and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History. (New
516-523; Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History,
quotation is from Virtue, Commerce, and History, 466.

27 The impact of recent scholarship on republicanism is the subject of two articles by
Robert E. Shalhope, “Toward a Republican Synthesis: The Emergence of an
Understanding of Republicanism in American Historiography,” William and Mary
Quarterly, 3rd ser.XXIX (1972): 49-80 and, more recently, “Republicanism and Early
American Historiography,” William and Mary Quarterly (1982): 334-356. Among the
important recent contributions to feminist theory and women’s history made by scholars of
republican ideology are: Mary Beth Norton, Liberty’s Daughters: The Revolutionary
Experience of American Women, 1750-1800, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company,
1980); Linda K. Kerber, Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary
Perhaps because it was so exceptional and ahead of its time, the republican ideology of The New-England Courant in its relationship to Massachusetts culture in the 1720s has been overlooked. This study attempts a description of the ideology communicated by James Franklin's Courant in order to trace the features of the conceptual paradigm — the ideological "language" in Pocock's word — of the group of contributors known as the Couranteers who, with James Franklin at the center, produced the newspaper.

As cultural history has grown more precise in its knowledge of the republican ideology, of which the Courant was an early and influential source, historians of the book have explored the critical role of the newspaper in early American culture from a new perspective which emphasizes the double nature of printed materials as a commodity and as a vehicle for ideas. Michael Warner has investigated the relationship between the ideological paradigms of republicanism and the public sphere — a concept taken from the work of the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas — and described the process whereby "an emerging political language — republicanism — and a new set of ground rules for discourse — the public sphere — made each other mutually intelligible."29 Charles E.

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28 Because they present a republican ideology that was widespread in the colonies after 1750, these studies make selective use of a large number of varied sources. By focusing on the small group of writers who produced the New-England Courant from 1721 to 1726, this study attempts to show how ideas about religion, politics, and society existed as an interrelated whole in the minds of specific individuals.

29 Michael Warner, The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990) 13; In 1962, Jürgen Habermas published Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit [The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere], in which he theorized that the formation of a liberal, democratic public sphere was the locus of modernization in eighteenth-century society, but
Clark has placed the Courant in the context of Anglo-American newspapers, demonstrating that the paper was "begun for the express purpose of conducting political warfare against established authority" by middle-class provincials sharing an "exclusion from the main centers of power and influence in the province, a gift for satire or something like it, and a compulsion to write."\textsuperscript{30} The language in which the Couranteers conducted political warfare against established authority represents the earliest instance of the creation of a republican "language" (in Pocock’s sense of an ideological paradigm) in British North America. While the fundamental structures of this language were imported from the Real Whigs, and the London press, the Courant applied that language to the representation of uniquely American experiences: Indian warfare, an arson ring of black slaves, provincial politics, a de facto established church of Dissenters, and the domestic affairs of Boston’s "leather-apron men" and "gentlemen journeymen." The way in which the Courant presented these topics in its pages is the first printed record of republican ideology operating on American experience.\textsuperscript{31}

While the political background against which the Courant appeared has been the object of scholarly study, the issue of how psychological forces acted upon the people who produced the paper has not been addressed. The analysis of Puritan literary expression done by such scholars as Edmund Morgan, John Demos, and Sacvan Bercovitch has not

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\textsuperscript{31} Questions of primacy are somewhat subjective. The Rev. John Wise of Ipswich published his Vindication of the Government of New-England Churches in 1717, a work which attempted to harmonize republican concepts with Congregational polity. There are other, isolated instances of American use of republican ideology to be found in New England from the time of the Andros Rebellion. The Courant, as a sustained, collaborative expression of republican ideas was the first publication to have significant impact outside its own pages.
been fully extended to the early eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{32} Richard L. Bushman described the life of Jonathan Edwards from a psychological perspective and turned a similar analytical technique on the questions of political corruption and the concept of royal authority in Massachusetts.\textsuperscript{33} Edwin G. Burrows and Michael Wallace conducted a similar quest for an understanding of the role of individual psychology in political development during the era of the Revolutionary War.\textsuperscript{34} More recently, David S. Shields has explored the connection between the literary and religious sensibilities of the generation of New England poets that came of age in the 1720s, some of whose most important members contributed to the \textit{Courant}.\textsuperscript{35}


Fred Weinstein and Gerald M. Platt have produced a broad, theoretical framework for understanding the interplay of psychology and social change in the eighteenth century in The Wish to be Free. The authors observe that:

When we consider the various movements toward autonomy and inclusion we observe that all of them were generated within traditional social structures — structures, that is, in which the moral and psychological necessity for dependency relations and arbitrary authority was taken for granted both by authority and by its subjects. The question is, What were the social conditions that allowed these innovative demands to be accepted as legitimate and acted upon by masses of people on different institutional levels in different times and places?

The answer which Weinstein and Platt gave to this question is a complex one, based on the sociological theories of Talcott Parsons and drawing on the theories of Erikson, Brown, Feuer, and Marcuse. The stresses which underlay social change, they asserted, caused new ideas to emerge from the unconscious minds of individuals. In the

36 Weinstein, and Platt, The Wish to be Free.

37 Weinstein and Platt, 4.

38 In his more recent work, History After the Fall: An Essay on Interpretation, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), Weinstein has expressed misgivings about the validity of theoretical frameworks such as the one he developed in Wish to be Free, citing an “inability to anticipate or account for the different ways that perceptions of loss and recovery could be experienced because of the emphasis on instinct and the implied unity of motivation that lay underneath the variety at the surface.” Weinstein also pointed out that applying psychological constructs to large-scale processes of social change runs into difficulty because “the populations involved in social situations of all kinds were so heterogeneous, unanticipated situations were so affecting and occurred so rapidly, and responses were so discontinuous that the explanatory value of such a factor as internalized morality was radically compromised.” Despite these flaws, Weinstein observes, “concept of ideology is difficult to use, but it is also difficult to give up. It seems that logical problems arise no matter how the concept is used: there is always something arbitrary about what is included and what is left out of discussions of it. On the other hand, whatever the logical difficulties, the concept continues to have value because it addresses something real, namely, the process involved in the ongoing struggle of people to maintain themselves as separate individuals, to control the impact of social and dynamic events, especially events that are unanticipated from the standpoint of conscious expectations” (Weinstein, History and Theory, 7-9, 86).

39 Bailyn observes that “the great goal of the European revolutions of the late eighteenth century, equality of status before the law — the abolition of legal privilege — had been reached almost everywhere in the American colonies at least by the early years of the eighteenth century,” through a process whereby “… major attributes of enlightened
eighteenth century these ideas were focused upon a demand for inclusion of the bourgeoisie within the politically empowered elite, a demand facilitated by a redefinition of public discourse and the rationalization of traditional authority through separation of its emotional and abstract functions. 40

The thoughts which in times of stress became the elements from which new cultural values were formed were not confined to the unconscious of individuals; they were also drawn from that pool of beliefs and values which, according to Bailyn, constituted a society’s common property. The significance of the Courant lies in large part in the central role it played in the transmission of this common body of advanced theory. The Cato letters of Trenchard and Gordon, for example, appeared in print for the first time in America in the pages of the Courant, where six of them were reprinted within two years of their publication in The London Journal. However, the Real Whig theory that was to form a common body of knowledge for the revolutionary generation was not at all common or unconscious in the Boston of the Couranteers. James Franklin returned from his London apprenticeship in 1717 with these new notions bursting in his head. While James was reading commonwealth radicals in London, his younger brother, Benjamin, was discovering Defoe, Steele and Addison in Boston. 41 Ideas that would become commonplace in later years were electrifying and controversial when the Courant brought them to New England readers. The contradictions and tensions between the values acquired during a Puritan childhood and

politics had developed naturally, spontaneously, early in the history of the American colonies, and they existed as simple matters of social and political fact on the eve of the Revolution.” (Bailyn, “Experience”, 348-349).

40 Weinstein and Platt, 12, 29, 32.

Real Whig ideas lately brought from London gave the Courant its impetus and were responsible for the explosive reception the paper received at the hands of provincial leaders such as Cotton Mather and Samuel Sewall.

The Courant’s readers and writers, regardless of age or occupation, were living at a time when recent economic and political changes rendered inadequate the understanding of the world created by Puritan culture. Economic conditions had changed as a result of Boston’s participation Queen Anne’s War. Economic changes were transforming the social structure of the seacoast towns, and new cultural ideas and values were pouring in from Georgian England. War and disease added to the difficulties caused by economic hard times. A smallpox epidemic killed hundreds of people in 1721, and Indian attacks destroyed frontier towns and caused the death or capture of people all along the edge of New England settlement. In the stress produced by these conditions New England culture was transformed and The New-England Courant, during its brief life, recorded one segment of New England society’s experience of that transformation.

Although the essays, letters and articles which made up each issue of the Courant were conscious thoughts, indeed were often literary creations as highly polished as their authors could make them, the cultural change which they document had its roots in unconscious ideas widely shared among members of the paper’s community of readers. The patterns of association and categorization of the ideas which appear in the Courant are those of ideas made newly conscious or given new importance as the people who wrote them created a new understanding of their society. I have identified two such patterns of association or classification which were prevalent within the Courant’s community of readers. Considered under the rubric of these concepts, the contents of the Courant take on a coher-
ent organization and consistency of subject that is not apparent from a consideration of individual pieces in the paper’s two hundred fifty-five weekly issues.\footnote{All references to the \textit{New-England Courant} (hereinafter NEC) are to the microfilm edition of the paper produced by the American Antiquarian Society in the series \textit{Early American Newspapers} (Readex: New Canaan, CT). This collection contains the annotated copies ascribed by Ford to Benjamin Franklin. The first issue of the \textit{Courant} appeared August 7, 1726, the last extant issue, numbered 255, on June 25, 1726. Seven numbers published between March 29, 1725 and June 11, \textit{\textsuperscript{ii}}26 (191, 193, 213, 216, 244, 250 and 253) are missing.}

I have called the first of the two patterns of association and categorization which this essay examines the "circle of enemies." It is an arrangement of groups and forces by which the Courant’s community of readers felt threatened and to which they were united in opposition. The circle of enemies is represented graphically in figure one:

![Diagram of the Circle of Enemies]

Indians, particularly the Eastern Indians against whom Massachusetts Bay conducted Dummer’s War from 1722 to 1726, represented a clear and easily identifiable threat. The Indian enemy was supported logistically and diplomatically by the French provincial government in Quebec. The war between Massachusetts and Quebec known as Queen Anne’s War had been conducted as the colonial component of the War of the Spanish Succession, which pitted England, as leader of a coalition of Dutch and German Protestant states, against the Catholic powers of France and Spain. Although the issues in the conflict
were more wide-ranging and complex than points of theological controversy and loyalty to the Pope, the Protestant-Catholic dichotomy offered both sides a simplification convenient to states at war.

War between Protestant Britain and Catholic France touched the sensitive nerve of Catholicism in England. It was the issue around which had coalesced political dispute resulting in the downfall of the Stuart monarchy. The political convulsion of the Glorious Revolution settled the questions of parliamentary supremacy and Protestant succession, but to many contemporaries the permanency of the new order seemed doubtful. Dissatisfaction with Whig policies and the foreign character of the House of Hanover gave continued life to the Jacobite goal of a second Stuart restoration. Scotland revolted against the Hanoverian installation in 1715. In 1721, Francis Atterbury, the bishop of Rochester, was at the center of a revolutionary intrigue with Jacobites in France which, while it never had a real chance of overthrowing King George, sent a profound shock through the British ruling class. Jacobite opposition was not finally eliminated until the suppression of the rising of 1745.43

In Massachusetts the political implications of the Jacobite issue reached back in time beyond the 1690 defeat of James II at the Boyne. The colony of Massachusetts Bay had been founded sixty years earlier because of dissention within the Church of England. The Puritans who founded Massachusetts were supporters of the Parliamentary leaders who established supremacy over King Charles in 1641 and in 1649 cut off his head, a fact which caused an uneasy association of Massachusetts with regicide in the period of the

Restoration. The events of the seventeenth century continued to influence attitudes in and
toward Massachusetts long afterward. In England in 1723, people also responded to the
difficulties Massachusetts provincials were having with their governor with references to
the Civil War:

Many People think we are Disposed to rise in Rebellion against the King, and it's so
Commonly talked of That I Scarse dare own my Self to be a new England Man ....
Collo Blayden one of the Lords Commissioners Said That in any other Country than
New England the Assembly would have been Esteemed Traitors and Rebellious and
that by all he Could See we were Dancing to the Tune of 41.

During the reign of Queen Anne there existed an associative link between Tory and
Jacobite in the person of the queen's half-brother, the Catholic "Old Pretender" sheltered by
the French monarchy. A predisposition among moderate Tories in favor of the royal pre-
rogative and insistence upon conformity to the Church of England made them appear inimi-
cal to Massachusetts. A complex web of historical associations caused Puritan Mas-
sachusetts to see English Whigs as the best protectors of their interest. The Tory party's
support for the established church caused some Massachusetts Congregationalists to see an
alliance between English Tories and supporters of the Anglican Church in New-England.

A current of anglicization, a turning away from Puritan rejectionism and acceptance
of a self-image as members of the British Empire, began to set in New England during the
closing years of the seventeenth century and gathered momentum in the new century. In
the 1720s, Anglican houses of worship were erected in Boston and a number of other im-
portant towns. The announcement, in 1722, by the Rector of Yale College and a number
of other Connecticut ministers that they would seek Episcopal ordination in England sent
shock waves through the Congregational establishment. Alarmed Congregationalists ac-

44 For the continuity of developing theories of sovereignty from the seventeenth century
through the American Revolution see Edmund S. Morgan, Inventing the People: The Rise

45 Capt. Clark, London, to Edward Winslow, Sept. 9, 1723, forwarded by Winslow to
William Dummer, Nov. 5, 1723, Quoted in Bushman, King, 83.
cused Anglican sympathizers of Tory political beliefs, even though most New England Anglicans were not Tories any more than most British Tories of the time were Jacobites. Supporters of the Good Old Cause like Cotton Mather and Samuel Sewall could see in an Anglican a "high flyer," a supporter of royal absolutism and the Old Pretender. By association, high flyers seemed to threaten England's Protestant succession, inviting the defeat of Britain by Catholic France and the conquest of New England by Indian savages and their French Jesuit advisors.

There were few readers of the Courant so hysterical as to consciously believe that such a train of events was likely, or even possible. Bostonians in the 1720s, despite economic hard times, basked in a sturdy self-confidence and took pride in the hegemony of Britain over the Atlantic world. At the same time war, disease and accident gave life a flavor of uncertainty and the potential for sudden tragedy that we can imagine today only by conscious effort. Boston's enemies, even when not imminently threatening, were decidedly real and none existed in vulnerable isolation. In the minds of the Courant's readers, each enemy was linked by some affinity, real or imagined, to at least one other. These links signaled a source of potentially deadly combination; they also suggested an interpretation of the motives of New England's enemies. The circle of enemies describes the configuration of forces which Courant readers felt opposed or threatened them.

A circle of enemies lay at the periphery of the world of the world of the Courant; a quite different classification scheme describes the hierarchical and deferential society within which the Courant's readers and writers lived. In theory, each member of New England society occupied a defined place on the social hierarchy and, based on social position, owed deference to those above and was entitled to dominate those below. The major components of the social hierarchy are illustrated in figure two.
The Social Hierarchy

King
Parliament
British Aristocracy
Governor
Provincial elite
Boston Freeholders
Tradesmen and Yeomen
Apprentices, Servants
Indians and Negroes

At the top of the pyramid, and to some degree outside it, stood the king. The idea of a direct link between the King and God, never enthusiastically entertained by Whig thinkers, had become untenable to all but the most fervent of Tories as a result of Parliamentary maneuver that placed first William of Orange and then George I on the throne. The religious concept of divine right had evolved into the political convention that the king could do no wrong, that unpopular or unsuccessful policies were the fault of royal ministers. On the basis of this view, the king was universally accepted in New England as a hieratic although secular figure. Massachusetts society was dominated by Dissenters, a peculiar circumstance which tended strongly to support a separation of religious authority from the figure of the sovereign. Since in all New England there were perhaps a score of individuals who had been presented at court, the king, even among the leaders of provincial society, was an abstract figure.

The British nobility, while still remote from the lives of most of the Courant's readers, was a more tangible entity. A number of provincial leaders had family ties to this class, which they cherished and developed devotedly. The political and mercantile life of the New England colonies was conducted through a network of agents whose role combined the ambassador with the lobbyist. Men like Ashurst and Dummer maintained a working relationship with friends of New England in Parliament and their appointees in
important bureaucratic agencies such as the Board of Trade and Plantations. Travel to Britain by members of the New England elite gave them direct acquaintance with representatives of the British ruling class; however it was through the London newspapers and items re-printed from them in the Boston press that most of the Courant’s community of readers gained their knowledge of the British elite.

The provincial elite of Massachusetts was as familiar to readers of the Courant as the British elite was remote. The oligarchy which controlled the political and economic life of the province was concentrated in Boston, a town of some 16,000 people occupying the Shawmut Peninsula. The elite of Boston came into contact with the rest of the population on the street, at public functions such as muster parades and executions, and in church. Men in this group managed their affairs directly. The tenants of Paul Dudley in Roxbury, for example, dealt with him on a face-to-face basis without an intermediary class of estate managers, footmen and attendants.46

Below the elite group who controlled the province’s political and economic life stood a heterogeneous class of self-employed tradesmen, skilled artisans and shopkeepers. Their relationship to the provincial elite could not be fully adapted to the British model. The small size and relative newness of Massachusetts inevitably conspired to close the gap separating the daily lives of members of the Governor’s Council from those of the ordinary people among whom they lived. The democratic structure of the Congregational churches and the influence of a frontier still less than a hundred miles away from the Town House acted to pull the two groups together at the same time that a growing disparity in wealth and economic power were pulling them apart.

46 Dudley was satirized as Major Ball-Face in the Courant for attempting to coerce his tenants politically and for a lavish gift of plate to the Roxbury church shortly before election time. Such an attack on the local squire was daring indeed; it was possible, in part, because of the attenuated class structure of New-England.
Political tension flowed along the shifting, irregularly drawn fault line separating the internationally connected mercantile elite from the Boston bourgeoisie. The mimetic impulse of provincials to replicate forms of metropolitan society, guided by the Puritan-Whig traditions of New England, gave rise to a strong popular party in the Lower House of the Massachusetts legislature.⁴⁷ Although the primary focus of the popular party was the gubernatorial prerogative, against which they asserted the traditional rights of Englishmen in a replication of the struggles of the British Parliament against the Stuart monarchy, other issues revealed the identity of interests between the royal governor and the local elite in such a way that the British political division between a Court and Country party had a certain applicability to Massachusetts. Tensions were replicated and intensified in the municipal politics of Boston where a broad franchise permitted the creation of a powerful caucus led by Elisha Cooke, which dominated municipal elections after 1720.⁴⁸

Tension between the elite and the middling sort, the Court and Country Parties, the New Charter and Old Charter men, supplied the energy which gave life to the Courant. The paper's readers were drawn from both parties and, in keeping with the universal condemnation of faction prevalent at the time, the Courant avoided overtly partisan editorial policies and loudly proclaimed its impartial independence.⁴⁹ Divisive issues continued to

⁴⁷ Jack P. Greene, in "Political Mimesis: A Consideration of the Historical and Cultural Roots of Legislative Behavior in the British Colonies in the Eighteenth Century," American Historical Review, LXXV (1969): 337-360, makes the case for conscious imitation of British political life by American colonials. A reply by Bernard Bailyn in the same issue argues that colonial political configurations were the product of local conditions not mimesis. Bushman has sided with Bailyn in the debate, asserting that "judging from Massachusetts before 1740, colonial politics were not an imitation in miniature of English politics." (Bushman, "Development", 82).


⁴⁹ The issue of impartiality in the colonial press is discussed by Stephen Botein, "'Meer Mechanics' and an Open Press: The Business and Political Strategies of Colonial
boil beneath the surface and erupted occasionally onto the pages of the Courant; more important than specific political issues however, was the identity and social status of the group immediately below the recognized elite. The identity and social position of the Massachusetts bourgeoisie was the central theme of the Courant.

The task of defining its own identity which preoccupied the community of readers sustaining the Courant involved a drawing of the boundaries separating them from the social groups above and below them in the social hierarchy. The presentation of a social group in the pages of the Courant was strongly informed by the status relationship between the subject and the Courant's community of readers. The predominant attitudes towards socially superior and inferior groups is represented pictorially in figure three:

![Status Groups and Editorial Policy](image)

Towards the king, the British Parliament and the English nobility, the Courant maintained an attitude of reverential deference. Here was the focus for the powerful forces

of anglicization which played so central a part in the identity of the Courant's community of readers. The Courant not only accorded this group its full measure of deference, it made every effort to maintain harmony of its views with theirs.

The paper's policy towards the governor and his council was quite another matter. On the surface at least, an attitude of deference and formal courtesy was essential. The governor held a royal appointment and embodied royal authority in the province. Any affront to his person or office would smack of lèse majesté. A seat on the governor's council was the most prestigious office to which a Massachusetts provincial could aspire. Ridicule or derogation of the council as an institution could only have the self-destructive effect of belittling the status of all New Englanders. Added to these considerations was the importance of polite manners, a polished and courtly formality whose rubrics were a major component of the sophistication to which Courant readers aspired. On a more practical plane, the executive authority of the province did not look kindly upon affronts, real or imagined, to its honor. James Franklin spent a month in jail for suggesting that the provincial authorities were ineffective in dealing with pirates. In Massachusetts, failure to demonstrate appropriate deference could be a legal as well as social error.

Beneath the polite surface a conflict existed between the Courant and gubernatorial authority. Politically, the Courant was in harmony with the popular party in the House of Representatives which opposed Governor Samuel Shute on almost every major political issue. In early 1722, deadlock over appointment of a Speaker of the House caused Shute to sail abruptly to England in order to seek clarification of (i.e. support for) his prerogative. Shute's departure left the popular party in uneasy control under Lieutenant Governor William Dummer while both sides waited for a decision from London.50

50 The Crown upheld Shute but appointed a new governor, Burnett. Improved economic conditions and the end of the Indian war (i.e. a lowering of social stress) also contributed to an easing of the crisis.
In municipal affairs, the Courant supported the Boston caucus. Caucus leaders were also prominent in the popular party. In local politics the opponents of the paper were primarily the town’s conservative ministers, led by Cotton Mather. The editorial policy of the Courant was consistent at municipal and provincial levels: a support for the yeoman farmer, shopkeeper and tradesmen against the governor and the trans-Atlantic mercantile interests that supported him.

On the psychological level the Courant represented an adolescent son struggling to establish his identity independent of parental authority. James Franklin, John Checkley and a number of other contributors were in the early stages of an adult career. The biographical and the political existed in easy harmony for young Couranteers in an era when a parietal conception of executive authority was universal. Both king and governor were normally spoken of as fathers (of Britain and Massachusetts respectively) and the legislature and population referred to as children. Religious authority was also described in parental terms. The conception of society as a family in which age and gender symbolized authority allowed an unconscious blending of the developmental perspective of the Courant’s young authors with the political position of the paper vis a vis the governor and religious ministers.

The approach taken by the Courant to gubernatorial and religious authority contrasted sharply with its attitude toward the king and parliament. In the case of the governor, the Courant sought a more equal sharing of power through limitation of the prerogative and expansion of the authority of the provincial assembly. In conflict with the ministers, the paper advocated a restriction of their authority to narrowly defined pastoral concerns. In dealing with both the governor and the ministers, the Courant attempted to confine discourse to rational argument supported by legal or scientific evidence and to move the terms of discussion away from the emotionally laden symbolism of tradition. This shift in the terms of discourse was a product of the English Enlightenment; its adoption in a weekly newspaper opposing government authorities was one of the most significant contri-
butions the Courant made to the development of American culture. By bringing the Enlightenment concept of a Republic of Letters to the format of the newspaper, the Courant and similar journalistic efforts brought about the transformation of the public sphere, and influenced the political development of the American colonies. In addressing the governor and ministers the Courant attempted to minimize the significance of the status boundary separating them, a boundary that demarcated a dominance-deference relationship in which the Courant's writers held the inferior position.

In its presentation of women, children, and Negroes, the Courant emphasized the status boundary separating its readers from those beneath them. In place of the rational argument and appeal to evidence with which the Courant minimized status differences with the elite, the treatment of inferiors was humorous in tone in order to emphasize their separation from the paper's readers. The inclusionary strategy the Courant employed towards superiors was balanced by an exclusionary treatment of inferiors. The goal of the paper was not a universal democracy but the extension of full political and social inclusion to men of the petite bourgeoisie.

Although called a newspaper by its contemporaries, the Courant more closely resembles a journal of ideas than a modern newspaper. Issued in the same format and on the same weekly schedule as the other two Boston papers of the time, the Courant devoted more than half its space to original compositions by New England writers and occasional reprints of political or social commentary from the London press. This emphasis on local talent and local affairs contrasted sharply with the practice of the rest of the colonial press of the time, although two similar journals sprang up in Boston to provide the town with a literary newspaper upon the Courant's demise. In addition, Benjamin Franklin took the lessons he learned as an apprentice at the Courant to Philadelphia, where he exercised a

51 The role of the newspaper in the development of republican ideology in pre-Revolutionary America is discussed in Warner, Letters, 1-85.
dominating influence over the newspapers in that city and, eventually, all the American colonies. Although the Courant lasted for only five years, it was one of the seminal influences in eighteenth century American culture.

This study examines the presentation of issues of authority in the Courant. Chapter One discusses the founding of the paper and the central role played by its printer, James Franklin, examining the output of the Franklin press in the context of the world of Boston printers in 1721 to establish the relationship between the commercial and ideological factors giving rise to the Courant. Chapter Two analyzes the Real Whig political writings which Franklin reprinted from the metropolitan press and which provided the Couranteers with a system of political rhetoric which they adapted to local issues.

Chapters Three and Four and Five deal with the Courant's presentation of the two lowest status groups in Boston, Indians and Africans. Chapters Three and Four explore the Courant's coverage of the major battles with the Indians in Dummer's War and the interplay between journalism, historiography and ideology which the conflict occasioned. Chapter Five interprets the presentation of Indians and Negroes in terms of the psychological demands for autonomy and self-control paramount in the Couranteers's quest for inclusion in the elite.

Chapters Six and Seven explore the role of women and the use of gendered rhetoric. Chapter Six interprets the Courant's presentation of stories about women. Chapter Seven analyzes the rhetorical function of gender in the ideology of the paper's writers.

Chapters Eight, Nine, and Ten deal with the Courant's presentation of religious issues, a topic which occupied as much of the paper's attention as war or politics. Chapter Eight treats the inoculation crisis and the debate over the meaning of the New England Way, issues which focused the attention of readers on the rapidly changing character of Massachusetts culture. Chapter Nine examines the Courant's presentation of the church controversies which rocked the Congregational churches of New England in the 1720s and the way in which the paper adapted its Real Whig rhetoric to issues of church polity.
Chapter Ten reviews the Courant's coverage of the conflicts between the Congregational establishment and the Anglicans, Baptists, and Quakers who challenged its hegemony. Religion had been the center of Massachusetts culture and as the Couranteers described the stresses which anglicization brought to religious tradition they effected an adaptive synthesis of colonial tradition and metropolitan innovation which formed the kernel of the paper's contribution to American civilization.
Chapter One

James Franklin’s Opposition Press

On a fall day in 1721, Cotton Mather encountered a young printer on the streets of Boston. The conversation which followed is one of the earliest examples of dialogue between an American leader and an opposition publisher:

Young Man: You Entertain, and no doubt you think you Edify, the Publick, with a Weekly Paper, called The Courant. The Plain Design of your Paper, is to Banter and Abuse the Ministers of God, and if you can, to defeat all the good Effects of their Ministry on the Minds of the People. You may do well to Remember that it is a Passage, in the Blessing on the Tribe of Levi, Smite Thro’ the Loins of them that rise against him, and of them that hate him. I would have you to know, That the Faithful Ministers of Christ in this Place, are as honest, and useful Men as the Ancient Levites were, and are as Dear to their Glorious Lord as the Ancient Levites were: And if you Resolve to go on in serving their Great Adversary as you do, you must expect the Consequences.\(^{52}\)

The young man who called down upon his head this jeremiad against opposition journalism was James Franklin. His paper began a new — and to Cotton Mather diabolical — era of journalism in America. How the Courant came to be and why it provoked such impassioned condemnation can be explained by the changing cultural and political climate in the province of Massachusetts and in terms of the developing world of printers and booksellers in Boston.

The young publisher’s reaction to the minister’s chastisement was laconic, “This heinous Charge and heavy Curse would have been more surprizing to me, if it had not come from one who is ever as groundless in his Invectives as in his Panagyricks.”\(^{53}\)

\(^{52}\) NEC. December 4, 1721. Mather’s account of the interview is part of his letter to the Courant signed CASTALIO. Mather says the incident occurred on November 23.

\(^{53}\) NEC. December 4, 1721. Franklin published his own account of the Mather interview on page one. He dated the incident “About Three Weeks since.”
dismissing Mather's judgment, Franklin brought into question the legitimacy of the minister's authority. Franklin directed his counter-criticism at Mather's use of the rhetorical forms of invective and panegyric, suggesting that both men understood the controversy over the Courant in terms of literary theory and the role of the printed word in social discourse. The sarcasm of Franklin's description of a "heinous Charge and heavy Curse," hints that Mather's imputations about his age and accomplices may have struck a tender spot. The focal point of Mather's confrontation with Franklin was the nature of the press and its role in Boston's culture.

By the time that Franklin began to publish the Courant in 1721, the British press had developed both weekly newspapers and literary journals. Franklin synthesized these genres in his paper, giving America its first literary newspaper, but in this he was following a path blazed by provincial printers in Britain. As early as 1712 The Stamford-Post, Or an Account of the most Material News, Foreign and Domestick, to which is added the Weekly Miscellany informed its readers that half of its space would be devoted to essays on "a miscellany of useful and diverting subjects," in addition to the London and foreign news items that were staples of the provincial press. From 1720 on, most country newspapers began to carry essays on a wide variety of subjects: verse, humorous and fictitious letters, historical and geographical articles; in short, all the genres that Franklin and his accomplices employed in the Courant. Franklin differed from other provincial newspapers publishers in the amount of locally written and locally focused material that he printed. Only Thomas Coton's Kendal's Weekly Courant approximated the Courant's dedication to local

54 For a history of the "literary newspaper," see Clark, Prints, especially the chapters "The Couranteers" and "A Fine Taste for Good Sense and Polite Learning": The Literary Newspaper."
writers, and Coton did not begin publication until 1731. Originality of content rather than of form was the distinguishing mark of the Courant.\textsuperscript{55}

The Courant introduced a new kind of journalism to America. Its unique flavor and dramatic impact were a result of the application of journalistic forms developed in one community of readers to a quite different one. In structural terms, the Courant came into being at the juncture of a sub-structure formed by the experience of the paper's New England readers and a superstructure of the English provincial newspaper which was Franklin's model. Although the format of the Courant was conventional, the content was stridently confrontational. In their satires of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities of Massachusetts the Couranteers inserted the rhetorical style of Defoe and Swift into the provincial weekly newspaper.\textsuperscript{56} The result was a literary equivalent of the "incendiary grenade" thrown through Cotton Mather's window at the height of the inoculation crisis whose flames the Couranteers so assiduously fanned.\textsuperscript{57}

The Courant gave America its first opposition newspaper; however, political discourse in Massachusetts had not sufficiently evolved to make such a role viable and "Monsieur Corrant" was harassed by the Council and run out of town.\textsuperscript{58} As a commercial

\textsuperscript{55} For the content of the British provincial newspapers see R. M. Wiles, Freshest Advices: Early Provincial Newspapers in England, (Ohio State University Press, 1965).

\textsuperscript{56} Most critics of the Courant have emphasized Franklin's indebtedness to The Spectator, a debt made clear by Checkley in his essay in the first issue, modeled explicitly after Mr. Spectator's opening essay; however it is my contention that Swift -- and especially Defoe -- were the models for the biting, adversarial journalism characteristic of the Courant at its best. Franklin's use of Defoe's News from the Moon as a model for his News from Robinson Crusoe's Island is described below.

\textsuperscript{57} The incident occurred at 3:00 A.M. on Nov. 14, 1721. Thomas Walter, author of The Little-Compton Scourge; or, the Anti-Courant, was in the room recuperating from his recent inoculation by Dr. Zabdiel Boylston. The attack is described in Hutchinson, 207.

\textsuperscript{58} "Courant" was so commonly used as the name for a newspaper as to have an almost generic denotation. The New-England Courant was the collaborative effort of a circle of writers who usually directed their published letters "to the Author of the Courant."
enterprise Franklin's newspaper might be accounted a failure; yet it was a momentous fa-
ure for in its pages several strands of dissatisfaction coalesced into a new voice in the
emerging republic of letters. For the first time in America the power of the newspaper
was used to articulate political, social and religious alternatives to the values of society's
rulers.

The Courant was the product of a score or so of amateur journalists. Some were
committed advocates on one side or the other of the several controversies in which the
Courant intervened, others were provincial literati attracted by the opportunity to see their
work in print. Initially, the core of the group consisted of James Franklin, printer and pub-
lisher, John Checkley, the paper's principal writer, and Thomas Fleet, Checkley's printer
and Franklin's friend.

The literary form which the Couranteers brought to Boston was well established in
Britain when James Franklin returned from apprenticeship to a London printer in 1717.
The provincial press developed rapidly in the early years of the eighteenth century and
Franklin's paper was a part of that growth. Figure four shows the number of provincial
newspapers published in Great Britain in the first two decades of the eighteenth century:

59 The republic of letters was a phrased used by Whig and dissenting journalists in the
early eighteenth century to describe the new possibilities for expression of political, social,
religious and aesthetic ideas created by journals and newspapers.
In its layout, the Courant conformed to the conventions of the British provincial weekly. The circulation base of the Boston papers was only a tenth of a typical British provincial paper; as a result, the American products were under-funded and undercapitalized. Franklin had fewer sizes and styles of type than the more affluent British printers and his type was worn. American printers frequently purchased used type from British presses that were upgrading their equipment and this may have been how Franklin acquired his set-up. Despite the modest quality of his equipment, James Franklin was able to reproduce the look and feel of a British provincial newspaper although he did not use the woodcut “ears” or the decorative rules commonly found in British papers.

The two newspapers printed in Boston when Franklin returned from London offered him practical models for operation in the local market. John Campbell’s Boston

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60 The situation Ben Franklin found at Keimer’s press in Philadelphia a few years later was typical: “The printing-house, I found, consisted of an old shatter’d Press and one small, worn-out font of English…” (Benjamin Franklin, The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin, Leonard W. Labaree, ed., (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964.). When Benjamin planned a printing establishment in Philadelphia a decade or so later, he calculated the cost of newly-established press with type at £100. (Franklin, Autobiography 87). It is doubtful that James could have spent half that amount to set up his press in Boston. He may have had some financial assistance from his father, but the investment in press and type for his shop was probably a part of his wages as an apprentice.
News-Letter, published since 1704, was the oldest newspaper in North America. Campbell was a post-master whose journalism was imitative and rather stodgy. He copied the format of his paper from the London Gazette and filled its columns with shipping news and reprinted snippets from the British press. His editorial policy was staunchly to support the royal governor and council. When Campbell lost the postmastership he did not relinquish the newspaper. His successor, William Brooker, began a second paper upon assuming the office in 1719. Brooker’s paper, the Boston Gazette, aspired to official status like the London Gazette and carried the phrase “Published by Authority” on its banner. Although the claim was without statutory authorization, the paper did serve as a semi-official public record of the provincial government. Brooker assigned the printing of his Gazette to James Franklin, whose formal training in London allowed him to give the paper a livelier, more pleasing appearance than the News-Letter. Franklin’s experience as printer of the Gazette taught him news gathering and production in Boston.61

The existence in Boston of two newspapers, Campbell’s News-Letter and Brooker’s Gazette, opened the possibility of a journalistic dialogue between them. The town’s writers were not slow to seize the opportunity to refer to each other’s letters in intertextual exchanges limited by the fact that both papers doggedly supported the provincial establishment. Neither Brooker nor Campbell seemed to have much taste for controversy, certainly not for opposition to the province’s leaders. The uniformly pro-establishment position of both newspapers left open the possibility that, despite its limited readership base, Boston might support a third paper willing to challenge the editorial stand of the other two. Franklin’s Courant seized that opportunity. Overnight, the newspaper world of Boston was charged with a tension and conflict greater than it had known before. Benjamin Franklin, speaking of his brother, James, later recalled, “He had some ingenious men

61 For the history of the Boston newspaper market and details of the format of Boston’s early newspapers see Clark, *Prints*, chapters 4, 5, and 6.
among his friends, who amused themselves by writing little pieces for this paper, which
 gained it credit and made it more in demand, and these gentlemen often visited us."62

The serial nature of the newspaper implies the existence of a meta-textual form of
which each issue is an example or component. When we speak of the Courant, we refer not
to any single number, nor to simply the total contents of all its issues taken together, but to
a gestalt comprised of serially issued examples. The Courant's contemporaries personified
the meta-textual entity. Contributors wrote to "the Author of The New-England Courant,"
contracting the collective authorship into a single persona. The paper's detractors were
more arch, apostrophizing a "Monsieur Corrant."63

The Boston of Monsieur Corrant was a rather small island, connected to Roxbury
by a causeway, to Cambridge and Charlestown by ferries, and to the rest of the world by
sea. Compared to other colonies, Massachusetts Bay had received relatively little immig-
ration since 1688 and, as a result, was ethnically homogeneous and permeated with a dense
network of kinship relations. Checkley, Fleet and Franklin each stood to some degree out-
side the network. Checkley, although of an old Boston family, spent much of his youth in
England and eventually became the rector of the Anglican church in Providence, Rhode Is-
land. Franklin was only a second-generation Bostonian, and Fleet arrived from England in
1712.64


63 The title was first used by Thomas Walter, Cotton Mather's nephew, in his broadside
The Little-Compton Scourge: Or, The Anti-Courant, published by James Franklin as
number 7 in the Courant series. In later issues Franklin and the other Couranteers also
used the name. Walter sought, somewhat unfairly, to mock the lack of Harvard degrees
and foreign sophistication among the paper's creators. Fairness was rarely a concern of
the Courant or its enemies.

64 Biographies of Checkley, Franklin and Fleet are given in the Dictionary of American
Biography.
Although literacy rates were high, only a small fraction of Boston's sixteen thousand inhabitants were newspaper readers. Among the small community of Boston readers the identity of the Courant's writers was not much of a secret. In the restricted compass of Boston's literary society, friend and foe alike were aware that the paper was a collaborative effort; acceptance of the corporate persona distinct from the social or legal identities of individual writers was more problematic. Cotton Mather's confrontation with James Franklin shows that he accepted no distinction between the young man standing before him on the street and Monsieur Corranto. In his straightforward approach Mather was acting on the critical assumptions of the Augustan age. In the eighteenth century, satiric criticism was read as an attack by a concrete subject upon a concrete object. Readers saw Defoe's target in "News from the Moon" as the London Council, not vain politicians in general. Courant readers who enjoyed Franklin's reprint of Defoe's satire read it in the very specific context of a bookseller up on charges for selling a pamphlet critical of Boston's ministers. The anonymity which the Couranteers sought in their elaborate noms de plume was largely formal and deceived few.

The fact that the veil of anonymity surrounding the Couranteers was not very effective does not mean that it was unimportant; anonymity and pseudonymity were essential components of journalism. The use of pseudonyms or initials to mask the name of con-

65 Circulation figures for Boston newspapers in this period do not exist. Campbell, in his Boston News-Letter of August 10, 1719, claimed that "...he cannot vend 300 at an impression, tho' some ignorantly concludes he Sells upwards of a Thousand." Many successful weeklies in Britain at this time had circulations in the range of 3000.


67 The bookseller was Benjamin Gray. The pamphlet, Letter to an Eminent Clergy-Man, (Boston, 1721,) , may have been written by Elisha Cooke and was aimed at Cotton Mather for his opposition to private banks. This pamphlet is listed in Charles Evans' American Bibliography (New York: Peter Smith, 1941), number 2230, hereinafter cited as Evans.
tributors was a convention of the British newspaper from its earliest days. The *Mercuries* and broadsides of the fugitive presses of the English Civil War had cogent practical reasons for concealing the names of contributors. The lapse of absolute government control with the expiration of the licensing act in 1694 — and colonial governors tended to believe that absolute control continued in force in their jurisdictions — did not give rise to anything like freedom of the press as later generations were to understand that term.68 The imprisonment of Defoe exemplifies the harshness with which early eighteenth century government punished those who criticized it in print. James Franklin spent a month in jail for suggesting in the *Courant* that his government was ineffective in dealing with pirates.69 Practical concerns as well as British models mandated anonymity for journalists.

The convention of anonymity did more than protect journalists; it invited readers to participate in a different kind of public discourse, one in which a printed text could be considered independently from the social status of its author. Such separation was as necessary for the social criticism of Mr. Spectator as it was for the political commentary of Cato.70

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68 The legal status of press control in the American colonies following the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1694 was somewhat unclear. Massachusetts Governor Shute took the position that his instructions from the Crown gave him this authority under the king’s proprietary jurisdiction. Elisha Cooke and the Old Charter men argued that common law and the traditional rights of Englishmen remained in effect in the colonies; hence the lapse of the licensing act in Britain freed Americans from control as well. Press censorship was but one of the issues involved in the debate over the Massachusetts charter. For a discussion of the evolving idea of freedom of the press in 18th century America, see Jefferey A. Smith, *Printers and Press Freedom: The Ideology of Early American Journalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988) 17-74.

69 The article appeared in the June 11, 1722 issue.

70 The *Spectator* was a daily paper which appeared in London between March 1, 1711, and December 6, 1712. Slightly less than half of the essays signed “Mr. Spectator” were written by Joseph Addison, the rest by Richard Steele. Benjamin Franklin described his delight in discovering a bound volume of *Spectator* essays in his brother’s printing shop and his determination to imitate their style in his *Autobiography*, 61-62. “Cato” was a favorite Whig pseudonym taken from Marcus Porcius Cato (great-grandson of Cato the Censor), leader of the senatorial faction during Rome’s Civil War. He committed suicide in Utica in 46 B.C. rather than surrender to the Caesarians. Addison wrote a play about the event (London, 1712) and John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon used Cato as their
The importance of this innovation — and Monsieur Corranto is one of its earliest American manifestations — carried far beyond the scoldings of Silence Dogood and her companions. The creation of a printed political discourse offering anonymity to reader and writer transformed notions of the public sphere and altered the direction of American politics.71

Boston readers in 1720 were familiar with the anonymity of print culture upon which the republic of letters depended. Pamphlet wars, which had raged in the province for fifteen years, accustomed the reading public to text whose authorship could not be connected to an identified writer.72 In addition, they read the British press with its convention of pseudonyms such as Cato, Isaac Bickerstaff, and Mr. Spectator.73 Massachusetts read-

pseudonym in a series of essays on Whig political themes published in the London Journal from 1720 to 1722, a number of which were reprinted in the Courant and are discussed in Chapter Two. On the later use of Cato as a pseudonym see Anthony M. Limanni, “Exploiting ‘Cato’: The Classical Pseudonym as Patriot Propaganda,” Retrospection 3, (1990) : 1.

71 Michael Warner characterizes James Franklin’s founding of the Courant as an effort to “validate utterance in a world of print dominated by Puritan clergy.” (Warner, Letters, 67).

72 Thomas Hutchinson attributed the success of the Old Charter Party to the pamphlet literature occasioned by controversies in the administrations of Dudley and Shute: “By these calamities the minds of the people were prepared for impressions from pamphlets, courants, and other news papers, which were frequently published... (Hutchinson 2, 174).” Hutchinson’s characterization of pamphlets and “courants” as newspapers serves to remind the modern reader how closely these genres were linked in the minds of 18th century readers. The common custom during this period of saving newspapers in hardbound annual volumes with an index created by the owner suggests that newspapers occupied a place on the spectrum of printed matter between pamphlets and almanacs.

73 Isaac Bickerstaff was the nom de plume used by Steele in his journal The Tatler. The Tatler was successor to The Spectator. Bickerstaff was the leading spokesman for a “club” of writers under whose names the journal’s articles appeared. The Couranteers were influenced by this literary convention. The Tatler was also aimed at a female audience to a greater degree than earlier journals and inspired Anne Careful, Silence Dogood, and other female companions of Monsieur Corranto. For the importance of women readers of The Tatler, see “Fathers and Daughters: Women as Readers of the Tatler “ by Kathryn Schevelow in Elizabeth A. Flynn and Patrocinio P. Schweickart, eds. Gender and Reading: Essays on Readers, Texts, and Contexts, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).
ers knew how to decode anonymous text; the Courant would put that ability to the test by bringing the conventions of pseudonymity to local ideological and political issues in the serialized observations of Monsieur Corranto and his associates.

Through the convention of pseudonymous authorship, some Massachusetts readers were willing to admit a distinction between the journalist's identity as a writer and his identity as a flesh-and-blood resident of the community. Cotton Mather was clearly unable — or perhaps only unwilling — to make such a distinction in the case of James Franklin. Anonymity invalidated ministerial authority, which derived its legitimacy from the social status of the clergyman as a servant of God ordained over a specific congregation. Civil authorities were more willing to entertain a dual view of Franklin as publisher and as citizen. When Franklin was ordered to submit his publication for prior review, he eluded the restriction by pretending to end his younger brother's apprenticeship and making him the publisher of the paper. "A very flimsy scheme it was," Benjamin would later recall, and one that must have fooled no one.74 Supporting the government's willingness to believe this flimsy scheme was the political alliance between the Selectmen of Boston and Elisha Cooke's party, which controlled the lower house. The willingness of the General Court to accept the transparent fiction that the Courant was being published by a seventeen-year-old boy demonstrates that politicians were able to distinguish between James Franklin's citizenship in the republic of letters and his citizenship in Boston. The anonymity of the Couranteers was largely conventional, but it was an important convention.

74 B. Franklin, Autobiography, 70. After jailing Franklin for a month in June of 1722, the Council attempted to require him to post a £100 bond to guarantee compliance with an order for prior approval of the Courant but the resolution failed in the Cooke-controlled House. When a joint committee finally forced through the motion in January of 1723, Franklin printed a final issue in defiance and went into hiding to avoid arrest. The February 11, 1723, issue appeared over Benjamin's name.
The identities of Monsieur Corranto's writers would be more problematic for modern scholars had not Benjamin Franklin identified the most frequent contributors to early numbers on his own file of the paper. Based on the 92 articles whose authorship Franklin identified, it appears that the Courant was dominated by a small core of writers supplemented by a larger group of occasional contributors. Figure five shows the distribution of articles in the Courant according to Franklin:

**Articles by Identified Authors, the New-England Courant, August 7, 1721 - May 28, 1723**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Fleet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Mr. Harris</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Thomas Lane</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Matthew Adams</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. John Eyre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. John Checkley</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Gardner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madame Staples</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Williams</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Franklin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Steward</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Mather</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Gibbons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Douglass</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capt. Taylor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin Franklin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sixteen writers identified by Franklin fall into three categories. There was a core group, initially composed of Checkley, Douglass and James Franklin, who did most

75 Franklin's attributions are discussed in Ford, "Courant", 338-82.
of the writing and had the lion's share of editorial influence.\textsuperscript{76} James Franklin contributed essays and poetry as well as serving as publisher. Later, his younger brother, Benjamin, wrote a number of pieces including the Silence Dogood letters, the best and most original work in the \textit{Courant}.

The second group was composed of physicians (Drs. Douglass, Gibbons and Steward) for whom the \textit{Courant} served as a forum for their anti-inoculation views during the smallpox epidemic of 1721. The doctors were instrumental in founding the paper, but dropped from sight when the epidemic had passed.

The third group was more diverse in background and interest. For them, the \textit{Courant} was an outlet for literary aspirations rather than a vehicle for political controversy. They seemed to have been at the periphery of the Couranteers circle. Two of them, John Eyre and Matthew Adams, went on to play roles in the \textit{New England Weekly Journal}, the \textit{Courant}'s establishment-supported successor.

As a group, the Couranteers shared a cluster of values. They were anglophiles and proud of their membership in the British Empire, but interpreted the role of Massachusetts in the Empire according to the extreme views of the Real Whigs.\textsuperscript{77} In local politics their philosophy found expression in Elisha Cooke's Old Charter party. The Couranteers also shared a preference for wit, polite learning, scientific rationalism and good taste which inclined them towards Anglicanism.

\textsuperscript{76} Checkley was the original principal writer but was dropped after the third issue because his notoriety and slashing attack on Boston's ministers threatened the existence of the paper. His place was taken by Gardner.

It was among New Englanders who shared these views to one degree or another that the Courant found its supporters. How the paper’s enemies saw the Couranteers can be deduced from Cotton Mather’s explanation for his confrontation of Franklin:

The Reason of this faithful Admonition was, because the Practice of supporting, and publishing every Week, a Libel, on purpose to lessen and Blacken and Burlesque the Vertuous, and Principal Ministers of Religion in a Country, and render all the Services of their Ministry Despicable, and even Detestable to the People, is a Wickedness that was never known before, in any Country, Christian, Turkish, or Pagan, of the face of the Earth, and some Good Men are afraid it may provoke Heaven, to deal with this place, in some regards as never any place has yet been dealt withal, and a Charity to this Young Man, and his Accomplices might render such a Warning proper for them.  

Mather objected to the purpose for which the paper was produced (“on purpose to lessen and Blacken and Burlesque”) because he did not share Franklin’s view of the role of printed material in the public sphere of Massachusetts’ culture, i.e. as a medium for opposition to authority. As the most prominent of New England ministers, a man whose closest eight male relatives were ministers, Cotton Mather embodied that “world in which power embodied in special persons is represented before the people” which, according to Habermas, characterized the traditional public sphere. Franklin’s Courant, in whose pages a leather-dresser or a sixteen-year-old apprentice could take issue with Cotton Mather, presented the province with a dramatic demonstration of a new public sphere in which “power is constituted by a discourse in which the people are represented.”

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78 NEC, December 4, 1721.

79 The idea of a public sphere of discourse is developed in Jürgen Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere (1962) in which he argues that printing changed the public sphere “…from a world in which power embodied in special persons is represented before the people to one in which power is constituted by a discourse in which the people are represented.” (Warner, Letters, 39). Warner states that “For John Adams, print and the public sphere are coextensive; this was a development of mid-century. Previously, the public sphere had involved personal social exchanges.” (Warner, Letters, 39).

80 Nathaniel Gardner was a currier. His fellow Couranteers occasionally referred to him as “Corporal Skinner.” For Gardner’s family background, see Dean 133-134.
The transformation of the public sphere delivered the coup de grace to the New England Way but its effects were civil as well as ecclesiastical, a fact Mather referred to with characteristic indirection by warning that Franklin's journalism might "provoke Heaven, to deal with this place." The phrase, despite its religious language, refers to provincial politics. The rough handling that Governor Shute received from the Massachusetts House caused questions to be raised in Parliament about the province's loyalty and the appropriateness of its charter. Mather's warning is oblique evidence of the link between the Courantees and the popular party led by Elisha Cooke.81 Cotton Mather's critique, although characteristically indirect and emotional in style, was also characteristically insightful.

Mather's outrage at finding himself an object of satire in the public prints came from the novelty of being attacked on his home ground and on a weekly basis. Mather had employed anonymous invective and political argument "on purpose to lessen and Blacken" his Massachusetts adversaries. He collaborated with the province's agent, Sir William Ashurst on the pamphlet A Memorial of the Present Deplorable State of New-England...by the Male-Administration of their Present Governour (London, 1707), attacking Governor Dudley in an unsuccessful attempt to secure his removal.82 Mather had been burlesqued in print when the British historian John Oldmixon referred to his cherished Magnalia Christi Americana as "...so confus'd in the Form, so trivial in the Matter, and so faulty in the Ex-

81 The relationship is discussed later in this essay in terms of Cooke's caucus. Mather was to fall under his own reproach less than a year later when acting-governor William Dummer canceled Mather's series "The State of Religion" running in the News-Letter, because of unflattering references to the Anglican Church. Branding Mather "a publisher of dangerous libels," the new government advised him "look upon it as a piece of proper modesty, to be as little as possible in their presence." Kenneth Silverman, The Life and Times of Cotton Mather, (New York: Columbia University Press Morningside Edition, 1985) 365.

82 Mather accused Dudley, among other things, of treason by reason of selling ammunition to the French during a period of Anglo-French hostilities. The pamphlet was reprinted in 1721 (Evans, 2241) to embarrass the New Charter faction and Mather.
pression, so cramm'd with Puns, Anagrams, Acrosticks, Miracles and Prodigies, that it rather resembles School Boys Exercises Forty Years ago, and Romish legends, than the Collections of an Historian bred up in a Protestant Academy. These blows had been given and received in the English press; the thought of similar attacks from the son of a local soap-maker was galling and unprecedented because of the traditional subservience of the Boston press. That subservience began to change in the years just before the appearance of the Courant because of two Boston printers: James Franklin and Thomas Fleet. In the work of these two artisans we can see the beginnings of America's first opposition press.

Figure six shows the number of imprints issued by each of the printers active in Boston from 1717, when James Franklin returned from his London apprenticeship, through 1726 when he folded his shop and moved to Newport, Rhode Island:

**Boston Imprints, 1717-1726, by Printer**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>B. Green</th>
<th>S. Kneeland</th>
<th>J. Franklin</th>
<th>T. Fleet</th>
<th>J. Allen</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1717</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1718</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1719</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1720</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1721</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1722</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1723</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1724</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1725</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1726</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>398</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Evans, *American Bibliography* and Bristol, *Supplement to Evans* fig. 6

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83 Oldmixon's two-volume *The British Empire in America* was published in London in 1708. His criticism of Mather's *Magnalia* was repeated during the height of the inoculation controversy in an anonymous pamphlet printed by Franklin and probably written by Checkley, *A Friendly Debate; or, A dialogue between Rusticus and Academicus*, (Boston, 1722, Evans, 2386) 6.

84 The chart shows only those imprints in *Evans* or Roger P. Bristol's *Supplement to Charles Evans' American Bibliography* (Univ. of Virginia Press, 1970), for which a printer is given in the colophon. This is somewhat less than half of the total.
Most of the printing in Boston during the years 1717-1726, was done by five printers: Bartholomew Green, Samuel Kneeland, James Franklin, Thomas Fleet, and John Allen. An examination of the annual output of the five principal printers shows that production peaked in the middle of the 1717-1726 period then fell off sharply.

John Allen issued the fewest imprints. Although 1718 was a particularly busy year for him, his participation in the 1720-1721 boom was very modest and his output after that was small. The four other printers also had a growth spurt in 1718 but in each case business reached a much higher peak in the 1720-1721 period. The intense printing activity in the years 1720-1721 was the result of two events which rocked Boston: the Shute crisis and the smallpox inoculation controversy. The flood of pamphlets which issued from Boston presses as a result of these two events illustrates how closely the world of print had become tied to political and social issues in the public sphere.85

The printing trade in Boston was dominated by Bartholomew Green and his nephew, Samuel Kneeland. Timothy Green, another nephew, also printed during the period. Bartholomew Green and his nephews were part of a printing family so influential that one historian has remarked that "In the first half of the eighteenth century printing in New England was a matter of Greens and non-Greens."86

The influence of Bartholomew Green and his nephews was political as well as commercial. Green was a pillar of the Old South Church and a staunch defender of religious orthodoxy. He not only printed for the Mathers, he was the Mathers' printer. In the early years of the century when John Colman, pastor of the liberal Brattle Street Church,

85 The definition of an imprint used in this study is that of Evans, in which the annual production of a weekly newspaper is counted as a single item. Since, apart from textbooks and religious steady-sellers, Boston's printers issued few books, most of the imprints were pamphlets and broadsides.

submitted a manuscript of which the Mathers did not approve to Green, the latter refused to print it without the authorization of the Lieutenant Governor of the Province. Thomas Brattle, one of Colman’s supporters, said of Green’s role in the incident that the Mathers were “known by all to have been his particular Friends and Imployers.” The work was eventually printed in New York with a preface charging that the Boston press was too much “under the awe of the Reverend Author” whose views Colman was attacking.87

A quarter of a century later the Mathers’ control of the press remained an issue. John Checkley complained in 1725 that the town’s printers “have been so much menaced by the Teachers, that we have found it very difficult to get any thing printed in defence of the [Anglican] Church.”88 The suppression of the Courant was the final but effective act of press censorship by the Puritan Old Guard. In the relatively stable, tightly-knit community of Boston printers James Franklin and Thomas Fleet were outsiders; they intended to give America its first anti-Establishment press and, although they could not sustain the effort, they succeeded.

Thomas Fleet arrived in Boston from England in 1712. In the years 1717-1721, his shop produced some of the best and most controversial literature of the day as well as the run-of-the-mill staples which covered a printer’s overhead. Fleet printed Nathaniel Whittemore’s Farmer’s Almanac. Such almanacs rivaled printed legal forms as a source of reliable income for colonial printers. His religious imprints were few in number; however, he printed the homecoming sermon of Thomas Prince with its preface by Increase Mather in 1718. This was Fleet’s only share in the substantial Mather printing business, although he was one of the sellers sponsoring Cotton Mather’s Faith Encouraged, printed by John

87 Colman’s pamphlet was titled The Gospel Order Revived. The incident is discussed in Botein, “Meer Mechanics” 171.

Allen in 1718. Fleet also did some of the printing for the town’s important booksellers. He printed a Latin textbook for Samuel Phillips and a Psalter for Daniel Henchman, but his share of this trade in “steady sellers” was smaller than any of the better-connected Green clan.

In literature Fleet showed a discerning eye. He printed Thomas Robie’s *Almanack of the Celestial Motions* in 1719. Robie was the leading mathematician/astronomer of Harvard and a major source of Newtonian science and Enlightenment ideas in the Boston of his time. Fleet also reprinted two important classics of American literature, Mary Rowlandson’s *Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, the story of her captivity among the Indians, and John Williams’ *The Redeemed Captive, Returning to Zion*, the captivity narrative of the pastor of the Deerfield church. Both of these printings were second editions of works that were steady-sellers for years.89

Fleet’s Anglican leanings deprived him of a share of the Mather market dominated by the Green family; they also impelled him into a controversy which was to become the central topic in the first issues of the *Courant*, the nature of ministerial authority. In 1719 Fleet reprinted Charles Leslie’s *The Religion of Jesus Christ, the Only True Religion, or A Short and Easie Method with the Deists*. Checkley was a flamboyant proselytizer for the Church of England in Boston and re-printing Leslie’s booklet was part of his strategy to woo New England Congregationalists.90

89 The breakdown of negotiations with the Indians at Arrowsick Island in Maine and the resumption of their predations under the Jesuit Father Ralle prompted a renewed interest in Indian warfare. Imperial policy was to discourage colonial contact with Maine Indians and avoid provocations. The *Courant* supported the policy of aggressive intervention in Maine advocated by Cooke’s caucus.

90 Three years later Checkley was fined £50 under Massachusetts’ seditious libel laws for selling the same work, this time with a “Discourse concerning Episcopacy” which he wrote himself.
In 1721 Fleet printed another controversial piece of Anglican propaganda for Checkley, *Choice Dialogues Between a Godly Minister and an Honest Countryman, Concerning Election and Predestination*. This work, which also contains the text of an Epistle to the Magnesians by St. Ignatius counseling obedience to bishops, was an attack on Congregational church polity. The ministerial party replied with a pamphlet, *A Choice Dialogue Between John Faustus and Jack Tory His Friend*, by Thomas Walter, published for Boone, Gray, and Edwards. Checkley and Walter continued their battle over ministerial authority in the pages of the *Courant* during the smallpox epidemic and in pamphlet wars beyond.

Checkley was too controversial even for the Couranteers: he was dropped as the chief writer of the paper after the third issue and his place taken by Nathaniel Gardner. After Checkley dropped off the paper, his friend, Fleet, took a larger role as a writer. Fleet published four pieces under the pen names as Tom Tram, Anne Careful, and Sidrophel, from January through April of 1722. In these letters Fleet accused the Boston Post Master (and printer of the rival *Gazette*) of dishonesty, joined in the debate surrounding Franklin’s bachelorhood, took a few digs at Walter’s pamphlet against Checkley, and criticized the effrontery of a certain lawyer accused of illegal cohabitation. Fleet’s contribution shows him to be an enthusiastic Couranteer and suggests that his printing for Checkley had more than financial motivation. Evidence of Fleet’s loyalty to Franklin appeared in 1723. Franklin was required to post £100 surety that future issues of the paper would be submit-

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91 *A Choice Dialogue Between John Faustus and Jack Tory His Friend* (Boston, 1720, Evans, 2194). The printer was probably Boone.

92 The Tom Tram letter appears in *NEC*, January 15, 1722, Ann Careful writes in *NEC*, January 29, 1722, Sidrophel’s defence of Checkley is in *NEC*, February 12, 1722, and the lawyer’s effrontery criticized in *NEC*, April 23, 1722.
ted to the Secretary of State for approval prior to printing. Thomas Fleet put up half of the required amount.\textsuperscript{93}

Anglican sympathies aligned Fleet with Checkley, an association which, along with Fleet's own literary aspirations and status as a non-Green printer, drew him to the ranks of the Couranteers. Collaboration with Franklin was Fleet's introduction to newspaper publishing. The retirement of John Allen and Bartholomew Green from the ranks of Boston printers at the end of the decade gave scope to Fleet's commercial aspirations. At the end of the period of literary newspapers in Boston Thomas Fleet took over the printing of the \textit{Weekly Rehearsal} and, with the issue of April 2, 1733, became its sole proprietor. When the \textit{Rehearsal} folded in 1735, he began the \textit{Boston Evening Post}, a paper which his sons continued (after their father's death in 1758) until the Revolution. The printer's experience as a journalist for Franklin's \textit{Courant} produced a newspaper publishing family that was active in Boston for over forty years and Fleets printed in Boston until the end of the 18th century.\textsuperscript{94}

The number and content of James Franklin's imprints reflect the business strategy of a young man competing in a marketplace dominated by the Greens and in which Thomas Fleet already occupied the position of anti-Establishment printer. The Franklin shop issued only two imprints in its first year of operation. In 1719, however, the new postmaster, William Brooker, gave Franklin the printing of his paper, the \textit{Boston Gazette}. Brooker may have been attracted by Franklin's wit and London polish but the young tradesman's lack of connections with ministerial or business elites — not to mention his association with Checkley and Fleet — was a drawback. In 1720, Musgrave switched his printing to the better-connected Samuel Kneeland. The loss of income from the \textit{Gazette} influenced:

\begin{itemize}
\item[93] The records of the Committee can be found in the \textit{Mass. House Journal}, 4, 205-209 and \textit{Mass. General Court Records}, vol. 11, 491, 493.
\item[94] Thomas, vol. 1, 48.
\end{itemize}

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Franklin to bring out the Courant. Franklin published eight other imprints in 1719. Half were religious in nature: a steady seller by Richard Bernard in its 16th edition, a defense of traditional Baptism practices by Joseph Jenks, a sermon by Cotton Mather on the evils of falling asleep in church, and a treatise by the venerable Solomon Stoddard. The other four imprints covered the range of subject matter in the Boston press at the time: a steady-seller arithmetic text, a treatise on astronomy by Harvard tutor Thomas Robie, the catalog of a book auction for Samuel Gerrish, and a political pamphlet by John Colman arguing for the establishment of municipally regulated markets in Boston.  

Two of Franklin’s 1719 imprints were done for the bookseller Daniel Henchman. Franklin’s commercial relationship with Henchman deepened in 1720. Four of his five imprints in that year were for Henchman, the other was another book catalogue printed for Gerrish. Over the course of Franklin’s career in Boston 20 of his 54 imprints (37%) were for Henchman, in all but two cases exclusively. Franklin’s other major customer (aside from Musgrave’s Gazette) was Samuel Gerrish. Franklin published a handful of imprints for other booksellers, but most of his work carries no “Printed for” line in the colophon. Franklin probably sold these titles at his own shop, exchanged them with other printers, or marketed them through booksellers like Checkley who did not finance the printing. He also published a number of broadsides including the first published work of his younger brother, Benjamin. Figure seven shows the distribution of imprints by Franklin by the name of the bookseller listed in the colophon:

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95 The attempted creation of municipally regulated markets was part of an effort to replace Boston’s town meeting with a more restricted franchise on the model of an English borough in order to undercut the power of Cooke’s caucus.

96 “My brother, supposing it might turn to account, encouraged me and induced me to compose two occasional ballads. One was called ‘The Light-House Tragedy,’ and contained an account of the ship-wreck of Captain Worthlake with his two daughters; the other was a sailor’s song, on the taking of the famous Teach, or ‘Blackbeard,’ the pirate. They were wretched stuff, in street-ballad style; and when they were printed by brother sent me about the town to sell them. The first sold prodigiously, the event being recent and
A comparison of Franklin's publishers with those of Samuel Kneeland reveals how advantageous the latter's establishment connections were. A significantly larger portion of Kneeland's imprints carried a "Printed for" line, suggesting that he was better able to contract with booksellers and did not have to print on speculation as frequently as Franklin. Both printers did work for Gerrish and Henchman, the major booksellers, but Kneeland did a significant amount of work for Musgrave, Butolph, and Phillips. While Franklin did a modest amount of work for Thomas Fleet, Kneeland did none; the alliance of Fleet and Franklin was one in which the establishment printer, Kneeland, had no part. Figure eight shows the distribution of Kneeland's imprints by the name of the bookseller listed in the colophon:

having made a great noise. This success flattered my vanity; but my father discouraged me by criticizing my performances and telling me verse-makers were generally beggars. (B. Franklin, Autobiography, 15" James Franklin advertised a number of broadsides in the pages of the Courant. Most of them, including Benjamin's first ballads, are "ghosts" of which no known copy survives.
Franklin's 1721 imprints show a turn away from steady-sellers and religious works to political controversy. Foremost among these works was the Courant, but there were other significant publications from what had become a controversial and decidedly political press. Franklin printed John Wise's The freeholder's address to the Honourable House of Representatives, the latest work by the outspoken populist minister from Ipswich who alone had broken ranks with the Mather-led clergy to support paper money. This pamphlet was sold by Benjamin Gray, the bookseller who earned the displeasure of the Council for selling A Letter to an Eminent Clergy-man. Gray's actions were defended in an anonymous pamphlet, News from the Moon, probably written by Franklin himself, published the

97 Perry Miller said of John Wise's writings, "These works, as posterity has learned to appreciate, are as important for how they speak as for what they say. They amount to a liberation of language, and their example, even if not noticeably felt by Wise's ministerial colleagues, could not be lost upon James Franklin or his little brother Benjamin, or upon men more concerned with declining currency than with the declension of the spirit." (Miller, Mind 292).
same year. The work is a witty adaptation of a satire by Defoe about a tailor persecuted for making a "fool's coat" which the magistrate believes fits him. Franklin also printed a work by Thomas Paine which, although blaming extravagance and a taste for imported luxury for Boston's cash shortage (a favorite ministerial theme), argued the case for paper currency.98

Franklin printed three religious works in 1721. One was a pamphlet giving the dis-senter's side of an argument dividing Boston's newly-formed Baptist Church. The second, a work by John Williams, argued that smallpox inoculation was not supported by religious or medical orthodoxy — a refutation of the views of the Mather faction.99 The third work was *The Grounds and Rules of Music Explained, or an Introduction to the Art of Singing by Note*, by Thomas Walter. The use of a trained choir singing in harmony from a loft at the back of the church, a liturgical practice facilitated by Walter's book, was part of the tendency towards a more elegant liturgy favored by the urbane young ministers around Boston.100 Regular singing had an Anglican flavor in contrast to the free-form bellowing favored by Congregational traditionalists. Franklin may have landed this printing contract because his London training gave him technical skills useful in setting the first music in bar notation printed in America. However opposed Walter was to Franklin on political and religious issues, he was willing to do business with him as a printer.

98 *A Discourse shewing, that the real first Cause of the Straits and Difficulties of this Province of the Massachusetts Bay, is it's Extravagancy & not paper Money. (Boston, 1721, Evans, 2283).*

99 Williams was a tobacco-seller and part-time apothecary. His pamphlet (Bristol, 618) accuses Mather and the other ministers of indifference to the plight of working people in Boston. The bitterness of its tone reveals the depth of feeling that drove "leather apron men" to support the caucus.

100 "The introduction of musical literacy and skill also very often pitted young against old, gifted against bumbling, town against country. Those who defended regular singing, as note reading was called, made their case in about a dozen sermons, instructional works, and pamphlets published in New England from 1720 to 1727, arguing on scriptural and other grounds for trained performance." (Silverman, *Life*, 305). The controversy over regular singing is discussed in Chapter Ten.
Franklin's most successful year was 1722. Besides the Courant, Franklin printed another pamphlet in favor of paper money and the land bank, a letter on smallpox inoculation, a satire on hoop petticoats by Franklin himself, half a dozen religious works, and two versions of a sermon by Thomas Walter defending regular singing in churches. Franklin's printing of the Walter sermon during the heat of the Courant controversy is an example of "freedom of the press" as the term was understood in the period, i.e. a press open to writers of all persuasions.

The attempted suppression of the Courant forced Franklin into the subterfuge of claiming his brother Benjamin as the paper's printer. The disruption and controversy took a toll on the Franklin press: in 1723, only 2 imprints were issued, a religious work and a patriotic poem. Franklin's remaining three years in Boston were no better. He printed a sheet almanac by Nathaniel Bowen and three other minor works. Franklin's Boston enterprise never recovered from the Council's attack on the Courant. In 1727 James Franklin began printing in Newport, Rhode Island.

The total number of imprints by James Franklin during his years in Boston show that his was an important press in the town. Although his output did not match that of either of the establishment printers, Kneeland and Green, Franklin held a share of the market roughly equal to that of his fellow anti-establishment printer Thomas Fleet and greater than that of the thoroughly respectable John Allen. The number of imprints issued by James Franklin and Thomas Fleet shows a reciprocal pattern. After 1722, Fleet's output increased and Franklin's dropped dramatically, suggesting that Fleet may have picked up the trade that Franklin lost because of his persecution and notoriety. Figure nine shows the number of imprints issued annually by James Franklin and Thomas Fleet during the 1717-1726 period:
The gain in Fleet's business as Franklin's declined is evidence that the two printers were not only collaborators on the *Courant* but that they shared a role as Boston's opposition press. When the total imprints of Fleet and Franklin combined are compared to the total output of Bartholomew Green and Samuel Kneeland combined, it can be seen that, although the business of the opposition press peaked a year later than that of the establishment printers, their shares of the Boston market remained stable. Figure ten shows the combined number of Green-Kneeland imprints and the combined number of Franklin-Fleet imprints for the 1717-1726 period:
The Courant was America’s first opposition newspaper, that is a paper established specifically to oppose the policies of the civil and religious rulers of the province. From its first issues, the Courant opposed Governor Shute’s Indian policy. It opposed the efforts of the Council to restrain the press, and it opposed the efforts of Cotton Mather to introduce smallpox inoculation in Boston. In politics, to oppose is, at least by implication, to advocate something else. What were the Couranteers in favor of? Who benefited from the existence of this new, anti-government paper in Boston?

The most persuasive answer is Elisha Cooke, Jr. and the Boston Caucus of which he was the leader. Cooke’s father was a member of the mercantile elite and led opposition to the Charter of 1691. His mother, Elizabeth Leverett, was the daughter of Governor Leverett and brother to John Leverett, installed as President of Harvard (and Increase Mather’s successor) in 1707. The Harvard election sealed the enmity of Cotton Mather to the Cooke family. Elisha Cooke, Jr. rose to prominence as one of the Boston representatives to the General Court in 1714, when he led the fight to establish a land bank to ease the province’s
perennial shortage of capital.\textsuperscript{101} He also figured prominently in the related issue of Maine land titles. Cooke, Dudley and a number of other wealthy speculators held vague, often conflicting titles to thousands of acres of Maine timberland. Ownership disputes turned upon the nature of the Massachusetts charter and the right of the province to transfer title of crown lands to private owners. Cooke’s unswerving championship of the Old Charter was based in part upon the fact that his titles in Sagadahoc were granted under its provisions. Cooke was a rich man independent of his holdings in Maine; confirmation of his deeds and the establishment of a land bank to turn his land titles into investment capital would have greatly increased his wealth. Land speculation as well as Whiggish political sentiment made Cooke the champion of the Old Charter party.\textsuperscript{102}

When Governor Shute succeeded Governor Dudley, Cooke’s leadership became the central issue in provincial politics. Shute had none of Dudley’s devious political acumen and his repeated negatory of Cooke’s election to the Council served as a catalyst to unite the Boston representatives to the General Court against him. The boom years of Queen Anne’s

\textsuperscript{101} The bank was to be a private corporation issuing notes based on the value of land owned by the bank’s investors. The province’s experience with the inflation caused by government notes during the war years caused creditors to oppose the scheme and Shute’s instructions from the Lords of Trade were to veto any such proposal. Amid much divisive discussion and a flurry of pamphlets the proposal came to nothing. On the various banking schemes put forward in Massachusetts at this time, see Andrew M. Davis, “Currency and Banking in the Province of Massachusetts-Bay”, \textit{Publications of the American Economic Association}, 3rd. series, vol. 1.

\textsuperscript{102} The division of Massachusetts’ political groups into Old Charter and New Charter parties, the former a Whiggish alliance of land owning merchants favoring the independent status of the original charter and the latter a more Tory group closely allied to the Royal Governor and dependent upon the trans-Atlantic trade for its financial power, is persuasively argued by Shields, \textit{Oracles}, 110-120. I have adopted Shields’ designation since it reflects autochthonous political issues in Massachusetts better than the Court vs Country terminology of British politics. For the idea of Court vs Country parties in Massachusetts see “Political Development,” by John M. Murrin in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds. \textit{Colonial British America: Essays in the New History of the Early Modern Era}, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), and Bushman, \textit{King. Cotton Mather saw division over the charter as central to the province’s political alignments and wrote a satirical allegory about it in 1692, “The New Settlement of the Birds in New England.”
War (1702-1714), when the town was the staging port for British attacks against the French in North America and 5,000 troops swelled the city, had given way to post-war depression. The market for foodstuffs and naval stores collapsed and Massachusetts' chronic balance-of-trade deficit with Britain drained the province of hard currency. Paper money issued by the provincial government was depreciating rapidly, squeezing those on fixed incomes and making trade difficult outside the small circle of trans-Atlantic merchants who formed the province's elite. Economic hardship enhanced the appeal of the Old Charter faction as all but the upper stratum of the province's commercial classes faced difficulties that paper money promised to alleviate.

Cooke wasted no time in getting to the head of the Old Charter group. He used pamphlets to spread his views beyond Boston to towns where small merchants and farmers formed a receptive audience for his message of cheap money and ancient liberties. Cooke's group won control of Boston in 1719, when three of the four incumbent representatives to the General Court failed of reelection, being replaced by Elisha Cooke, Oliver Noyes, and William Clark. In Boston, where from 1719, he served as moderator of the town meeting, Cooke gathered his supporters into a disciplined caucus. In forging an alliance between the discontented artisans, Whiggish landowners and professional men, Cooke's caucus gave America its first broad-based and systematically managed political party.

The connection between Cooke's caucus and the Couranteers was more concrete than mere affinity of interest. One of the principals in the caucus, Samuel Checkley, was the uncle of John Checkley, the paper's first principal writer. Samuel Checkley was elected Town Clerk in 1721 — the year of the Courant's appearance — and served in that of-

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103 That such a turnover was the result of deliberate campaigning seems probable from the fact that before 1719, 63% of the incumbents were reelected. During the years 1719-1775, when the caucus was functioning, fully 82% of incumbents were reelected. The election results of 1719 seem explainable as the result of the political activity which brought Cooke's group to power. See Warden, 19-33.
fice until 1734. Samuel Checkley’s election was part of the caucus’ tightening control on Boston’s municipal government. In that year the caucus also managed the election of Joseph Wadsworth as Town Treasurer as well as electing caucus candidates as selectmen. Also in 1721, the caucus published what may be the first platform of an American political party, a broadside “Printed for Benjamin Gray at his Shop in Corn-Hill” of “Instructions to John Clark and others.” John Clark was one of the founders of the caucus. His election to the Council had been negativated by the governor in 1720 as part of the crisis which drove Shute from office. The power base of the caucus was Boston where dissatisfied shopkeepers like John Checkley and leather-apron men like Nathaniel Gardner gave it control of the municipal government and elected its leaders to represent them in the General Court. The two Checkleys, one a caucus member and Town Clerk, the other a founding Couranteer, linked the caucus and the Courant.

Association with Cooke’s caucus shaped the participation of the Courant in the controversy over smallpox inoculation as well. Cotton Mather’s recommendation in favor of inoculation was opposed by the medical profession in Boston with the exception of the apothecary-surgeon Zabdiel Boylston, who successfully inoculated 242 people (of whom 6 died). Opposition to the ministers centered in the very groups that were the core of the caucus’ power base. Dr. William Douglass, the Couranteers’ chief medical writer, summed up the battle in the May 21, 1722, issue of the Courant:

Last January Inoculation made a Sort of Exit, like the Infatuation Thirty Years ago, after several had fallen Victims to the mistaken Notions of Dr. M----r and other learned Clerks concerning Witchcraft. But finding Inoculation in this Town, like Serpents in Summer, beginning to crawl abroad again the last Week, it was in time, and effectually crushed in the Bud, by the Justices, SelectMen, and the unanimous vote of a general Town-Meeting.

It hardly seems a coincidence that of the founding members of the Boston caucus, Elisha Cooke, Oliver Noyes, Thomas Cushing, John Clark, William Clark, all but Cushing
were physicians, although without medical degrees.\textsuperscript{104} John Clark who, as a leader of the Boston caucus had been negativied by Shute when elected to the Council, was the brother of Cotton Mather's second wife, Elizabeth Hubbard Clark. At the time of the crisis, he was the attending physician to Mather's daughter, Liza. Passions ran deep over the inoculation affair and the small size of Boston (some 16,000 people in the 1720s) gave the conflict a tangled intimacy which heightened the tension.

The close alliance between the Mathers and the Green family of printers, and the fact that the physicians opposed to inoculation were led by a prominent member of the Boston caucus, made it difficult for anti-inoculators to gain space in the News-Letter or the Gazette. The sequence of events in the three months prior to the appearance of the first issue of the Courant shows the battle lines forming. On April 22, 1721 H.M.S. Seahorse arrived in Boston carrying several infected slaves. The Selectmen immediately initiated a quarantine on Spectacle Island. On June 6, Cotton Mather circulated a letter to physicians in which he stated, "My request is, that you would meet for a Consultation upon this Occasion, and to deliberate upon it, that whoever first begins this practise, (if you approve that it should be begun at all ) may have the concurrence of his worthy Bretheren to fortify him in it."\textsuperscript{105} Boylston successfully inoculated his 6 year-old son and two of his slaves.\textsuperscript{106} On July 21, the Boston Selectmen, disregarding Boylston's invitation to visit his patients, ac-

\textsuperscript{104} The issue of credentials is a complicated one. Cotton Mather had as much medical training as most of the physicians who opposed him, having studied under Dr. William Avery in his youth and retained an interest in medical science in later years. Mather had learned of inoculation in African folk-medicine as early as 1706 and recorded his support for the idea "if I should live to see the Small-Pox again enter into our city" in 1716. A detailed summary of the epidemic of 1721 is given by John B. Blake in "The Inoculation Controversy in Boston: 1721-1722." New England Quarterly 25, (1952): 489-506.

\textsuperscript{105} A Vindication of the Ministers of Boston, from the Abuses & Scandals, Lately Cast upon Them, in Diverse Printed Papers (Boston, 1722, Evans, 2396) 8.

cepted the testimony of Dr. Lawrence Dalhonde that inoculation in Italy, Spain, and Flanders killed many patients, and forbade the practice in Boston. On July 24, Douglass published a cautious essay in the News-Letter crediting Mather with "a Pious & Charitable design of doing good" but attacking Boylston for his "mischievous propagating the Infection in the most Publick Trading Place of the Town." On July 31, Boston's leading ministers replied to Douglass in the Gazette in a letter signed by Increase and Cotton Mather, Benjamin Colman, Thomas Prince, John Webb, and William Cooper. On August 7, the first Courant appeared. The conflict over inoculation was more complex than a simple disagreement between Mather and Douglass; it was a battle between the Congregational ministry of Boston and selectmen controlled by the Boston caucus.

The close relationship between the Courant and the Boston caucus is evident in an article by Nathaniel Gardner in the September 4, 1721 issue. The essay opened in a bantering, political tone:

In a most generous Clan of Honest Wags, Congregated in a certain Place where Apollo is a Deity very well known: Unanimously agreed and voted, that the following epistle be sent to the most noble, and super-eminent Author of the New-England Courant in order to be inserted in his next....

The secretary of this Clan of Honest Wags, noting "That too much of one thing is good for nothing," urged that the inoculation topic be dropped as "DULL." The essay closed with another bit of political banter and an interesting reference to drink:

Know also, Good Sir, that we have had a hot Debate this Evening, whether it be right for a ------------------------------- ? but being put to Vote, it pas'd in the Negative. -----But it is time to stop here. ------ Our Clan (whatever others do) keep good Hearts. -------- We are now Exhillerating our Spirits over a Capacious Bowl of Inebriating Liquor, and your Health is just going round....

The curious punctuation with long dashes and the omission of the resolution passed in the negative may have been in the original, or may represent excisions by Franklin. Ei-

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107 Dalhonde's testimony ran in serial form in the Courant during the period of peak mortality, October and November.
ther way, the piece captures the flavor of inebriated wit in an eighteenth-century political club. Besides the parliamentary burlesque, the reference to drink would also have suggested the caucus to contemporaries. One derivation for the term "caucus" is the Greek "kaukos," or wine bowl. "Corkus" was a common spelling among pre-Revolutionary writers, a pun indicative of the close connection between meetings of the caucus and alcohol. The Tory historian Peter Oliver, looking back on the early activity of the Boston caucus in the 1720s, noted its huge expenditures on liquor for members and as a lubricant for persuasion of Boston voters.108

James Franklin's response, under his favorite pseudonym of Timothy Turnstone, showed that he understood the political implications of the Clan of Honest Wags. After some light-hearted rebuke of the clan's pretensions, Franklin concluded:

Know also good Gentlemen, That I have taken the Liberty to make you stop shorter than you intended, in your hot Debate about certain Matters of State which you know of; and if you persist in judging your Judges (whatever other Clans do) I shall oblige yours to keep the following Good Orders.

1. That you do not exhillerate your Dull Spirits over a Bowl that will contain more than a full Gallon; nor drink my Health, till your Heads are just going round.

2. That you let all Discourse of Government drop of its self, and presume not to talk of State Affairs, till you are so far gone as to forget your own ....

Although we appear to be in the midst of an "in" joke, it seems clear that the Clan of Honest Wags was one which debated affairs of state and criticized the conduct of judges as part of its concern with government affairs. The tavern clubs which formed the grass roots of the Boston caucus were a recent innovation in Boston's traditionally sedate social life, and one which was not popular with all of the Courant's readers. One essay, criticizing "The Set Clubs, that assemble at the Taverns almost every Night of the Week," describes these societies where "vast affairs of State and Government are Survey'd and settl'd, the Honest Schemes of Rulers are arraign'd and traduc'd, and their Arcana too freely inter-

108 For the history of the Boston caucus and its association with alcohol, see Warden.

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meddled with.⁹ The Courant depended for its readers as well as for some of its contributors on these set clubs, whose politically knowledgeable associates were members of the Boston caucus.

The Boston caucus was part of a new politics of organized interests which, although bemoaned on every side, had taken root in Boston as a cutting from British Parliamentary stock. It was Governor Dudley who began the systematic use of patronage to build a network of support for his administration. The ineptitude of his successor, Shute, provoked the Old Charter faction led by Cooke and Clark to organize support not only in the House but among the voters of Boston. The need of an opposition party for a newspaper to galvanize supporters and spread its views was a proximate cause for the appearance of the Courant. The caucus, or some of its members, may have subsidized the paper. In a market where the long-established News-Letter could sell 300 copies a week at best, it is unlikely that Franklin’s paper would have been able to support his business, particularly after 1723, when his other printing income declined precipitously.¹⁰ Subsidies to journalists were a common practice in British politics at this time. The opposition claimed in 1731 that Walpole was spending £20,000 annually subsidizing the ministerial press.¹¹ It seems

¹⁰ This criticism of Boston’s tavern-based political clubs is from the Courant of January 7, 1726. Previously the issue had been raised in the issues of February 12, 1722 and January 7, 1723 as well as the Clan of Honest Wags letter cited above from the issue of September 4, 1721.

¹¹ On the circulation of the News-Letter, see note 50 above. Franklin sold the Courant for 3d. single, 10s a year. Advertising in the Courant was negligible and cannot have contributed much to the budget. Three hundred paid annual subscriptions would have grossed the tidy sum of £150 annually; but, based on Franklin’s pleas to his subscribers to pay up, this figure seems even more wildly optimistic than the assumption of a weekly press run of 300. Actual receipts may have been in the range of £50 to £75 annually, i.e. the equivalent of 100 to 150 paid subscriptions. Out of this amount the printer would have to pay for expensive, imported paper and ink, as well as other overhead, including Benjamin’s wages as an apprentice.

likely that the wealthy leaders of the caucus (Cooke was said to be the richest man in the province) may have followed English political models in conceding financial help to the paper that served as its spokesman.

The Courant represented more than adolescent humor and self-conscious attempts by young provincials to imitate the Spectator, although it often had that flavor; James Franklin's paper signaled the arrival of a new dynamic in American culture. The appearance of a self-proclaimed opposition press was the result of deep fissures in the province's ideology arising from the passing of the New England Way and its supercession by Enlightenment values and Anglican religious norms. Rapid economic growth in the years 1688-1714 had been followed by inflation and business decline in the 1714-1730 period. The shift in economic conditions produced conflicts of interest among the commercial elite of Boston and also gave the town its first real taste of class antagonism. These influences, ideological and economic, profoundly changed the culture of Massachusetts Bay.

The transformation of New England’s political culture in the early years of the eighteenth century can be seen in the Shute crisis of 1720. As in the Andros Rebellion thirty years earlier, a royal governor was driven from the province; however, two aspects of the Shute crisis were new. The first was that opposition to the governor was not uniform among citizens of the province. Most of the ministers and many of the most powerful merchants sided with the governor. These New Charter men were opposed by a diverse collection of entrepreneurial capitalists frustrated by restrictions on the development of Maine timber resources, small merchants hurt by the lack of a circulating currency, "leather-apron men," members of the urban bourgeoisie suffering from inflation and hard times, and religious liberals attracted to the Anglican Church because of its greater tolerance of Socinian or Unitarian theology. This heterogeneous Old Charter group, so called because its members saw in a return to the pre-Andros charter the possibility for local autonomy that would further their interests, was united under the leadership of Elisha Cooke into a Boston-based caucus in the General Court whose strength was sufficient to oppose the power of the royal
Governor and his Council. The result was a constitutional crisis provoked by Shute's negative of caucus members elected to the Council by the lower house. Shute dissolved the General Court amid mounting tumult and took ship for England. In the Andros Rebellion a united colony removed an unpopular governor by force; in the Shute crisis a deeply divided General Court provoked the resignation of a governor supported by much of the elite. The contrasting dynamics of the two events resulted from a profound transformation of the public sphere of Boston life.

The Courant was a leader in the transformation of the public sphere. By creating a sustained forum for the views of the Old Charter group, The Courant transformed the sputtering arguments of the pamphlet wars into a sustained debate in which ideas about banking, marriage, religion and science coalesced into an ideology capable of attracting new adherents. The anonymity of print, its capacity to separate ideas from their author's social status, gave added power to the leather-apron men of the Boston caucus. In the verbal, face-to-face debate of an hierarchic social order, no shop-keeper or apprentice boy could hope to question the pronouncements of Cotton Mather as Checkley and Franklin did in the pages of the Courant. It is the sense that the old champions were being unhorsed in a new form of combat that gives Mather's confrontation with James Franklin on a Boston street in the fall of 1721 its special significance. Monsieur Corrant stayed in Boston for less than five years, but the town would never be the same.
Chapter Two

Massachusetts Politics and the Real Whigs

In the Courant of December 4, 1721, after the mounting furor over inoculation had resulted in Cotton Mather's public confrontation with James Franklin, the young publisher attempted to defend his role in the controversy claiming that "the Courant was never design'd for a Party Paper. I have once and again given out, that both Inoculators and Anti-Inoculators are welcome to speak their Minds in it." To Franklin, the fact that both sides could be published in his paper proved that it was not a party paper; in fact, he boasted that "those that have read the Courants must know that I have published Pieces wrote among ourselves in favor of Inoculation, but have given as full an Account of the Success of it in England, as the other Papers have done." The Courant was not a party paper like the openly partisan British journals subsidized by the Walpole administration; however, Franklin's paper was an advocate for an identifiable faction in the turbulent political wrangling of the time, the party of Elisha Cooke and the Old Charter men, opponents of the Court Party led by the Dudleys and Cotton Mather in support of Governor Samuel Shute. The Courant began publication in the context of a division in the political leadership of Massachusetts Bay into two opposing parties. In its consistent advocacy of Cooke's caucus

112 "Real Whigs" was the term employed by eighteenth-century libertarian writers to distinguish themselves from the much larger and less radical Whig political party that assumed control of the British ministry with the Hanoverian succession.

113 Franklin's phrase "among ourselves" refers not to the Couranteers but to New Englanders favoring inoculation.
in municipal politics and his Old Charter Party in the General Court the Courant was, its openness to opposing views notwithstanding, a party paper.

Samuel Shute was appointed to the governorship when the splintering of Massachusetts was already underway.\textsuperscript{114} Under his predecessor, Governor Dudley, the growing rift between the traditional New England Way and the secular values of the new century had burst rancorously into the open and friends of New England in Britain saw the new man as a healer who would restore harmony to the troubled province. During the maneuvering that preceded Shute’s appointment, Massachusetts’ agent, Jonathan Belcher, wrote to Benjamin Colman describing the candidate as a strong supporter of the province’s interests:

His Whole family Dissenters time out of Mind, Our Mr. Morton late [Minister] of Charlestown was his Tutor, from whome he past to the University of Leyden in Holland .... An Universal Acquaintance at Court, & a good interest, with the King & Ministry, Which I know he will Always be ready to imploie in Espousing the priviledges & liberties of N. England His principles & Natural Inclination leading him to the love of Liberty & property.\textsuperscript{115}

Shute turned out to be more of a mixed blessing. He was, in fact, a moderate Anglican, not a Dissenter, whose political ineptitude was to cause the Court Party as much difficulty as his loyal support for the prerogative. The first year of Shute’s administration, although marked by jars over the bank controversy, passed relatively smoothly and Colman was able to report in June of 1717 that "We never had such a free & open pleasure in & prayers for our priviledges before made from Ye Chair."\textsuperscript{116}

\textsuperscript{114} Perry Miller employs the phrase "the splintering of a society" as a chapter title in his second volume of \textit{The New England Mind: From Colony to Province}.

\textsuperscript{115} From a letter to Benjamin Colman, May 31, 1716, in the Colman Papers, (Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston).

\textsuperscript{116} Colman Papers, letter to Lord Barrington, June 5, 1717.
It was to strengthen Shute's hand against the advocates of a private bank that Cotton Mather made the fateful decision to campaign actively on the governor's behalf. Believing that Cooke and his followers had "gott the knack of perverting and misleading a Majority of poor, and weak (tho' sometimes honest) Coun treymen in our House of Representatives," Mather lobbied against the bank scheme and noted with satisfaction that "A conspicuous Change in the Tempers and Measures of the House Ensued." Supporters of the bank believed that in harnessing his prestige and the deference due him as a minister to this political struggle Mather was acting unfairly, a charge that would be made against him repeatedly in the pages of the Courant.

As the bank controversy was replaced by the issue of timber rights, Mather continued to serve as a lobbyist for Shute. He recorded in his Diary for January 2, 1719, that "Our excellent Governour presses me to form a significant Society of our superiour and principal Gentlemen who may project methods for the Deliverance of the Countrey from the dreadful Distresses, which it is running into." Three weeks later he recorded the progress of his efforts to rally a coalition in support of Shute, noting that:

The Country is brought into dreadful Distresses. And they grow upon us space towards a great Extremity. Our excellent Governour converses with me upon that Head, and I am with his Assistances, projecting several Things, that may have a Tendency to rescue us from the impending Destruction.

Mather's efforts were directed at persuading representatives from outlying towns of the immorality of organized political opposition to the Council, which he referred to in his Diary as "that cursed, and senseless Party-Spirit, which is now among us, in a most

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117 Proposals for a private bank had been repeatedly put forward during the Dudley administration. The project was first headed by Elisha Cooke, Sr., and then by his son. Details of the various land bank schemes advanced by the Cookes can be found in Davis, 55-80.


119 Mather, Diary, 580-582.
abominable Operation. Let me contrive to do all that I or others can towards the Extinction of so comprehensive a Mischief.**120** Mather's opponents, of course, saw him as practicing the very party activities that he condemned as immoral in them. Mather did not interpret his conduct as hypocrisy. He saw himself as qualified by education and position for membership in the "speaking aristocracy" whose role it was to guide the "silent democracy." Fundamentally differing conceptions of political authority separated the House and the Council, Cooke and Mather; each side accused the other of inappropriate activity because there was no longer a common set of rules for political behavior.

Not content with personal persuasion in his efforts to see Shute "vindicated from the Aspersions of a cursed Crue in this Place," Mather employed the press to defend the governor in his struggles with Elisha Cooke, Jr., leader of the Old Charter Party.**121** Using the tactic of sending material to the British press which he had used against Dudley, Mather published a lengthy piece in praise of Shute in the *Flying Post* of May 16, 1718, reprinted in Boston in 1720.**122** In the anonymous satire *News From Robinson Cruso's Island* (1720), Mather described a visit to the island of Insania where "rash Men willing to see the Country all in Confusion" unjustly oppose their governor out of self interest but under "the

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**120** Mather, *Diary*, 515.

**121** Mather, *Diary*, 2, 461.

**122** T. J. Holmes, *Cotton Mather: A Bibliography of his Works*, (1940) lists the encomium of Shute as number 197. Mather first used the strategy of publishing in England in order to bring pressure to bear upon New England politics when he collaborated with Sir Henry Ashurst, the provincial agent, in the pamphlet *The Deplorable State of New-England*, published in London in 1708 against Governor Dudley. The work was reprinted in Boston in 1720 (Evans, 2214) — presumably to Mather's discomfort — as part of Cooke's campaign against Shute. The title of the pamphlet charged members of Dudley's Council with "Scandalous and Wicked Accusation of the Votes, Ordered by Them to be Published in Their Boston News-Letter." Use of the newspaper was a part of the new politics in the age of Queen Anne which Dudley had learned during his exile in England following the Andros Rebellion. The popular party in Massachusetts was not slow to copy the lesson, but their access to the press was limited before the founding of the *Courant*.
Hypocritical disguise of contending for your Privileges."^{123} Cooke's side responded with two works: *Mr. Cooke's Just and Seasonable Vindication*, addressing the legality of Shute's negatory of his election to the Council, and *Reflections upon Reflections: or, More News from Robinson Crusoe's Island*. The latter pamphlet was a rebuttal to criticisms made by Mather, who was referred to as "one, whose Scribendi Cacoethes has made him famous on both sides of the Atlantick" and whose brain "is over-charged with so great a variety of News, that the Country feels themselves on many accounts the worse for him." Cooke characterized Mather's style as "learned jargon" and accused him of threatening representatives with the loss of the charter should they persist in defending the province's liberties. To yield to Shute's interpretation of the royal prerogative would, Cooke asserted, make "our selves obnoxious to the Curse of succeeding Generations."^{124}

Mather's political activism was not an innovation. The leading ministers of New England had been at the center of the political process, as counsellors but not office-holders, since the colony's founding. Nonetheless, Mather's political activity in support of Governor Shute provoked cries of outrage by opponents from all classes of Boston society. Mather's personal style must be accounted a significant factor: the mixture of sanctimoniousness and deviousness characteristic of his interventions was an irritant to those who disagreed with him. His vanity and ambition laid him open to accusations of hypocrisy and self-interest.^{125} Mather's pamphlet style, like his pulpit oratory, was old-


^{125} Self-interest was particularly apparent in his struggles to obtain the presidency of Harvard. It was in this effort that Mather reversed his earlier opposition to the Dudley faction and formed the alliance which tied him firmly to the Council during the Shute administration. Details of Cotton Mather's rupture with Thomas Dudley over the latter's conduct during Queen Anne's War are given in Sivlerman, *Life*, 211-221. The
fashioned and weakened his effectiveness, particularly in appealing to younger and more cosmopolitan New Englanders. Although a majority of New England ministers sided with the Court Party, it was Cotton Mather who drew most of the fire of the Old Charter Party.

Hostility to ministerial involvement in politics was based on more than the idiosyncratic weaknesses of Cotton Mather: a new conception of the role of religion in public life had come into existence in the province, a conception under which Mather’s lobbying in the General Court and publication of purely political writings such as News from Robinson Crusoe’s Island were socially as well as spiritually inappropriate. John Eyre, writing as Peter Hakins, stated the essence of the new idea in the Courant of November 6, 1721.

Writing in rebuttal to an attack by Mather in the previous week’s Gazette, Eyre observed:

I shall make no answer to that Piece lest I should differ in my Sentiments with Men of Piety, Learning, and great Estates that after much serious thought have come into that Opinion; and shall only mention what Dr. Gumble in Monk’s Life says of a Clergyman. “Doubtless (says the Dr.) a Clergyman, while he keeps within the Sphere of his Duty to God and his People, is an Angel of Heaven; but when he shall degenerate from his own Calling, and fall into the Intrigues of State and Time-Serving, he becomes a Devil; and from a Star in the Firmament of Heaven, he becomes a sooty Coal in the blackest hell, and receiveth the greatest Damnation.”

The central idea in Eyre’s argument was that of “the sphere of his duty to God and his people,” the limitation of ministerial authority to a definable set of roles and tasks within the larger society which did not include either political intrigue or self-promotion. Eyre did not make the point that ministers lacked medical training — an argument that William Douglass emphasized in his essays in the first numbers of the paper — but he took for granted that there was a defined ministerial sphere within which the clergyman was “an angel of heaven.” Forty years earlier the Reverend Samuel Willard had rebuked the shoemaker John Russel for presuming to serve as minister to the Anabaptists of Charlestown with the Ciceronian injunction “let the cobbler stick to his last;” now the clergy found a

similar injunction laid upon them by Eyre, Wait Still Winthrop’s step-son, just two years out of Harvard College.126

John Williams, a Couranteer of considerably lower social standing than Eyre, voiced the same sentiment more aggressively: “I would advice the Gentleman to stick to Divinity for the future.... I like him much better in the Pulpit, there I’ll willingly receive his Instructions; but now he is out of his Sphaere, and so he must excuse me, if I differ from him in Opinion.”127 Members of the older generation were shocked at the new attitude and recognized that the issue of traditional ministerial authority ran like a fault line through New England society. Major Samuel Sewall of Medford wrote to John Colman expressing his sympathy for the financial straits of the clergy but adding ruefully that “we live in Such An Age that Its too often a flouting Expression to be called a ministerial Man, but however I am fully of Opinion that the present Contempt of our Ministry carries with it a Very Ill Omen.”128 In attempting to claim the unbounded authority of a spiritual shepherd, New England pastors ran into resistance from a growing number of young men who refused to see themselves as sheep. Against the ministers’ claim of unbounded authority they offered the role of technical specialist in religion and the minister who reached beyond this prescribed sphere was accused of forming a party of self-interest.

The political controversy in which Cotton Mather involved himself had its origins in agitation for an increase in the money supply begun by Elisha Cooke, Sr. during the administration of Governor Dudley. The idea of a land bank which would issue circulating notes based on the value of mortgages had been firmly vetoed by the Lords of Trade. Con-

126 Samuel Willard, Ne Sutor Ultra Crepidam. Or Brief Animadversions Upon the New-England Anabaptists Late Fallacious Narrative, (Boston, 1681).

127 John Williams, An Answer to a Late Pamphlet Intitled “A Letter to a Friend in the Country” (Boston, 1721) 9.

cern for the interest of those British merchants with whom Massachusetts ran a chronic balance-of-payments deficit resulted in a skeptical vigilance over all proposed issues by the Massachusetts provincial government of debt instruments which might serve as an inflated currency. The problem of money shortage became more severe in the depressed economy of the early 1720s and the lack of available remedy helped to drive a permanent wedge between the mercantile elite whose trans-Atlantic enterprises remained profitable and the bourgeoisie. Shute came to office sensible of the currency problem but seems to have supposed naively that an allowable remedy could be found. His first address to the General Court upon assuming office recommended that "some Effectual Measures to supply the want of money" be developed.\textsuperscript{129} Cooke’s party responded promptly with a proposal for the issuance of £100,000 in provincial notes, to which Shute agreed only to have the project disallowed by the Lords of Trade. The episode was an inauspicious beginning for the new governor: conservatives perceived him as easily led and an inflationist while the Old Charter Party focused on him resentments and frustrations of long standing exacerbated by difficult times.\textsuperscript{130}

The precipitating cause of open hostility between Shute and Elisha Cooke, Jr. was not the banking controversy but the issue of mast timber and land titles in the Maine woods.\textsuperscript{131} Cooke was the largest speculator in lands on the eastern frontier, having ac-

\textsuperscript{129} \textit{Journals of the House of Representatives of His Majesty’s Province of Massachusetts-Bay, 1715-1740}, ed. W. C. Ford vol. 1, (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1919-1940) 129.

\textsuperscript{130} Jeremy Belknap, \textit{The History of New-Hampshire. (The Sources of Science}, No. 88. 2 vols. New York and London: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1970) vol. 1, 197 offered this assessment of Shute’s character: “He is said to have been a man of a humane, obliging and friendly disposition; but having been used to military command, could not bear with patience the collision of parties, nor keep his temper when provoked. Fond of ease, and now in the decline of life, he would gladly have spent his days in America if he could have avoided controversy.”

\textsuperscript{131} The question of mast pine rights was a perennial sore point in relations between governors and the legislatures of New England. Belknap observed that “great complaints
quired title to approximately one hundred thousand acres in the Sagadahoc. Cooke's title was confirmed by the Massachusetts legislature in 1718, at which time the legal argument was advanced that in purchasing Ferdinando Gorges' patent the colony obtained property rights which remained in force under the new charter of 1691, giving the Massachusetts General Court rather than the crown jurisdiction in the matter of Maine land titles. In consequence, when Bridger, the royal official responsible for controlling crown lands and timber, asked the legislature to restrain logging in Maine, "he was very smartly answered, that Acts of Parliament were of no force with them, they had a charter." 132 The Council, whose members were also involved in Maine land speculation, advised Shute to uphold the people in "their just Rights and Privileges, of Logging, Mastling and Timber," which the governor reluctantly did. 133 Once again, Shute had managed to obtain the worst of both sides of the controversy. To the Lords of Trade it appeared that he was unable to control the provincial assembly or protect Crown property; his subjects perceived him as the agent of imperial forces bent upon the exploitation of the province at the expense of the rights of the inhabitants.

Affronted, outmaneuvered and personally insulted by Cooke as "a blockhead," Shute struck back with a vindictiveness that was as understandable as it was unwise. In the spring of 1721, he negatioried Cooke's election to the Council and insisted that Cooke's

were frequently made of the destruction of the royal woods; every governor and lieutenant-governor had occasion to declaim on the subject, in their speeches and letters; it was a favorite point in England, and recommended them to their superiors as careful guardians of the royal interest." (Belknap, History, vol. 1, 188.)


office as Justice of the Peace be taken from him. At another time such a rebuke might have chastened even so ebullient a young man as Cooke; in the turbulent political conditions of Boston, however, an unprecedented outcome ensued. Cooke’s removal became a cause célèbre among the small tradesmen and artisans of Boston as well as more affluent members of the Old Charter Party in the Lower House. At the March town meeting Cooke was chosen a selectman and moderator by unanimous consent, a vote which Wait Winthrop attributed to his conflict with the governor: “the Mobility are so disgusted at the ill Treatment he has had by being turned out of all that they will have him a Deputy this turn: they are sett upon it resolutely.” At the elections for the General Court, the town chose “all by a considerable majority, notwithstanding all endeavours used to the contrary.”¹³⁴ Out of these elections was born the Boston caucus, a political organization which controlled municipal offices throughout the decade. In the Lower House of the General Court, Cooke became, in Jeremiah Dummer’s words, the “Darling of his countrey.” He was elected Speaker of the House and was able to command overwhelming majorities on votes pitting the Old Charter Party against the governor and his Council.¹³⁵

Baffled by the growing intensity and effectiveness of what was now a well-organized opposition, Shute negated Cooke’s election as speaker and delayed the Council elections for two days in order to give Mather and others an opportunity to rally support in his behalf. Cooke’s party remained unshaken and the house chose Nathaniel Byfield and John Clark to the Council, popular leaders whom Shute was forced to negatory. When the house refused to select a replacement speaker for Cooke, Shute dissolved the General Court. In the June, 1720, interim before the next assembly Cooke published his Just and


¹³⁵ Jeremiah Dummer to Cotton Mather, April 25, 1721, (Massachusetts Historical Society, Miscellaneous Mather Papers).
Seasonable Vindication Respecting Some Affairs Transacted in a Late General Assembly at Boston, a defense of the position of his party against the maneuvers of the governor. After reviewing the events of the session, Cooke recounted Shute's offer to withdraw his negative of the speaker if Cooke "would wait upon his Excellency, and say to him, I was sorry for the Misunderstandings that had happened between us; and pray, that what had passed might be forgot, and endeavour always to discharge my Duty to the Governour, as well as my Country." Cooke declined to apologize and the governor found himself opposed by a party which controlled the Lower House, the town of Boston and, to a growing degree, public debate in printed form. 136

As relations between Shute and the Old Charter Party worsened, the governor moved to assert that control of the press to which he believed his instructions entitled him. 137 During the dispute over logging rights in Maine, Shute, citing the "Power of the Press" given him by royal authority, attempted to prohibit the publication of the Votes of the house because the record contained Cooke's rebuttal of the governor's speech. The regular printer of Votes, Green, complied with Shute's wishes and the record was printed by Nicholas Boone. Mather may have influenced Green's decision. Green was the printer for Mather's voluminous output. Shute requested the Council to take action against Green but they refused, citing a lack of legal grounds. When the house reconvened in March,

136 Elisha Cooke, Jr., Mr. Cooke's Just and Seasonable Vindication: Respecting some Affairs transacted in the late General Assembly at Boston, 1720. (Boston, 1720, Evans, 2110) 9. Cooke or one of his followers was the author of another work written about this time, Reflections upon Reflections: Or, More News from Robinson Cruso's Island in a Dialogue Between a Country Representative and a Boston Gentleman, July 12, 1720. (Boston, 1720, Evans, 2111) which rebuts Mather's pamphlet of the same title and compares him to a Tory from the time of Queen Anne for opposing the exercise of the traditional rights of the people.

137 Although with the expiration of the Licensing Act of 1695 Parliament surrendered its right to prior restraint in Britain, it was the position of the Lords of Trade that such control continued to be vested in the Crown in the American colonies under the provisions of royal charter.
1721, Shute proposed a law to prevent the "many Factions and Scandalous Papers: highly reflecting upon the Government and tending to disquiet the minds of His Majesties good Subjects." The house, under Cooke's leadership refused to pass the bill and, reminding the Governor of Mather's efforts on his behalf, suggested that:

It is an unhappy Circumstance attending a well Regulated Government, when they have Seditious and Scandalous Papers Printed, and publicly Sold or Dispersed. And the most ready and effective way to prevent and hinder all such, is for the Executive part of Government at the very first putting forth any such Factions Papers, strictly to endeavour the finding the Authors thereof, that upon conviction they might be bro't to Condign Punishment, that so others might hear and fear, and do no more so wickedly. And question less when a certain Print, called News from Robinson Crusoe's Island was so publicly dispersed and given to many Members of this House at the Opening the Session in July last, wherein the Contriver of that Piece not being content to compare the Representatives at their last May Sessions to a parcel of men, who in an angry humour did things on purpose to shew their spite to your Excellency, and put a publiek affront upon you.... Had proper Methods been then taken to discover & punishe the Inventor or Publisher of that Libel; few or none afterward would have dared to publish any others of that Nature and Tendency.\(^{138}\)

Shute's failure to establish control over Boston's increasingly political press could not have gone unremarked by James Franklin and his associates; indeed the statement by the Cooke-controlled house that

Should an Act be made to prevent the Printing any Book or Paper without Licence first obtained from the Governour for the time being, no one can foresee the innumerable inconveniences and dangerous Circumstances this People might Labour under in a little time

must be accounted as a factor in the decision to produce the Courant. Since Franklin was to spend a month in jail and then be subjected to prior restraint as publisher, it should be observed that the controversy over press control in the spring of 1721 did not result in the establishment of press freedom as later generations would know that term.

\(^{138}\) Shute's assertion of the royal prerogative in matters of the press is recorded in the House Journal, 2, 224-225. His attempts to gain passage of a censorship law are recorded the House Journal, 2, 353, 379, 381. The resolution by the House citing Robinson Crusoe's Island is found in the House Journal, 2, 358-359. The Council's refusal to act against Boone is recorded in the Calendar of State Papers, 1719-1720, 357.
At stake in the struggle between Shute and Cooke was not the freedom of the press but the question of who would control the press. The reply by the Massachusetts house in 1721 to Shute's request for a censorship bill expressed no sympathy for "Seditious and Scandalous Papers." Shute’s attempts to suppress the printing of Votes of the House of Representatives was resisted because it appeared to the Old Charter Party to be an infringement of the rights of the assembly. The British parliament in this period exercised an even stricter control over publication of debates, forcing journalists there into a number of transparent subterfuges. In 1728, two years after the Courant had ceased publication in Boston, Parliament suppressed reports of its proceedings in Rake's Gloucester Journal.\textsuperscript{139} Nor was Shute out of step with metropolitan policy in wishing to eliminate printed criticism of his administration. When the printer of the English Whig newspaper the Craftsman, Richard Franklin, was prosecuted for seditious libel in 1731, he complained that all the government wanted printed were "Panegyricks and Encomiums on all ministerial Schemes."\textsuperscript{140} It was dissention within the provincial oligarchy and the reflexive defense of the rights of the assembly against the perceived encroachments of the royal prerogative rather than support for a press independent of governmental control that allowed the Courant to begin publication under the aegis of the Old Charter Party. One proof of Franklin's statement that his was not a party paper was the way in which protection for the Courant was withdrawn when Franklin's criticism of government policy and ministerial meddling no longer suited Cooke's purposes. In July of 1721, however, those limits had yet to be tested. With provincial politics in an uproar, the governor unable to control organized opposition in the Lower House, and Cotton Mather turning his attention from lobbying at Government House to calling for inoculation against the smallpox newly come to

\textsuperscript{139} Jeremy Black, English Press, Chapter Six.

\textsuperscript{140} Quoted in Smith, Printers, 74.
town, the times seemed to favor the creation of a newspaper to extend debate on issues in a public forum.

Significant, if uncontrovertial, was the printing of election results for town offices and the provincial assembly in the Courant throughout its existence. For the most part the election results were offered with no comment. The first issue of the Courant observed simply that "John Clark, Elisha Cooke, William Hutchinson Esqrs; and Mr. William Clark Merchant, were by a great Majority chosen their Representatives," with no reference to the controversies which had terminated the previous session. A year later, on June 4, 1722, the paper reported that "The Counsellors elected, who did not serve the last Year, were Adam Winthrop, Esq; Jonathan Belcher Esq; Nathanael Byfield Esq; and Mr. William Clark. The two last are negativ'd by his Excellency."

In the unsettled period following Shute's abrupt departure for England in December of 1722, Lieutenant Governor Taylor continued administration policy and political fevers still ran high in 1723. On March 18th of that year the Courant reported that "Two printed Pamphlets have been lately thrown about our Streets, one of them entitled Truth and Daylight, and the other with this Title, From the Town of Inquisition to the Great Don Pedro on Crusoe's Island, Great Patron of our Island and Imprimatour [sic]." Immediately following appeared an account of the Boston elections in which Cooke was again chosen moderator and a slate of his supporters elected to municipal offices. Readers were, perhaps, intended to draw an inference from the item about pamphlets in the streets and the election results.¹⁴¹ In the General Court elections, reported in the Courant of June 3, 1721, the Old

¹⁴¹ Back in May of 1722, the Courant had followed a story about Dudley's gift of communion plate to his Roxbury church with a one-line notice of his election to the General Court. Dudley's defenders criticized the paper for juxtaposing the two items, observing: "...what an horrible Idea does it give not only of this Gentleman, but of the church of Christ there, who could thus receive the Silver of Unrighteousness to bribe them into a Vote for a Representative, as the line of Intelligence from Roxbury immediately following the Scandalous story would Intimate."
Charter Party was again triumphant. John Clark was elected speaker of the house and Nathanael Byfield elected to the Council. Byfield was negatord by the lieutenant governor.

By 1724, political passions were beginning to cool. Shute was still in England awaiting the response of the government to two memorials on Massachusetts which he had submitted. The strong possibility that he would be upheld against the assembly and the even more intimidating possibility that a displeased Crown might chastise the province for its actions tempered the enthusiasm of the Old Charter Party. At the same time, the lack of a royally commissioned executive and the continued dominance of the Old Charter Party made accommodation expedient for the lieutenant governor and the Council. The election results published in the Courant of June 1, 1724, indicated a movement towards consensus on both sides. William Dudley was chosen speaker of the house and Byfield, Clark, Cooke, Oliver and a number of others from the Old Charter Party elected to the Council. "His Honour the Lieutenant Governour," the paper reported, "has accepted the Choice of all those of the Council that are now in the Province," a decision which pointedly excluded Cooke, who remained in London defending the Massachusetts assembly against Shute's complaints.

In 1725, the popular caucus continued to control Boston's municipal offices. The Courant of March 15, 1725, announced the election of Nathaniel Byfield as moderator. Isaiah Tay continued as a selectman and Samuel Checkley as town clerk; other posts were filled by new men loyal to Cooke, who was still in England. The provincial election in May also continued the existing alignment of forces. Dudley continued as speaker and the seated councilors returned, with the addition of Edward Hutchinson and Spencer Phips.

The last year of the Courant's publication saw a continuation of the political balance with some changes of personnel. Thomas Hutchinson replaced Byfield as moderator of the Boston town meeting. In the General Court, William Dudley was again chosen speaker
"whom the Lieut. Governour was pleas'd to approve of." On May 26, 1726, Lieutenant Governor William Dummer gave a speech to the General Court in which he urged speedy passage of revenue legislation, requested support for the naval stores industry, and announced his immanent departure eastward to sign the peace treaty ending war with the Indians. His speech closed with words that although a formal courtesy, nonetheless captured the atmosphere of subdued cooperation that descended upon the General Court in the wake of the Shute crisis: "And in all other your Determinations, wherein his Majesty's Service and the Good of the Province may be promoted, I shall cheerfully concur, while I have the Honour of serving His Majesty in my present Station."

Given the dynamic nature of provincial politics during the period in which the Courant was printed, it is not surprising that the amount of space given to essays on Massachusetts politics varied both seasonally and over the life of the paper. The political cycle, which began at the beginning of the Old Style year with municipal elections in March and continued with provincial elections for the General Court in May, was largely over when the General Court was prorogued for its summer recess. Because of the election cycle, the political coverage for the first half of each year was generally much greater than the second half, a pattern that is clearest in the 1724-1726 period when political reporting in the paper diminished significantly, as figure eleven illustrates:

142 NEC, May 28, 1726.

143 NEC, June 4, 1726.

144 The quantification upon which the graph rests is to some degree subjective since a number of essays in the paper dealing with historical topics possessed an implied connection with Massachusetts politics. The essay printed on July 30, 1722, on the protections from imprisonment without due process granted in the Magna Carta made no reference to James Franklin's imprisonment for printing the Courant; however, the connection was almost certainly made by informed readers and the piece thus constituted an editorial against the Council. Also, since the chart tallies the number of stories, not the number of lines — a decision made because some lengthy articles such as the Magna Carta piece were reprints from England. — the graph should not be interpreted as a representation of the total space dedicated to political essays in each period.
The chart illustrates the way in which concern with local political controversy peaked in the early months of 1722, remained high throughout that year, and declined precipitously thereafter. The pattern is not surprising as it traces the contours of the struggle between Governor Shute and the Old Charter Party led by Elisha Cooke; however it does suggest that the increasing attention paid by the Courant to literary and religious topics after 1722 may have been in part due to the dearth of political controversy during the interregnum of Lieutenant Governor Dummer. The political ideas advocated in the Courant did not change significantly over the life of the paper; the impassioned Whiggery characteristic of the first year of publication simply became more generalized and extended to issues of church polity after the summer of 1723.

The inoculation controversy in the midst of which the Courant inaugurated publication was at least as much a political as medical dispute. Douglass and the other doctors who attacked inoculation were supported by the Boston selectmen; although the governor and Council remained aloof, the fact that the inoculators were led by Cotton Mather and Boston's leading ministers allowed the Courant to cast the controversy in terms of the traditional rights of freemen. From its beginning the Courant embraced the view expressed by
Cooke and the Old Charter men which associated the ministers with the Council as expressions of a kind of authority to which they were opposed. Across a range of subjects and in a variety of rhetorical modes, the Courant rejected the traditional authority claimed by the ministers and the Council and advocated a quite different definition of civil and ecclesiastical power. This was more than party journalism, particularly in the narrow and negative sense in which Franklin and his contemporaries used the term "party;" it was a synthetic, new understanding of the individual in his relation to society's agencies of control and to the past.

At times the Courant articulated the new philosophy of authority shared by its contributors by reprinting excerpts from the Cato Letters. Trenchard and Gordon were running in the London Journal. The Courantists believed fervently in the Real Whig philosophy of Cato; quoting the London paper had the additional merit of insulating the editor from charges of libel. On November 11, 1734, as the New York Weekly Journal's attacks on Governor Morris were reaching a crescendo, John Peter Zenger announced to his readers that "AS I am not sure any Thing I can offer of my own will not be deemed Libel, I choose to send you Part of one of Cato's Letters, the Publication of which I hope will be acceptable to your Readers."

James Franklin printed, in addition to a half-dozen excerpts from the Cato Letters, a piece of locally-produced political journalism modeled on Trenchard and Gordon, the pamphlet English Advice to the Freeholders &c. of the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay.

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145 The London Journal was founded in the wake of the South Seas Bubble. The essays Franklin reprinted appeared in 1720. Trenchard and Gordon ceased publication in the London Journal in 1722 when the owner of the paper was bought off by the Walpole government. The pair subsequently published a few additional essays in the British Journal. Trenchard died in 1723. Details of the collaboration of Trenchard and Gordon can be found in David L. Jacobson, ed. The English Libertarian Heritage From the Writings of John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon in The Independent Whig and Cato's Letters. The American Heritage Series, (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1965).
written to influence the provincial elections in 1722.\textsuperscript{146} The pamphlet, addressed to Massachusetts voters, purported to be written by Englishmen signing themselves Brutus and Cato in order "to incite and quicken you, timely to consult and prepare for the new Choice of Representatives" The first point made was that "It is very difficult to find Men of that Resolution and Integrity, who are able to withstand the Snares and Temptations that Places of Honour and Profit subject them to." Accordingly, Massachusetts voters were urged not to chose men who enjoyed appointed positions i.e. members of the governor's party, and instead to "chuse those that are men both spirited and have Leisure to serve their country." \textbf{English Advice} followed Whiggish principles in urging support for the Country Party represented by gentlemen of leisure because members of the Court Party had to balance self-interest against principle.\textsuperscript{147}

Moving to specific issues in the 1722 elections, \textbf{English Advice} singled out for criticism the "Three or Four misguided Gentlemen" who sponsored legislation for preventing riots and controlling the press in 1720. These measures, proposed at the suggestion of Governor Shute as a means of restricting the growing influence of the Old Charter Party in Boston politics and the General Court, were supported by the Dudleys but defeated in the Lower House. Similar legislation had been passed in the New Hampshire — where no printers were operating and where Shute also served as governor.\textsuperscript{148} The \textbf{Courant} had lamented the acquiescence of New Hampshire in a letter from a Portsmouth correspondent "who like a Friend to the Province wherein he lives, dares to expose the Arbitrary Proceedings of some great Men among them" in the issue of December 18, 1721. The New Hamp-

\textsuperscript{146} \textbf{English Advice}, (Boston, 1722, \textit{Evans}, 2335).

\textsuperscript{147} Henry Care, \textit{English Liberties, or the Free-born Subject's Inheritance}, 5th ed., (Boston: James Franklin for Buttolph, Eliot, and Henchman, 1721, \textit{Evans}, 2208) 1-2.

\textsuperscript{148} Shute's initial foray into New Hampshire politics had been stormy. In 1717 he replaced Lieutenant Governor Vaughan, whose assertiveness threatened him, with the more compliant John Wentworth. (Belknap, \textit{History}, vol. 1, 187).
shire writer contrasted the "woeful Slavery we in the Province are in" with the "Injoyment of Liberty and Freedom" to be found in Massachusetts, claiming that "there is not a private Man among us who dare open his Lips, unless it be to flatter." James Franklin responded to this letter in the issue of December 25, 1721, pointing out that the laws against freedom of the press and of assembly were assented to by the elected representatives and asking "And if they will enact Laws to enslave you and your Posterity, Cannot you Ease your selves of such Adversaries, and Elect better men in their Room?" The Courant had not been in existence when the legislation was voted upon in both provinces but its failure in Massachusetts and passage in New Hampshire entered into the lore of the Old Charter Party as an object lesson in the vigilance with which "Privileges which belong to you as men and Englishmen" had to be vigilantly guarded.

The second point of local political history raised by the author of English Advice was that "Those also that have wrote to England against the Country, should not be screened from a just Resentment," a reference to Cotton Mather's involvement in the 1708 pamphlet The Deplorable State of New England. In attacking Dudley and Mather, the authors declined to go as far as the latter in characterizing the condition of the province as deplorable. "We have some good Rulers now; yet we don't know how long they will continue," Boston voters were warned, "You may already see (among many other Things worthy of your Notice) how Strangers are promoted and your Countrymen neglected and despised."149

The pamphlet English Advice marked an important milestone in the transplanting of Real Whig political ideas to American circumstances. Neither the ideas nor the rhetoric were themselves exceptional in the context of either British political argument or the positions taken by the Old Charter Party. In the American political context, the pamphlet was a

149 Care, English Liberties, 3, 4, 6.

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precocious example of the importation of English forms to the American scene. Like most of the political pamphlet literature published in Boston in the early eighteenth century, English Advice takes an exaggerated view of both the practical extent of constitutional liberties and the threat to those liberties posed by royal authority.\textsuperscript{150} Cooke's claim that the Massachusetts legislature was, under its charter, essentially independent from acts of Parliament was without legal basis. The assertion by the Old Charter Party of the right to appoint military commanders and to approve budgetary expenditures in advance on a line-by-line basis was not justified by either the charter or the instructions given the governor by the Lords of Trade. Shute, on the other hand, seems genuinely if ineffectively to have promoted an atmosphere of accommodation and compromise. Neither he nor his London superiors wished to provoke a confrontation by overriding provincial tradition in either civil or religious matters.

Political conflict which had intensified under Governor Dudley and come to a head in the confrontations between Elisha Cooke, Jr. and the province's new governor, Samuel Shute, created a demand for legal history among a far wider circle of New England readers than the elite which in previous generations had concerned itself with such matters. Four of Boston's printer-booksellers perceived the market for material relevant to the intractable quarreling between the Old Charter Party and the Council and agreed to risk the investment necessary to profit from it. The result was the publication in 1721 of a fifth (and first American) edition of English Liberties, or the Free-born Subject's Inheritance, an anthology of legal texts and commentary based on the writings of the seventeenth-century journalist Henry Care. English Liberties was intended to supply New Englanders with histori-

\textsuperscript{150} Persistent colonial exaggeration of the threat to liberty is discussed in Gordon S.Wood, "Conspiracy and the Paranoid Style: Causality and Deceit in the Eighteenth Century." William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 39.(July, 1982).
cal background and legal precedent in the political controversies which were coming to dominate the intellectual life of Massachusetts.

Personal conviction as well as business acumen prompted James Franklin to take the initiative in supplying the New England market with Real Whig legal material. Publication of Care’s book represented a major investment of risk capital for him and the three booksellers who shared the cost of production. At a time when the typical Boston imprint was a pamphlet of less than fifty pages, the two hundred and eighty-eight pages in duodecimo of English Liberties constituted a heavy commitment of time and materials. Larger than most of the schoolbooks or religious works which, as “steady sellers” justified investment on a similar scale, Care’s work appeared to its backers to address a significant audience willing and able to pay for legal materials. English Liberties had gone through four English editions, the most recent published in London in 1719, and it seems probable that the success of the fourth edition among Boston booksellers gave them confidence in the success of a new, American edition.

English Liberties was an annotated anthology of important legal documents together with commentary and several interpolated essays on English legal history which set forth the Real Whig interpretation of British constitutional history. A preface addressed to the reader stated the historical and legal themes of the work with concision and the claim that:

The title Page is alone sufficient to shew the Usefulness of the following Sheets, and to recommend them to the Perusal of all the true Lovers of the Liberty and Welfare of their native Countrie: The reader will here see at one View the many Struggles which the People of this Nation have had to rescue their almost oppress’d Liberties and Religion from the servile Bondage to which some of our Princes, prompted by Ambition, and fond of Arbitrary Sway, or bigotted with a false Zeel for a superstitious Worship, have endeavour’d to subject both the one and the other; and by what Degrees we have secured to our selves the Enjoyment of both, till at length we are risen to such a Height of Prosperity under the auspicious Reign of our present August Monarch, that we are become the Envey of the neighbouring States, our Friends, and the Terrour of those that are our Enemies.\textsuperscript{151}

\textsuperscript{151} Care, English Liberties, ii.

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The title page shows the work to be composed of four sections. The first, based on
the work of Henry Care himself contained the foundation blocks of the British Constitu-
tion, "Magna Charta, Charta de Floresta, The Statute De Tallagio non concedendo, The
Habeas Corpus Act, and several other Statutes; with comments on each of them." The sec-
ond section, also probably by Care, dealt with the rights of the accused in capital cases with
an interpolated essay on the powers of Parliament and the qualifications which voters
should look for in a representative. The third section of English Liberties was a historical
synopsis giving a "short but Impartial Relation of the differences between K. Charles I.
and the Long Parliament concerning the Prerogative of the King, and the Liberties of the
Subject." The final section of the work was a description of the duties of a number of mi-
nor royal officials such as justices of the peace, constables, and coroners. The second half
of English Liberties was not the work of Care but a barrister of the Middle Temple, W.
Nelson, whose contributions and editing smoothed the outlines of the book, transforming it
from an anthology of Care’s essays into a handbook of texts and precedents supporting the
Real Whig interpretation of the British constitution.

The author whose work formed the kernel of English Liberties, Henry Care (1646-
1688), was not a theorist of the stature of Harrington, Vane, or Sidney, but a political jour-
nalist considered by some "a petty fogger, a little despicable wretch" for the degree to
which pecuniary considerations swayed his allegiance.152 During the turbulent final years
of Charles II, Care was the editor of a newspaper called the Weekly Pacquet of Advice
from Rome. Despite the paper’s title, Care was a staunch Presbyterian who focused his ire
on the Church of England, which he accused of backsliding into Popery.153 Care lost con-

152 Quoted from Wood's Athenæ Oxon in the DNB, 3, 954.

153 A certain antipodal fascination with Rome seems to have existed among Puritans of this
period. Algernon Sidney had spent the years 1660-63 at Rome, distrustful of Papism but
otherwise a willing student of Roman culture, c.f. Jonathan Scott, Algernon Sidney and
trol of the paper in 1683. He published a number of works on the religious question and, in February of 1687-8 produced a second paper, *Publick Occurrences truly stated*, which defended James II and attacked the Church of England from the Catholic side. Care edited this paper until he died in August of 1688.\(^{154}\)

Like Algernon Sidney and other writers who formed the Whig pantheon, Care was a product of an earlier period of English history whose ideas were quite selectively adopted to the political climate of the 1690s and early 1700s as part of a deliberate effort to create a suitable ideology for the Country Party. Two broad tendencies governed Whig efforts to create an eighteenth-century political ideology out of materials bequeathed by seventeenth-century writers. The first was suppression of the religious element. Like Vane and Sidney, Care (at least in the early part of his career) was a Puritan rather than a libertarian. In excising the religious perspective from the writings of the Commonwealthmen, later Whigs did more than remove language that was antique and politically unacceptable in the world of eighteenth-century politics; they severed the language of political liberty from its taproot in ideas about freedom of conscience which dated back to the Marian exiles. The highest values in *English Liberties* are secular ones and the book celebrates political life as the supreme expression of the human spirit with an enthusiasm that needs concede nothing to later American patriots, "being fully convinced of this Truth, that when Liberty is once gone, even Life it self grows insipid and loses all its Relish."\(^{155}\)

Secularization of the ideas of the Commonwealthmen harnessed Puritan revolutionary ideals to patriotism centered on constitutional monarchy. The effect of this transformation was especially significant in New England where republican theory was turned against an establishment that was itself a product of the Puritan impulse. One of the few references.

\(^{154}\) Details of Care's variegated career are given in *The Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. III, 954-955.

\(^{155}\) Care, *English Liberties*, iii.
to religion in *English Liberties* illustrates how this potentially disruptive topic had become enveloped in a penumbra of patriotic self-congratulation:

Therefore since at present we live under so happy a government, where being securely landed our selves, we behold the shipwreck of our Neighbours; it is therefore the indispensable Interest and Duty of all true Englishmen, to maintain these Privilidges, conveyed from their Ancestors thro' so many Generations inviolable, upon which all our Earthly, and in a great measure our Spiritual Happiness, Safety, and Well being depends.\textsuperscript{156}

The second transforming impulse whereby the Whigs arrogated the Common-wealthmen to the service of eighteenth-century party ideology was the suppression of disquieting notions of parliamentary republicanism in favor of the tranquilizing fictions of constitutional monarchy. It was the assertion of parliamentary supremacy which had sent the Whigs' greatest saint, Sidney, to the block. The eighteenth-century Country Party declared him a martyr for liberty and ignored the incompatibility of his vision with its patriotic enthusiasm for the crown.\textsuperscript{157} Care's *English Liberties* opened with a ringing encomium for the monarchical constitution and the nobility under whose control it had come to rest:

The Constitution of our English government (the best in the World) is no Arbitrary Tyranny, like the Turkish Grand Seignior's or the French Kings, whose Wills (or rather Lusts) dispose of the Lives and Fortunes of their unhappy subjects: Nor an Oligarchy, where the great ones (like Fish in the Ocean) prey upon, and live by devouring the lesser at their Pleasure: Nor yet a Democracy, or Popular State; much less an Anarchy, where all confusedly are hail fellow, well met. But a most excellently mixt, or qualified Monarchy, where the King is vested with large Prerogatives sufficient to support Majesty; and restrain'd only from the Power of doing himself and his People Harm; which would be contrary to the very End of all Government, and is properly rather Weakness than Power: The Nobility adorn'd with Privilidges to be a Screen to Majesty, and a refreshing Shade to their Inferiors, and the Commonality too so guarded in their Persons and Properties by the Sense of Law, as renders them Freemen, not Slaves.\textsuperscript{158}

\textsuperscript{156} Care, *English Liberties*, 122.

\textsuperscript{157} Sidney was in fact executed for his past as a high ranking military and political official during the interregnum as much as for the republican writings found in his possession. The point that the reality of Sidney's life and beliefs were scarcely more acceptable to the Whigs than to the Stuarts is made by Scott, *Sidney*, 1-4.

\textsuperscript{158} Care, *English Liberties*, 1.
The possibility of present-day conflict between Crown and Parliament was treated
delicately in Care's work. The corruptions against which Parliament was to safeguard the
nation were described as arising principally from the self-interest of royal favorites. By
1718 the dangers to liberty which Care described had an antique flavor reminiscent of the
court of Charles II rather than the age of Bolingbroke and Shaftesbury. Parliamentary
supremacy was referred to in passages such as this as the ultimate safeguard of the consti-
tution and the liberties of the people:

The Truth is, 'tis the High Court of Parliament, that only can hinder the Subject from
being given up as a prey to the Arbitrary Pleasure, not only of the Prince if he should
attempt it, but which is ten times worse to the unreasonable passions and Lusts of
Favourites, chief Ministers, and Women.... 159

The disquieting possibility of suppression of liberty by Parliament remained the Achilles
heel of the "original Happy Frame of Government" which Care described. Since Care de-
defended Dissenters at the time of the Clarendon Code of 1662, he was well aware of the in-
justices of which Parliament was capable: English Liberties, however, dismissed the pos-
sibility with an optimism unjustified by experience: "For by a Fundamental Law in our
government, No Man's Life (unless it be in Parliament, which is a suprem Court, and 'tis
supposed will never do any Man Wrong) shall be touched for any Crime whatsoever, but
upon being found Guilty on two several Tryals...." 160

Whether by Care himself or later editors, the elimination of the issue of parlamen-
tary oppression — for which, of course, the royal prerogative was the theoretical rem-
edy — kept the argument of English Liberties safely within the bounds of the Whig politi-
cal program at the expense of historical accuracy and theoretical rigor.

The liberties which "under the auspicious Reign of our present August Monarch"
made England "the envy of her friends and terror of her enemies," were, in Real Whig the-

159 Care, English Liberties, 121.

160 Care, English Liberties, 201.
ory, legitimated by a historical mythology which Care's work presented to its readers in simplified, synoptic form. In origin, English liberty was attributed to "our Ancestors, the Saxons," who "had with a most equal Poise and Temperament, very wisely contriv'd their Government, and made excellent Provisions for their Liberties, and to preserve the People from Oppression." The language Care used to describe Saxon political structures makes his argument sound ahistorical; his presentation is a simplified version of a theory based on statements made in Tacitus' *Germania* and argued with more sophistication and detail by Milton and Sidney.161

The villains in the Real Whig historical myth were the Normans, who substituted hierarchic feudal structures for the easy democracy of the Saxon *wittena-gemots*. It was the resulting dislocation of English politics which prompted the demands of *Magna Charta* and began the long struggle for the reestablishment of English liberty only finally concluded with the accession of William of Orange. The nature of the Norman conquest thus became central to the Real Whig interpretation and Care followed the customary route in asserting that William the Conqueror, like William of Orange, assumed the throne as a constitutional monarch:

And when William the Norman made himself Master of the Land, though he be commonly called the Conqueror, yet in truth he was not so; and I have known several Judges that would reprehend any Gentleman at the Bar, that casually gave him that Title; For though he killed Harold the Usurper and routed his Army, yet he pretended a

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Right to the Kingdom, and was admitted by Compact, and did take an Oath to observe the Laws and Customs.\textsuperscript{162}

The significance of the compact between William the Norman, as Care preferred to call him, and the Saxon people was that it makes the subsequent struggle for supremacy by Parliament an attempt to restore rights legitimately belonging to the people by immemorial custom. As Care described it, the concessions embodied in Magna Charta:

\begin{quote}
\textquote{are not properly the Concessions of Kings, but Affirmations of the Common Law, and ratified by the Suffrages of the People, who claimed them as their Rights and Privileges, and as their birth right: And they did not enter into War with that King (I mean King John) because he would not grant them new Privileges, but because he abused them of those Rights to which they were entitled as well by the Common Law, as by the Grants of any former Kings.}\textsuperscript{163}
\end{quote}

The second pillar of English liberty according to Care was the Charter of the Forest. This document, "confirmed in the same Year with Magna Charta," was of immediate relevance to Massachusetts provincials in their disputes with the governor over timber rights in the Maine woods. As in his account of Magna Charta, Care ascribed the oppression from which this act granted relief as a product of Norman violation of ancient rights, for "All the Norman Kings, not only inclosed forest in the manner as before mentioned, but punished those who hunted, and killed any of the Game with the greatest Severity."\textsuperscript{164}

Before the making this Charter it was a general Complaint, that the Officers of the Forest did very much oppress the People who dwelt there, or who had any Land adjoining; and this was by Extortion, and by a multitude of unnecessary Officers, by whom the same were exacted. Now as the mischief was two-fold, so was the Remedy, (viz.) The first is a General Prohibition by this Chapter, for avoiding all manner of Extortion; the second is likewise a Prohibition to avoid all such charging the Forest with too many Foresters and Walkers, and other under Officers, so that there should be no more than what were sufficient to look after the wild Beasts, and by diminishing the Number of such Officers, their Extortion would of Consequence be diminished.\textsuperscript{165}

\textsuperscript{162} Care, English Liberties, 7.
\textsuperscript{163} Care, English Liberties, 6.
\textsuperscript{164} Care, English Liberties, 33.
\textsuperscript{165} Care, English Liberties, 32, 39.
The third great act confirming English liberties cited by Care was “A Statute made Anno 25 Edw. I. commonly called De Tallagio non concedendo.” As the Charter of the Forest legitimated the Old Charter Party’s opposition to Bridger in his attempts to control the cutting of mast timber, so this act bolstered the Massachusetts house in its struggle against a permanent, annual salary for the royal governor. The key provision of the act, that “No Tallage or Aid shall be taken or levied by us, or our Heirs, in our Realm, without the Good-will and Assent of Archbishops, Bishops, Earls, Barons, Knights, Burgesses, and other Freemen of the Land,” was given its significance in Care’s comment:

The word Tallage is derived from the French word Taller, to share or cut out a Part, and it is metaphorically used for any charge, when the King or any other, does cut out, or take away, any Part, or Share, out of a Man’s Estate, and being a general Word, it includes all Subsidies, Taxes, Tenth, Aids, Impositions, or other Charges whatsoever.166

Here was support for the idea that each payment of the governor’s salary required the assent of the “Freemen of the Land” in the form of a vote in the provincial assembly. Since Shute’s instructions from the Lords of Trade were to obtain a suitable salary as a fixed charge not requiring annual ratification, the grounds were laid for a protracted struggle that extended beyond his term in office and into those of the next two governors, Burnet and Shirley. The popularity of Care’s interpretation of English constitutional history lay in the relevance of the great medieval concessions of right to the immediate political concerns of the Old Charter Party in Massachusetts. Elisha Cooke and his followers could point to Care’s interpretation to demonstrate that they, and not the governor or his council, were the true and legitimate protectors of English liberties in New England.

An important aspect of Care’s historical vision — and it must be stressed that his work is completely typical of Real Whig history in this regard — is its reactionary dynamic. His account of the development of the British constitution is untouched by those

166 Care, English Liberties, 53, 55.
ideas of progress and development that permeate nineteenth-century historiography; instead, all activity was cast in the mold of restoration and the return of immemorial rights abrogated by Norman kings. This myth of restoration imbued the political theory of the Real Whigs with a portability that Englishmen in Massachusetts were not slow to appreciate. The idea of "each Man having a fixed fundamental Right born with him, as to Freedom of his Person, and Property in his Estate, which he cannot be deprived of," powerfully strengthened the claims of autonomy made by leaders of the Old Charter Party in the General Court by allowing argument to be lifted far above details of the old and new provincial charters to ethereal considerations of an eternal birthright. At the same time, the legitimacy of the Massachusetts House of Representatives was considerably enhanced for that body could be presented not as an appendage of crown authority created by royal charter but as a direct inheritor of an ancient parliamentary tradition, a younger sister rather than a servant of Westminster.

The psychological value of the Real Whig history conveyed to New Englanders in the works of writers like Care must be accounted one of the important factors in the universal acceptance of radical publicist and opposition political writings as the primary sources for American political thought in the early eighteenth century. By its legitimation of provincial interests via a vie those of the metropolis and its possibilities for identification of American experience with the heroic struggles to recover freedoms from a mythic Saxon past, the historical perspective of English Liberties could powerfully assuage feelings of isolation and inferiority characteristic of the colonial mentality. By casting freeholders in

167 *For it was the opposition press, as much as any single influence, that shaped the political awareness of eighteenth-century Americans; it was the opposition version of politics, past and present, that became the ordinary presumption of informed Americans.* Bernard Bailyn, Origins, 38-39.

168 On the sense of inferiority felt by colonists see the essays by John H. Elliott and Michael Zuckerman in Nicholas Canny, and Anthony Pagden, eds, Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World, 1500-1800, (Princeton, 1987) and Jack P. Greene, *Search for Identity:
the heroic role of resisting Norman oppression and depicting Parliament as champion in
"the many Struggles which the People of this Nation have had to rescue their almost opp-
press'd Liberties and Religion from the servile Bondage to which some of our Princes,
prompted by Ambition, and fond of Arbitrary Sway, or bigotted with a false Zeel for a su-
perstitious Worship have endeavour'd to subject both the one and the other," Care's book
tended to legitimize confrontation with patriarchal authority more generally. The heroic
struggles leading to *Magna Charta* and the triumph of Parliament over Stuart tyranny could
be taken as models in contests against other authority figures than the royal governor.

The alacrity with which New England politicians seized upon the Real Whig myth
in order to argue the Old Charter Party cause is evident in the pamphlet published by Elisha
Cooke, Jr. following his confrontation with Governor Shute in the stormy 1720 session of
the Massachusetts General Court. The purpose of *Mr. Cooke's Just and Seasonable Vindi-
cation*, was the defense of Elisha Cooke's conduct in the controversy over Bridger's activi-
ties as Overseer of His Majesty's Woods and in Shute's negatory of Cooke as speaker of
the Lower House; beyond these two specific points, however, the work attempted to justify
the Old Charter Party in its assertion of the rights of the assembly *vis a vis* the governor
and royal prerogative. The conflict between Cooke and Shute brought to a head a contro-
versy that had been developing since the Dudley administration; *Mr. Cooke's Just and Sea-
sonable Vindication* was the opening salvo in the climactic battle which would, in January
of 1722, see Shute sail for England.

A central point to Cooke's argument was that his actions were not prompted by per-
sonal motives but from his obligation to defend traditional English liberties. "I do solemnly
avow" Cooke wrote of his refusal to apologize to Shute, "that no perverse temper, or any
private View or sinister end, forbid me closing therewith: But a just fear for, and tender

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Regard to the Rights and Liberties of this People was the occasion of my Non-compliance." Having seized the moral high ground, Cooke declaimed upon the supreme value of liberty in terms entirely familiar to readers of Real Whig literature:

The happiness or infelicity of a People, entirely depend upon the enjoyment or deprivation of Libertie; Its therefore highly prudent for them to inform themselves of their just Rights that from a due sense of their inestimable Value, they may be encouraged to assert them against the Attempts of any in time to come.

Cooke's reference to the citizens of Massachusetts as "this People" suggests that they formed some sort of constitutional entity, with the implication that the colonial legislature was a parliament for them analogous to Westminster. No such interpretation of the charter was, of course, accepted by the Lords of Trade, nor did even the most loyal of New England's friends in England support such a Commonwealth interpretation of colonial status; the ideal, however, was alive behind the words, a product of the historical myth that described Parliament not as the source of the rights of Englishmen but as a product of them.

Cooke's claim to be defending ancient English liberties for future generations was the principal justification he offered for his refusal to accede to the prerogative. Defending the refusal by the Lower House to elect a new speaker, Cooke observed that:

had they then given up the Cause, Ages to come would justly said, they had given a Deadly wound to the Constitution and well being of that House, and deprived the People whom they Represented of their proper Rights, which would have been a Reproach to them when in their Graves; But like those worthy Patriots of their Country, that went before them in the like Case, properly Opposed and Repelled all Attempts of that Nature, so have they, and in so doing behaved themselves as became true and Faithful Assertors of the Peoples Liberties, and in No wise Infringed the Prerogative of the Crown.

169 Cooke Vindication 9.
170 Cooke Vindication 14.
171 Cooke Vindication 12.
Although Cooke did not make the point in his pamphlet, the right of the Crown to negatory the choice of the house for its speaker had been denied William III by Parliament and not been asserted thereafter. By the implied analogy of the Massachusetts General Court to the Westminster Parliament, Cooke’s Old Charter Party was within its rights in insisting upon the power to choose its own leadership. The vigilance, amounting almost to paranoia, with which Cooke attempted to guard the dubious autonomy of the Lower House was captured in his observation that

Precedents are of great force. Few Men at first see the danger of little Changes in Fundamentals, every design therefore of alteration ought to be most Warily observed and timorously Prevented, for its the Interest of the People, that Fundamentals should be daily Guarded, for whose benefit they were at first laid.

There existed no statutory basis for the assertion that the choice of speaker of the Massachusetts General Court was not subject to gubernatorial review. Neither the charter nor the instructions of the Lords of Trade mentioned such a possibility; moreover, a precedent existed from the Dudley administration which Shute was not slow to point out. Against the formidable obstacle presented by the lack of statutory basis for his claim, Cooke set the power of tradition sanctified by Real Whig mythology:

But in a very short space of time, a Message was Sent up to the Governour that the House had Elected a Speaker according to the Ancient and Undoubted Rights and Usage of that House, and therefore Insisted upon there Choice.... It being my firm belief, that the House of Representatives have an Indubitable Fundamental Right to Chuse their Speaker, & the Governour no Negative Voice in that Election, which to Me is made Unquestionable, not only by the best of Evidence, Perpetual Usage, but also by

172 Bernard Bailyn, Origins, 114.
173 Cooke, Vindication 14.
174 *And soon after Mr. Secretary Willard, brought down a Message that his Excellency Ordered him to acquaint the House, that he was Informed, that Governour Dudley, did in his government disallow a Speaker Chosen by the House, and that his Proceedings were Approved by the Commissioners of Trade and Plantations, and that he was thereupon directed from the said Lords Commissioners, to acquaint the council, that it would not be tho’t fit that Her majesty’s Right of having a Negative upon the Choice of a Speaker be given up, and which was reserved to Her Majesty, as well by the Charter, as the Constitution of England." (Cooke, Vindication, 3).
an Act of the Great and General Court or Assembly of this Province, Held at Boston June 8th, 1692. 175

Elisha Cooke, Jr., was not so naive a lawyer as to think that the General Court could achieve independence from gubernatorial review simply by passing an act to that effect; indeed, the subjective note introduced by his phrase "which to Me is made unquestionable" suggests that he was aware that his argument was unlikely to persuade his opponents. The strength of Cooke's argument lay in its ability to inspire his supporters. His invocation of "Fundamental Right" established by "Perpetual Usage" created a distinction between the power of royal authority and the right of ancient English liberties. The effect of the Real Whig myth as Cooke applied it to Boston was to place the Old Charter Party in the role of the House of Commons while casting the Lords of Trade as successors to those "Princes, prompted by Ambition, and fond of Arbitrary Sway" against whom the struggle for the restoration of English liberties had been waged.

The emotional dynamic of the Real Whig historical myth as popular leaders like Cooke applied to New England conditions was that of a triangular relationship between the "true Lover," the lustful tyrant, and the desirable heroine of English liberty whom the lover must rescue and restore. The consistency with which the love of the patriot was opposed to the lust of the oppressor gave the struggle for English liberties overtones of a tale of chivalry or, in more modern terms, an oedipal struggle. The unstable element in the dynamic was the villain: it was quite acceptable to identify the Norman kings as violators of Saxon freedoms, but to continue that line of reasoning into the eighteenth century would result in lese majeste or the equally unsettling implication that the Parliament at Westminster had succeeded the Stuarts as an oppressor. By the time of the Stamp Act crisis such an accusation would be made by the more flamboyant American patriots, but in the very different climate of the 1720s such a view was unthinkable. An expedient solution to the problem

175 Cooke, Vindication, 2-3, 9.
of the villain was found in the convention that the king could do no wrong, that any violation of liberty was the fault of his ministers. Cooke was careful to locate the issue at the level of the Lords of Trade and to assert that of the actions by his party in the Massachusetts assembly:

none in the least Measure will aspi're to lessen the Prerogative of the Crown, nor willingly come into or depart from any thing that then, or hereafter may be made Use of for the lessening or abridging the Peoples Rights and Properties, because the Kings Prerogative when rightly used, is for the good & benefit of the People, and the Liberties and Properties of the People are for the Support of the Crown, and the Kings Prerogative when not abused. 176

Governor Shute, himself a Whig and moderate Church of England man, was well aware of the maneuver for moral high ground contained in Cooke’s interpretation of local autonomy. In a report to the Board of Trade, Shute complained that the assembly was peopled with:

persons (better adapted to their farming affairs than to be Representatives of the Province) who are drawn into any measures by the craft and subtility of a few designing persons whom when they are endeavouring to invade the Royal Prerogative make the unthinking part of the Assembly believe, that they are only asserting the just privileges of the people, and by this false guise these men become the favorite of the Populace who believe them to be the only patriots of their country. 177

The somewhat indistinct nature of the villain in the Real Whig myth gave it greater rather than lesser force. In the New England setting it allowed the Old Charter Party and the Courant to transfer villainy not only to local political opponents such as Paul and William Dudley but to Cotton Mather as representative of the institutional authority of Congregationalism. That a fervent Anglican like John Checkley could feel himself to be the defender of traditional English liberties against the encroachments of a Puritan clergyman like Cotton Mather testifies to the degree to which the emotional value of the Real Whig myth could override the circumstantial evidence of recent British history. Like all myths, the myth of

176 Cooke, Vindication 18.
177 Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and West Indies, 1722-23, 329.
English liberties was polymorphous. Its transference to church controversy in Massachusetts may have been by inexact analogy, but it energized and legitimated the arguments advanced in the Courant in a way in which no mere rehearsal of fact and allegation could have done.

Descending from the lofty plane of Magna Charta to the techniques of electoral politics, Care's English Liberties included a lengthy essay on the qualifications of a representative which so impressed James Franklin that he published an imitation of it that adapted Care's principal arguments to the circumstances of provincial elections in 1722. The result, English Advice to the Freeholders &c. of the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay, must be accounted one of the first pieces of campaign literature printed in the American colonies.

The rapidly growing patronage system used to reward members of the House of Commons for support of the ministry was an issue that on a daily, concrete basis divided the Court and Country factions of British political life. From the reign of Queen Anne, if not before, judicious distribution of the extensive patronage at the disposal of the chief minister constituted a medium of political exchange. Hundreds of offices, both ceremonial and efficient, in the administration and at court were dispensed to members of the administration, their families and supporters in the creation of a network of allies within the House of Commons upon which the ministry depended for its successful operation and for its very existence. A very significant minority of the sitting members of the Commons were direct or indirect beneficiaries of ministerial patronage.178

178 Bernard Bailyn has estimated that, despite the passage of the Place Act of 1707, "In the middle of the eighteenth century about 200 of the 558 members of the House of Commons held crown places of one sort or another, and another 30 or 40 were more loosely tied to government by awards of profitable contracts. Of those who held places, 40 at least held offices intimately involved in the government and were absolutely reliable. The other 160 held a variety of sinecures, household offices, pensions, and military posts, which brought them well within the grasp of the administration but yet required constant solicitation and management." (Bailyn, Origins, 29).
To members of the opposition and Real Whig theorists the use of patronage to control Commons was the quintessence of corruption. Proceeding from seventeenth century notions of constitutional balance articulated by Harrington and others, these writers saw ministerial patronage as a coopting of the many (Commons) by the few (the nobility), which threatened to destroy a necessary check on those in power. As their insistent use of the word corruption to describe this political influence suggests, Real Whig writers saw the issue in moral and patriotic terms. Seduction of M.P.s by patronage and preferment was, to members of the opposition, not an administrative technique but a direct assault on English liberties.

In New England these Real Whig ideas about the evils of patronage were received with a fervor out of all proportion to the realities of provincial administration. The offices which a governor like Shute might command were few in number and relatively of little value.179 Not only was the administrative apparatus small, the wide franchise and dispersed nature of the Massachusetts electorate made control of the assembly through distribution of offices an impossibility. Governor Dudley had enjoyed some success in putting together a coalition of interests in support of his administration but he had drawn upon existing patterns of financial and family alliance within the New England oligarchy rather than a wealth of government patronage. Shute, a somewhat unsophisticated outsider, was denied this resource and remained passive in the face of existing political alliances in Massachusetts.

A major section of Care’s English Liberties was a detailed essay entitled “Some Directions concerning the Choice of Members to Serve in Parliament, and the Qualifications; that render a Gentleman fit or unfit, worthy or undeserving of your Voices for so great a,

179 Bernard Bailyn describes Massachusetts politics in this period as dominated by “conflict between a legally overgreat but politically weak executive and an implacable, assertive ‘democracy.’” (Bailyn, Origins, 114).
Trust." A number of Care's points were irrelevant to New England conditions. An admo-
nition not to

 elect any such as have their dependance on Foreign Princes or States, these are under
strong Obligations to see you ruined; for your own reason will tell you, that no Foreign
Power will prodigally throw away his Pistoles, where he expects not an Harvest an-
swerable to his Seed

 was unnecessary in New England, as was Care's warning to "avoid all such as play
the Protestants in Design, and are indeed disguised Papists, ready to pull off their Mask on
the first opportunity whenever time serves." These passages, while they might feed an
underlying fear of Jacobite plots, were the product of very different conditions in England
during the period from the Exclusion Crisis to the flight of Bolingbroke when English Lib-
erties was written and found no echo in the Massachusetts pamphlet English Advice. The
main points of Care's argument, however, seemed to "Brutus and Cato" (for so the work
was signed) to bear upon New England politics in 1722.

 The purpose of English Advice to the Freeholders &c. of the Province of the Mas-
achusetts-Bay was "to incite and quicken you, timely to consult and prepare for the new
Choice of Representatives ... but especially in the House of Representatives, who are the
Guardians of the People's Liberty." The principal danger against which Massachusetts vot-
ers were warned "was for you to chuse and Persons to serve, that sustain a publick Post in
the Government" since "It is very difficult to find Men of that Resolution and Integrity,
who are able to withstand the Snares and Temptations that Places of Honour and Profit
subject them to."

 Care had expressed similar sentiments in somewhat more general terms:

 Avoid all such as hold any Office of considerable Value during Pleasure, they being
subject to be over-awed. For altho' a Man wish well to his Country, and in the betray-
ing thereof, knows at the long Run he mischiefs and enslaves his Posterity, if not him-

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180 Care, English Liberties, 126, 131.
181 English Advice, 1-2.
self; yet the narrowness of Mens Minds is such, as makes them more tenderly apprehend a small present Damage, than a far greater hereafter. ¹⁸²

The myth of ancient liberties of Saxon derivation residing in the people and overlain by the repressive acts of Norman feudal kings subtly fed a form of nativism in the politics of the Real Whig opposition on both sides of the Atlantic. In Care's English Liberties this tendency was to be seen in dark warnings against crypto-Papists and those in the pay of foreign powers. In English Advice the authors pointed out that "You may already see (among many other Things worthy of your Notice) how Strangers are promoted and your Countrymen neglected and despised." ¹⁸³ The structure of the Real Whig myth, with its dynamic of the imposition of foreign tyranny upon native liberties, lent itself easily to a transposition in which a royal governor, whether the wily Dudley or the hapless Shute, played the role of the Norman feudalist, enclosing the forest and demanding tallage, while Cooke and his followers slipped comfortably into the part of parliamentary defenders of the rights of the people. ¹⁸⁴

The authors of English Advice were able to give the issue of foreign placemen feeding like locusts off the bounty of New England additional force by linking the politics of patronage to the depressed economic conditions of 1722, asking "Whether the poor Tradesman or Husbandman does much more than keep the Wolf from the Door tho' diligent and industrious? Who lays up Money but those that are in publick Stations?" ¹⁸⁵ Structured as it was on a dynamic of restoration, the Real Whig historical myth played best

¹⁸² Care, English Liberties, 125.

¹⁸³ Care, English Liberties, 6.

¹⁸⁴ The tendency to see royal governors as avaricious and self-serving placemen come to live off American provincials is described by Bushman, who observes that "Attached to the underside of popular party ideology, with its legalistic discourse for public occasions, was a sociology of oppression, a description of malevolent forces operating below the surface of public events. In this view of politics, the primary danger, surpassing all others, was official avarice." (Bushman, King, 97).

¹⁸⁵ Care, English Liberties, 4-5.
in a mode of elegy and alarm. Patriotic pride, as well as political prudence, prompted en-
comiums to the status quo, but the power of the Real Whig rhetoric was unleashed in cries
of alarm at the erosion of liberty and manly expressions of stoic sorrow over the debased
condition of the fatherland. Care introduced his work on a triumphant note, claiming that
Britons "are risen to such a Height of Prosperity under the auspicious Reign of our present
August Monarch, that we are become the Envey of the neighbouring States, our Friends,
and the Terour of those that are our Enemies," and described the English constitution un-
abashedly as "the best in the World." The authors of English Advice paid lip service to
the current administration in guarded terms, stating that "we have some good Rulers now;
yet we don't know how long they will continue;" their argument for avoiding placemen
was better served, however, by the verse quoted from Trenchard and Gordon's London
Journal with which the pamphlet closed:

But ah! What Fate does suffering Virtue find?
What Troubles rack the steady PATRIOT's Mind?
What Scenes of Woe his heavy Soul surprize?
What Floods of Tears forsake his manly Eyes?
He sees his Country lost, and with a Groan,
Laments her Fate, and seals it with his own.
No more let Whig and Tory e'er contest,
But let their Countrys Love inflame their Breast.
This done: The joyful Muse shall all Day long,
Make the glad UNION Subject of her Song.

186 Care, English Liberties, ii, 1. A similar patriotic enthusiasm characterized Francis
Knapp's poem, Gloria Britannorum, published by James Franklin in 1723 and discussed
below. Unstable alteration between pride and alarm is characteristic of the political writing
to be found in The New-England Courant.

187 Care, English Liberties, 4,6.
The ostensible theme of the verse, the need for union of Whig and Tory factions for the good of the nation, was the same as that of the Latin tag which headed the title page — *Quoque res in conjunctione pro bono conjunctionis* — an appeal which members of the Old Charter Party in Massachusetts never ceased to declaim but which they made no attempt to implement.\(^{188}\) It would be simplistic to see the plea to end party conflict as insincere; the restoration of unity, or at least harmony, was the fundamental dynamic of the Real Whig myth. The meaning of the appeal for union can be found in the emotional posture of the patriot as he contemplated its absence.

The third pillar of *English Liberties* which, according to Care, ranked with the charters redressing Norman oppression and a disinterested Parliament, was trial by jury. In a section entitled “Of the Advantage *Englishmen* enjoy by this Trial by Juries, above any other Nations under Heaven,” Care explained how jury trial fitted into the Real Whig historical myth:

>This grand Privilege of *Trials*, by our Country, that is by JURIES, as it seems to have been as Ancient as the Government, or first Form of Policy in this Island; for it was not unknown to the ancient Britains (as appears by their Books and Monuments of Antiquity) practiced by the Saxons and confirmed since the Invasion of the Normans by *Magna Charta*, as you have heard, and continual Usage, so it is a thing of the highest Moment, and an essential Felicity, to all English Subjects.\(^{189}\)

To Care jury trial was the ultimate defense against abuse of the prerogative since “Judges are made by Prerogative, and many times heretofore they have been preferred by corrupt Ministers of State, and may be so again in time to come; and such advanced as would serve a present Turn, not always those of the most Integrity and Skill in the Laws.” Consequently, “whosoever shall go about openly to suppress, or craftily to undermine, and render only a Formality, does *Ipso Facto* attack the Government, and brings in an Arbitrary

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\(^{188}\) The Latin may be loosely translated as “Let the state be united for the good of all the parties.”

\(^{189}\) Care, *English Liberties*, 200.
Power, and is an Enemy and Traitor to his King and Country. Care's interpretation of the right of trial by jury was the centerpiece of James Franklin's defense of the Courant against the council.

The politics of Massachusetts Bay during the years that James Franklin published in Boston were a provincial component of the political life of the British empire. As such, Massachusetts politics were composed of a simplified list of ingredients all of which were to be found in the more complex formulation of the metropolitan political system. In was not in the components but in their proportions that the politics of Massachusetts were unique. In tandem with the pattern of English politics in which recognizable groupings of interest, Whig and Tory, coalesced and contended during the period from the Exclusion Crisis to the ascension of George I, Massachusetts politics developed a bifurcated configuration of Old Charter and New Charter men which under the administration of Governor Dudley developed an explicit dynamic in the relationship between the General Court and the council. Although described (and disparaged) on all sides as the politics of party, the composition of these interest groups in Massachusetts, like their British counterparts, differed in fundamental ways from the political parties which were to come into being later in the century.

What distinguished political parties in Boston (and Westminster) during the period from 1714 until the middle of the century was the lack of fundamentally opposing social or economic interests. In their unity of class and interest, British politicians after 1714 differed from their predecessors in the closing years of the Stuart monarchy when religious conflict caused profound separation between the first Whigs and Tories. After the death of Queen Anne, few real differences over policy separated the ministry from its opponents. Personal ambition and family interest rather than ideology informed the maneuvers of the principle

190 Care, English Liberties, 202-203.
members of the Whig majority. When, for example, Walpole and Townshend broke with Stanhope and Sunderland in 1717, personal ambition dictated their alliance with a faction of old Tories and independents; their intention was to bring down their former allies rather than to change government policy. When, by affecting a reconciliation between their protector, the Prince of Wales, and his father, they were restored to power in coalition with their rivals, they abandoned their supporters in opposition without a qualm. Within the loosely defined and fiercely ambitious oligarchy of Whig leaders, considerations of interest rather than philosophy dictated strategy.

In Massachusetts during this period political strife reached unprecedented levels in the controversies swirling around the hapless Shute as the Old Charter party led by Cooke, Clark, and Byfield flamboyantly opposed the New Charter group led by Dudley and Auchmuty, who controlled the council. Passionate and perhaps sincere as the struggles between them were, no fundamental religious or social differences separated leaders of the opposing factions. Old and New Charter men came from the same dense cousinage of families that formed the Massachusetts elite, they worshiped in the same churches and were products of the same Harvard College. Their financial interests whether in Boston real estate, trans-Atlantic trade, or speculation in Maine timberlands were essentially identical. Like their British counterparts, the Massachusetts political elite divided over issues of personal ambition and family loyalty rather than class.

While the structure of Massachusetts political life was similar to the metropolitan models upon which it was based, two factors gave rise to significant local differences. The first of these was political and derived from differences in the franchise which gave the General Court a very different complexion from the English Parliament. Relatively equal wealth distribution and a low property qualification meant that the franchise was more

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widely distributed than in England. Coupled with an absence of rotten boroughs and a more straightforward electoral procedure, the wide franchise meant that the composition of the Massachusetts assembly was both more closely tied to and more representative of the population as a whole than was the case with the Westminster Parliament. A collateral development to the nature of the electorate was a colonial administrative heritage which denied the royal governor opportunities for patronage and influence in any way analogous to the system whereby the ministry maintained its working majority in the British parliament. In New England, posts which might have been used to form an obedient following were either controlled by town elections, distributed through the London-based imperial machinery, or non-existent. As a result, the Old Charter Party in Massachusetts faced a governor who lacked the wherewithal to achieve effective control over the assembly.¹⁹²

The second great difference separating Massachusetts politics from that of England was the unique position of the Congregational churches. In England, Dissenters, although numerous and economically powerful, were tinged with a fading aura of regicide and revolution. Denied the right to hold office by the Test and Corporation Acts, Dissenters were entitled to the parliamentary franchise if forty-shilling freeholders in the counties or meeting local borough requirements. Under these conditions Dissenters formed a powerful opposition bloc in many corporations and in some even exercised control. In the Bay Colony, however, the Congregational sect was de facto the established church, not only controlling almost all the pulpits in the province as well as Harvard College, but embodying a Puritan heritage whose church polity was in many ways the religious counterpart to the secular values of the Real Whigs.

¹⁹² In Origins, Bailyn makes the important argument that colonial governors such as Shute were given too much prerogative power and not enough of the patronage and influence which allowed the government to work with the House of Commons in Britain. The imbalance between power and influence made colonial administrations incapable of controlling provincial assemblies under the sway of Real Whig ideology. The resulting tensions formed the dynamic of American politics in the early eighteenth century.
The Real Whig constitutional theory and historical myth which James Franklin brought to New England with his printing of Henry Care’s *English Liberties* was complemented and in some ways overshadowed by his importation of the *Cato Letters* by John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon. Like Care, Trenchard and Gordon appealed on a number of points. They were working journalists whose *Independent Whig* (1720) and *London Journal* (1721-23) served as spirited gadflies to the ministry. They were former members of the bar, able to ground their impassioned libertarianism in historical precedent as well as philosophical altruism. Not least important, they were Low-Churchmen, defenders of Dissenters and impassioned enemies of Jacobite Toryism. The four-volume collection of their essays, *Cato’s Letters* was to become the most influential single political treatise in the American colonies and it was the Boston press of James Franklin which first reproduced their dramatic appeals in the New World.¹⁹³

The selections from the *London Journal* which Franklin chose to re-print in the *New-England Courant* during its first year show that he relied on the *Cato Letters* for a political psychology to complement Care’s political history. Where *English Liberties* traced the structural development of the British Constitution from a mythic, Saxon past, Trenchard and Gordon explored the motivation of contemporary Britons in public life —illustrated with copious references to the Roman Republic. Where Care’s work described a myth of restoration, Trenchard and Gordon presented a dynamic of degeneration: the *Cato Letters* which Franklin reprinted in the *Courant* detail the pathology of a state corrupted by the unchecked effects of human vice. The Real Whig historical myth gave the Couranteers a proud heritage of English liberties; the essays of the *London Journal* inspired alarm at the process whereby those liberties were being daily eroded by villains equally mythic.

¹⁹³ Bailyn points out that “In the bitterly contentious pamphlet literature of mid-eighteenth-century American politics, the most frequently cited authority on matters of principle and theory was not Locke or Montesquieu but *Cato’s Letters*.” (Bailyn, “Experience”, 344).
The Couranteers employed Cato's Letters for both offensive and defensive purposes. Offensively, selections from the London Journal were invoked to provide a conceptual framework for attacks on the Dudleys as opponents of Cooke's Old Charter Party. Defensively, Franklin cited the writings of Trenchard and Gordon to protect his paper against the charges leveled at it by the Dudley-Mather faction. In the former mode the Couranteers explored how unchecked ambition could corrupt the political process, in the latter Franklin defended press freedom against charges of seditious libel.

The Courant had been in circulation for barely a month when the issue of September 11, 1721, carried a lengthy "Abstract of a Letter in the London Journal, June 10." The proximity of the two dates is significant: Franklin was providing his readers with Cato material as rapidly as trans-Atlantic communication allowed. The first four issues of the Courant had stirred up a hornet's nest with their criticism of Cotton Mather's role in the inoculation crisis. John Checkley, who had been the paper's principal writer for the first three issues, was replaced by Nathaniel Gardner but the paper's powerful enemies were still unmollified. Franklin turned to Trenchard and Gordon for arguments to justify what to his opponents seemed a libel of unprecedented effrontery.

It was into these turbulent waters that Franklin cast the bait of a "Letter to lay before the Town some Tho'ts upon Libelling, a sort of Writing that hurts particular Persons, without doing good to the Publick." The idea of doing good to the public was central to the defense of the press made by Cato in this letter. The authors conceded that legal point

194 The speed with which news (and newspapers) were transmitted to America is analyzed by Ian K. Steele, The English Atlantic, 1675-1740: An Exploration of Communication and Community, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

195 Checkley was dropped after the third issue. The fourth issue was written largely by the Rev. Henry Harris, assistant rector of King's Chapel, who attempted to calm the furor the paper had provoked with a Spectator-like summary of the merits of both sides of the question. Although Harris continued to contribute to the paper, Gardner became its principal writer with the fifth issue and contributed 32 major pieces in the period September, 1721 — April, 1722, cf. Ford, "Courant", 338-82.
which so often troubles laymen in such a way as to strengthen the importance of public benefit from public print:

A Libel is not the less a Libel for being true. This may seem a Contradiction; but it is neither one in Law, nor in common Sense: There are some Truths not fit to be told; where, for Example, the Discovery of a small Fault may do great Mischief; or, where the Discovery of a great Fault can do but little Good....

Dedication to the public good as the highest goal of activity in the public sphere was justified by appeal to the love of country, the touchstone of Real Whig political rhetoric: “Nothing ought to be so dear to us as our Country, and nothing ought to come in competition with it’s Interests,” from which it followed that “Every Crime against the Publick is a great Crime, tho’ there be some greater than others.” Here then was the rationale for publication of information whose content might be libelous, for the hurt that might accrue to individuals in public positions was outweighed by the need to protect the state from the evil designs of potential tyrants:

Whoever calls publick and necessary Truths Libels does but apprise us of his own Character, and arm us with Caution against his Designs. Machiavel says, Calumny is pernicious, but Accusation beneficial to a State; and he shews Instances where States have sufer’d or perish’d for not having, or for neglecting the Power to accuse great Men who were Criminals, or thought to be so.

Cato’s approach to criticism of government officials in the public prints stood the traditional idea of seditious libel on its head. Prevailing legal theory in the early eighteenth century still connected seditious libel with the ancient idea of lèse majesté or affront to the sovereign.196 Behind the exaltation of the public good lay implicit the idea of popular

sovereignty, an aspect of republican doctrine explicit in such seventeenth-century Puritan thinkers as Sidney and Harrington but not a part of eighteenth-century Whig theory. From the idea of the people, Cato developed a third class of libel:

I have long thought that the World are very much mistaken in their Idea and Distinction of Libels. It has been hitherto generally understood, that there were no other Libels but those against Magistrates, and those against private men: Now, to me there seems to be a third sort of Libels full as destructive as any of the former can possibly be; I mean Libels against the People.

While not explicit on the subject of popular sovereignty, Cato used that republican concept implicitly to develop a theory of the public interest whose violation could be thought of as a libel against the public. Defense of the public against the government — a defense undertaken by the press — was one of the twin goals of that balanced constitution so favored by Whig theorists. The other goal, defense of the government against the irrational passions of the people, was universally acknowledged. Since the seventeenth century, political writers had described a tripartite structure of the one (a king whose power unchecked led to despotism), the few (a nobility whose tendency was to oligarchy), and the many (the people as represented by Commons whose uncontrolled passion produced anarchy). The genius of the British Constitution, according to Whig writers, was the balance between these elements which sustained the fragile flower of liberty. Contending schools of political theory differed fundamentally in the relative power they ascribed to the three components.

Cato and the other Real Whig writers stood for Parliamentary supremacy, a constitutional theory which led naturally to a defense of the many whose interest was represented by the House of Commons. The historical models to which, in rather idealized form, these


198 NEC, September 11, 1721.
writers turned were Athenian democracy, the Roman Republic, and the city-states of the Italian Renaissance. Like the seventeenth-century republicans before him, Cato quoted the Discourses of Niccolò Machiavelli to justify a constitutional structure which protected the rights of the many against the passions of the one:

Machiavel, in the Chapter where he proves that a Multitude is wiser and more constant than a Prince, complains that the Credit the People should be in, declines daily.... I must own, I know not what Treason is, if sapping and betraying the Liberties of a People be not Treason in the eternal and original Nature of things.... I know it is a general Charge against the People, that they are turbulent, restless, fickle and unruly: Than which there can be nothing more untrue; for they are only so where they are made so.199

Cato's idea of libel against the public interest was an attractive apologia for James Franklin from two points of view. In immediate terms, it served as an intellectually respectable defense of his newspaper taken from metropolitan sources. Criticism of the leading political figures in the province need not be seen as seditious libel but as protection of the liberties of the people, themselves libeled by encroachments upon their freedoms. On a more abstract level, Cato's rationale for a public press to defend the people from libels by their rulers interpreted the Real Whig historical myth in the context of eighteenth-century politics in such a way as to diminish the distance between the printer and the magistrate by subjecting them both to the exigencies of a higher good, traditional freedoms.

In theory at least, the authority of the government was no longer self-evident or merely self-declared; governmental actions had to be justified in terms of the Real Whig historical myth of popular liberty and the newspapers were to be the forum in which that justification was examined. Here was the ultimate radicalism of the Commonwealth men, for such a vision of civil authority perforce severed the immemorial link between the king and God and assumed that government was of purely human invention, unsanctified by any expression of the divine will. The dynamics of the Hanoverian succession had laid

199 NEC, September 11, 1721.
permanently to rest the idea of any divine right of kings, but complete desacrilization of civil authority was still a step too radical for either English Whigs or their American counterparts to take.

The Real Whig ideas which James Franklin presented to his New England readers were attractive but not entirely persuasive. Political and ministerial elites were hardly prepared to accept an analysis which disconnected their institutional position from ultimate sources of authority and subjected their actions to review in the newspapers. Even the Cooke-controlled House of Representatives, which blocked the first efforts of the Council to suppress the Courant, eventually agreed to require Franklin to submit his paper for prior approval by the Secretary of the Province because:

in the Paper call'd the New England Courant printed Weekly by James Franklin, many Passages have been published, boldly reflecting on His Majesty's Government an on the Administration of it in the Province. the Ministry, Churches, and College: and it very often contains Paragraphs that tend to fill the Readers minds with vanity, to the dishonour of God and the disservice of Good Men.200

The immediate significance of the idea of a press protecting the people from libels made by their rulers which the Courant adopted from Cato's Letters was not that the idea itself was widely accepted but that the concepts and vocabulary of Trenchard and Gordon were put into play in the intellectual life of New England. Invigorating the placid world of the Boston Gazette and Boston News-Letter with republican vocabulary "filled the need continually to make and remake a fit between the public discourse and the social world."201 In Boston, where the newspapers were still proud to fancy themselves the mouthpiece of the administration, "published by authority," and the press itself still under the domination of the clergy, Cato's Letters gave the Couranteers a justification for a new concept of the role of the press as a tribune defending the people's liberties.

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200 House Journal IV, 72.
201 Warner, Letters, 63.
The Couranteers invoked the writings of Trenchard and Gordon to defend the role of the newspaper as independent arbiter of government activity; they also drew on Cato's Letters for a psychopathology of political corruption by which they attacked the leaders of the prerogative or New Charter party. Corruption, by which the Real Whigs meant a disturbance in the balance of the constitution, was attributed not to abstract or historical forces such as were responsible for the existence of English liberties, but to personal vice in individual men, particularly the sins of lust, pride, avarice, and anger. This is not to say that Cato was unaware of impersonal forces; indeed, both "Party" and "Interest" appear throughout the Letters used in this way. These evil influences, however, are seen as the collective expression of the moral shortcomings of individuals.

A month after the issue defending the people from the libels committed against them by their rulers, the Courant ran a two-part except from the London Journal on the subject of flattery whose relevance to the heated political climate in Boston was assumed to be obvious to its readers. The theme of the piece was the vulnerability of rulers to manipulation by the unscrupulous:

FLATTERY is a poisonous and pernicious Weed, which grows and prevails everywhere, but most where it does most harm, I mean in Courts... A melancholy Lesson of the vile Fraudulency of Flatterers, and of the Blindness of Princes who trust in them. Even Galba, who was thought Proof against Flatterers (adversus blandientes incorruptus) was deceived by them.... The Sieur Amilot de la Houssaye, from whom many of these Observations are taken, says truly, that most Princes are better armed against Fear than against Flattery: Terrors animate them, and Threats whet their Courage; but Flattery softens their Minds, and corrupts their Manners; it makes them negligent and idle, and forget their Duty... He further says, that Philip the 2nd of Spain, was wont to interrupt those who went about to flatter him, by saying to them roundly, Cease trifling and tell me what it concerns me to know: Words worthy of all Princes, who are never entertain'd by their Flatterers but with things useless or pernicious.202

202 NEC, October 9, 1721. The reference to Galba in the text is to Servius Sulpicius Galba (3 B.C. — A.D. 69) Roman emperor for about six months, A.D. 68-9, in succession to Nero, having been proclaimed emperor by his troops in Spain. He was honest and just, but severe and mean. He soon became unpopular; a conspiracy against him was formed among the praetorians, and he was murdered and replaced by Otho. Galba's fate is discussed by Tacitus in the first book of his Histories. Gordon published a highly successful annotated translation of Tacitus and was clearly much influenced by that
In the New England context this Letter could be (and doubtless was) read as a warning and complaint to Governor Shute about the circle of Court Party or New Charter men surrounding him and serving on the Council. This group, which included William Auchmty and Judge Samuel Sewall, had at its core the recently forged alliance of William Dudley and Cotton Mather. Both Dudley and Mather had been rejected in their attempts to control Harvard College. Paul Dudley’s efforts to have his brother, William, named Treasurer were thwarted by President Leverett, against whom Cotton Mather had competed unsuccessfully for the office of President of the College. Opposition Leverett prompted an amnesty between Dudley and Mather for disagreements stretching back to the days of the administration of Dudley’s father. In the manner of contemporary politics in Britain, the opposing alliances in Massachusetts were loose aggregates of financial interest, family connections, and personal ambition with none of the class or ideological cement which subsequently became characteristic of party politics. Perhaps for this very reason, the language used by Cato to describe a dynamic of political influence and negotiation, which was hardly novel in itself, was both shrill and moralistic to a degree which the eighteenth century found distasteful in any form of discourse save the political.

Why, of the numerous Letters on the subject of tyranny and other evils of government, James Franklin was particularly moved to reprint the one he introduced on October 9, 1721, is a question whose answer was suggested by the content of the second installment, in which it was observed of flatterers that:

Where there are no Faults they create ’em. The Crime, objected to the honest and excellent Trasea Petus, were such as these, namely, That he had never applauded Nero, nor encourag’d others to applaud him… that he would not vote that a Gentleman who had made Satyrical Verses upon Nero should be put to Death; tho’ he condemn’d the Man and his Libel, but he contended that no Law made the Offence Capital. That they could
not without Scandal, and the Implication of Cruelty, punish with Death, and Offence for which the Laws had already provided a punishment that was milder..... Flattery therefore is never at the Height till Liberty and Vertue are quite lost; and with the Loss of Liberty, Shame and Honour are lost..... As Flatterers make Tyrants, Tyrants make Flatterers; neither is it possible that any Prince could be a Tyrant without them: He must have servile hands to execute his Will, and servile Mouths to approve it.203

The exemplary tale of Thrasea provided a point of continuity between the Letter published in September and the two-part excerpt on flattery the Courant ran a month later: the tyrant's accusation of libel and the bold senator's refusal to flatter his wounded vanity by voting an illegal penalty supported and amplified the vision of the press as protector of the people's liberty. After its first month of publication, the Courant's printer had become an object of enmity of several of the most powerful citizens of the province; his sympathy for "a Gentleman who had made Satyrical Verses upon Nero" was not wholly detached.

The Cato Letters which Franklin printed to defend the role of the press had as their focus the conjunction of affect and political power. Cato did not analyse the political organization of the governments from which he drew his examples and it would be a mistake to suppose that he approved of the Spain of Philip the Second any more than the Rome of Nero simply because he praised the former and criticized the latter; his purpose was to explore the interaction between human passions, which he assumed to be the same in all times and places, and constitutional structures which must contain their destructive effects. Since the faint-hearted rarely hold supreme power, the emotion of fear was one against which the prince was well fortified. The corrosive blandishments of flattery, on the other hand, presented a real threat to liberty even in a balanced constitution such as that of Britain. Deference, the social lubricant of hierarchic society, had the capacity to unleash vice in the powerful unless some countervailing impulse were applied.

203 NEC, October 9, 1721. Thrasea was Publius Clodius Paetus Thrasea, a prominent senator under Nero and leader of the Stoic and republican opposition. He was accused of lack of loyalty and driven to suicide (A.D. 66). Like Galba's, the example of Thrasea is a result of Gordon's devotion to Tacitus.
The view of human nature which underlay Cato's explanation of the psychological dynamic of the ruler had its roots in seventeenth-century theory, particularly that expressed by Thomas Hobbes in his Leviathan. On October 23, 1721, Franklin reprinted in the Courant Cato's Letter number 33 which offered a somber picture of man as a brute whose selfishness was tempered by fear. "Considering what sort of Creature Man is," Cato observed, "it is scarce possible to put him under too many Restraints, when he is posses'd of great Power .... Men that are above all Fear, soon grow above all Shame." The propensity to bloodshed observable in Nero was a permanent human characteristic, not significantly ameliorated by Christianity or progress:

And there actually have been many Princes in the World, who have shed more Blood, and done more Mischief to Mankind that Nero did. I could instance in a late one, who destroyed more lives than ever Nero destroyed, perhaps an Hundred to One. It makes not difference that Nero committed Butcheries out of Cruelty, and the other only for his glory; however the World may be deceived by the Change of Names into an Abhorrence of the One and an Admiration for the Other: It is all one to a Nation, when they are to be slaughtered, whether they are slaughtered by the Hangman or by Dragoons; In prison or in the Field.

The passage has a strikingly modern air with an apparently cynical dismissal of calls to glory and emphasis on the sufferings of "the Nation" in pursuit of ideals proclaimed by the prince. Such cynicism and disenchantment should not be read ahistorically into the passage, which owes more to the age of Pym than to that of Sigfried Sassoon. Readers of the Courant do not appear to have been persuaded to such a jaded view of glory. Like their metropolitan counterparts, they reveled in the triumphs of the Age of Marlborough and celebrated them in patriotic poems such as Francis Knapp's Gloria Britannorum (which James Franklin printed and advertised in the Courant). Human depravity was recognized in its moral dimension within the individual, the idea that glory and cruelty were all one painted life in too dark a hue for eighteenth-century provincials.

The pessimistic view of human motivation expressed by Cato had a strong similarity to the Calvinist idea of the total depravity of fallen man that was New England orthodoxy:
It is nothing strange that Men, who think themselves unaccountable, should act unaccountably, and that all Men would be unaccountable if they could; even those who have done nothing to displease, do not know but one time or other they may; and no Man cares to be at the entire Mercy of another. Hence it is, that if every Man had his Will, all Men would exercise Dominion, and no Man would suffer it.

If this dark view of human nature which "made a great Philosopher call the State of Nature a State of War" is seen as a form of secular Calvinism, then it was love of country which corresponded to divine grace as the ennobling spirit of patriotism which enabled leaders to rise above self-interest and protect the rights of the people. Beneath the obvious differences separating Real Whig ideology from New England Puritanism lay structural parallels which permitted the Courant's readers to pass comfortably from the faith of their fathers to the bracing new ideas emanating from the opposition press in London.

The fundamental dynamic of political history as presented in Cato's Letters is a moral struggle between the ruler dominated by lust and champions of liberty whose love of country inspires them to adhere to the dictates of reason. "The World," observed Cato, "is govern'd by Men, and men by their Passion." The problem lay not in the egotism of individual rulers (although this could be spectacular: "Alexander and Caesar were that sort of men; they would let the World on Fire and spill its Blood rather than not govern it") but in unchecked authority. One of the last of the Whigs expressed the view which all had held from the first: "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Against the inevitable temptations of power was set the aggregate of the people, whose entropic tendency was the preservation of their traditional freedoms, "The Peoples jealousy tends to preserve Liberty; and the Princes to destroy it."

Tension between the interests of the many and the will of the few or of the one was sustained because the people remained naively ignorant of the designs of their rulers:

205 Cato's Letters, number 33, printed in NEC, October 23, 1721.
the common People generally think that great Men have great Minds, and scorn base Actions; which judgement is so false, that the basest and worst of all Actions have been done by great Men; perhaps they have not pick’d private Pockets, but they have done worse; they have often deceiv’d disturb’d and pillag’d the World.²⁰⁶

The earlier Commonwealthmen had detected in the people a tendency to anarchy which, under a balanced constitution, was checked by the interests of the few (the nobility) as well as the king. The Cato’s Letters do not deny this aspect of the theory of a mixed constitution, they simply ignore it, possibly on the assumption that the likelihood of unchecked mob rule in Hanoverian Britain was remote.²⁰⁷ The result is a rather more romantic view of the people than is to be found in the Commonwealthmen (who had the excesses of the Civil War immediately before them), one which in some ways appears to anticipate Rousseau:

The People have no Bias to be Knaves; the Security of their Persons and Property is their highest Aim. No Ambition prompts them, they cannot come to be great Lords, and to possess great Titles, and therefore desire none. No aspiring or unsociable Passions incite them; they have no Rivals for Place, no Competitor to pull down; they have no darling Child, Pimp, or Relation, to raise; they have no Occasion for Dissimulation or Intrigue, they can serve no End by Faction; they have no Interest, but the general Interest.²⁰⁸

How thoroughly the writers for the Courant had mastered both the rhetoric and the spirit of Cato’s Letters can be seen in a series of essays which appeared in the spring of 1722, criticizing Paul Dudley and opposing his reelection to the House and Council. Matthew Adams, writing under the pseudonym of Harry Meanwell informed readers of the April 30, 1722, issue that:

²⁰⁶ NEC, October 23, 1721

²⁰⁷ Pocock, in Politics, Language and Time, observes that “both Court and Country, in eighteen-century constitutional debate, believed that the constitution consisted in the balance maintained between its parts, but the ‘Country’ theory maintained that the balance was to be reserved by preserving the parts in independence of each other, while the ‘Court’ apologists — nearer as they usually were to constitutional reality — contended that the balance was between parts that were interdependent and must be preserved by keeping the interdependence properly adjusted.” (Pocock, Politics, 132).

A certain Gentleman some time last Week in his Conversation (in the Hearing of divers Persons) was pleased to say, That he would make his Tenants to know; that they should vote for good Honest Men for Representatives, such men as he would have them vote for, or else he would turn them out of his Tenements.

The essay concluded teasingly that "Twould be needless to name him, so that every Body might point at him; but for your own Satisfaction, if you will tell no Body, I’ll tell you thus much, That he commonly goes with one Eye half shut, and his Mouth screw’d up into a whistling Posture."209

Vote buying and the threatening of electors were cardinal sins of political corruption which Care strenuously condemned in his English Liberties; in fact, the treatment of the topic in the Courant illustrates how much more literally Real Whig doctrine was taken in New England than in contemporary Britain, where the government ministry routinely exchanged preferment, offices, and other favors for votes in the House of Commons. In New England, where the emollients available to the royal governor were proportionately much less, outcry at the efforts of the executive to maintain a working majority in the assembly were far more shrill. As for attempts to influence the votes of tenants, British Whigs regarded such exercises in the politics of deference as completely acceptable. As Bushman points out:

The Country Party advocates of independence did not intend to honor vagabonds, small shopkeepers, or even professionals like the city lawyers. The gentlemen who applauded Cato, the Country Party publicist, and were his ideal were men anchored in the traditional social structure. They were substantial patrons in their own small kingdoms with domains of dependents that included their families, a household establishment, local clerics, tenants and farm laborers, village tradesmen, and others who ate at their tables, received their charity, and depended on their protection in litigation. The Country Party proposed independence only for the small number of people who constituted the political community not for the entire society.210

209 NEC, April 30, 1722. The identification of Major Ball-Face as Paul Dudley was made by Clifford K. Shipton, Sibley's Harvard Graduates, IV, 49.

210 Bushman King, 61.
In applying the political values of the Real Whigs to the simplified and more egalitarian social structure of Massachusetts, writers for the Courant gave British doctrines a more radical and democratic effect than they achieved in the metropolis, and no facet of Real Whig doctrine was more enthusiastically applied to local politics than condemnation of deference as inimical to the people's liberties. On May 14, a correspondent to the Courant signing himself Elisha Trueman, presented a lengthy essay against the practices of traditional politics aimed at the Dudley candidacy. The essay was a sequel to the piece signed Harry Meanwell which appeared on April 30th. The first installment reported threats by Major Ball-Face against tenants who would not vote for his candidate, the second described how the threats were carried out. Elisha Trueman recounted an incident at the polls in which his cousin, James, left a smudge of blood from a cut finger on his ballot, by which the selectman (a relative of Major Ball-Face called Captain Ball-Face) discovered that Trueman had voted for one of his own relatives rather than the major:

The major was soon inform’d of this, and afterwards meeting with James, he in an angry and reproachful Manner demands of him, how he could be so base, after the Service he had done him to vote for another. To which James answer’d, That for what Service he had done him, he thank’d him, and would at all Times endeavour to make a suitable Return; but he never thought, when his Honour was at the Trouble of writing a Line in his behalf, that by that he was obliged to give him in lieu thereof the greatest Privilege he had.

The incident is typical of the style of eighteenth-century English politics and exemplifies, on a petty scale, the mix of social deference, influence peddling, and family loyalties which provided motive force for Whig administrations in the Age of Walpole. The mix of honors and preferments which the ministry dispensed in return for support in Parliament was the lubricant of the British political machine. The Real Whigs vociferously condemned the exchange of votes for favor because it undercut the power of the opposition, which was, in their view, the defender of the liberties of the people against the en-

211 Ford identifies Elisha Trueman as Thomas Lane.
croaching power of the prerogative.\textsuperscript{212} The "hearty Old Charter-man" whose conversation

Elisha Trueman reported fastened on this aspect of the incident with a feral grip:

We have (says he) the Choice of Representatives at hand, let us therefore resolve, that neither Hope of Gain or Fear of Displeasure shall move us to vote for such as will become Wax to receive every Impression the Enemies of our Constitution shall think fit to make on them: Nor let us, like Esau, sell our most valuable Priviledges for Trifles. What will the Offspring of Ensign Pliant and Sergeant Supple have Reason to say hereafter? Why truly, that their Parents, for the imaginary Honour of carrying a Pair of Colours and a Halbert, have brought them into Bondage: For so soon as they were advanced, they became Creatures to the major their Master, who is one of those Implements of Wax I was speaking of; and as he is himself a Tool and a Property to another, (for the sake of Preferment,) so he expects the same in all others, for whom he does the least Service.

The initially puzzling aspect of this analysis is that there seems to be no identifiable programmatic content to the fear of bondage, no plan on the part of Major Ball-face or the Court Party whose dastardly consequences would justify the rhetoric of outrage and alarm. To be sure, Governor Shute had attempted to uphold the authority of his Overseer of the Woods in enforcing the Naval Stores Act, but Major Ball-face — Paul Dudley — who supported him was just as deeply invested in the Maine woods as Elisha Cooke, who opposed him. Shute’s attempt to restrain the press, understandably of great moment to James Franklin and the Couranteers, was not a first principle among the Old Charter Party in the General Court, which first refused to indict the Courant but then a few months later concurred with the Council order placing Franklin under prior restraint “as has been usual.”\textsuperscript{213}

\textsuperscript{212} Typical of the rhetoric of \textit{Cato’s Letters} on the attempts of ministers to influence Parliament is this passage: “They will endeavor to bribe the electors in the choice of their representatives and so to get a council of their own creatures; and where they cannot succeed with the electors, they will endeavor to corrupt the deputies after they are chosen... and to draw into the perpetration of their crimes those very men from whom the betrayed people expect the redress of their grievances and the punishment of those crimes.” In the four-volume collection, 5th ed. London, 1748, vol. 1, 115-116, (quoted in Bailyn, \textit{Origins} 44).

\textsuperscript{213} The relevant paragraph of the resolution passed by the House in May of 1722 reads: “Resolved, That no such Weekly Paper be hereafter Printed or Published without the same be first perus’d and allowed by the Secretary, as has been usual. And that the said Franklin give Security before the Justices of the Superior court in the Sum of £100 to be of the good Behaviour to the end of the next Fall Sessions of this Court.” (\textit{House Journal}, 124
The outrage and alarm expressed by New England devotees of Cato's Letters was genuine but greater than the political maneuvering of their opponents would appear to justify.

Equally significant was the affective mode in which the traditional politics of deference practiced by the Major was carried forward. When the Major confronted James Trueman, it was in an "angry and reproachful Manner" because a trust had been betrayed in a relationship of an essentially personal character. There was nothing of the abstract and impersonal world of commerce; the idea of "buying votes" as a commercialization of political influence would belong to a later age. James and the Major were linked by the older concepts of deference and obligation. James failed to vote for the major not because he had been offered more for his vote by another nor because he disagreed with the major's politics, but out of family loyalty which caused him to vote "for one of the Truemans." Unremarkable as the major's position would have been in the context of English politics, the outrage expressed by Elisha Trueman at his cousin's experience shows how literally and fervently the precepts of Cato's Letters were taken in New England.

The central theme of the Cato Letters reprinted in the Courant, the supremacy of the liberties of the people, offered a secular conception of the state and the elimination of the idea of the king as an hieratic figure imbued with divine authority. Seventeenth-century republican theorists had countered traditional conceptions with the idea of government as a contract formed by men in a state of nature. The contract theory, like the idea of the state of nature, had a mythic rather than historical character and functioned axiomatically to permit civil power to be treated as a purely human invention:

vol. 4, 72). Prior review by the Secretary of the Province had not been usual before 1722, and Shute's attempts to enforce the control of the press described in his instructions had been frustrated, so the passage in the resolution is obscure. After the Shute crisis, the House was amenable to press censorship to a greater degree than had been previously the case. The Council recalled the issue of Musgrave's Gazette for May 4, 1724, in similar circumstances. See the Council Records, 3, 22 and the Boston Gazette, 232, May 4, 1723.
Hence grew the necessity of Government, which was the mutual Contract of a Number of Men, agreeing upon certain Terms of Union and Society, and putting themselves under Penalties if they violated these Terms, which were call'd Laws, and put into the Hands of one or more Men to execute. And thus men quitted part of their natural Liberty to acquire Civil Security. 214

Stripped of hieratic status, the king's authority could be viewed empirically; legitimacy was established not by appeal to rituals of the supernatural but pragmatically in terms of the rights of the people. "Humane Reason says, that there is no Obedience, no regard due to those Rulers who govern by no Rule but their Lust: Such men are no Rulers, they are Outlaws, who being at Defiance with God & Man, are protected by no Law of God, or of Reason." While contractual theory was not unknown in the Middle Ages, it was the Commonwealthmen of the seventeenth century who first articulated a theory of sovereignty without reference to the Lord's anointed. 215

The idea of civil authority defined without reference to divine sanction was too radical an idea for mainstream Whigs of the eighteenth century. Cato's conclusion that "Power, without Control, appertains to God alone; and no Man ought to be trusted with what no Man is equal to" formed a concise expression of the fundamental difference between Whig and Tory on the question of royal prerogative, but the concept of a limited monarchy became detached from the more unsettling question of popular sovereignty. In simple terms, the debate came down to whether government was a divine or human invention. Cato followed the Commonwealthmen in describing government as a purely secular contract. Although not without philosophical appeal, the secular contract theory raised fundamental questions which the institutions of the eighteenth-century British Constitution were not prepared to resolve. The entire issue of an established religion could become problematical

214 NEC, October 30, 1721.

215 Medieval theories of mixed government and limited monarchy are the subject of James M. Blythe's Ideal Government and the Mixed Constitution in the Middle Ages (Princeton, 1992). Blythe demonstrates that it was the pre-existence of medieval ideas of limited royal authority upon which later writers, using Polybius, built their theories.
and, on a broader plane, the question of how the performance of the government in protecting the liberty and happiness of the people might be evaluated could open the way for a return to the chaos of the previous century. Philosophers and journalists might speculate on the state of nature but practical men of affairs required a government established on transcendental values whose authority could not be called into question by self-appointed spokesmen for the people. Kings might no longer rule by divine right, but the Crown had to be seen as sanctioned by divine authority.

It was to refute the secular conception of government that the Courant published an essay on May 28, 1722, which articulated the Real Whig philosophy of Cato's Letters without reference to contract theory. According to this author:

Whatever different Opinions and warm Disputes there are in the World, concerning the various Species and Forms of civil Government, it is nevertheless confessed by all to be of Divine Original and Institution. And this is not only a clear Dictate of natural Reason, (that Light which enlighteneth every Man that comes into the World,) but is every where suggested to us in the sacred Oracles.

Despite this fundamentally different premise, the views of the author were identical to those expressed in the Cato Letters that the purpose of government was to ensure the liberty and happiness of the governed. Like Cato, this author believed that the power of the government must be limited in order to prevent corruption because of the inherent weakness of human nature. The argument of the two essays is strikingly similar on this point. Where Cato had declared that "Power, without Control, appertains to God alone; and no Man ought to be trusted with what no Man is equal to," the second essay argued that "The Power of civil Rulers is derivative and limited and therefore they must not arrogate to themselves an absolute incontrolable Empire, which appertains to God alone, being essentially and independently in him. An absolute Government is what no Mortal is equal to, or fit to be intrusted with."

The ease with which the Courant's author re-wrote Cato's argument to premise a divine origin for government suggests that the theory of social contract was not a fundamental assumption for the articulation of Real Whig values, that the means and ends of
government were their central concern and the question of its origins a secondary, specula-
tive consideration. The invocation of the "sacred Oracles" of Christianity to support Real
Whig ideals of government assumed that the performance of the ruler was judged by reli-
gious as well as utilitarian criteria. As the author of the May 28th essays expressed it,
"Civil Government, (when the Administrations of it are regulated by the Divine Standard)
is the Strength, Glory, and Safety of Nations and Common-Wealths; 'tis the strongest
Bulwark against the Efforts of Tyranny a sure Defence of the Liberties of Mankind when
invaded by unreasonable Men."

The reconciliation of Real Whig constitutional theory with traditional, religiously
sanctioned notions of authority in this essay was asserted rather than demonstrated. The
Bible not portraying God as a constitutional monarch of limited authority, the point of de-
bate became whether civil rulers were an imitation and extension of divine omnipotence (the
Tory view), or whether the authority of civil rulers should be as different from the authority
of God as human nature is from the divine (the Real Whig argument). The issue of the ori-
gin of civil government, while peripheral to the Real Whig political myth, required resol-
ution if only as an axiomatic assertion, for the desacrilization of the Crown and complete
separation of civil authority from biblical tradition was, since the Restoration, too radical a
program to be seriously entertained on either side of the Atlantic. The Real Whigs' line of
reasoning, based on the difference between God and man, had the powerful advantage of
associating constitutional theory with religious tradition because the contrast between the
polity of the Church of Rome and that of English Dissenters offered a parallel argument in
support of their view of civil authority. The association between Protestant tradition and
Real Whig politics cut both ways: a descendant of radical Dissent in seventeenth century
England, Real Whig theory was re-applied to questions of church polity by writers in the
Courant as a way of resisting the growing authority of the minister as New England Con-
gregationalism veered closer to the Presbyterian model.
The Couranteers accepted without question the assumption of Cato's Letters that the fundamental dynamic of politics was a moral struggle between reason and lust. The pages of Tacitus and Plutarch offered colorful examples of the excesses of which the unchecked vices of a ruler were capable; it was difficult, however, to see in men like Walpole and Townshend (much less Paul and William Dudley) a comparable degree of flamboyant depravity. The martyrdom of a Gaiba or Thrasea might inspire, but provided little in the way of practical guidance in the struggles over colonial legislation.

The Naval Stores Act, which sought to regulate the harvesting of mast pine, offered an opportunity to apply the legal theories of Cato's Letters in an undramatic but economically significant context. Title to the immensely valuable white pines of coastal Maine, an area where both Dudley and Cooke were proprietors of large tracts, was the principal point of contention between Cooke and Governor Shute. To the economic injury which Crown restriction on the cutting of these trees posed to Massachusetts land speculators was added the insult of Admiralty Courts, imposed to adjudicate violations of the Naval Stores Act and prevent local juries from acquitting the guilty. It was a cardinal point of Real Whig doctrine that the law protected the people from arbitrary oppression on the part of the ruler, but here was the more perplexing case of a people oppressed by a law passed in due form by Parliament. On May 14, 1722, a correspondent to the Courant, citing the "Matters of great Consequence to North America, but more especially to us here in New England," offered an extract from Cato's Letters which addressed the issue of oppressive legislation rather than vicious rulers. The law, Cato observed, "only provides against the Evils which

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216 Trenchard and Gordon supported the economic exploitation made possible through colonization, observing in Number 106 (December 8, 1722) that "our Northern Colonies do, or may if encouraged, supply us with Timber, Hemp, Iron, and other Metals, and indeed with most or all the Materials of Navigation." (Jacobson, Libertarian Heritage, 244). Their colonial policy was based on the belief that the use of military force to hold colonists in subjection was inefficient not unjust, and that legislation aligning the economic self-interest of the colonists with that of the mother country was the key to a successful relationship.

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it knows or foresees, but when Laws fail, we must have recourse to Reason and Nature, which are the only guides in the making of Laws." From this principle the essay developed a distinction between valid laws, which were written in accordance with the principles of reason and nature, and mere statues which were not:

The Violation therefore of Law does not constitute a Crime where the Law is bad; but the Violation of what ought to be Law, is a Crime even where there is no Law. The Essence of Right and Wrong, does not depend upon Words and Clauses inserted in a Code, or a Statute Book, much less upon the conclusions and Explications of Lawyers; but upon the Reason and Nature of Things, antecedent to all Laws.

This line of reasoning, quite different from the arguments advanced by Henry Care, represented what might be considered the antinomian extreme of Real Whig political thought. Where Care had grounded his case in ancient customs arising from Saxon traditions, Cato based his position on an appeal to universal abstractions of reason and nature. The English liberties which Care defended were built up in a case-by-case series of acts and charters creating a constitution formed of historical precedent. Cato's argument appealed to a higher law to which statutes must conform or be considered void. The antinomian aspect of Cato's approach lay in the difficulty of establishing a criterion whereby it might be determined if a statute was indeed in harmony with the higher law of reason. The framers of the Naval Stores Act presumably felt it reasonable and in keeping with nature that the Surveyor of the Woods restrain the citizens of Massachusetts from cutting his Majesty's mast pine. Cato's attempt to clarify the universal principles upon which valid laws depend did not bring such differences in views much closer to resolution:

The two great Laws of Humane Society, from whence all the rest derive their Course and Obligation are those of Equity and Self-Preservation: By the First, all Men are bound alike not to hurt one another; and by the Second, all Men have a Right to defend themselves.

The difficulty with appeal to universal abstractions like "Reason and the Nature of Things" was the problem of getting back down to specifics. Proprietors such as Elisha Cooke doubtless felt that their rights as well as their interests were injured by the limitations of the Naval Stores Act but the high-minded arguments of the London Journal lacked
specifics which might persuade opponents. The more legalistic approach of Care’s *English Liberties* provided surer footing with its language of *de taliagio non concedendo* and *The Charter of the Forest*, but such arguments ran to the point of parliamentary supremacy and no farther. Men of the next generation such as James Otis and Samuel Adams would formulate a synthesis of the historicism of Care and the universalism of Cato to argue the case for the independence of the Massachusetts General Court as the legitimate parliamentary successor to Westminster; the generation of James Franklin and Jeremiah Gridley laid the basis for that synthesis in their adaptation of Real Whig rhetoric to New England political life.\footnote{Jeremiah Gridley was the leading Massachusetts lawyer of his day, under whom by Otis and Adams read for the bar. Gridley founded the second (and final) successor to the *Courant*, the *Weekly Rehearsal*, in 1731.}

A gauge of the impact of Cato’s *Letters* on readers of the *Courant* can be taken by noting the ideas of Trenchard and Gordon which most impressed the young man who was to become the most influential of all the Couranteers, James Franklin’s younger brother, Benjamin. The sixteen-year-old printer’s apprentice was at mid-career as the author of the letters of Silence Dogood when his fictitious widow informed her readers that “I prefer the following Abstract from the *London Journal* to any Thing of my own, and therefore shall present it to your Readers this week without any further Preface.” The Cato letter which formed the body of Silence Dogood’s eighth essay was the fifteenth in the original series, published originally on February 4, 1720, and its theme, the importance of freedom of speech, was intended to be applied to James Franklin’s difficulties with the authorities.

Cato’s argument opened in typical fashion with a general observation: “Without Freedom of Thought, there can be no such Thing as Wisdom and no such Thing as public Liberty, without Freedom of Speech.” The second phase of the argument asserted the same thesis in the contrapositive: “Whoever would overthrow the Liberty of a Nation, must be-
gin by subduing the Freeness of Speech: a Thing terrible to Publick Traytors." This characteristic inversion of the premise aligned the issue of free speech with the Real Whig historical myth by invoking the threat to traditional liberty posed by the usurpation of tyrants. In this posture, the advocate of free speech became a defender while the tyrant or government ministry assumed the onus of the aggressor. Free speech became associated with tradition, its defenders advocates not of change but of restoration.

The defensive posture of the Real Whig myth facilitated the de-authorization of government since it was government, in the hands of a tyrant, which aggressively sought to subvert traditional freedoms. Good or legitimate government, by implication, was that which did not attack the liberties of the people. Put another way, "The Administration of Government, is nothing else but the Attendance of the Trustees of the People upon the Interest and Affairs of the People." Through the introductory assumption of government as tyranny or potential tyranny over the people, Cato suggested a vision of state power as little more than a benign bureaucracy dedicated to the preservation of tradition. What was dismissed without being confronted was the notion of executive power as a legitimate instigator of change. The realignment of king (referred to in the republican terminology derived from Machiavelli as the prince to create a dignified separation between tyrants and the House of Hanover) and people in this argument was sealed by the establishment of a criterion whereby the ruler was judged:

Indeed whenever the Commons proceeded to Violence, the great Ones had been the Agressors. The best Princes have ever encouraged and promoted Freedom of Speech; they know that upright Measures would defend themselves, and that all upright Men would defend them.

Young Franklin and the other Couranteers admired the dialectic techniques of Cato's Letters as much as its principles. At the center of this dialectic lay the historical myth that allowed Real Whigs to call for a radical redefinition of state authority while appearing to defend the stability of ancient practice. By asserting the fundamental goodness of the people and dwelling almost exclusively on the corrupting temptations of power to the
prince, Real Whig rhetoric created by implication the image of an aggressive, lustful ruler bent upon inflicting his will upon a passive but morally superior people. Interposed between the tyrant and the people was their defender, the press, which articulated the voice of reason in the public sphere.

Just as the persuasive appeal of Cato's somewhat contrived appeal to the defense of traditional liberties lay in the emotional power of its triangular myth, so the strength of the opposing view (in reality as much that of the Whig ministry as of the Tories or Jacobites to whom the Real Whigs attributed it) lay in the emotional appeal of the image of the prince, not as lustful aggressor but as the incarnation of patriotic tradition and divine sanction. It was to counteract the appeal of traditional loyalties to the father-priest-king that the Real Whigs insisted so vociferously on the extraction of emotion from the political process, the reduction of institutionalized religion to the status of a technical specialty, and on reason as the sole guide in matters of law and policy.

Two weeks after her citation of Cato's Letters on July 9th, Silence Dogood again returned to "an ingenious Political Writer in the London Journal," this time to bolster her condemnation of politics animated by the power of religious sentiment. In its immediate context, Silence Dogood's ninth essay can be read as a continued defense of James Franklin's publication of the Courant in the face of attack by the Court Party. The object of Mrs. Dogood's criticism was the "State Hypocrite," the unscrupulous political leader who manipulated the public through its religious sentiments. Such a man, Dogood claimed, was more of a threat to the liberties of the people than the "openly Prophane" because "by a few savoury Expressions which cost him Nothing," he is able "to betray the best Men in his Country into an Opinion of his goodness; and if the Country wherein he lives is noted for
the Purity of Religion, he the more easily gains his End, and consequently may more justly be expos'd and detested."\textsuperscript{218}

With characteristic originality Silence Dogood adapted Real Whig rhetoric of corruption and self-interest to Massachusetts conditions by modifying its dynamic to accommodate the institution of the Congregational clergy:

But the most dangerous Hypocrite in a Common-Wealth, is one who leaves the Gospel for the sake of the Law: A Man compounded of Law and Gospel is able to cheat a whole Country with his Religion, and then destroy them under Colour of Law: And here the Clergy are in great Danger of being deceiv'd, and the People of being deceiv'd by the Clergy, until the Monster arrives to such Power and Wealth, that he is out of the reach of both, and can oppress the People without their own blind Assistance.

The individual who appeared best to fit this description was the Courant's nemesis, Paul Dudley. Paul Dudley, son of the unpopular governor Joseph Dudley, joined the faculty of Harvard College but left in order to study law at the Inner Temple in London. He served as attorney-general under his father and in 1718, was made a justice of the Superior Court by the incoming Governor Shute. Although Cotton Mather had bitterly opposed Governor Dudley, Paul had taken the initiative to mend relations and so gained the support of the clerical party. In 1720, Paul moved to Roxbury, where his youngest brother, William, served as representative to the General Court (William was elected Speaker of the House when Elisha Cooke followed Shute to London). Paul served as representative from Sagadahoc, where the family had extensive holdings, and in that capacity was elected a member of the Council, from which position the Old Charter Party attempted unsuccessfully to dislodge him in the spring of 1722. The Dudley brothers treated Roxbury as the family borough in British fashion, giving a bell to the school, giving communion plate to the church, and building a stone bridge over Smelt Brook. In return, they expected the def-

\textsuperscript{218} NEC, July 23, 1722.
erence and political support which grateful crofters owed their squire, an expectation which provoked the righteous indignation of Silence Dogood and the other Couranteers.\textsuperscript{219}

In attacking the alliance between the Mather faction and the Dudleys, Silence Dogood struck at the New England clergy's political vulnerability: the growing perception that they were indifferent to the plight of those squeezed by hard times. "The Reason of this Blindness in the Clergy is, because they are honourably supported (as they ought to be) by their People, and see nor feel nothing of the Oppression which is obvious and burdensome to every one else."\textsuperscript{220} This charge may have been unfair. The clergy, living on fixed incomes, were among those adversely affected by the inflation caused by depreciating provincial currency.\textsuperscript{221} Anti-ministerial sentiment appears to have been most intense in the town of Boston where the Dudley-Mather political alliance was opposed by artisans and tradesmen organized by Cooke's Boston Caucus.\textsuperscript{222} Silence Dogood's depiction of the clergy as placemen whose insulated condition caused them, like other rulers, to be insensitive to the people and prey to flatterers was a clever political attack and demonstrated how Real Whig rhetoric could be adapted to New England issues.

\textsuperscript{219} Details of Paul Dudley's career are given by Clifford K. Shipton in volume four of Sibley's Harvard Graduates (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933) 42-54. Shipton recounts an incident from the history of the Town of Roxbury which illustrates the manner of Squire Dudley: "Driving to town on one occasion, he noticed that he had forgotten a law book, and, pulling up, ordered a laboring man to go back and fetch it. The man seemed astonished at the demand, but asked, 'Can one fetch it, sir?' 'Oh, yes,' said Dudley. 'Then go yourself,' was the reply." (Shipton, 47).

\textsuperscript{220} Silence Dogood's ninth letter, NEC, July 23, 1722.

\textsuperscript{221} This argument was made by the Ipswich minister, Jabez Fitch, in his pamphlet A Plea for the Ministers of New-England. (Boston: Samuel Gerrish, 1724). At least one minister, John Wise (also of Ipswich) defended provincial bills of credit and ascribed the province's economic problems to the trade deficit with Britain rather than monetary policy in his A Word of Comfort (Boston: 1721).

\textsuperscript{222} Growing alienation from the ministers of the town's bourgeoisie fueled the inoculation controversy and was clearly reflected in the pamphlets Several Arguments (Boston: 1721, Bristol 618) and An Answer to a Late Pamphlet (Boston: 1722, Evans, 2407) by the Boston tobacconist John William as well as numerous essays in the Courant.
The passage from the *London Journal* with which Silence Dogood closed her ninth essay, intended to show "that Publick Destruction may be easily carry'd on by hypocritical Pretenders to Religion," described "a Fund of Subscriptions for charitable Use" established by unscrupulous politicians as a public relations scheme to mask their "raging Passion for immoderate Gain." Reflecting on how easily the public was gullied by the ploy, Cato recounted that "an honest Country Clergyman told me last Summer, upon the Road, that Sir John was an excellent publick-spirited Person, for that he had beautified his Chancel." Here was a reference to Dudley's gift of communion plate that few readers were likely to miss. Benjamin Franklin was not, of course, a typical sixteen-year-old apprentice but his attack on Cotton Mather and Paul Dudley illustrates how the new public sphere created by newspapers, when energized by the political rhetoric of the Real Whigs, could relocate the fulcrum of public influence on government policy.

The issue of the role of the clergy in political life raised by Silence Dogood in her ninth letter was one which Trenchard and Gordon had made the centerpiece of their journal the *Independent Whig*. This weekly, which appeared throughout 1720, was the immediate predecessor to the *London Journal* in which first appeared Cato's *Letters*. That the authors of the *Cato's Letters* should have devoted their first year of collaboration to a journal principally concerned with religious questions and the role of the clergy in political life attests to the central position occupied by these topics in Real Whig thinking.

As in the case of executive authority, the Real Whigs found themselves somewhat on the defensive in the matter of religion. As the party of Low Churchmen and Dissenters, the Whigs favored a limited role for the Established Church in civil life. In terms of the psychological dynamic which formed the basis of Real Whig rhetoric, the union of state and steeple imbued civil authority with transcendent affective values tending entropically to an undifferentiated hegemony over the thoughts and feelings of loyal subjects. The limitation of civil authority through constitutional balance among the one, the few, and the many required that the one be divested of his mythic status of god-king. Executive authority legiti-
imated by religious tradition preempted the concept of popular sovereignty and caused verti-
cal communication within the social hierarchy to be determined by concepts of deference
and submission. Religion played an important part in the writings of the Real Whigs be-
cause theological questions were intimately bound up in issues of civil authority.

The religious ideas espoused by Trenchard and Gordon in the Independent Whig
were premised on the sufficiency of reason and a psychology of experimentalism. Reason
in this view:

is the only guide given to Men in the State of nature to find out the Will of God, and the
Means of Self-preservation. The Senses are its subordinate Instruments and Spies: They bring it Intelligence; and it forms a Judgement, and takes Measures, according to
the Discoveries which they make.

The conclusions which reason draws from sensory impressions were those values
which formed the core of Real Whig political beliefs:

It distinguishes Subjects from Slaves; and shews the Loveliness of Liberty, and the
Vileness of Vassalage: It shews that, as to political Privileges, all Men are born equal;
and consequently, that he who is no better than others, can have no Right to command
others, who are as good as himself; unless for the Ends of their own Interest and Safety, they confer that Right upon him during their good Pleasure, or his good Behav-
ior.

The obverse of this encomium, which seeks to establish the reasonableness of reli-
gion but seems rather to argue for reason as a religion, was the condemnation of those in-
tense feelings which formed the cardinal sins of Real Whig politics:

Reason checks tumultuous Passion, the greatest Enemy to the Peace of the Mind, and
to the Peace of Society. Hence it has been observed, by the same Moralist, that all our
rational Pursuits are temperate Pursuits; and that what we pursue with REASON, we
never pursue with Violence. REASON subdues Anger, and prevents Cruelty; it makes
a Man less fierce than a Lyon, and less ravenous than a Bear. It is not human Shape,
but human Reason, that places a Man above the Beasts of the Field, and lifts him into a
Resemblance with God himself.223

The close association of reason and religion in the Independent Whig had the effect
of cutting the associative tie between figures of authority, both secular and ecclesiastical,

223 These three quotations are taken from number thirty five of the Independent Whig
(September 14, 1720) quoted in Jacobson, Libertarian Heritage. 30-31.
and the powerful emotional forces of tradition and myth. Once established as the essential epistemology of religious experience, the universal character of reason obviated the need for a clerical class to interpret religious doctrine. Real Whig religious theory also preemptively denied the other mainstay of sacerdotalism, providential intervention in contemporary affairs:

I think it is generally granted that Revelations are no more, and that Prophecy hath ceased. The Reason given for this, I take to be a very good one, namely, that God has already sufficiently discovered his Mind to Men, and made his Meaning manifest. If it were otherwise, we should doubtless have his extraordinary Presence still, but as we have not, it is to be presumed there is no Occasion. He appeared himself whilst Men were in Darkness; but now that he hath shewn them his marvellous Light, he appears no more. His Presence is supplied by his Word, which being addressed to all Men equally, and not to one Tribe of men to interpret it for the rest, it follows, that all Men have in their Power the Means to understand it. Old Revelation therefore does not want the Assistance of New, nor has the Omnipotent any need of Prolocutors.  

The denial of a hieratic function for the clergy had deep roots in Protestant tradition and therefore fell upon sympathetic ears in New England. The Congregational churches stood delicately poised on the questions of sacral authority, rejecting the formalism of the Church of England but resisting with equal determination the more radical views of Anabaptists and Quakers. In its vision of a clergy respected for piety and learning but without claim to supernatural authority or sacral power the Independent Whig struck just the note that James Franklin and a number of the Couranteers wished to sound themselves. To the writers of both journals the intervention of the clergy in politics posed a threat to liberty which, in the contemporary context of eighteenth-century parliamentary supremacy, was potentially as great as the lust of princes. The commingling of religion and civil politics threatened to upset the constitutional balance by empowering the prerogative with the force of divine sanction. The Independent Whig's execration upon clerical intervention in politics

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224 The Independent Whig, number nine (March 16, 1720) quoted in Jacobson, Libertarian Heritage, 20.
was — with the exception of its reference to (Jacobite) rebellions — a compendium of the charges the Courant was to level against Cotton Mather:

If Clergymen would avoid Contempt, let them avoid the Causes of it. Let them not be starting and maintaining eternal Claims to worldly Power. Let them not be hunting after Honours, courting Preferments, and bustling for Riches: Let them not be assuming to give Models of human Government, or to adjust and determine the Titles of Princes: Let them not pretend to punish any Man for his Way of Worship; and to give him to the Devil for his Money or Opinion: Let them not join Factions, and foment Rebellions: Let them not defy Heaven by swearing falsely: Let them not promote Servitude in the People, and Barbarity in the Prince; and let them not flatter wicked Kings, and plague and disturb good Ones.225

Although the Courant cited the Cato Letters extensively in its first year of publication, the paper made no reference to the Independent Whig until the issue of September 4, 1725. The most likely explanation for this fact is that copies of the Independent Whig were not available to the Couranteers when the Boston paper began publication in August of 1721. The last issue of the Independent Whig appeared in London on December 31, 1720, and although some earlier numbers of the paper may have reached Boston, neither the Congregational establishment nor the Anglicans involved in the Courant may have had much enthusiasm for a paper whose principal topic was the propagation of deistic views.

The citation from the Independent Whig which appeared in the Courant in 1725 was offered by a correspondent signing himself Charity Manly who excerpted passages from numbers nine and ten of the London paper on the subject of sacerdotalism. The argument advanced was one that had been popular among radical sects during the Civil War and sounded a distant echo of the Puritan roots of Real Whig thought. The central point of doctrine in Charity Manly’s piece was the lack of any biblical basis for priestly authority. Reviewing the role of the Tribe of Levi in the Old Testament, Cato observed that:

They are to put their Hands upon the Head of the Beast, and to receive its Blood, and to make fires. They are not, as I remember, once made use of to speak God’s Mind to the

225 The Independent Whig, number three (February 3, 1720) quoted in Jacobson, Libertarian Heritage, 8-9.
People; that is the Duty of the Civil Magistrate, and Moses performs it..... In short, their whole Function was to be Servants and Journeymen in the House of Sacrifice.

Passing to the Christian era, Cato cited Christ’s condemnation of the Levites as “vile hypocrites” and invited the reader to “consider whether they be at this Day without Heirs and Successors. Indeed it seems to me to be the only Succession which has not been interrupted.” Sacerdotalism was not only without biblical authority according to this argument, but was at the core of those false practices which it was the mission of Protestantism to extirpate, an argument which created the inference that the Church of England, at least in its High Church branch, was insufficiently reformed:

Altars and Priests are divinely appointed in the Old Dispensation, but are neither directed nor described in the New; and yet we know of what importance they are at present in the Popish Church and elsewhere. ....it is not once said in the Christian Law, that there must be an uninterrupted Race of bishops, of Popes, or Priests, to the end of the World; and that there is no Church where it is not.

The conclusion to be drawn from this exegesis was that no special class of priests was required for an effective practice of the Christian religion. “The Decalogue, or the law of the Ten Commandments, delivered by God himself from Mount Sinai, with great Glory and astonishing Circumstances,” after all, “was little else but the Law of Nature reduced into Tables, and expressed in Words of God’s own chusing.” There being no special authority in a clergy that was self-appointed, “a learned and virtuous Layman can instruct more effectually, and pray more devoutly and successfully than an ignorant and profane Priest; and is consequently a more proper and secure Guide to others.” The principles of Christianity, being essentially those of reason applied to human nature, were universally accessible by each individual without praeternatural or sacerdotal assistance.

Denied biblical sanction and stripped of praeternatural authority, the minister became a tutor to the natural reason in his flock, the value of his services determined by his learning and the compelling power of his example. The central postulant of this argument was the universal accessibility of Christian truth through unaided human reason, a proposition incompatible with Calvinism and difficult to justify from church tradition. In the Independent Whig as in Cato’s Letters, this point was assumed, rather than argued. A belief in
the adequacy of human reason in religious as well as civil life was a precondition for acceptance of Real Whig ideology, not a result.

The desacralization of the ministry presented in the Independent Whig led to the commoditization of religion and the redefinition of the minister as a kind of tradesman. The traditional metaphoric language of the minister as a laborer in the divine vineyard was unceremoniously reinterpreted in literal fashion that subjected the minister to the same scrutiny as any other vendor of services:

It is indeed said, that The Labourer is worthy of his Hire: and I acknowledge it is fit that those who hire them should pay them: But sure this Text leaves every one at Liberty to chuse his own Labourer, and to make as good a Bargain as he can, or to do his own Business himself. What Pretense is there of a Divine Right to just a Tenth part and not only of our Estates, but of our Stock and Industry too, which in some Corn-Lands comes to double the Rent that the Landlord receives?

The emotional forces identified with traditional religious belief and the associative capacity of religious tradition to imbue executive authority with divine sanction had to be neutralized before Real Whig historical mythology, with its theories of contractual government and popular sovereignty could find acceptance. In Britain, Real Whig ideology was the articulation of a demand for social autonomy and political inclusion by the Country Party; the Couranteers of Boston raised the same demands before a provincial elite represented by the Royal Council and supported by the leading Congregational ministers. The central importance of desacralization to these demands was summarized by the observation that:

one of the crucial factors in the development of autonomy and inclusion has been the rationalization of traditional authority, the separation of emotional from abstract factors, and the reorganization of each in more functionally specific roles and institutions. Without this kind of separation and emotional withdrawal it would have been impossible to express the behavioral mandates typically associated with the demands for autonomy — rationality, competitiveness, and emotional constraint. The withdrawal of emotional content arising from and directed toward objects permits the abstract manipulation of these objects. Among the philosophes, for example, the capacity for emotional
withdrawal was very clearly expressed in a hostility to traditional religion and a demand that religion as such be separated from the political structure.\textsuperscript{226}

Separation of emotions with deep roots in tradition and the unconscious from civil affairs and religious experience effected a narrowing of the spectrum of permissible feelings. Both terror and the sublime, in this way of thinking, were excluded from discourse.\textsuperscript{227} The result contributed a muted tenor to the description of human existence captured in one of the later issues of the \textit{Courant} in which a correspondent signing himself Theophilus offered readers this characterization of happiness quoted from \textit{Cato's Letters}:

\textbf{...The Truth, I say, is, Human Nature is far from being form'd for compleat happiness, (so it has pleased God to ordain it,) and not any single Thing or Circumstance, but very many must conspire to give us the little Share of it we are capable of enjoying.... To be happy, when one has said all, and to make the most of it, is only to enjoy as much of the Benefits of Life, as Persons of our Rank ordinarily do, and to be as free from the Evils and Torments of it. This, I take it, is the Tenour and Image of human Hapiness: All beyond it is a Picture of our own Creation; a gay Idea norrish'd by Fancy, and which the Weakness of the Heart pines after unprofitably..... Every man has some Plan, or imaginary System of Felicity in his Head, which he cannot attain to and which if he could, would not answer his Expectation.}

The political mythology and language of the Real Whigs which James Franklin and the Couranteers brought to New England was a catalytic ingredient in the cause célébre which the \textit{Courant} became in the spring of 1722. The radical libertarianism of Franklin's paper was what differentiated it from its two older competitors, the \textit{News-Letter} and the \textit{Gazette}. The novel and unsettling editorial stance of the \textit{Courant} was facilitated and to some degree engendered by the works of Care, Trenchard, and Gordon which appeared prominently in its pages. The efficacy of Real Whig rhetoric as it appeared in the \textit{Courant} had three causes: its modernity, its harmony with Puritan tradition, and the appeal of its psychology to the \textit{Courant}'s community of readers. It was by articulating the ideology of the

\textsuperscript{226} Weinstein and Platt, 13.

\textsuperscript{227} The attempted exclusion was, of course, only partly successful. The quest for the sublime, although confined largely to music and poetry, became a central concern of contributors to the \textit{Courant} such as Matthew Adams and Mather Byles in the years following the demise of Franklin's paper. See David S. Shields, "Sublime", 231-248.
Real Whigs in the medium of the weekly newspaper that the Couranteers began the tradition of an opposition press in America.

The modernity of the Real Whig material from Care, Trenchard, and Gordon was instrumental in attracting contributors and readers to the Courant; the new was (and is) the soul of the newspaper. When Franklin produced the first American edition of Care’s English Liberties in 1721, he offered New Englanders a work whose successful fourth edition had been printed in London in 1719. The first of Cato’s Letters reprinted in the Courant had appeared in the London Journal only three months before. By eighteenth-century standards the time elapsed between the London and Boston printings was about as brief as technology would practically permit. In publishing the works of these Real Whigs, Franklin’s press and the Courant became a source for the latest political writings from the metropolis, material that gratified the patriotic pride of New England colonials with its fervent encomiums of an ancient British tradition of liberty, a tradition of which Englishmen in America could feel very much a part. The original material which Franklin’s press and the Courant contributed to the Real Whig tradition, the pamphlets and essays against the Mather-Dudley faction, explicitly connected local political controversies to the Whig historical myth, and in so doing elevated the self-image of adherents to the Old Charter Party both in the General Court and outside of it.

While its aura of metropolitan modernity gave Real Whig literature immediate attraction, its enthusiastic and profound acceptance by the Courant’s readers was owing in large part to a deeper congruence between Real Whig political theory and Massachusetts’ Puritan heritage. Both movements had a common root in opposition to the Stuarts and although they had grown increasingly apart since the Exclusion Crisis, the Whig party remained the home of Dissenters in British political life. Deism and an increasingly secular

228 The transmission of printed information from Britain to the Americas is analyzed by Ian K. Steele, English Atlantic.
focus separated the Real Whigs from the mainstream of contemporary Massachusetts leaders while their passionate opposition to executive authority did not always sit well in a province where Dissent had become, de facto, the establishment in both church and state.

Beneath these recent separations, however, lay common convictions about the autonomy of the individual, a belief in the accessibility of truth to the individual without institutional mediation, and a distrust of claims to authority based on praeternatural sanctification or traditions. The elaboration of an increasingly sophisticated society in New England had produced a clergy tending towards Presbyterianism and a mercantile elite whose financial interests were aligned with their metropolitan counterparts; as a result, aficionados of Real Whig theory found in the provincial Court Party the counterpart to the prerogative party in Britain, a circumstance which greatly facilitated the transplantation of radical theory to New England. 229 The transplantation was successful because the Real Whigs were distant, secular cousins to Massachusetts Puritans.

The third, and by no means least influential, factor in the enthusiastic reception which Real Whig writers received among the Couranteers was the harmony between the libertarian psychology and the circumstances of the young Bostonians who created the paper. The fundamental dynamic of the Real Whig ideology was opposition to the traditional form of authority represented by the royal prerogative. In an age in which civic authority was still described in familial terms, the king was the father of his people. Although parliamentary supremacy had radically diminished the influence of the idea of the divine right of kings, the position of the king as head of the national church continued the traditional

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229 Jack P. Greene, in his Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1988) proposes a general model for the development of colonial societies in the eighteenth century in which, under the influences of heritage and experience, initial simplification proceeded through a process of elaboration to the replication of metropolitan features. In terms of this model, Massachusetts, despite its self-proclaimed “declension,” entered a phase of accelerating replication following the Andros Rebellion and the issuance of the new charter in 1689.
fusion of religious and state authority. The implications of that fusion were more political than theological: the emotional power and associations of the Christian faith lent immemorial patriarchy transcendent force and made it the fundamental paradigm of authority in family life as well as civil society. To the growing forces in opposition to traditional authority structures in private and public spheres, forces engendered and nurtured by the rapid development of mercantile capitalism, the libertarian ideology of the Real Whigs offered a legitimizing rationale.

The diverse group of men and women who formed the Couranteers shared a common aspiration to assert their autonomy in the face of patriarchal authority. For some that authority was perceived as the New Charter men dominating the Royal Council; for others, the conflict was focused on clerical leaders whose involvement in civil affairs appeared to place the authority of religion on the side of the economic elite. Many of the Couranteers, including the Franklin brothers, were young men who had yet to marry and establish independent households; for them patriarchal authority had an immediate referent since they lived in a society in which filial piety remained a powerful social principle. For each member of the Couranteers, Real Whig deconstruction of integrated patriarchy had personal as well as abstract significance.230

To the synthetic authority of patriarchy the Real Whigs offered an alternative ideology based on the analysis and separation of authority into constituent parts. Their overriding heuristic was the separation of rational from emotional elements and the confinement of

230 Jay Fliegelman, Prodigals and Pilgrims: The American Revolution Against Patriarchal Authority, 1750 - 1800. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) points out that "by the middle of the eighteenth century family relations had been fundamentally reconsidered in both England and America. An older patriarchal family authority was giving way to a new parental ideal characterized by a more affectionate and equalitarian relationship with children. This important development paralleled the emergence of a humane form of childrearing that accommodated the stages of a child's growth and recognized the distinctive character of childhood" (Fliegelman, Prodigals, p.1 ). The Courant is one of the earliest American sources in which the effects of that transition may be observed.
political life to the sphere of rational behavior. Religion, the repository of the most potent emotional values, was both rationalized as far as possible and separated from governmental functions. Against the conservative force of cultural tradition was set a historical myth of English liberties in which the king served not God but the people. Concomitant to these intellectual propositions were a broad spectrum of social and economic changes which tended in the aggregate to weaken the influence of paternal authority and family control on the younger generation. The Courant had a galvanic effect on Massachusetts society because it spoke not only for an ideology but for a generation.
Chapter Three

Newspapers and Broadsides:

Captain Harmon and the Eastern Indians

Although the Courant is best remembered for its involvement in the inoculation controversy of 1721, and the satirical pieces written by Benjamin Franklin under the name Silence Dogood, the longest-running story in the paper was the conflict between Massachusetts and the Eastern Indians known as Dummer's War. This struggle, a continuation of fighting between Indians and English during Queen Anne's War, was tangentially related to provincial political issues in which the Courant took an interest. English encroachment upon Indian territory in Maine, the casus belli, was supported by wealthy Massachusetts merchants, including Elisha Cooke and Oliver Noyes, leaders of the Old Charter Party. Political as well as economic motives caused the Lower House to become involved in arguments with the governor about war finance and the appointment of a commander. As a result, the war with the Eastern Indians became a secondary issue in the conflict which drove Shute from office.231

Then as now, war was good for the newspaper business; but covering the conflict was not easy for the Courant. Fighting took the form of sporadic raids along a thinly settled arc from the coastal towns of Casco Bay to the wilderness of the lakes region of New

231 William Dudley, member of the Council and supporter of Shute against Cooke was also involved in Maine land development. The Cooke faction in the house attempted to negate Dudley's election as representative from Maine. Shute's support for Dudley was one of the causes of the crisis which eventually drove Shute back to London.
Hampshire, site of the fortified Indian village of Pigwacket. Lack of unified military command or an organized system of dispatches meant that news of action had to be gleaned from returning participants, who might return from battle to one of several frontier towns.

Although war was not formally declared until July of 1722, a pattern of raids and counter-raids was already in progress when the Courant began publication on August 7, 1721. The paper's account of the embarkation of 60 soldiers, part of a larger force in the process of being assembled and transported piecemeal to the English base on Arrowsic Island in Casco Bay, was charged with patriotic enthusiasm. Readers were assured "there is no question but that (by the Blessing of God,) such a Number of Troops, so well equip't and led by such Officers, will be more than sufficient to put a stop to the threatening Danger, and bring the Indians to our own Terms." Ignoring the question of English provocations and the financial role of Cooke and others in establishing a string of poorly defended townships, the Courant chose to focus on the sufferings of English settlers lured eastward by the offer of free land. "Nothing," the paper commented, "can be more grateful to those poor, affrighted Strangers in those Parts, than this well-timed Expedition." The Eastern Indians, they were dismissed as "treacherous Barbarians."

The irregular pattern of hostilities and the difficulty of communication with the frontier would have made it hard for the Courant to focus readers' attention on the Indian campaign had it wished to do so. The expedition to Arrowsic was overshadowed by a small pox epidemic in Boston and inoculation experiments, which the paper strongly opposed, to halt the spread of the disease. In this climate of public concern and editorial interests, the Courant took a characteristically witty course. The issue of August 14 united the topic of the Indian war with that of small pox inoculation in a burlesque proposal by Dr.

232 NEC. August 7, 1721.
William Douglass, chief medical opponent of inoculation, who urged "A Project for Reducing the Eastern Indians by Inoculation."

Although the Courant was more concerned with New England culture than either of the other two Boston papers, it shared with the rest of the early American press a primary purpose of bringing its readers news from afar. The next two issues of the paper carried Indian stories from New York, where Governor Burnet was attempting to prevent the construction of a French and Indian fort on his frontier, and Pennsylvania, where Governor Keith was concluding a treaty with the Conestogoe Indians. The Courant made no attempt to follow up on local news involving Indians, including the expedition reported in its first issue, but waited for dispatches from the frontier to come its way. Little such news came to the Courant in the autumn of 1721 and the paper contented itself with stories about smallpox mortality among Indians on Nantucket and the recapture in Concord of some Indian hostages who had escaped from confinement in Boston. Events in Maine were a world away.

Towards the end of 1721, the Indian war acquired an inter-provincial and imperial aspect which caused the Courant to renew its interest. The issue of November 6, 1721, carried a paragraph noting that the governor of New York had forbidden the Maquois Indian residing in that province to enter negotiations with William Dudley, who was attempting to enlist them as allies against the Eastern tribes. Massachusetts renewed the effort to enlist Indian cohorts a year later, when an embassy of Mohawks caused a sensation in Boston, but the war ended before any effective assistance could be obtained.233

233 Samuel Penhallow, the principal contemporary historian of Dummer’s War, in The History of the Wars of New-England With the Eastern Indians. (Boston: Fleet for Gerrish and Henchman, 1726) attributed the lack of a coalition against the Indians to oversight: "But their not consulting beforehand with the other Governments was certainly a great oversight; who probably would have come into it, and thereby have help’d to support the Charge, which now lay wholly on the Massachusetts and New Hampshire." (Penhallow 88). The account in the Courant of Dudley’s embassy suggests that this was an unjustified criticism of the Massachusetts administration.
French cooperation with the Indians gave Dummer's War an imperial aspect since the New Englanders and the Indians were proxies in the struggle between France and England. The Courant reported in the February 12, 1722, issue the seizure of letters to the Jesuit advisor to the Norridgewalk Indians, Sebastian Ralle, from the governor of French Canada. According to the Courant, the letters contained offers of ammunition and instructed Ralle to keep French support — a violation of the Treaty of Utrecht — confidential. This news projected the struggle against the Norridgewocks onto the scene of international politics, enhancing the importance of the Massachusetts effort and strengthening New England's identification with the imperial tradition of the Age of Marlborough. The Courant's report concluded with the observation "'Tis said his Excellency has wrote to England of this Affair."

As Indian attacks in Casco Bay during the summer of 1722 moved matters to a crisis, the Courant took note of controversy within the Massachusetts administration over the advisability of resuming a state of war. In a letter in the July 23rd issue an anonymous correspondent listed "The chief Reasons that have been urg'd against making a War (so far as I can learn)." The first argument, "Particular Gentlemen having vast Tracts of Land, have settled Families theron Scattering and distant from one another and this Province is not oblig'd to be at the Charge of defending them," referred to the activities of Cooke, Noyes, and the Dudleys. These wealthy proprietors and the homesteaders they were settling in their townships stood to gain handsomely if timbering and fishery activities in Casco Bay should prosper. The author of the letter represented the interest of the middling group of taxpayers

234 This imperial military tradition was a major ingredient in the new-found pride of the American colonials in their membership in the British Empire. The glory of English victories against the French was celebrated by Francis Knapp in his poem Gloria Britannorum: Or, The British Worthies. (Boston: Franklin for Buttolph, 1723), discussed below.
who would bear the war's cost without gaining from its prosecution.\textsuperscript{235} The Courant preferred to side-step the issue of wealthy proprietors and concentrate upon the plight of homesteaders and the Catholic threat, observing that evacuation of the new Maine settlements would not be a solution because “if we should quit them, the Popish Missionaries, who have all along instigated the Indians, will not fail to set them on our Western Frontiers.”\textsuperscript{236}

More characteristic of the wit with which the Courant aspired to approach the politics of the Indian situation was this brief item in the Courant of April 9, 1722:

We hear there is no catching Fish at Winter-Harbour without baiting the Hook with a Gudgeon; and it happens to be so all along the Eastern Shore, as far as the English Settlements. 'Tis thought by many that the Price of Fish will be very high by reason that Bait is so scarce.

The point of the story was a play on the double meaning of the word “gudgeon,” both a trash fish used for bait and a slang term for a gullible person. In its latter meaning the word was a slighting reference to attempts by Shute and the Council to renew the treaty of pacification signed in 1717. In a meeting at Arrowsic in July of 1721, the Indians had delivered an ultimatum to Governor Shute “importing, That if the English did not remove and quit their Land in three weeks, they would burn their Houses and kill them as also their Cattle.” In addition to reinforcing the garrisons a committee of Council members attempted to summon the Indians to further talks but the Norridgewoks “slighted the Message with derision.”\textsuperscript{237} The Courant’s pun on the word gudgeon mocked Shute and the Council for

\textsuperscript{235} The costs were substantial. Military expenditures were by far the largest item in the provincial budget. Penhallow, writing after the end of the conflict, calculated that the government had spent £1000 for each Indian killed: “The Charge of the War in the last three Years was no less than One hundred seventy thousand pounds; besides the constant Charge of watching, warding, scouting, making and repairing of Garrisons, &c. which may modestly be computed at upwards of seventy thousand pounds more.” (Penhallow 128).

\textsuperscript{236} NEC, July 23, 1722.

\textsuperscript{237} Penhallow, 85.
their failed attempts to entreat the Indians and suggested that the conciliatory policy made
the "savages" more insolent.

By the beginning of the summer of 1722, Cooke's party had Governor Shute and
the Council boxed in politically over the Eastern Indians. Public opinion was now in favor
of war, but conflict between the popularly controlled assembly and the Council over finan-
cial accountability and the appointment of a commanding officer left the administration un-
able to act.238 The Old Charter Party, having produced the impasse, was able to make po-
litical capital of it by claiming that Shute was a tool of the Dudleys and the Council a school
of gudgeons duped by savages.239

In the summer of 1722, hostilities escalated and a formal state of war was declared.
These important developments received only glancing treatment in the Courant. Part of the
cause for this may be assigned to the subjective editorial policy of the paper. James
Franklin did not attempt to provide continuous coverage of significant occurrences or even
comprehensively to report events as they occurred. American newspapers had not yet de-
veloped such an editorial policy, although Campbell's News-Letter foreshadowed the idea

238 "The Country at this time was in a surprizing Ferment, and generally disposed to a
War; but the Governour and Council could not readily come into it, considering the vast
Expence and Effusion of blood that would unavoidably follow." (Penhallow, 870).

239 Cooke had taken this line of attack since the early days of the Shute administration
when he clashed with the new governor over rights to mast pine in the Maine woods. "It
was, soon after, insinuated that the governor was a weak man, easily led away, and that
he was in the hands of the Dudleys, men of high [i.e. Tory] principles in government, and
it behoved the people to be very careful of their liberties.... A dispute happened about the
same time between Mr. Bridges surveyor of the woods, and the inhabitants of the
province of Maine, concerning the property of the white pine trees within that province.
Mr. Cooke immediately inserted himself in the controversy, publicly patronized the
inhabitants, and in a memorial to the house of representative charged the surveyor with
male [sic] conduct in threatening to prosecute all who without license from him shall cut
any pine trees in their own ground, which Mr. Cooke alleged they had good right to do,
and he further charged the surveyor with permitting, such persons as could pay him for it,
to cut down the trees which were said to belong to the king." (Hutchinson 166-169).
in its awkward attempt to maintain a "thread of occurrences" in reporting foreign affairs.\textsuperscript{240} The \textit{Courant} was put together in quite a different way. Editorial conferences were social affairs involving the printer and "some ingenious men among his friends, who amused themselves by writing little pieces for this paper."\textsuperscript{241} Stories were written or selected on the basis of the personal interests of this group of young wits. Completeness and continuity were secondary considerations at best.

The \textit{Courant}’s coverage of one of the events in June of 1722, shortly before the formal declaration of hostilities, illustrates how superficially the \textit{Courant} could treat a story when the writers’ attention was focused elsewhere. The issue of June 25, 1722, contained a brief account of an Indian attack on shipping coming up from Nova Scotia:

We have advice from the Eastward, that the Indians there are again in Arms, and have burnt several Houses, kill’d a considerable Number of Cattle, and taken five Men Prisoners, and one or two Sloops bound to this Place, from Annapolis royal. Six Indians came arm’d on board a Scooner, which lay at Anchor, and bound two of the Men (there being but one more on board who made no Resistance) but while they were plundering the Vessel, the men found means to free themselves, and after a short Skirmish threw 4 of the Indians overboard, who (tis said) are all drown’d: The other two made their Escape, and ‘tis said the two Men are pretty much wounded by the Indians.

The \textit{Courant}’s story is a garbling of three separate incidents: Indian attacks on settlements and two separate attacks on sailing vessels. An account of the attacks on shipping was carried in the \textit{Boston News Letter} of June 23, 1722, (i.e. two days before the story appeared in the \textit{Courant}). The account in the \textit{News Letter} stated that Captain Blin had gone ashore with two of his crew and five passengers when “they were seized upon and made Captives by a Dozen of Indians, in whose Company there were about the same numbers of French. The Indians said they had Orders from … [the] Governour of Canada for what they did, and that there was War.” The \textit{Courant} not only missed the important element of

\textsuperscript{240} The effort by John Campbell, editor of \textit{The Boston News-Letter}, to maintain “a thread of occurrences” is analyzed in Clark, \textit{Prints} 188-193.

\textsuperscript{241} Franklin, \textit{Autobiography} 22.
French involvement in the attack, but confused the five passengers seized with the attacks on houses.

After capturing Blin, the Indians fell upon another unsuspecting captain, as the News Letter recounts: “they also took George Lynam and his Sloop at St. John’s a Passenger and two of Master Blin’s Crew slipt from the Indians and got on board the Sloop, cut their Cable, and came away for fear of the Enemies taking both them and her Cargo.”

The Courant’s failure to get the Blin story straight is more surprising because the two crew members who escaped while Blin was being held for ransom on shore made a sworn deposition in which they described their role in the incident (this was the normal procedure for ships arriving in port after a pirate attack). In their statement the sailors claimed that they arrived in Boston on June 20th, five days before the Courant’s story was printed. The Boston Gazette of July 2nd carried the deposition in its entirety.²⁴²

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²⁴² The text of the deposition as given in The Boston Gazette is:

At Sea on Board the Sloop Ipswich off Grand Island the 14th of June 1722, bound from Passamaquada for Boston in New-England.

These may Certify all concerned, that Yesterday about nine a Clock in the Morning after we had saved the said Sloop and Cargo from the Indians at Passamaquada at the great Peril of our Lives, at the mouth of the River at said place we suffered a Birch Canoe to come on Board wherein were Three Frenchmen, one belonging to said Vessel, the other Two Inhabitants on shoar, who brought us off a Paper which they said was from Capt. James Blin Master of said Sloop, who we had left a shoar with Hibbert Newton Esq. his Child, and Mr. John Adams Jun. Prisoners in the hands of the Indians, the said Note mentioning Two pieces of Cloth, Three pieces of Linen and Ribbon, all which Goods were sent ashore by said Two Frenchmen, telling them with all that we would tarry Two Hours for said Prisoners, in a little time they returned from the shoar, and demanded Two pieces of Cloth more, without any Note, saying, the Prisoners were at the Water-side and would be off presently, after we had advised the mate made them answer, that he engaged his Faith that whatever Goods should be agreed upon for their Ransome that were on Board should be delivered upon the delivery of the Captives, but before that was done no more Goods should be delivered from the Sloop, upon which they went ashore, we standing off and on with the said Sloop about Three Hours, the Weather looking bad, the Fogg coming in thick and the Tide near spent were obliged for the safety of our Lives and Vessel to put to Sea, making the best of our way for Boston, where we arrived the 20th of June 1722.

Francis Fredrick
Matthew Bedlington.
Province of the Massachusetts-Bay, Sworn before His Excellency the Governour and Council.
The third part of the story in the Courant on June 23, concerned a separate incident in which six Indians overpowered the crew of an English vessel but were repelled in the act of plundering. This story appeared as a separate item in the Boston News-Letter of June 23, 1722, in clearer form and with more detail than in the Courant two days later.

The outbreak of hostilities on the Eastern frontier was marked by surprize attacks on land and sea by Indians under French command. The Courant’s coverage of the story was garbled and filled with inaccuracies. The blame for this poor coverage cannot be ascribed to a lack of sources because the News-Letter had published a much superior account two days previously which Franklin did not even both to copy accurately. In addition, two of the participants had arrived in Boston five days before Franklin published his account and gave a sworn deposition about Blin’s captivity to provincial authorities. The Courant covered the story so badly not because the facts were hard to get but because the Couranteers were interested in other things.243

An examination of the contents of the issue in which the story of the captured sloops was inserted shows why the story of Captain Savage’s adventure seemed peripheral to Franklin and his friends that week. The lead article of the issue was Silence Dogood’s famous essay on Kitecil verse and the second item another satire of the same elegy on the death of Mehitabel Kitel. These two pieces occupied three quarters of the paper. The Sav-

Attest J. Willard, Secr.

243 Penhallow’s History, which was based largely on newspaper accounts gives this picture of the Blin incident: “Capt. Savage, Capt. Blin, and Mr. Newton, who at this time were coming from Annapolis, and knew nothing of their Ravages, went into Passamaquady for Water. They were no sooner ashore, but found themselves hem’d in by a Body of Indians, the French basely standing by and suffering it. They wanted to divide the Cargo of the Sloop among them, and at last sent Capt. Savage on board to procure some Ransome. But the Wind rising, he was forc’d off, and made the best of his way to Boston: Those that he left (after some Difficulty and Expence) were released.” (Penhallow 86). Penhallow’s account of the ransom request differs somewhat from the deposition by Fredrick and Bedlington, whose account seems designed to protect them from charges of cowardice or piracy.

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age story was sandwiched between two paragraphs of excerpts from the London press and three paragraphs of shipping information which made up that last of the issue's four columns. One may easily imagine the Couranteers roaring in glee at their lampoons of an inept elegy and giving only cursory attention to Captain Savage's close call with the Indians down in Passamaquody.

The Courant's weakness in gathering war news was similarly evident in its coverage of the burning of Brunswick, the attack which precipitated a declaration of hostilities by the provincial government. All three of Boston's newspapers gave versions of the attack, which took place on July 23, 1722; however, their accounts show significant differences of detail. 244

The Boston Gazette gave the story the best coverage, perhaps because, as postmaster, Brooker had access to the most complete accounts. His version of the losses in Brunswick and the size of the opposing forces was the most concrete and his narration of the ambush by Captain Harmon of the Indians who killed Moses Eaton had a sure sense of chronology. The account even managed to infer that Harmon delayed his attack even though he suspected an Englishman was being tortured. 245

244 Press accounts date the incident "On the 12th Instant" because the British Empire remained on the Old Style calendar until 1752. By the eighteenth century the old reckoning lagged eleven days behind the New Style calendar.

245 The text of the Gazette's account is as follows: "On the 12th Instant 60 or 70 Indians by force of Arms drove into the Garrison of Port-George 90 odd Souls, Men, Women & Children almost naked, firing at them & afterwards at the Garrison, having first burnt 5 Houses: they wounded one Person in the Thigh with a Ball, and after about an hour's dispute the Garrison firing sundry Great Guns, Round and Pareridge & Small Arms drove them off, then thereafter (?) to killing the Creatures, & about 80 to 90 Cattle and Horses are missing. A Person who made his Escape from the Indians saw drawn up about a Mile from the said Fort between 4 & 500 Indians. Capt. Harmon being Apprized of these Proceedings of the Indians, imarked on board a Sloop with [illegible] and went up Kennebec River 7 or 8 miles from Brunswick to observe the motion of these Indians and by the Fires they had made (it being Night) discovered the place where they were camped. Captain Harmon was fairly persuaded the Indians had shed blood, by their behavior & the manner of their Dancing and Rejoying which proved too true. When their uncommon mirth was over which was about 1 aClock in the Morning Capt. Harmon & Company
The Boston News-Letter's account of the attack contained little of the detail in the Gazette. Campbell's version of Harmon's pursuit was also sketchy and the story of Moses Eaton missing entirely. The account was rounded out with an editorial notice warning towns on the frontier to be on guard, advice whose timeliness must be considered limited in view of the efficiency with which Boston's weekly newspapers could be distributed to isolated garrisons.

The account of the attack on Brunswick in the Courant was attached almost as an afterthought to a letter attempting to shift the focus of concern about the Indians away from the role of wealthy land speculators onto the issue of the honor of the province in its obligation to defend the homesteaders (i.e. the political rather than military dimension of the conflict). The Courant's account of the destruction caused by the Indians was generalized

perceiving the Indians were gone to Rest (by the Fires they had made extinguishing) went on shoar, where they found a Part of them asleep, and fell upon 'em & killed 18 or 20. Then after looking over their Slain, they found the Hand of a White Man laid upon a Stump, & the Body to which it belonged hard by, which the Indians had most barbarously murther'd by cutting his Tongue out & cutting off his Nose & private Parts; besides having given him innumerable Stabs & Wounds all over his Body. Capt. Harmon brought off the body to Brunswick in order to be Interred, and found it was the Body of Moses Eaton whose Brother lives there. One of Capt. Harmon's Company (notwithstanding his care) was left behind, but whether dead or alive is uncertain. The Principal Body of the Indians had presently Notice of what had happened by some of the Parties escaping which they fell upon; And in a short time after Capt. Harmon & his Company were got off, they saw the Indians come firing through the Woods after them, and heard them Yell and Bawl in a most hideous manner. The Indians that were killed had by them several Quarters of Horses & Neat Cattle, and some Arms which they had taken from the Houses they had burnt."

246 The News-Letter's account is as follows: "We are Informed That the Indians at the Eastward have Burnt and Destroyed Brownswick town, the Inhabitants were drove by them into the Garrison: A Party of the forces under the Command of Captain Johnson Harman, sent from hence to cover the Eastern Settlements just arriving there, and hearing what spoil the Indians had made on the said Town the Day before, went in quest of the Enemy that Night, who Killed and Destroyed about 18 or 20 of them, and brought away with them about 15 Firelocks.

And therefore all the Frontier Towns in a special manner, are hereby Advertised to be on their Guard, by keeping a very strict Watch and Ward against their Barbarous, Murdering Adversaries, which seldom of never appear or face any in the Day time, but in the silentest time of the Night."
and the burning of Brunswick mentioned only in passing. Harmon's counter-attack was also treated synoptically with no mention made of the death of Eaton, although the story does contain the fact that a second party of Indians was camped nearby and that Harmon's troops were traveling by boat. The statements "We have certain advice...," and "We are likewise inform'd..." imply that the Courant's story was pasted together from two accounts.247

The weakness of the Courant's coverage of events in Casco Bay may be attributed to the paper's position in Boston's world of print as well as the editorial focus of its writers. The Courant appeared in Boston as a brash, anti-establishment newcomer. As such it had neither the close ties to the provincial administration of Campbell's long-established News-Letter nor the semi-official status and access to dispatches of Postmaster Brooker's Gazette. Through its connection to Cooke's Boston Caucus and the Old Charter Party, the Courant possessed excellent sources for stories on municipal and legislative politics, but these sources were of little use in covering the burning of Brunswick.

By the standards of later journalism the coverage of Dummer's War in the Courant seems curiously detached. The paper was quick to deflect popular dissatisfaction away from leaders of the Old Charter Party and onto the Council. Franklin and his associates also expressed sympathy for the plight of Maine settlers and horror at the barbarism of the Indians. Yet beyond these conventional attitudes the Courant evinced little interest in the con-

247 The Courant's version of the story is as follows: "We have certain Advice from the Eastward (since the Date of the above Letter) that the Indians have kill'd one Man, and are daily plundering the People of their Cattle and Goods, and burning their Houses. We are likewise inform'd (by some Persons lately come from the Eastward) that Capt. Johnson Harmon, being advis'd of a Body of Indians who had burnt the Town of Brunswick, went after them with his Company the Night following, and finding them asleep, kill'd 18 of them on the Spot, with the Loss of but one of his own Men. 'Tis said there was a considerable Body of Indians at a Small Distance, who were alarm'd by the Firing; so that the English were oblig'd to take their Boats and come off."
lict. The paper's coverage of major events was often weaker than either the News-Letter or the Gazette and important facts were omitted even when first-hand accounts were available.

The Courant’s treatment of Dummer’s War was unenthusiastic because the conflict was peripheral to the paper's central concern: the formulation of an identity, confected from Real Whig political ideas, polite literature, and London-oriented sophistication of manners, for New England provincials. Neither the enemy nor the location of Dummer’s War lent itself to the paper’s principal themes. Moreover, the mimetic impulse of the Couranteers, their tendency to think of themselves in terms and images derived from metropolitan rather than local sources, could find no satisfactory outlet on the uniquely American terrain of Indian warfare. Identification with the triumph of Parliament and Protestantism over Stuart absolutism and Catholicism, culminating in the Glorious Revolution and the coronation of William and Mary, was the foundation of a new American sense of self-worth. Popular leaders like Cooke were quick to associate their struggles against royal governors with the struggle of Parliament against the Stuarts. British defeat of Louis XIV was the mainspring of a new-found pride in the British Empire. However, the gigantic disparities between military conditions in Europe and America made any parallel between the triumphs of Marlborough and the fight against the Eastern Indians difficult to sustain. The creation of an image of the American military which could stand beside the political self-image derived from the Real Whigs was an important goal of the Courant.

At the peak of Dummer’s War, the Courant carried an advertisement for a newly-published poem which was a clear expression of colonial pride in British military triumphs. "GLORIA BRITANNORUM: Or, The British Worthies," was described as a poetic essay on "the Characters of the most Illustrious Persons in Camp or Cabined since the Glorious Revolution." Its author, characterized as "a Lover of the present happy Constitution," was
Francis Knapp and his printer was James Franklin. Knapp's father, George, had been the captain of a ninety-gun station ship on the American coast in the early part of the eighteenth century. Like the Franklins, the Knapps had family on both sides of the Atlantic. Francis Knapp was part of the flow of immigrants which kept New England in touch with contemporary metropolitan culture.

Francis Knapp's literary production was scholarly rather than popular. His Gloria Britannorum was at once a paean of praise to the British Empire and a tutorial for American colonials on leading figures in English political life. Knapp's poem was one of only two works Franklin printed for Buttolph. These were Buttolph's only patriotic publications during the period James Franklin worked in Boston. Franklin may have promoted Knapp's poem to Buttolph; it certainly harmonized with the editorial policy of his newspaper.

The Duke of Marlborough died in 1722, so the second part of Knapp's work, his ode "On the Immortal Memory of that ever Renowned and Victorious Prince and General, JOHN Duke of Marlborough, Prince of Mindelheim, &c." must have been composed.

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248 *NEC*, March 11, 1723.

249 An ancestor, John Knapp, was one of the founders of Groton, Massachusetts. Another Knapp settled in Watertown and Francis came to New England because he inherited land there from his grandfather. John's daughter, Elizabeth, suffered demonic possession of which she was cured by the eminent clergyman Samuel Willard. Willard's account of Elizabeth Knapp's possession was published in 1672 as *A Brief Account of a Strange and Unusual Providence of God Befallen to Elizabeth Knapp of Groton*. Her case was cited, based on Willard's account, by Increase Mather in his *Illustrious Providences*.


251 The other was Care's *English Liberties*. 

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shortly before Franklin printed it.\textsuperscript{252} Knapp was over fifty when he wrote the ode on Marlborough's death; \textit{Gloria Britannorum} must have been written considerably earlier since in it he spoke of himself as a young poet:

For Wisdom fam'd, the rude Attempt excuse,

Accept an Off'ring from an Infant Muse. (Knapp 2)

The poem's closing lines are equally obsequious. Knapp suggested that not only his youth but his provincial status may have unfitted him for his subject:

But where, presumptuous Muse! dost thou aspire,

Thy Genius toucht not with the sacred Fire;

Forebear on such a mighty Theme t'engage,

Not Sing of Patriots with unequal rage;

Rather some humble Country Subject choose,

That better suits thy Lyre, and feeble Muse,

Then on so great, so vast a Subject dwell,

Which only thou in mean ignoble Verse canst tell.\textsuperscript{253}

Justification for such feelings of inferiority would not have been hard to find. The size of the forces engaged, their composition — the lack of cavalry or artillery units — and, above all, the "savage" nature of the enemy made it difficult for provincials to associate the struggle against the Eastern Indians with Marlborough's victories in the War of the

\textsuperscript{252} The ode is in twelve stanzas, printed on the last three-and-a-half pages of the thirty page book.

\textsuperscript{253} Knapp, \textit{Gloria Britannorum}, 24. Writing three years later, the New Hampshire historian of Dummer's War, Samuel Penhallow, would express a sense of the inferiority of provincial arms similar to Knapp's apologetic presentation of provincial letters: "And tho' our Actions in this War can bear no comparison with those of our British Forces, (which have caused the World to wonder) yet not to mention the braver of these Worthies, who died in the Bed of Honour, and for the interest of their Country, would be denying them the Honour that is due unto their Memory, and a burying them in Oblivion. The mourning Drum, the Lance and Ensigns trail, The Robes of Honour all in Sable vail." (Penhallow 116-117).
Spanish Succession. The lack of an aristocratic class presiding through a regimental structure over a more-or-less professional army of long-service recruits gave the military a fundamentally different social function in Boston than in London. The militia, composed of able-bodied, free males of military age required to train locally on militia days or pay a fine, enjoyed a heightened prestige during the years of Queen Anne's War. By the 1720s however, military service was quite out of fashion in a town given over to mercantile competition and polite learning. On September 14, 1724, the Courant sadly observed that whereas formerly the "best men" in the province as well as merchants joined the militia, "now there is not so much as a Merchant's Boy that will train: Nay, the very Leather-Apron-Men's Apprentices scorn to carry a Gun, while they can rake up Five Shillings to pay their Fine."

The reference to Leather-Apron-Men's Apprentices, i.e. the lowest urban social class with pretensions to respectability, was significant because this was the group to which the Franklins belonged. The leather-apron men, shopkeepers and artisans, were the backbone of Cooke's Boston Caucus. They and their apprentices represented the lower limits, in terms of social standing, of the Courant's readership. Lack of economic incentive and status evidently made militia service unattractive even to this group.

In the following week's issue the anonymous "Scandberg" continued his thoughts on the lack of status in militia service, suggesting that the situation in Boston differed from that in the surrounding towns, where militia titles "command as much Veneration from the People as Right Honourable or Right Reverend, in our native Isle. ...But in this Town of Boston it is not so," Scandberg continued, "for here the prophane vulgar esteem these Offices fit to be sustain'd only by such as Jereboam of old advanc'd to the Priesthood.\footnote{NEC, September 21, 1724. Jereboam staffed the temple with priests not of the tribe of Levi, an act which became a type for promotion of the unqualified. Willard accused the Anabaptists of this sin for ordaining uneducated men and at the time of the Cutler apostasy the comparison was made by Anglicans critical of non-episcopal ordination. Scandberg's use of the allusion in military affairs was a bit forced and was probably a result of contemporary religious controversy.} 254
The author's reference to the status value of certain titles "in our native Isle" was indicative of the metropolitan frame of reference in which Englishmen in America viewed questions of social status. While it is possible that the writer was born in Britain, it is equally likely that the word "native" was used in the sense of "ancestral." The author was addressing Bostonians in general, not just British immigrants; the readers of the Courant preferred to think of themselves as Englishmen.255

The Courant's essay gave an estimate of attendance figures for the Boston militia, which should have mustered eight 300-man divisions. The author's statement that "there are but about 60 Train" in each division suggested an absentee rate of 80%. For the rank-and-file lack of economic incentive was an important factor. The author observed that "the Regiment in the Common, for the greatest part, consists of Irish and Jersey Boys, Porters and Draymen," and claimed that even "the Porters are above Training, they can earn more at Straining in the Time."

For the merchants and artisans of the town, lack of social status, and in particular the mockery of female observers, seems to have been a consideration. "For how scandalous does it look," Scandberg asked rhetorically, "to see a Man of credit, and Master of a Family, to lug a Musket thro' the Streets, in the middle of a Rank of greasy Teaguelandish Slubberdegullians, while the Girls and Women point from the Shops and windows, and laugh at him as he goes?"

Although the status of militia service was higher in country towns, the level of training, at least in marching drill, was hardly much better. Writing in the issue of December 2, 1723, a "Captain Struttingham" inquired about the value of companies trained in ru--

255 There was a small but significant amount of immigration to Boston from England during the 1720s of skilled tradesmen such as printers, picture framers, dancing masters, and the like. A number of these purveyors of imported British elegance advertised their goods and services in the pages of the Courant. On the development of Boston's artisan class, see Gary B. Nash, Urban Crucible.
eral areas where recruits were drilled "to face about to the Stump-Yard, or turn about to the Barn." To the lack of social approval there were added the dangers of participation in a force of ill-trained and unmotivated amateurs. On September 24, 1724, the Courant reported a training accident on the Common in which "one of the men having carelessly loaded his Piece with a musket Ball, it went tho' one man's Leg, split the But of another's musket, and struck a third in the knee."

Under such conditions it was not surprising that New England's best fighters came not from the Boston militia but from frontier settlements. Perhaps due to the glamour that attached to captains like Lovewell and Harmon during the war, there seems to have been an increase in military interest and smartness among the militia in the towns surrounding Boston. On October 23, 1725, the Courant reported on a general muster held at Charlestown involving six companies of foot and two of horse. The paper commented that companies from outlying towns "discover'd a far greater Degree of the Military Spirit than in our Boston Militia." A particularly dashing contingent was the "Charlestown-Wood Men, who appear'd in their Regimental Apparel; that is to say their Hatts were all bound with White Paper, and some of them had blue Stockings clock'd with White."

With the Charlestown-Wood Men as its best-dressed unit, it is easy to see how the Massachusetts militia failed to satisfy the desire of the Courant's readers to identify their province with the military glories of Marlborough.

Despite absenteeism and low morale in the Boston militia there was a wide audience eager to celebrate Captain Harmon's victory at Norridgiwock, an audience whose interests and orientation were quite different from sophisticated admirers of Francis Knapp. At the end of the last column of the Courant of August 31, 1724, appeared an advertisement for "An Excellent new Song, Entituled, The Rebels Reward: Or, English Courage display'd. Being a full and true Account of the Victory obtain'd over the Indians at Norrigiwock, &c. Illustrated with a curious Cut." The subject of this advertisement was a broadside which, in doggerel verse set to the familiar tune "All You that Love Good Fellows," provided an ex-
tended and dramatized account of the night fight on the banks of the Kennebec July 23, 1722.\textsuperscript{256}

The broadside ballad-and-woodcut was a venerable literary form with a decidedly popular flavor.\textsuperscript{257} The broadsides published by the Franklin press were part of a print culture quite different from that of the Courant. Verse set to a well known tune was designed to facilitate memorization and subsequent oral transmission. The traditional woodcut illustration gave a visual interpretation of the climax of the story in a form accessible to the illiterate. Franklin's woodcut was typical of the genre: highly stylized, synoptics, and of low artistic quality.

\textsuperscript{256} The actual title of the tune used for "The Rebels' Reward" was "The London Apprentice." Common ballad tunes such as this were frequently referred to by the first line of the original verse. The tune was well known on both sides of the Atlantic, having been printed and re-printed many times in Thomas D'Urfey's \textit{Pills to Purge Melancholy}. Franklin used the same tune for his broadside in celebration of Captain Lovewell, discussed below. The melody is given in Otis G. Hammond, "Captain Lovewell's Battle With the Indians at Pigwacket," \textit{Bulletin of the Folk-Song Society of the Northeast} 4, (1932) 3.

\textsuperscript{257} Young Benjamin's first published works had been broadsides: "My brother, supposing it might turn to account, encouraged me and induced me to compose two occasional ballads. One was called 'The Light-House Tragedy,' and contained an account of the shipwreck of Captain Worthlake with his two daughters; the other was a sailor's song, on the taking of the famous Teach, or 'Blackbeard,' the pirate. They were wretched stuff, in street-ballad style; and when they were printed by brother sent me about the town to sell them. The first sold prodigiously, the event being recent and having made a great noise. This success flattered my vanity; but my father discouraged me by criticizing my performances and telling me verse-makers were generally beggars." (Franklin \textit{Autobiography} 15).
Figure twelve shows the broadside woodcut of "The Rebels Reward." At the left of the picture is the palisaded Indian village of Norridgiwock. Father Ralle's flag, with its five crosses and four bows-and-arrows flies from the church. Before the village and floating in the Kennebec are the bodies of the slain Indians. The English are drawn up in close order on the right side of the picture, smoke curling from their muskets. The background of the picture is composed of two highly stylized and conventional elements. The landscape is left entirely blank with a horizon of trees and hills suggested in outline by a series of simple straight lines at acute angles. The sky is a series of parallel, slightly curved striations. Both these conventions deny the woodcut a sense of depth in order to allow a clearer presentation of foreground elements, the outline of the village and the English. The rippling waves of the Kennebec river are also portrayed conventionally in a pattern of gouged ovals. The woodcut is intended as a glyph in which key elements are conventionally reproduced to convey an idea rather than to reproduce a visual impression. The iconographic elements of the "curious Cut" were combined with typographic elements shown in figure thirteen to create a banner across the four columns of the ballad text.
The Rebels
Reward:

OR,

English Courage Display'd
BEING
A full and true Account of the
Victory obtain'd over the Indians
at Norrigiwock, on the Twelfth
of August last, by the English
Forces under Command of Capt.
Johnson Harmon

fig. 13 Title cut: "The Rebels Reward"

To the left of the woodcut at the top of the broadside was the title, set in several sizes of type and widely leaded to give a dramatic, visual effect and be easily read at a distance: Beneath this banner of words and graphic the text of the ballad was set in four columns. Like all broadsides, "The Rebels Reward" was printed unfolded on one side of a sheet.

"The Rebels Reward" showed a mastery of the traditional broadside ballad in form and typographical format. Franklin's shop had the capacity to produce woodcut illustrations following the conventions of that genre and to integrate the woodcut with columns of text. This capability was not surprizing in the shop of a printer who had served a formal apprenticeship in London, where similar broadsides were turned out in large numbers.

That Franklin printed "The Rebels Reward" as a separate broadside rather than in the pages of the Courant says much about how the printer and his accomplices viewed their newspaper. Franklin printed a good deal of poetry, including verses of his own, in the Courant but none were in the popular form and prosaic narrative style of the broadside bal-
Such pedestrian literature was, in fact, frequently mocked in the letters and essays of the *Courant*, which was an enthusiastic advocate of the formal poetry of the Augustan style. To provincial versifiers enamored of Pope and Cowper, tavern ballads were the antithesis of polite style and metropolitan sophistication. As Couranteers, James Franklin wrote witty satires about sexual indiscretions while Benjamin mocked the ineptitude of New Englanders whose incomplete grasp of formal poetics produced Kitelic verse. As tradesmen, the Franklin brothers exploited a profitable market for broadsides like "The Rebels Reward" that were beneath the editorial standards of the *Courant*.

The *Courant* rejected the graphic element of the broadside as well as the popular ballad verse form. The *Gazette* carried two woodcut illustrations, a ship and a post rider, at the top of its banner. Like the *Boston New-Letter* however, the *Courant*'s banner had no graphic component. Franklin struck a middle course between his two rivals by using an illuminated capital for the first word of the opening essay. With this choice the young printer achieved a look for his sheet that distinguished it at a glance from the other two Boston newspapers.

Early newspapers did not make use of woodcuts to illustrate news stories because the newspaper was essentially a verbal rather than graphic medium. The illustrated newspaper did not come into being until the nineteenth century when new techniques allowed engravings of greater clarity and detail than did the woodcut. The severe limitations which the woodcut medium imposed on all but the most skilled carver gave it the quality of an abstract or symbolic glyph rather than the representational quality of an etching. Because of its abstract quality, the woodcut was in some senses an alternative to the act of reading as

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258 One critic has suggested that the differences in style between the James Franklin's verses in the *Courant* and the broadsides he printed on Harmon and Lovewell prove that he could not have been the author of the popular ballads. This argument is not convincing given the statements in Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography* cited above and the ability of authors to work in both popular and cultivated genres if it suits their interests. See Hammond, 3-8.
much as a complement. Like the printed word, the woodcut was decoded rather than viewed. The fact that woodcut illustrations were not used in the British newspapers that were his models certainly played an important part in Franklin’s decision to omit such illustrations in the *Courant*. The old fashioned nature of the woodcut illustration and its close association with street ballads were a further deterrent to experimenting with it in his newspaper.

The contents of the broadside sheet “The Rebels Reward” were inappropriate for the *Courant*; they were, however, of interest to Franklin and at least part of the market since his press produced a number of broadsides and, according to Benjamin, some of them sold prodigiously. As “The Rebels Reward” was not offered for sale until a month after news of Harmon’s victory reached Boston and since Franklin advertised the broadside in the pages of the *Courant*, it seems likely that most purchasers of the sheet bought it not because it was their first news of the fight but because it gave additional details, “a full and true account,” and because it placed the event into a larger interpretive context of patriotic significance.

In contrast to Knapp’s elevated invocation to the muses, the author of “The Rebels Reward” opened his verses with an address to soldiers:

> You jolly hearted soldiers,
> Whose Courage ne’er was stain’d,
> Come listen to my ditty,
> a truer ne’er was penn’d.

Although nothing in Captain Harmon’s actions seemed to bespeak exceptional bravery — indeed his waiting to attack until the Indian campfires had died down even though he suspected a captive was being tortured suggested that he placed discretion before valor — the author asserted that his courage against the Indians “to all the world is known.” The opening lines, along with the sub-title “English Courage Display’d,” suggested that courage was the theme of the poem, although the Englishness of that virtue, which presumably united
the audience with Captain Harmon as well as the British military tradition, was somewhat difficult for the author of "The Rebels Reward" to demonstrate.259

One of the ways in which "The Rebels Reward" strengthened the reader's (or listener's) sense of identification with English military tradition was through the depiction of the Indians as rebellious i.e. disloyal subjects in contrast to the English. The assertion of sovereignty over the Eastern Indians made by the provincial government was based on the provisions of the Treaty of Utrecht, to which the Indians were not a party. The government of Massachusetts Bay had made the English position clear in a meeting with French officials at Quebec in the fall of 1724, asserting that "in as much as the Boundaries between the Two Crowns were firmly fix't that all the Indians inhabiting this side of L'Accadie, must of consequence belong to the Crown of Great Britain."260 The French, as well as the Indians, took the position that the latter were an independent nation. Massachusetts policy recognized the existence of Indian tribes as political entities with whom land purchases could be arranged and boundaries agreed, but remained vague on the degree of independence or

259 A considerably less heroic presentation of Harmon's attack on Norridgewalk was given by Father de la Chasse, superior general of the missions to New France: "There were not above fifty fighting men in the village. These took to their arms and ran out in confusion, not with any expectation of defending the place against an enemy already in possession, but to favor the escape of their wives, their old men and children, and to give them time to gain the other side of the river, of which the English had not then possessed themselves. The noise and tumult gave Father Rasles [sic] notice of the danger his converts were in. Not intimidated he went out to meet the assailants in hopes to draw all attention to himself and secure his flock at the peril of his own life. He was not disappointed. As soon as he appeared, the English set up a shout, which was followed by a shower of shot, and he fell near a cross which he had erected in the middle of the village, and with him seven Indians, who had accompanied him to shelter him with their own bodies. The Indians, in the greatest consternation at his death, immediately took to flight, and crossed the river, some by fording, others by swimming. The enemy pursued them until they entered far into the woods; and then returned, and pillaged and burnt the church and the wigwams. Notwithstanding so many shot had been fired, only thirty of the Indians were slain, and fourteen wounded. After having accomplished their object, the English withdrew with such precipitation that it seemed rather a flight than a victory. (2 Coll. Mass. Hist. Soc., viii, 254-255)

sovereignty the Indians possessed. The final peace treaty of 1725, for example, referred to the Indian signatories as British subjects of a sort.  

On the other hand, the tenor and content of the negotiations leading up to the treaty suggested that both sides recognized the Indians as negotiating from a position of some sort of sovereignty or at least independence. In the event, the question was settled by arms rather than legal argument: Indian independence continued only as long as the Indians were able to maintain it by force. The author of "The Rebels Reward" chose to emphasize the subordination of the Indians, and hence their rebel status, because it suited his purposes rather than because the Indians’ status as subjects of King George was universally recognized among the provincials, much less among the Indians themselves.

A second point of identification with English military tradition was the depiction of Dummer’s War as an action against a French enemy, placing the action within the conceptual frame of the circle of enemies. Like the question of Indian independence, the issue of French involvement was an ambiguous one. The French maintained that the Indians were independent of their control, although friendly relations permitted them to mitigate Indian barbarities and arrange the ransom of prisoners. The New-Englanders preferred to see the French as in controlling the Indians, supplying them with ammunition and supplies and manipulating their activities through the sinister figure of the Jesuit missionary, Sebastian

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261 In the treaty document the Indians were described as “being now sensible of the Miseries and Troubles they have involved themselves in, and being desirous to be restored to his Majesty’s Grace and Favour, and to live in Peace with all his Majesty’s Subjects of the said three Governments and the Province of New-York and Colony’s of Connecticut and Rhode Island, and that all former Acts of Injury be forgotten." (Penhallow, 109).

262 The proceedings of this conference were published as The Conference With the Eastern Indians, at the Ratification of the Peace, held at Falmouth in Casco-Bay, in July and August, 1726. (Boston: Green for Eliot, 1726, Evans, 2751). The Norridgewocks did not attend this conference.
Ralle. The Courant recognized the enemy in triad formation in the issue of April 9, 1722, when, referring to changes in the militia leadership issued the warning "stand clear, jesuits, French and Indians." On August 12, 1723, the paper reported renewed support for the Indians by the French, and blamed this encouragement for the rejection of mediation efforts by the Five Nations to end the war. In November, the Courant reported that "On Sunday Night the 17th Instant, several French Gentlemen arrived in Town from Canada" with a warning that the English were violating the peace by attacking the Indians and demanding that a boundary line be established by mutual agreement. In the later stages of the war the provincial government got the British ambassador at Versailles to request cessation of French support for the Indian cause, but hostilities were terminated before any practical results were obtained. French influence with the Indians was perhaps not as powerful as the English believed, but there is no doubt that in the Jesuit Sebastian Ralle the Indians had an advisor as well as religious leader.

Father Ralle's status as an agent of the French connected the struggle against the Indians to larger issues of imperial politics and facilitated, to some degree at least, identification of the Indians with the enemies of Marlborough and Ormonde. From the colonial

263 Father Ralle was one of the many Jesuit missionaries who worked in Indian missions from Canada to Paraguay in the early eighteenth century. He was born of a good family in Franch-Comte in 1657 and had lived among the Penobscots since his arrival in New France in 1680. According to Belknap, he was "a man of superior sense and profound learning; and particularly skilled in Latin, which he wrote with classical purity." (Belknap, History, vol. 1, 207) Details of Ralle's life are to be found in 2 Coll. Mass. Hist. Soc. viii, 250-257.

264 The Courant reported the request to the Board of Trade on December 11, 1725. News that "Instructions have been sent from London to the Ambassador at the Court of France, to solicit an Order to be sent to the French Government at Canada, not to intermeddle, for the future in the War between the Indians and English" was reported on February 5, 1726.

265 According to popular rumor, Ralle was "said to be an Irish man born." (NEC, August 24, 1724). Such an identification would turn the Jesuit's status from that of an enemy to one of traitor, identifying him with James II's followers and, by association, giving his New-England opponents some of the aura of King William's victorious supporters in the battle of the Boyne.
rather than imperial viewpoint, Ralle was something of a traitor to his white or European identity because of his assistance to the Indians. Here, from the New England perspective, was one of the subsidiary evils of the Catholic profession. In the initial stages of the conflict Cotton Mather toyed with the idea of winning Ralle over to Protestantism and hence to the English cause, recording in his diary for September 11, 1718, "I would make an Essay towards it by writing largely in the Latin tongue unto him." 266

Sebastian Ralle formed an important link in the circle of enemies, connecting the Indians directly to the French and hence to the Jacobites. To Ralle's Catholicism was attributed a pernicious religious doctrine "of meriting Salvation by the destruction of Heretics," 267 In "The Rebels Reward" this reproach, grounded in a rejection of the Catholic doctrines concerning the sacrament of confession rather than a denial of divine support for righteousness armed, was simplified into the lines:

These all were come together

to make their horrid Dins,

Whenas their Priest pretended

to pardon all their Sins.

Ralle's Frenchness was as significant for its implied Catholicism as for the more secular issues of British foreign policy. Catholicism was the connecting link between the French and their English allies, the Jacobites.

The honor of a combat being determined by the status of the opponent, it was flattering to the English identity of Massachusetts to emphasize the associations of the Indians with the French empire. One of the few details of the fight which could support such association was the capture of Ralle's flag, a heraldic device carefully illustrated in the poem's

266 Mather Diary, 554.

267 Penhallow, 106.
accompanying woodcut and described in the text in a way that associated it with idolatry and the false Christian doctrine of the French Jesuit:

Old Rallees Flag they got
which the Indians did adore.
On which were Crosses many
and bows and Arrows four.
This did our Honest Soldiers
their Honour to preserve

Capturing the colors of the enemy was a ritual form of triumph which gave the fight at Norridgiwick a traditional, European "feel." In a similar vein, the poem spoke of the honor of the English soldiers, a problematical consideration in view of the style of English warfare against the Indians in which non-combatants were routinely slaughtered. The poem's description of the death of the Indian leader Moug captured some of the ruthlessness of the encounter: Moug had already surrendered to the English and informed them that he was expecting reinforcements from the Penobscots:

This said, and Indian Soldier
whose Brother Moug did kill,
Took up his trusty Musket
and did this Villain kill
His wife and two young Children
were then dispatch'd with speed.
Who sat in tears bewailing,
and for their Lives did plead.

The poem did attempt to shift some of the opprobrium for the dishonorable treatment of the captured Moug by ascribing his killing to one of the Indian allies motivated by his own brother's death at Moug's hands, but this was only a partially successful device for two reasons. First, it put the English in the same ambiguous relationship to their Indian
allies as that for which they repeatedly criticized the French. Second, even if the killing of Moug could be explained, the deliberate slaughter of captured women and children remained a dishonorable act by contemporary standards of military conduct. Nevertheless, the taking of prisoners may have presented Harmon and his men with logistical problems after the action, as transportation and security would have been difficult in an amphibious night attack. Because the English were in the vicinity of other Indian forces, there was the additional danger that captives would give away the English position at any moment. On the other hand, it is hard to see what harm would have been done by letting unarmed women and children go.

A second element of English warfare with the Indians which did not fit the European code of military honor was the selling of captives into slavery. This practice, which the English colonists had resorted to since the early days of the Bay colony, was referred to in lines which suggest it was an alternative to killing other women and children on the spot:

They brought away a Squaw
and likewise Children three
Which only were preserved
our bond Slaves for to be

The English had a long experience of taking both hostages and prisoners from the Indians. A number of these were confined in Boston at various points in the course of Dummer's War. The fact that one woman and three children were taken as prisoners to be sold as slaves suggests that the killings of Moug's family was a deliberate, and dishonorable, act of terrorism and revenge.

The issue of captive women and children illustrates the gap that existed between ideals of military conduct derived from the European wars, which were the source of the colonists' ideals, and their actual behavior, which was dictated by local circumstances. Conflict between how the colonists felt they ought to behave and what they felt actually
constrained to do was an important dynamic in the identity of provincial New Englan-
ders. 268

The hit-and-run warfare against the Eastern Indians subjected non-combatants on
both sides to death and capture. Out of the experiences of Elizabeth Hanson and her chil-
dren came an account of captivity among the Indians that was to become a classic of New
England colonial literature. Accounts of captivity among the Indians were such a popular
genre in early American literature in part because of the flexible nature of the form, which
was capable of expressing the changing attitudes of English colonials toward Indians, so-
ciety, nature, religion, sexuality, and other topics relevant to the captive’s tale. 269 Dummer’s War against the Eastern Indians occurred at the mid-point of a century-long armed
struggle against Eastern Indian tribes backed by French Canada. New England writers pre-
sented the conflict in either of two gendered frames of reference. Broadsides such as “The
Ballad of Lovewell’s Fight” and “The Rebels Reward” represented an aggressive, mili-
taristic perspective characterized by masculine imagery and male behavior. Works written
from this viewpoint emphasized “English Courage” (the sub-title of “The Rebels Reward”)
rather than divine support and tried, with varying degrees of success, to place the military
response of Massachusetts provincials within the heroic-chivalric tradition of British arms.
Association of warfare against the Eastern Indians with the War of the Spanish Succession
was a reflection of growing anglicization and imperial consciousness. The biblical and im-

268 See Nicholas Canny, and Anthony Pagden, eds. Colonial Identity in the Atlantic
ambivalence of the colonist’s response to local conditions.

269 “The very longevity and variety of the form, both as authentic narrative and as fictional
invention, however, suggest it ... accommodated a full range of historical, imaginative,
and psychological matrices, cohering in ... the power of the captivity narratives to express
the community’s sense of the meaning of its experience, to rationalize its actions, and to
move its people to new actions,” Richard Slotkin, Regeneration Through Violence: The
Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860, (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University

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perial models for masculine response to Indian aggression did not completely harmonize.
Preachers suggested that reliance on strength of arms was a form of idolatry, but cos-
opolitan Bostonians glorified the King of England as well as the Lord of Hosts.

Against the masculine story of soldiers battling the Indians for God or King stood a
contrasting feminine vision of widespread and enduring popularity, the captivity narrative.
In this literary tradition the central figure was a woman, a non-combatant minister, or a
child. Its theme was not valor and glory, but bondage and humiliation. The captive was not
heroic but powerless and the focus of the narration was not honor but the redeeming mercy
of God. In its emphasis on helplessness and subjection as much as in the fact that its central
character was frequently a woman, the captivity narrative presented a "feminine" response
to Indian predation while the soldier's ballad and providential battle history provided com-
plementary "masculine" modes. Of the two perspectives on the Indian menace, the feminine
form was by far the more popular. Three of the four narrative works that attained best-
seller status in the colonies between 1680 and 1720 were captivities (the fourth was Bun-
yan's Pilgrim's Progress).\textsuperscript{270} Elizabeth Hanson's account of her experiences as a captive
during Dummer's War spoke from a tradition to which the Courant offered a new alterna-
tive.\textsuperscript{271} What most strikingly differentiated the presentation in the Courant from Hanson's
autobiographical narrative was the former's emphasis on a male redeemer rather than a fe-
male captive. This male "slant" to captivity stories was consistent throughout the Courant's
coverage.

\textsuperscript{270} Wilcomb E. Washburn, ed., "Narratives of North American Indian Captivities," Early

\textsuperscript{271} Roy Harvey Pearce, "The Significances of the Captivity Narrative," American
Literature 19, (1947): 20, pointed out that these narratives reveal more about the English
than the Indian: "And the captivity narrative is interesting and valuable to us, I submit, not
because it can tell us a great deal about the Indian or even about immediate frontier
attitudes towards the Indian, but rather because it enable us to see more deeply and more
clearly into popular American culture, popular American issues, and popular American
tastes." (Pearce 20).
In contrast to the newspaper’s political emphasis, Elizabeth Hanson’s autobiography was one of an intensely personal family tragedy. Hanson’s captivity began with the murder of one of her young children in the dooryard of the family home. The shock of this sight was intensified by post-partum debilitation, “yet for all this,” she explained, “I must go or die. There was no resistance.” So began what was essentially a mother’s story. During the arduous trip to Canada, Hanson was occupied primarily with saving her children. Hanson’s captivity ended in reunion with her husband and their unsuccessful attempt to redeem their oldest daughter. John Hanson subsequently returned to Canada but was unsuccessful in his second effort to redeem his daughter and died on the return journey, telling his companion “that if it was the Lord’s will he must die in the wilderness, he was freely given up to it.”

The narrative of Elizabeth Hanson, like earlier stories of women captured by Indians, told the tale of a woman outside of civilization beset by savages and protected by God’s providence. Even in the hands of traditionalists, a narrative structure devised for such circumstances portrayed a female protagonist functioning outside of the aegis of civil or religious authority; accordingly, printed versions of female captivity narratives were increasingly placed in context by a minister-narrator who, by controlling and interpreting the flow of the story, provided a mediating authority between female experience and the public sphere of printed information.


273 Vaughan, 243.

274 The accounts of the captivity of Hannah Dustin by Cotton Mather illustrate the expanding role of the minister-narrator. Mather first published the Dustin story as part of his Humiliations Followed with Deliverances (Boston, 1697), with a gloss he called “an improvement.” In his Decennium Luctuosum (1699), Mather expanded both the story, which he called “A Notable Exploit, wherein Dux Faeminae Facti,” and his interpolations. By the time Dustin’s narrative appeared in the Magnalia Christi Americana (1702), the

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The story of Elizabeth Hanson’s captivity was published in four separate versions, each of which shaped the account according to different ideological assumptions. The first American edition was printed as an autobiography signed with the initials “E.H.,” by Thomas Keimer (Philadelphia, 1728). In this version there was no mediating minister-narrator and the story was told in the first person.\(^{275}\) However, in the British version of the story, the Quaker preacher Samuel Bownas appears as the minister-narrator. Bownas presented the story in the first person and claimed to have transcribed the narrative directly from Hanson, but interpolated numerous interpretative passages of his own.\(^{276}\)

Before either the American or British versions of Hanson’s story appeared in first-person narrative form, the incident was reported in the Courant and recounted by Samuel Penhallow in his History of the Wars of New-England With the Eastern Indians.\(^{277}\) The original events had become completely interwoven with Mather’s interpretive passages. Contemporary accounts of male captives were more likely to stand on their own. The captivity narrative of John Gyles, Memoirs of Odd Adventures, Strange Deliverances, etc. (Boston, 1726), was printed without ministerial editing. John Williams’ The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion (Boston, 1707) is suffused with interpretive passages but, as the author was a minister, he served as his own editor.

\(^{275}\) Several passages in Hanson’s autobiography reflected her Quaker beliefs and implied criticism of the Congregational clergy. “But the next day after I was redeemed,” she recorded, “the Romish priests took my babe from me, and according to their custom, they baptized it (urging if it died before that, it would be damned like some of our modern, pretended-reformed priests).” (Vaughan, 241).


\(^{277}\) (Boston: Fleet for Gerrish and Henchman, 1726). Penhallow was a friend of Cotton Mather as well as Shute’s closest supporter in the province of New Hampshire. (Someone wrote a letter to the Courant under the name “Tom Penshalow,” criticizing the New Hampshire legislature for supporting Governor Shute.) The real Samuel Penhallow attributed Indian attacks to God’s desire “to humble and prove us, and for our Sins to punish us.” However, he also vindicated the provincial government from responsibility for the Hanson tragedy, pointing out that John Hanson was “a stiff Quaker, full of Enthusiasm, and ridiculing the Military Power, would on no account be influenced to come into Garrison,” and so responsible for his own plight. Like Thomas Symmes’
contrast between the newspaper account and the first-person narratives reveals a number of
the ideological values out of which the Courant was fashioning a new voice in the world of
print.

The Hanson captivity was one of a series of captivity accounts in the Courant, begin-
going in the issue of April 29, 1723, when, the paper reported on “Letherby and his son
killed and four others taken by Indians at Small Point and Casco Bay.” In 1724, when a
number of captives taken in the previous year’s raids began to be ransomed back to New
England, the Courant’s coverage continued to emphasize fathers and sons. A story in the
issue of August 31, 1724, illustrated the factors which interested the Couranteers. “A Man
lately come from Canada, who went to redeem his two Sons, taken some time since, has
brought one of them with him without paying any Ransom,” the paper reported. Turning
from the captivity issue, the Courant related the man’s report that “two English Scalps were
brought in there and publickly expos’d by our Eastern Indians, before he came away,
which he observ’d was very much to the dissatisfaction of the French Mohawks.” This in-
formation was relevant to the policies of the Shute administration, which was endeavouring
to form an alliance with the Mohawks against the Eastern Indians. Such a political focus
was not characteristic of the traditional captivity narrative. The Courant’s informant also re-
counted “that the Governour in his Conversation with him, justify’d the Indian’s Rebellion,
and his People’s supplying them with Ammunition.”

The governor of French Canada, according to the Courant’s account, claimed that
the Eastern Indians “had given him good Reasons for carrying on the War, and he must
believe them till he finds they are contradicted from hence.” The policy of the French
provincial administration was a preoccupation of Massachusetts officials during Dummer’s

Historical Memoir of Lovewell’s fight, Penhallow’s History is an unstable mixture of
providentialism modelled on the Magnalia Christi, and a secular view of Indian wars based
on newspaper accounts.
War. The English position was that the Treaty of Utrecht required the French to desist from any overt or covert hostilities towards English settlements and to restrain "their" Indians from attacks. The French took the position that the Indians were a separate political entity over which they exercised a limited influence. They were generally helpful in assisting in the ransoming of English captives, but supported the Indian contention that the English were violating their agreements with them about trade and settlement. New Englanders were understandably critical of the French policy, which they saw as duplicitous.

The man's negotiations for the release the two sons, as the Courant' recounted it, had none of the human interest presentation of a traditional captivity narrative, despite the emotional tension which must have resulted from having to leave one of the boys behind. Also completely lacking was any reference to divine providence or a moral dimension to the redemption. The story contained no reference to the wife, who presumably was not among the captives and perhaps did not accompany her husband. Readers of the Courant's story would find out nothing about her and, male readers especially, may not have felt anything was lost thereby. The Courant tended to minimize female involvement in captivity stories even when women played a central role. The omission or marginalization of women from captivity accounts in the Courant was a product of the strongly gendered editorial policy of the paper. The paper was written by men and from a masculine point of view. Stories about women and the assumption of a female persona by male writers were interpreted from within the context of a masculine viewpoint.278

The same August 31st issue contained news "by an Express from Albany," that "70 Indians are lately come over the Lake." It was a detachment of that group which fell upon

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278 For masculine versus feminine reading in eighteenth-century journalism see "Fathers and Daughters: Women as Readers of the Tatler" by Kathryn Schevelow and "Reading Ourselves: Toward a Feminist Theory of Reading" by Patrocinio P. Schweickart, both in Elizabeth A. Flynn and Patrocinio P. Schweickart, eds., Gender and Reading: Essays on Readers, Texts, and Contexts, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).
the New Hampshire town of Cocheco (modern-day Dover) and attacked the home of the Hanson family. The report in the Courant of September 7th was brief and consistent with the paper's other accounts in its emphasis on the central role of the father: "On the 27th past the Indians kill'd 2 children of John Handson's, a Quaker at Dover, and carry'd away his Wife, maid, and 4 children."

The outcome of the Hanson family's capture was reported almost exactly a year later in the issue of September 4, 1725, when the paper reported his arrival "from Canada, with his Wife, three Children and a Servant Woman and one Ebenezer Down of Piscataqua and Millis Tomson, a Boy, who were all taken captives about a year past, except the said Handson." The account that "another of his Daughters, about 17 Years of Age, was taken at the same time, with whom he had the Liberty to converse, but could not obtain her Ransom upon any Terms." As in the earlier account, the Courant's story focused primarily on the role of John Hanson as father-redeemer, with no account of the experiences of his wife or the details of his daughter's continuing captivity.

The Courant was completely secular in its presentation of the issue of Indian captivity and concerned with the diplomatic rather than moral dimension of the situation. The Courant's disdain for the Indians was based on cultural rather than religious grounds. Secularized interpretation of the conflict reflected an important shift in the depiction of the Indian. First, as the emphasis on the Indian as an anti-type of the Canaanite or as an instrument of God's chastisement diminished, economic and political interpretation of Indians motives became more subtle. The Courant depicted the Eastern Indians as primitive but effective allies of French imperial power whose activities could be explained in terms of calculated self-interest. Second, as the self-image of New Englanders as a chosen people faded, a degree of relativism began to creep into discussions about Indian culture. James Franklin's editorial policy "To expose the Vices and Follies of Persons of all Ranks and Degrees" mitigated the black-and-white opposition of Indian and English conduct character-
istic of earlier writers. The witty social criticism which was a preoccupation of the paper mitigated, although it by no means eliminated, ethnocentricity and chauvinism. Newspaper accounts of Indian warfare became increasingly distanced from the tradition of the captivity narrative which, as the century advanced, became, in the words of Roy Harvey Pearce, a "vehicle of Indian hatred."

Another effect of the secularized interpretation of conflict with the Indians was a shifting of the patriarchal role from God to ordinary fathers like John Hanson, a change which diminished the role of the clergy. The Courant's numerous stories of captives redeemed were all accounts of a father rescuing his sons and, secondarily, his female dependents and servants. As the male role was strengthened by images of martial valor, the female role became increasingly dependent, passive and emotionalized. This changing social dynamic lay close to the heart of the ideology expressed in the Courant and was the key to the paper's treatment of the issue of captivity by Indians.

The story which Elizabeth Hanson published in Philadelphia in 1728, belonged to the traditional genre of the captivity narrative, and as such differed from the newspaper version in four ways. Where the captivity narrative was personal, the newspaper was polit-

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279 NEC, January 29, 1722: "To expose the Vices and Follies of Persons of all Ranks and Degrees, under feign'd Names, is what no honest Man will object against; and this the Publisher (by the Assistance of his Correspondents) is resolv'd to pursue without Fear of, or Affection to any Man."

280 Pearce, "Captive", 5.

281 Laurel Ulrich comments on the changing standards of feminine conduct revealed in the captivity narratives of the eighteenth century. In comparison to earlier women such as Hannah Dustin or Mary Rowlandson: "A woman like Elizabeth Hanson might identify more closely with the nurturing roles. She would be more trusting of her neighbors, more likely to cross barriers of gender and race in a religious context, but, ironically, even more submissive and obedient, even less likely to resist perceived injustice or oppression, even more reluctant to assume male qualities, and, as a consequence, more fully "feminine" in the nineteenth-century sense." Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England 1650-1750, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 233.
ical and placed the Hanson family's suffering in the context of the relationship between New England provincial authorities, two separate groups of Indian tribes, and the French government at Quebec. Where the captivity narrative employed the rhetoric of religious supplication, the Courant focused on the dynamic of political negotiation, both with Indian captors and French government authorities. Where the captivity narrative described the intense emotions of a believing Christian in a providential world, the newspaper account portrayed purely secular agents making rational decisions. Finally, where Elizabeth Hanson presented her story as that of a woman redeemed by God, the Courant told the story of a woman redeemed in a purely financial sense by her husband. So different were the assumptions of the traditional captivity narrative from those of the Courant that the accounts of the Hanson captivity in the two genres seem to occur in non-intersecting realities. The reason for such discontinuity lay deeper than literary convention; the differing ideologies of Elizabeth Hanson and the Couranteers caused her autobiographical narrative and the newspaper account of her captivity to differ in fundamental ways. In the pages of the Courant a new ideology, which would, when fully developed, be called republican, was coming into being. The older world view, however, died a lingering death. In Boston during the 1720s however, these two ideologies existed side-by-side.
Chapter Four

Lovewell’s Fight: Newspapers and the New Historiography

The successes of Captain Harmon and others on the Kennebec and in Casco Bay formed one part of the Massachusetts strategy against the Eastern Indians. The second part was a flanking movement by land forces into the territory known as Pigwacket, stretching from the eastern shore of Winnipissawcut Pond (Lake Winnipesaukee) to Sebago Lake in Maine. This area was inhabited by Pequaket Indians, a group closely allied to the Norridgewocks.

The terrain was well known to the English militia from the relatively large-scale campaigns that had been conducted during Queen Anne’s War. Pequaket had been invaded by a force of 360 men under Colonel March in 1703 and again in 1710-11 by 270 men under Major Hilton. In the early phases of Dummer’s War the English had invaded the area from the Maine coast to the east. Two expeditions from York County had entered the Pigwacket in 1722 and in 1723 another York company under Captain Sawyard had pursued an Indian band into the White Mountains beyond. An attack on the Pigwacket area from the west would threaten the flank of the Norridgewocks and cut the principal line of communication between the Eastern Indians and their bases in Quebec.

Indian raids in the Merrimack valley in 1724 gave added impetus to the idea of an expedition to attack Pigwacket. John Lovewell, Josiah Farwell and Jonathan Robbins, three young men from the town of Dunstable (the area surrounding modern Nashua, N.H.), petitioned the General Court to form a ranger company to serve for a year upon terms of five shillings a day in addition to the existing bounty of £100 provincial money for each adult male Indian scalp. The legislature offered a daily wage of half the amount re-
quested and upon these terms the newly commissioned Captain Lovewell set out with thirty men on November 26, 1724.

The company took a route up the Merrimack to the Pemigewasset which they followed to Lake Winnepesaukee. They crossed the lake, landing at Ossipee and penetrated about forty miles into Pigwacket, where they killed an adult Indian and captured a boy in his company. Lovewell was acclaimed a hero on his return and bounty money and wages (amounting to about £4 per man) gave additional luster to his company. In consequence, when Lovewell set out again on January 29, 1725, he was accompanied by a force of over eighty. Following the previous route, the force killed a party of ten Indians on the shore of what is now called Lovell Lake in Wakefield, New Hampshire. The company followed the watercourse to Dover, New Hampshire, where they were greeted as heroes. The express account sent ahead by Lovewell from Quochecha (Cocheco, now Dover, New Hampshire) was supplemented by first-hand accounts the following week when some of Lovewell’s men reached Boston. The next day Lovewell himself arrived at Boston and the Courant reported in the issue of March 15, 1725, that he had “receiv’d a Thousand Pounds Reward out of the publick Treasury for himself and Company.”

Prudent reflection might have led to the supposition that the Indians would not allow such a threat in their rear to continue indefinitely, but prudence does not seem to have been one of Lovewell’s characteristics. His third, and as it turned out, final expedition left Dunstable on April 16, 1725. The party was half the size of the previous one, perhaps because the spring plowing made recruitment more difficult. The expedition was plagued by bad luck and bad judgment. While still on the upper Merrimack two of the party and an Indian guide were injured and turned back. After crossing Winnepesaukee another man fell ill and Lovewell imprudently decided to divide his force. His men constructed a log fort at Ossipee in which they left the sick man, the company’s doctor and eight other soldiers.

Pushing on for forty miles or so in the direction of Saco, Maine, the company detected that they were being shadowed by Indians. On Friday, May 7, 1725, they heard In-
dians around their camp at night and the following morning came upon a lone Indian on the
shores of Saco Lake. Lovewell and his men suspected a trap but decided to attack the soli-
tary Indian anyway. Leaving their baggage behind, the group advanced upon their prey and
killed him, though not before he shot Lovewell, who died of his wounds later that day.

The Indian had indeed been a decoy or sentry and on the way back to their baggage
the English found themselves outnumbered and heavily attacked by a Pequacket war party.
Both sides charged, but the English were unable to break out of their position. The fire
fight continued throughout the day until the Indians withdrew under cover of darkness.
Lovewell and eight of his men had been killed and three more were too badly wounded to
walk. The survivors now began a retreat to their position at Ossipee; however, one of their
number had panicked at the beginning of the fight and run away ahead of them. He arrived
at the fort with news that Lovewell was dead and the force surrounded and probably killed.
In a panic, the eleven men abandoned the fort and made their way back to Dunstable. The
survivors of the fight, who had left their wounded in expectation of returning with rein-
forcements, arrived at the fort and finding it deserted, returned to Dunstable without at-
tempts to rescue those left behind. Twelve survivors from the fight reached Dunstable on
May 13, another six eventually made their way to various towns in Maine and New Hamp-
shire.282

In the issue of May 24, 1725, the Courant gave a detailed but flawed account of the
engagement. The Franklin shop had the advantage of two ready versifiers, James and
Benjamin, with the ability to produce broadsides to profit from popular interest in
Lovewell’s fight. The same issue carried an advertisement for “The Voluntier’s March;
being a full and true Account the [sic] bloody Fight which happen’d between Capt.
Lovewell’s Company, and the Indians at Pigwoket. An excellent new Song.”

282 This summary of Lovewell’s final campaign is drawn from the account given by
Two expeditions were sent to search for survivors of the disaster. One, under Colonel Tyng, left Dunstable May 17th. They found the battle site, buried the twelve English casualties and exhumed three Indian graves, identifying Paugus as one of the killed. A second expedition left from New Hampshire and reached the fort at Ossipee without making contact with Tyng’s force or finding any of the abandoned wounded. The encounter demonstrated that English and Indians were on roughly equal terms as fighters, although in this engagement Indian leadership was more skilled than Lovewell’s.

On July 12, 1725, the Massachusetts General Court, responding to the public interest in Lovewell’s fight and a concern for the widows of the men killed, appointed a committee headed by Colonel Stoddard “to take under consideration the Sorrowfull Circumstances of the Widow of Capt. John Lovewell, &c.” The committee report was published in full in the Courant of July 10, 1725. The committee recommended that the full £100 bounty be paid for each of the three dead Indians found by Tyng “although their Scalps were not produced,” and that a pension of £30 each be paid to the thirty-three participants or their heirs.

The same issue of the Courant which carried details of the pensions to be paid by the government carried an advertisement for another publication about Lovewell:

In a few Days will be publish’d, The Rev. Mr. Symmes’s Sermon upon the Death of Capt. Lovewell, &c. in the late Fight at Piggwacket, with a particular Account of that memorable Action, well attested. Sold by Samuel Gerrish, Bookseller, near the Brick meeting House in Cornhill, Boston. Price 1 s. single, or 10 s. per doz.

The final news item related to the Lovewell fight was printed on September 11, 1725, when the Courant reported on the death of Seth Wyman. “He was an Ensign under Capt. Lovewell in his several Marches to the Eastward; and for his uncommon Bravery at the late memorable fight at Piggwacket, his Hon. the Lieut. Governour granted him a Captain’s Commission.” The obituary of Captain Wyman sounded a last, elegiac note in the pages of the Courant of the Pigwacket fight. The synoptic accounts of Lovewell’s adventures as the Courant reported them gave only a glimpse of how the hero of Pigwacket was
perceived by Franklin and his circle of friends and why his deeds seemed so significant. The stories about Lovewell in Pigwacket in the Courant were amplified by two contemporary accounts, a broadside ballad published by Franklin and a Historical Memoir by Thomas Symmes.283

The Courant printed its first account of the fight at Pigwacket on May 24, 1725, with the admission that the material had been available in time for the previous week’s issue “but omitted by Mistake.” The story credited as a source “Lieutenant Wyman and several others who were in the late fight” and claimed that the Courant’s version was “a more particular and certain Account of the fight than has yet been publish’d (i.e. by the Gazette).” Since the advertisement for “The Volunteer’s March” appeared on May 31, 1725, with the statement “Just Publish’d, and sold by J. Franklin,” the broadside must have been composed sometime after May 17 but before the end of the month.284 The advertisement for Symmes’s book in the Courant of July 10, 1725, suggests that the Historical Memoir was then in the press. Both the Franklin poem and Symmes’s book were based on currently available information. Both works are an effort to expand interpretation of the known facts and to place them in a literary context.

Perhaps the most obvious difference between the coverage of Dummer’s War in the Courant and war coverage by modern journalism was the absence of the reporter or war correspondent. James Franklin had no notion of going out to get war news; he edited and

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283 The Franklin ballad, “The Volunteers March,” was destined to become one of the best known and enduringly popular works of early American literature. Although the original has been lost, variants were printed throughout the eighteenth century and continued to inspire other poets until the era of the Civil War. Longfellow’s first poem, for example, was on the subject of Pigwacket. A history of the poem and its descendants can be found in George Hill Evans, Pigwacket: Old Indian Days in the Valley of the Saco. (Conway, NH: Conway, N.H. Historical Society, 1939).

284 Franklin’s authorship is discussed by George Lyman Kittredge in Biographical Essays, A Tribute to Wilberforce Eames (New York, 1924), 121. Otis G. Hammond disputes Franklin’s authorship and argues that the ballad was written by an uncle of James and Benjamin, also named Benjamin. See Hammond, 3-8.
printed the news that came to him. The role of the war correspondent lay more than a century in the future. For news of the war against the Eastern Indians, the Courant depended upon dispatches sent by commanders in the field and accounts of participants who arrived in Boston after the fighting was over.

Provincial military dispatches were directed to the office of the lieutenant governor and made available to members of the elite as well as to Franklin, Musgrave, and Campbell for transcription in the newspapers. Such a report was the basis of the account of Lovewell’s second expedition, “We have Advice by an Express from Capt. Lovewell” (March 1, 1725). Information also came in the form of unofficial communication carried in either written or oral form from frontier towns to the provincial government at Boston and from there relayed to the press. Typical was the Courant’s story of the attack on Merrimack towns which began “We have Advice from Dunstable” (June 7, 1725). Such “advises” could often be little more than rumor or speculation and it was occasionally necessary to print a correction such as that appearing on May 31, 1725, “The Report of Capt. Lovewell’s being alive, proves groundless.” The last word on an important story could not be had until participants arrived in Boston and facts could be obtained by first-hand interview.

The reporting of Lovewell’s last fight at Pigwacket on May 9, 1725, illustrates how a passive approach to news-gathering shaped the presentation given the public through the newspapers. The first accounts of the battle came from the group of men who had been stationed in the fort at Ossipee. Early in the engagement at the pond, some forty miles away, a cousin of Lovewell’s, Benjamin Hassell, panicked and deserted. Making his way back to Ossipee, Hassell told the men waiting there that all was lost. Then he and the Ossipee detachment retreated to Dunstable, where they arrived on Tuesday, May 11. Hassell gave an account of the engagement to Colonel Eleazer Tyng, the commander of the Dunstable militia. Tyng sent a dispatch to Lieutenant Governor Dummer the following day which began, “May it Please Your Honour. Upon my hearing of thee Newes Early This
Morning this Twelte Instant and Benjamin Hassell Gave me This account.²⁸⁵ Although Tyng mentioned only Hassell as his source some of the details must have been supplied by Solomon Kies, a survivor who left the fight after Hassell deserted.²⁸⁶

Tyng's dispatch, which must have reached Boston the same day or very early Thursday, caused a sensation and was quickly circulated through the administration. Dummer wrote Governor Wentworth of New Hampshire on Thursday, giving a brief account, "I have just Time to tell you That One of Captain Lovewells Men is run from him and left him engaged with the Indians at Piggwacket last Lords Day." Tyng's dispatch was presented to the Council as well. Samuel Sewall recorded in a diary entry for Thursday that "Letters were read in Council which makes us fear that Captain Lovewell was slain by the Indians near Peguntick and many of his Men, on the Lord's Day, May 9th."²⁸⁷

The Boston News-Letter came out on Thursdays but did not get the story in time for the issue of May 13. The first printed account of Lovewell's fight appeared on Monday, May 17, in the Boston Gazette. The Courant, which also came out that Monday, missed the story completely. James Franklin explained in his account printed the following week that "The Article of the late Fight publish'd in the last Week's Gazette, was design'd likewise for this Paper, but omitted by Mistake."²⁸⁸ On Thursday, May 20, the Boston News-Letter carried an account of the fight that was identical to the one printed in the previous week's Gazette. Campbell may simply have copied his story from his competitor; however, Franklin's explanation that the account was "design'd likewise" for his paper sug-

²⁸⁵ Quoted in Eckstorm, 380.

²⁸⁶ Symmes described Kies as badly wounded and leaving the fighting by canoe with the permission of Ensign Wyman, who was then in command, i.e. not as a deserter. Kies's providential delivery is discussed below.

²⁸⁷ Tyng's account is in the Massachusetts Archives, vol. 52, 168. Sewall's account is in Collections, Massachusetts Historical Society, 7: Samuel Sewall's Diary, vol. 3, 354.

²⁸⁸ NEC, May 24, 1725.

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gests that the account may have been distributed to all three publishers as a press release.\(^{289}\)

A few days after the arrival of Tyng's dispatch, a number of survivors arrived in Boston. The May 24 issue of the Courant carried the second, longer version of the Pigwacket fight. No copy of the Gazette for the week of May 24 is known to have survived, but the News-Letter of May 27 re-printed Franklin's piece. Although there were two separate stories, an early one based on Tyng's dispatch and a later version of the fight derived from Wyman and other participants when they arrived in Boston, the town's three newspapers showed no variation in their reporting. The News-Letter and the Gazette ran identical stories on the Tyng dispatch, which the Courant missed. The following week the Courant and the News-Letter ran identical versions of the Wyman account.

The version of the story based on the Wyman interview is more than twice as long and is more detailed in its presentation of the events leading up to the ambush. Both stories contained elements designed to give the fight an heroic cast. The earlier account described the dying Lovewell with his piece cocked and presented even when he was too far gone to be capable of speech. Wyman's account described the defiant refusal of quarter by the embattled soldiers. Wyman's account also mentioned the death of Lieutenant Fairwell and the scalp taken by the party's unofficial chaplain, Jonathan Frye.\(^{290}\) Like Harmon's fight at Norridgewok, Lovewell's fight at Pigwacket was a major military engagement for the provincials; they desired to turn the events into something more than news, they wanted to

\(^{289}\) Working from this assumption, the Maine historian Fannie Hardy Eckstorm developed a theory that Thomas Symmes provided all the Boston papers with accounts of the fight designed to protect the reputation of the family of Jonathan Frye.

\(^{290}\) Although the popular legends which soon surrounded Lovewell's fight describe Frye as the chaplain of the company, he held no such official position. Military chaplains were appointed by the General Court; moreover, Frye had not received his A.M. degree. Details of Frye's life and enlistment can be found in Shipton, Vol. 7.
make it part of history. The man who undertook the task was the well-respected minister of the church at Bradford, Thomas Symmes.

Symmes's work on Lovewell's fight is a curiously ambivalent blending of history and sermon which captured New England historiography at a moment when the pulpit was ceding to the newspaper primacy of place for the interpretation of current affairs. Symmes's work went through two editions in 1725. The first, titled "Lovewell Lamented," was a funeral sermon with a preface giving an account of the fight at Piggwacket; the second edition, "Historical Memoirs of the Late Fight at Piggwacket" was an expanded version of the original preface to which the funeral sermon was attached. The shift to a primarily secular history and the relegation of the sermon to the "back of the book" appears to have been a response to the taste of New England readers. Symmes explained in the preface to the second edition that "I've the more easily comply'd with the Request of some of the Publishers of the Ensuing Sermon, that it might be accompan'd with a Narrative of the Memorable Occasion of it."291 That a senior minister in New England (Symmes was the fourth generation of his family to serve as ministers in Massachusetts) would substantially re-work his publication at the request of Gerrish and the other Boston booksellers shows the growing power of the press as a commercial force in the cultural life of the colony as well as the increasingly secular orientation of the book-buying public.

Related to the increased influence of booksellers was the increased importance of the newspapers as a source for the historian. Symmes explains that "I at first proposed only to Reprint the Relation of this Action given us in the Public News-Papers," but that "having been favour'd with a more particular account from the Valourous Capt. Wyman, and some other of good Credit, that were in the Engagement; I hope it will not be unacceptable to any, and am sure very grateful to some, to have the Story Publish'd with some Enlarge-

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291 Symmes, Memoirs, 2.
Booksellers like Gerrish and newspaper publishers like Franklin played a mediating role between authors and the reading public. The editorial influence of the bookseller-publishers and the public newspaper was part of the new a "public sphere" of print whose existence was shaping the behavior of writers.  

Symmes recognized the existence of this new public sphere of print when he spoke of publishing his work in order "particularly to make a Public Record of the Names of those of the Names of those Couragious Soldiers, who have so nobly play'd the man for their Country." A sermon preached before a congregation, which was the first form of Symmes's work, was certainly a public act; such sermons collectively were the most influential public acts of early New England. For generations, ministers had been printing the text of their sermons as a way of extending the influence of the spoken word. In Historical Memoirs, however, Symmes assumed a somewhat different relationship to the print medium: he sought not to use the press as an extension of his voice but in order to gain access to a newly restructured public record comprised of widely circulating printed texts.

For Symmes, history had become a part of the public record created by the press. This view was a departure from the traditional histories written by William Bradford or John Winthrop which were circulated in manuscript. Symmes was not original in his assumption that publication was a basic part of the creation of history. Over twenty years before, Cotton Mather had recorded his pride and anxiety in shepherding his Magnalia Christi through the press, his eagerness for praise of his work, and his outrage when the

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292 Symmes, Memoirs, 2.

293 The concept of the public sphere is the subject of Jürgen Habermas's 1962 book, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. Warner uses Habermas's concept as the basis for an analysis of the role of publishing in developing a republican ideology in eighteenth-century America. Among other things, the public sphere, according to Warner, "describes a growing tendency of individuals to assert autonomy and citizenship by virtue of their reading and publishing." (Warner, Letters, x).

294 Symmes, Memoirs, 2.
English historian John Oldmixon scorned his book as puerile and old-fashioned. Symmes’s statement that he believed the importance of Lovewell’s fight would entitle it to “a Room in the History of our New-English Wars, whenever a Continuance of it shall be Publish’d,” shows that a preoccupation with published history was not limited to Cotton Mather. Symmes may have been anticipating a continuation of the history of the Indian wars written by Mather. When Samuel Penhallow published his history of Dummer’s War in the following year he cited Mather’s work and described his own as a continuation of it. Like Penhallow, Symmes was conscious of the existence of a developing corpus of printed history which existed as a component of the public record.

To be a historian working in a public sphere controlled by publishers and influenced by newspaper accounts of current events posed challenges for which Symmes could find no ready solutions in works of the classical historians he had studied at Harvard. Symmes was one of the first American historians to face the maddening task of reconciling conflicting newspaper accounts with eye-witness interviews. In his preface, Symmes expressed anxiety about the scope and accuracy of his version of events:

But thus I’ve related the Story of the Action at Pigwacket, in a Style adapted to our Common way of telling it, and according to the best Information I cou’d obtain; and hope there are no Material, I’m sure, there are no Willing or Careless Mistakes in it. The “common way of telling it,” referred to the newspaper accounts which, Symmes admitted, were his initial sources for the story. The “best information” obtainable referred to the additional interview material Symmes gathered from Seth Wyman and the other participants whose account appeared in the Courant of May 24. The role of the newspaper as the disseminating source for the story of the fight was a milestone in the history of the press in

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295 Symmes, Memoirs, xi.

296 Symmes, Memoirs, xi.
America. Symmes's waverings about the accuracy of his account, his careful distinction between material, willing and careless mistakes, suggested at the least, his difficulty in reconciling the versions provided by his informants. It also reflected a conflict between Symmes's role as a historian placing this episode in the New-English wars in the public record, and his role as a minister offering a eulogy for the fallen as consolation to the bereaved and as a moral example to the society at large. Such a conflict would be acute if important details could not be reconciled with the consoling and exemplary functions. The role of Benjamin Hassell presented Symmes with this dilemma.

Symmes the historian also faced the complication of having his account scrutinized by informants who had given an interview to the newspapers, an interview which many of his audience had read. He attempted to deal with the inevitable inconsistencies between printed versions by having his informants sign a curious “attestation” which follows the text of the Historical Memoirs:

WE whose Names are hereunto Subscrib’d having had the Preceding Narrative carefully Read to us (tho’ we can’t each of us indeed, Attest to every particular Article & Circumstance in it,) yet we can & do Attest that the Substance of it is True; and are well Satisfy’d in the Truth of the Whole.

This attestation seems to raise more doubts than it allays. Its carefully phrased and qualified endorsement by men whose reading skills were apparently such that the account had to be read to them suggested that its wording was negotiated by Symmes and his three informants as a result of disagreement about some aspect of the account, either among the three soldiers or between the soldiers and the author.

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298 Hassell's desertion under fire and not Frye's taking scalps on Sunday, as Eckstorm maintains, seems the object of the cover-up one senses in Symmes's account.
Wyman was the young ensign from Woburn who took charge of the company when his superiors were killed in the fighting. Ayer and Asten were the two men in Lovewell's company from Haverhill. These were the men who lived closest to Symmes's parish in Bradford, so it is natural that they should have served as his informants. "Lieutenant Wyman and several others" were cited in the Courant as the source of the extended version of the fight printed in the paper on May 24th. It seems likely that Ayer and Asten were among the "others" and that they gave their account to the Boston press on their way through the town from Dunstable to Haverhill. Symmes could have conducted further interviews with them after the publication of their accounts in the Boston papers. However Symmes interviewed his three sources, their attestation suggested there were at least some details upon which confusion or conflict existed. Getting the public record straight turned out to be a difficult task, even with the assistance of three participants in the battle.

Symmes's work revealed a second sort of difficulty in putting his history into the public record of New-English Wars: the conflict between the interests of those with personal or family involvement in the events and the requirements of a history destined for anonymous readers. The funeral sermon, delivered before the friends and relatives of the deceased, could assume a knowledge of and personal interest in its subject on the part of the hearers. This assumption lost validity, of course when the sermon was printed, a problem frequently overcome by the inclusion of a preface giving the reader some of the background the original hearers would have possessed. The creation of such a preface was the genesis of Symmes's Historical Memoirs; in fact, Symmes's history started as an attempt.

299 Eckstorm holds that Symmes spoke with the returning soldiers before the appearance of the story in the Courant of May 24 and that Symmes prepared a written statement which Wyman and the others gave to all three papers. She claims Symmes prepared a deliberately altered account of the fight in which the date of the encounter was moved from Sunday back to Saturday, in order to protect the family of Jonathan Frye from accusations that his father's parsimony had driven the young chaplain to scalp hunting on the Sabbath in order to earn money to marry. Clifford Shipton points out that accepting Eckstorm's theory requires, in her own words, "a little imagination."
to permit anonymous readers participate in a sermon delivered orally. For Symmes the issue was compounded by the fact that although he had information from Wyman and two other participants, he had no pastoral relationship to Lovewell or his men. "Indeed, being wholly a Stranger to most of them, I can't pretend to give their Character; yet it's evident to the Country, they were Men form'd and rais'd up by Providence to serve us in pursuing an Enemy." The sermon tradition challenged Symmes the historian because he did not know the deceased; yet in that tradition a number of his readers expected eulogies for their relatives that had died on the expedition. His available sources, Wyman's account in the Courant, possibly supplement by additional information from subsequent interviews, was unsatisfactory for either the needs of the bereaved or the anonymous public. Symmes's apology carried some sense of the frustration he experienced in trying to write a history under these limitations and for two audiences with different expectations:

If any judge, I've observ'd some Circumstances in this Action too Minute, I've only to say, of some such Persons, or their Relations had been in the Action, it's possible they would not have been of this Opinion. However, those who I am firstly Oblig'd to Gratify, wont easily come into their Sentiments in this matter. And I must beg of the others to forgive me this Wrong, & that they'd only consider, the Different Taste of Readers & consequently the extreme Difficulty, if not Impossibility of pleasing every Body, in a Performance of this Nature. Any yet none would be more willing to do it, that the Unworthy Author, who is a Hearty Lover of His Country, and of all Good Men of every Denomination.

The circumstances which Symmes observed "too Minute" concerned details of the fight which did not appear in either the short account published in the Gazette or the longer version of the battle which ran in the Courant. Since the source of these details, Seth Wyman and his companions was available to James Franklin, it must be concluded that the additional details did not appear in the paper because they were thought inappropriate, although Franklin included some of them in "The Volunteer's March." Like Franklin's

300 Symmes, Memoirs, 24.

301 Symmes, Memoirs, xii.
broadside, Symmes's *Historical Memoirs* was a supplement to the newspaper account, giving details and interpretation that were of interest to a significant part of the reading public but not appropriate for the newspaper. Like the broadside, Symmes's work offered dramatic and emotionally effecting vignettes which had no place in the depersonalized account given in the *Courant*.\(^{302}\)

Symmes's account of the fight contained three portraits of heroism and pathos. Ensign Wyman, his chief informant, was shown to be a bold and sagacious leader; indeed, he was a greater hero in Symmes's story than Lovewell. Wyman was described as the tactical commander as the troop travelled around the pond to the scene of the fight.\(^{303}\) When the Indians broke off the action, it was Wyman who read the signs of their behavior and who had the daring and woodcraft to take advantage of it.\(^{304}\) Against the bravery of the survivor Wyman was set the pathos of Lieutenant Robbins who, badly wounded, instructed his men to leave him but "desir'd they'd Charge his Gun and leave it with him, (which they did) for

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\(^{302}\) One such vignette appeared in the *Gazette*’s account on May 17th: "Capt. Lovewell & Ensign Robins were mortally wounded by the Indians first shot from their Ambushments, who (not withstanding supporting themselves by such Trees as they could lay hold on) kept firing on the Enemy & encouraging their Companions, they both had their Guns in hands, Lovewell's being cock'd & presented when he was past speaking." James Franklin did not include this image of heroism and pathos in his May 24th version of the battle. In the broadside, Lovewell is quoted as encouraging his men:

"Then up spoke Capt. Lovewell, when first the fight began:
Fight on my valiant heroes! you see they fall like rain;"
The brave deaths of Robbins, Frye, Lovewell and Jacob Fullam of Weston --whom Symmes ignores-- are remarked but not described in "The Volunteers March."

\(^{303}\) "When they'd March'd about a Mile and Half, or two Miles, Ensign Wyman spy'd an Indian coming toward them, whereupon he gave a Sign and they all squat, and let him come on." (Symmes, *Memoirs*, v).

\(^{304}\) "At one time Captain [sic] Wyman is Confident, they were got to Powawing, by their striking on the Ground, and other odd Motions, but at length Wyman crept up toward 'em & firing among 'em, shot the Chief Powaw and brake up their Meeting." (Symmes, *Memoirs*, vii).
says he, 'The Indians will come in the Morning to scalp me, and I'll kill one more of 'em if I can.'

Symmes's most detailed eulogy was reserved for Jonathan Frye, whom he described as "Chaplain to the Company & greatly Belov'd by them, for his Excellent Performances and good Behaviour, and who fought with Undaunted Courage till that time o Day, was Mortally Wounded." Frye was one of the wounded men who had to be abandoned during the retreat to the Ossipee fort. Symmes's depiction of the scene established Frye as the ideal Christian soldier, complementing with his spirituality the martial leadership of young Wyman. The journal which was left with Frye was required in order to establish the per diem charges to Massachusetts for the company and was an official document. Why it was left behind and not taken by Lieutenant Josiah Farwell, who was second in command, remains a mystery.

The figure who stood in contrast to the heroism of Wyman, Robbins and Frye was Benjamin Hassell, the man who deserted the fight in its early stages and, hurrying back to the Ossipee position, persuaded the men there that all was lost. In describing this part of the encounter Symmes referred to Hassell simply as "the man that I Promised not to Name." There was no question of shielding Hassell in the public record; Colonel Tyng's dispatch to Dummer described Hassell as his chief informant and Dummer, notifying Benning Wentworth of New Hampshire of the news said, "I have just Time to tell you That One of Captain Lovewells Men is run from him and left him engaged with the Indians at Pigwacket last Lords Day," suggesting that Hassell's role was common knowledge in official circles. Neither of the newspaper accounts, however, referred to Hassell's role.

305 Symmes, Memoirs, vii.
307 Massachusetts Archives, 52, 168-170.
Symmes's promise not to name Hassell was part of his down-playing the entire issue of the Ossipee fort. All that he says of Hassell's deed is that he "ran directly to the Fort and gave the Men Posted there, such an account of what had happen'd that they all made the best of their way Home." In fact, the decision to abandon the post denied the survivors of the assistance of the company physician and eight rested, armed and fully provisioned soldiers. Had these reinforcements been available to the survivors, it might well have saved the lives of Jonathan Frye and the other wounded who were abandoned. The consequences of Hassell's panic were serious and his disgrace was already known to the soldiers and their families as well as the provincial administration. Symmes's decision to omit his name and minimize the importance of his actions seems to have been prompted by a desire to offer consolation to the families of those killed. Hassell's actions also did not fit in with the types of David and Jonathan upon which "Lovewell Lamented" was constructed. Human and religious motivations influenced Symmes's approach as a historian, strengthening his resolve to create a noble and improving history. Here can be seen that psychological need which Symmes shared with other readers of the Courant to demonstrate the worth of American deeds despite powerful feelings of provincial inferiority. In the closing passages of his work Symmes referred to the fact "that our little Army behav'd bravely, fought manfully, and very successfully; so that tho' our Loss is great, yet our Enemies have no cause to Triumph." The phrase "little Army" reflected that acute sense of scale separating Dummer's War from the epic glories of Marlborough. Assigning a significant role to Hassell's desertion would have seriously undercuts the assertion of provincial quality with which the Americans consoled themselves in the face of undeniable insignificance of scale.

308 Symmes, Memoirs, 31.

309 Cotton Mather had addressed the issue of the small size of New England's military engagements with the Indians in his Magnalia: "'Tis true, the European campaigns, for the numbers of men appearing in them, compared with the little numbers that appear in these American actions, may tempt the reader to make a very diminutive business of our
Symmes's wish to present the deeds of Lovewell's men as noble in character although small in size was not helped by the decision, forced upon him by the existence of the newspaper accounts, to present the story "adapted to our Common way of telling it," because this common way did not provide the means for imbuing events with uplifting nobility. Symmes supplemented the prosaic approach of the newspapers by recording vignettes of heroism and pathos. He also used the ancient historical device of placing speeches in the mouths of various participants, speeches which must have been conveniently reconstructed at best, possibly pure fabrications. These speeches may have been objected to by his three informants and been part of that body of detail which caused them to insist that "we can't each of us indeed, Attest to every particular Article & Circumstance" in his account.

When the first Indian was sighted at the pond, Lovewell apparently feared an ambush. He urged caution but, according to Symmes,

The Men Generally & boldly Answered, "We came out to meet the Enemy; we have all along Pray'd GOD we might find 'em, and we had rather trust Providence with our Lives, yea Dy for our Country, than try to Return without seeing them, if we may, and be called Cowards for our Pains."310

One can imagine the awkwardness felt by Wyman, Ayer and Asten when this passage was read to them. Real soldiers rarely speak in chorus, and it is unlikely that frontier rangers fearing Indian ambush analyzed the tactical situation in the terms ascribed to them. Symmes was employing a literary device, placing in the collective voice of Lovewell's men the ide-

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whole Indian-war: but we who felt ourselves assaulted by unknown numbers of devils in flesh on every side of us, and knew that our minute numbers employ'd in the service against them, were proportionably more to us than might legions are to nations that have existed as many centuries as our colonies have years in the world, can scarce forbear taking the colours in the Sixth Book of Milton to describe our story: and speaking of our Indians in as high terms as Virgil of his pismires: It nigrum campis agmen!" (Mather, Magnalia, 140).

310 Symmes, Memoirs, v.
als he hoped to instill in his readers. The access to those readers which the soldiers themselves gained through interviews in the newspapers, the fact that the Courant had in a sense made historians out of Seth Wyman, Ebenezer Ayer and Abiel Asten, introduced a new complication into Symmes's effort to find "a Room in the History of our New-English Wars" for Lovell's fight.

The perceived character of the American landscape and the posture good Englishmen should assume before it was undergoing a change which outran the limits of Symmes's literary resources. From the earliest days Puritan preachers had described the American forest as dangerous and desolate, a "howling wilderness," to use a favorite phrase, from which only God's providence could provide protection. Behind the idea of the howling wilderness lay the biblical type of the Sinai. This attitude toward the forest was central in the captivity narratives, including the narrative of Elizabeth Hanson. Symmes placed Lovell's men in this traditional landscape to show that the bravery of the soldiers was clear to anyone who "Considers the Distance our People were at from any English Settlement, in a Howling Wilderness, & very far in the Enemies Country." Urging, in "Lovewell Lamented" that a relief column be sent out to find the wounded and bury the dead, Symmes asked that they "March with utmost Expedition, to recover if possible, our dear Bretheren that lie wounded, and without Relief in a howling Wilderness." Symmes put Lovell's men in the traditional howling wilderness, but they would not stay there. Wyman and three others, travelling back to Dunstable a day behind the men from Ossipee fort, "caught two Mouse-Squirrels, which they roasted whole, and found them a sweet Morsel. Afterward they Kill'd some Partridges & other Game, and were Comfort-

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311 The Hanson captivity narrative is discussed in Chapter 5.

312 Symmes, Memoirs, xi.

313 Symmes, Memoirs, 29.
ably Supply’d, till they got home." The incident showed Wyman’s image as a leader of men, it showed as well the successful adaptation of frontiersmen to the woods.

Symmes made only two references to providence in his *Historical Memoirs*. In a footnote to the account he ascribed Lovewell’s initial success to a day of prayer conducted by Boston ministers. That Symmes confined providential explanations and interpretations of Lovewell’s fight to the sermon “Lovewell Lamented” and excluded them from the *Historical Memoir* was an example of the differentiation of secular and religious authority which was a central proposition in the *Courant*. The other reference to providence occurred in the story of the salvation of Solomon Kies:

> who having fought till he’d receiv’d three Wounds, & lost so much blood he cou’d not stand, He crawl’d to English Wyman in the heat of the Battle, and told him He was a Dead Man; But (says he) if it be possible, I’ll get out of the way of the Indians, that they mayn’t get my Scalp. This Kies Providentially found a Canoe in the Pond and roll’d himself into it, and was driven by the Wind some Miles toward the Fort; when being Wonderfully Strengthen’d he got to the Fort, as soon as the Eleven aforesaid: and they all came in to Dunstable, May 14 at Night.\(^{315}\)

Kies was a contrasting figure to Hassell. Where Hassell fled the field unharmed, Kies was on the point of death from wounds; where Hassell saved himself because he was a coward, God saved Kies because he was a brave Christian soldier. The Providential intervention has three components: the finding of the canoe, the wind which blew Kies toward the fort, and the miraculous recovery of the dying Kies in the canoe. Symmes’s restraint in handling the episode was remarkable. One cannot imagine Cotton Mather dismissing an incident so rich in typological possibilities with a single reference to God’s goodness and wonderful works. From a secular perspective, the passage pointed up Wyman’s role as leader of the group after the wounding of Lovewell.

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More skeptical readers may have wondered about Kies's recovery, especially since he would have had to walk many miles after being blown the length of the lake in a canoe, and yet he arrived at Ossipee either before or at the same time as the unwounded Hassell. Symmes was also incorrect in asserting that the "eleven aforsaid" arrived at the fort; all but Hassell had been stationed there for two days and did not participate in the fight at all, a fact mentioned in his own account as well as in the story printed in the Courant. It is possible that Kies was not as badly wounded as he claimed and was, like Hassell, deserting under fire. Similar doubts exist about the conduct of the men who became separated from the main body and returned by way of coastal towns rather than travelling back to Dunstable. Since all accounts agree that no Indians were sighted after the engagement on the shores of the pond, a question exists as to when and why they separated from the main group led by Wyman. They may have deserted during the battle or separated afterwards in an act of disobedience. These inconsistencies, and the curious attestation Symmes extracted from Wyman and his other two informants, leave a cloud of doubt over Lovewell's final battle that may never be resolved.

Both parts of Symmes's work on the Pigwacket fight were influenced by the public record in the public sphere newly transformed by Boston's weekly newspapers. One has only to turn to Cotton Mather's Decennium Luctuosum (1699), an account of Indian warfare in the decade 1688-1698, to see how clearly changing taste in the public sphere was directing historiography away from typology and learned analogy towards the "Common way of telling it," yet the hold of the older form of history on the imagination of New England readers remained strong. Cosmopolitan anglophiles in Boston may have looked down on the providential history of the captivity narrative and funeral sermon, but these time-honored forms remained the staple diet of most New England readers. An examination of Symmes's funeral sermon, "Lovewell Lamented," reveals by contrast the traditional view of Indian history.
Symmes's sermon, following Puritan practice, was based on a biblical text containing the types by which the meaning of the sermon's occasion was to be understood. To eulogize Lovewell and his men Symmes selected the Second Book of Samuel, Chapter One, verse twenty-seven: How are the Mighty fallen, and the Weapons of War perished! The sermon drew upon the two preceding verses as well.

How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, thou was slain in thine high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant has thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women (II Sam. 25-27).

The poignant intensity of David's lament must have seemed particularly appropriate to Symmes's listeners because Jonathan was the name of young chaplain Frye, whose death was a central topic of the sermon. The power and subtlety of typology lay in the ability of a congregation steeped in knowledge of the Bible to place the sermon text in its biblical context. The deaths of Saul and Jonathan in Second Samuel ushered in a period of civil war in Israel in which David, fighting the house of Saul for kingship, became corrupted by power and stooped to arranging the death of his loyal follower, Uriah the Hittite, in order to marry Uriah's wife, Bathsheba. In choosing his text, Symmes expressed to his audience not only sorrow at the loss of a much-loved warrior but also the implied message that, like Israel, New England was perched on the brink of disaster.

The conceptual core of "Lovewell Lamented" was history as jeremiad. Symmes paid homage to the bravery of Lovewell's men and enumerated the many benefits which their costly victory would bring to New England; and yet, he concluded with a heavy air of inevitability, "the Hand of the Lord, is herein gone out against us, and there are Tokens of his Displeasure to be seen in this Affair." The signs of divine dissatisfaction that Symmes cited included Hassell's cowardice but seem even more to be an indirect indictment of Lovewell's leadership. Symmes attributed Lovewell's questionable tactic of divid-

316 Symmes, Memoirs, 25.
ing his force to God's displeasure; indeed, to see the decision to set out with only 43 of the 80 or so original members of the force as a fatal flaw inspired, or at the least permitted by, God for the chastisement of His people. Although Symmes argued that it was New England as a whole, not Lovewell's Rangers that God intended to punish, there was an implication in the passage that Lovewell was in some sense not a soldier of the Lord. Placing the cowardice of Hassell between the two instances of Lovewell's flawed judgment strengthened Symmes's point by association. In both "Lovewell Lamented" and *Historical Memoirs*, Symmes gave Wyman rather than Lovewell credit for leadership. Unlike Frye or Robbins, Lovewell was accorded no vignette of heroism or pathos in death. As a historian Symmes skirted the issue of Lovewell's judgment; as a minister he was able to discuss it without detracting from the valor of the expedition by seeing in the leader's mistakes an inevitable doom occasioned by God's displeasure with New England.

The initial newspaper account in the *Gazette* ended with the observation that "The Loss of so Brave & Discree an Officer as Capt. Lovewell is much Lamented." The story based on Wyman's account in the *Courant* a week later had no such reference to the expedition leader and ended instead with the statement that "His Honour the Lieut. Governour has been pleas'd to grant a Captain's Commission to Lieut. Wyman, who distinguish'd himself during the whole Engagement." Lovewell led his men into an ambush, apparently against his own better judgment.\(^{317}\)

The lesson for his hearers that Symmes found in the losses of at Pigwacket was that "GOD is loudly calling upon us to amend our Ways and Doings."\(^{318}\) In describing the consequences of continued spiritual deviation Symmes offered a concise expression of the fear felt by many in the changing times of the 1720s:

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Necessity is laid upon us: NEW-ENGLAND must Reform, or without a Spirit of Prophecy, any one that observes the Signs of the Times, may think, evidently forsee, that in one twenty Years more, the Glory of New-England as New England, will be much more than hitherto, if not TOTALLY eclipsed.319

The idea of "the Glory of New-England as New England" showed that Symmes, like most thoughtful practitioners of the jeremiad, conceived of the declension of his country in spiritual or perhaps cultural terms rather than as a decline in economic or military strength. The entity that was eclipsing the traditional identity of New England was the secular, imperially-oriented culture of the Georgian Age. At its core, the declension or eclipse of New England was not a product of, or even directly related to the economic stagnation causing Massachusetts to be overtaken by the rapidly-growing economies of New York and Pennsylvania; nor was it per se a decline in the influence of organized religion — although the Congregational ministers of New England detected evidence of such decline at every hand. The "signs of the times" that were so clear to Symmes were a change in values and a shift in attitudes across a broad spectrum of issues of which organized religion was only a part, albeit a very important part.

An important area in which the values of New Englanders were rapidly shifting was the role of the sexes. In the very general terms in which such changes must, perforce, be described, eighteenth-century New England experienced an increased differentiation between male and female gender roles as part of the increasing differentiation of authority in all its forms. Military prowess had always been a field in which female participation was the remarkable exception.320 The Puritan tradition had always been skeptical of glorifica-

319 Symmes, Memoirs, 28.

320 Ulrich, Good Wives, discusses the cultural psychology of female violence under the type of Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite who killed Sisera with a nail as he slept in her tent, making the point that women committed violence largely in defence or demonstration of rights. The Courant reported such a case in the issue of August 10, 1724, in which a woman alone in her home shot one of several Indians attempting entry by chopping through the roof.
tion of the military and Symmes supported the traditional view, reminding his hearers that
"As it's Idolatry for Soldiers to trust in their Arms, or in their Dexterity and Courage to handle them; or in one another: So it's Idolatry for the People of God in whose Service they go forth to trust in them." 321 From a spiritual perspective, the glorification of martial valor obscured the real source of security which was prayer that invoked providential intervention. Through providential power the least martial members of the society could be as effective as the warriors:

A good Woman in her closet, (tho' she's afraid to take a Gun in her Hand) may serve her Country to very good purpose, even in respect of the war; For Prayer and Faith always were, are, and will be the Church's best Weapons. 322

The contrast of strong male warriors with weak females was, despite Symmes's reference to the power of prayer as a weapon, a frequent theme in both "Lovewell Lamented" and the Historical Memoirs. At the beginning of the Historical Memoirs Symmes referred to courageous soldiers as those "who have so nobly play'd the man for their Country;" 323 He reminded his audience that the affection between members of a fighting band such as Lovewell's Rangers was superior to heterosexual love when he glossed II Sam. 1-25:

I am distressed for thee, by brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: they love to me was wonderful, passing the love of Women, who are commonly most affectionate. 324

Although love between warriors was the great reward for valor, avoiding mockery for cowardice by women also played a part. Symmes offered a number of reasons why eulogies of fallen soldiers were religiously appropriate, one of which was:

321 Symmes, Memoirs, 21.
322 Symmes, Memoirs, 30.
323 Symmes, Memoirs, 2.
324 Symmes, Memoirs, 5.
that the Death of their Officers or Fellow-Soldiers is deeply resented by the People of God, that they still speak of them with great Honour in their Lamentations; this will Animatethem, we hope, to do Worthy, and rather Die with Honour, if call'd to Battle, than live with Disgrace; and for their Cowardice, have the offer of a Wooden Sword, and be Branded with the Infamous Character of Cowards, even by the Weaker Sex.\textsuperscript{325}

As increased emphasis was placed on the contrasting separation of male and female roles and the exclusively male role of warrior was elevated because of its potential for the highest affective experience, the female role acquired attributes as a validator of masculine valor. Successful heroism produced an acknowledgement by women of male superiority and grateful submission to masculine authority. Conversely, failure to live up to the warrior's code through ineptitude and especially because of cowardice, resulted in female rejection of the discredited warrior as her superior.\textsuperscript{326} His male potency was mocked through the presentation of a toy-like and ineffectual wooden sword, and he became an object of derision. Fear of such ridicule was a major force in maintaining the courage and discipline of men under arms. The mockery of the wooden sword symbolized the emasculation of a coward sexually as the mockery of women symbolized his emasculation socially. Symmes found a biblical text to reinforce the theme in the Second Book of Samuel. Urging the organization of an expedition to bury the dead left behind at Pigwacket, he said:

\begin{quote}
Methinks the reading those Words without a Comment, would fill a Soldier with Zeal sufficient to carry him with a sufficient Number, as far a Piggwacket, only to cover the
\end{quote}

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\textsuperscript{325} Symmes, Memoirs, 15.
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\textsuperscript{326} Weinstein and Platt connect the male fear of failure and mockery in the warrior role with the political suppression of women in a way that seems to apply to the ideology expressed in the Courant: "At bottom, however, the manifest disgust with failure reflected a fear of weakness, a fear of regression to the abiding wish for love and protection, and it was because of this fear that in the initial phases of economic, political, and familial change all those who were deemed unfit or unable to dispose themselves were not allowed to participate in the social order on any level of parity. Workers, women, and children, for example, were excluded, and were, moreover, expected to accept a subordinate position in a partially hierarchical class structure in which inclusion, status, and rewards were reserved form men. (Weinstein and Platt, 203)"
\end{flushright}
Dust, the valuable Dust of our gallant Soldiers, that there kept the Field, lest the Daughters of the uncircumcised rejoice.\textsuperscript{327}

Symmes worked the traditional forms and myths of Puritan religion with professional skill; however, the frame of reference within which he and his audience interpreted the sermon and its types was quite different from that of listeners in the previous century. The idea of the idolatry of arms lost its clarity and force in a society that thrilled to images of gallantry and valor. New England men could still be described as soldiers of the Lord but the fear of being laughed at by women and girls was also a powerful motive influencing their behavior.

Symmes's depiction of the Indians focused on their savageness and closely followed the presentation in the pages of the Courant. For Symmes, the essential alienness of the Indian was linguistic, as seen in animalistic war cries which bespoke the closeness of their consciousness to the that of the wild animals among whom they dwelt.\textsuperscript{328} The emphasis on the bestial character of Indian war cries came naturally to people of the Word. The power of speech differentiated the human from the sub-human as the power to read differentiated the Christian from the savage.

Symmes's other major theme in describing Indians was the essential barbarism of their behavior. He expressed concern that Frye and the other wounded left behind in the woods would "fall into the Hands of a barbarous Enemy to be kill'd over again, and tortur'd with Indian Cruelty."\textsuperscript{329} Such concern was perhaps justified by the incidents of torture and mutilation which were circulated as part of the news of Indian attacks. The fate of

\textsuperscript{327} Symmes, Memoirs, 29. The reference is to I Sam. 20: "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph."

\textsuperscript{328} "The Indians roaring and yelling and Howling like Wolves, Barking like Dogs and making all Sorts of Hideous Noises: The English Frequently Shouting and Huzzaing, as they did after the first Round." (Symmes, Memoirs, vii).

\textsuperscript{329} Symmes, Memoirs, 29.
Moses Eaton of Salisbury, whose mutilated body was recovered by Harmon during his 1722 expedition must have circulated widely as part of the story of that early victory. Captivity narratives similarly emphasized the cruelty of the Indians. Within Symmes's depiction of the Indians barbarism there was, however, a new note of condescension and contempt. Although his sermon was within the tradition of the jeremiad with its emphasis on the helpless dependence of God's people on His providence, Symmes addressed the issue of war with the Indians with a sense of confidence based the size and power of the English military effort rather than on divine assistance:

IF we'd Religiously Lament on this Occasion, we must not be disheartened and cast down, because a crew of Salvages have kill'd a few brave Men.330

In speaking of the death of the war-leader Paugus Symmes let slip a note of humor of the sort that characterized much of the writing in the Courant. Speaking of the Indian leader Paugus the party exhumed he remarked that “he be gone to his own place, He'll cease from Troubling.”331

Like the Courant Symmes also associated the Indians with the Jesuits, to whose religious teachings (rather than any injustice on the part of the English) the ferocity of Indian warriors was ascribed.332 The actual differences between alleged Jesuit teaching and what Symmes refers to as “the Motives of pure Religion” in which the English have “God to go before them, and fight for them, and either cover their Heads, or, receive their departing Souls to the blessed mansions above, where there is no Adversary nor evil Occurrent, where they shall rest from their labours, and their works shall follow them,” may strike the

330 Symmes, Memoirs, 29.

331 Symmes, Memoirs, x.

332 “The wretched Jesuits or Friers, are wont (‘tis said) to absolve their deluded Proselytes, the barbarous Indians, when they come forth to War against us: and flatter ‘em with the promise of an immediate passage to Paradise, without any stop at Purgatory, if they fall in Battle: And these delusive Hopes may possibly animate them, to fight with great Fury in their Engagements with us.” (Symmes, Memoirs, 20).
modern reader as trivial.\textsuperscript{333} However, Symmes's argument involved more than a rejection of Purgatory; by invoking the Jesuit influence, he placed the Indians in the circle of enemies and identified the fight against them not with a biblical type but with the struggles of Britain against the French.

Symmes's treatment of Lovewell's fight at Pigwacket revealed the attitude of many New Englanders toward the Indian wars and the transitional cultural values which produced that attitude. The bifurcated nature of his book, half secular history, half sermon, was indicative of a man whose mind was proceeding on two tracks at once. Symmes's metaphor of the eclipse of New England implied one body passing in front of and obscuring another. Although as a minister Symmes expressed alarm that the ideology of the eighteenth century was eclipsing the traditional New England Way, he did not convey any sense of personal loss or fear at the prospect. In contrast to Cotton Mather, Thomas Symmes expressed neither distrust nor scorn towards the new culture, and unlike such Couranteers as William Douglass or John Checkley, he gave no evidence of angry rebellion against the strictures of tradition. In his balanced and progressive stance Symmes showed a similarity with Benjamin Franklin who, when he achieved editorial power as a Couranteer adopted the persona of Doctor Janus. Franklin described his new character as "an Observer, being a Man of such remarkable Opticks, as to look two ways at once."\textsuperscript{334}

Symmes possessed similar "opticks." His openness to the new liturgical practice of regular singing and his advocacy of toleration in matters of religious belief showed him to be one of the progressive ministers of his time.\textsuperscript{335} His approach to the traditional myths of New England society shows how such progressives attempted to "look two ways at once."

\textsuperscript{333} Symmes, Memoirs, 20.

\textsuperscript{334} NEC, February 11, 1723.

\textsuperscript{335} Symmes advocated greater religious tolerance in his \textit{A Discourse Concerning Prejudice In Matters of Religion. Or, An Essay, to Shew the Nature, Causes, and Effects of Such
The mythic source for Symmes’s work on Lovewell was contained in the traditional genres of sermon and captivity narrative. By selecting as his text David’s lamentation for Jonathan, Symmes was able to draw on, through the interpretive mechanism of typology, an evocative context for the story of Lovewell’s fight in which the people of Israel prefigured New England Puritans,\textsuperscript{336} (the normal reading of the Old Testament) while Jonathan became a type of Lovewell and the Philistines a type for the Indians. In addition to the elegiac atmosphere invoked by the typology, Symmes’s text also suggested the dissention of the civil wars of Israel and God’s displeasure with David’s actions in eliminating Uriah and possessing Bathsheba. The biblical context in which the types were to be found provided the bridge between Symmes’s elegy for those who died at Pigwacket and his jeremiad on the eclipse of “New England as New England.” In structure and in its employment of biblical resources Symmes’s “Lovewell Lamented” was a classic example of the Puritan rhetorical tradition.

At the same time, Symmes’s manipulation of the traditional forms was characterized by a self-conscious formalism. The woods were a howling wilderness because any Englishman in danger outside the pale of settlement was always in a howling wilderness, even if he were dining comfortably on partridge. Indians were barbarously cruel and howl like wolves, but at the same time “we must not be disheartened and cast down, because a crew of Salvages have kill’d a few brave Men.” Confidence in the skill of soldiers was idolatry for the prayers of a mere woman afraid to touch a gun were more powerful; yet admiration for those who have valiantly “played the man” for their country thrilled Symmes

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\textsuperscript{336} In the terminology of the system, the Puritans could be called the anti-type of Israel.
as much as his listeners. In Symmes's treatment of Lovewell and his men we can see that many of the elements of the Puritan world had become formalized, that the raw power they exercised over the imagination of congregations in the previous century had been transformed into rhetorical forms sanctified by tradition. Philip Wheelwright has identified this transition to a second stage of myth-making as "romantic."\^337

Symmes was comfortable with the new value system of the Georgian Age which the Courant promoted in part because mythology of traditional Puritanism had become formalized. In his work on Lovewell Symmes was able to move between the forms of sermon and history, between Puritan and Georgian viewpoints because both elements of the dichotomy could be handled as codified structures whose formal attributes were conventionalized. There were potentially contradictory places in "such remarkable Opticks" — particularly in areas regarding the nature of human and divine authority — but these points could be glossed over in dealing with the Pigwacket fight. The eclipse of New England proceeded as smoothly an inexorably as a celestial eclipse and Thomas Symmes was able to observe it with an astronomers's detachment.

In discussing the Indians Symmes showed none of the tolerance or rationalism that he demonstrated in his sermon against religious prejudice. The Indians, who by this point in New England's history were no longer unfamiliar, remained incomprehensible. Symmes described the noises made by the English and the Indians as essential different. "The Indians roaring and yelling and Howling like Wolves, Barking like Dogs and making all Sorts of Hideous Noises: The English Frequently Shouting and Huzzaing, as they did after the

\^337 *Through repetition of the formulas or repeated use of the artifacts of this primary myth, however, a convention of form is established and identified with the content of the primary myth. In this romantic stage, the attainment of an original experience of mythopoetic insight into the nature of reality becomes less important than fulfilling the social obligations established for the myth and for the priests who keep and ritualize it.* (Philip Wheelwright, *Semantic Approach to Myth* in Thomas Sebeok, ed., *Myth: A Symposium*, 155-58).
first Round.”338 Two aspects of this description seem significant. The first is the contrast between the English whose “shouting” and “huzzaing” are comprehensible (to English speakers, at least) while the “roaring” of the Indians is not. The second is the nature of the Indians’ vocalization as animalistic rather than human.

New England historiography was in a transition during the period of Dummer’s War, groping towards a synthesis of the affective power of the sermon and captivity narrative with the objective emphasis of the news dispatch. Cotton Mather’s Magnalia Christi Americana (1702) represented the end of an earlier school of history-as-sermon in which captivity narratives could be interpreted through typologically derived conceptions of providential history. Benjamin Church’s Entertaining Passages Relating to Philip’s War (1716) marked the watershed at which providential history related to the sermon and captivity narrative gave way to a more secular interpretive viewpoint, a purely human scale of events, and a story organized by the interpretations of the narrator.339 Symmes’s work on Lovewell’s fight attempted, by its two-part structure, to bridge the gap between two currently popular styles of history.

Penhallow’s History of the Wars of New-England With the Eastern Indians (1726) also represented a passage in the secularization of the historiography of wars with the Indians. Penhallow narrated his story impersonally although he was an important participant in a number of conferences. He incorporated material from Symmes’s sermon-history in order to give some of the personal experiences of Lovewell’s men but ignored the typological context in which Symmes placed events. Throughout his narrative Penhallow followed strategic, political and economic forces behind events and assigned a secondary role to divine providence. In this he followed Church, who included in the full title of his Entertain-

338 Symmes, Memoirs, vii.

339 Richard Slotkin discusses the innovations Church’s Entertaining Passages in Regeneration Through Violence, 156-157.
ing Passages the promise of Some Account of the Divine Providence Towards Benj. Church Esqr that he fulfilled in the most perfunctory way. Like Church, Penhallow placed his story as a whole in a context whose providential element seems genuinely felt and curiously pro forma at the same time. He cited Moses and Cotton Mather as model historians (a pairing that must have appealed to the vanity of his friend, Mather) and gave as his motive the pleasure to be derived from observing the growth of colonies and churches in America. Penhallow felt obliged to invoke the forms of providential history although his understanding of events had outrun its confines.
Chapter Five

Indians, Negroes and Rum: The Issue of Self-Control

The clashes on Casco Bay and Pigwacket came to Boston as distant echoes on the frontier; other events in the war took place in Boston where the Courant's lack of news-gathering resources was less of a handicap. Despite New York's prohibition, Massachusetts diplomatic efforts among the Mohawks continued and in October of 1722, an embassy of Mohawks arrived in Boston to discuss military assistance to Massachusetts.340 One of the chiefs in the delegation died during the visit and on October 22nd, the Courant carried an account of the funeral at which he was "magnificently interr'd." The Courant's report was more concerned with the funeral ceremony, which conformed to military protocol not traditional religious practice, than with the Indians or their mission. As part of the increasing secularization of New England society, funerals were becoming less religious and more social rituals. The Courant had expounded on the loss of religious energy at funerals in the September 3, 1722, issue. The degeneration of the rites into mere flattery, particularly when the deceased was well-to-do, had been roundly criticized.341

In contrast to the hypocritical cant of religious funerals — and the abominable poetics of "Kitelic Verse" — the somber martial symbolism of the rites accorded the de-

340 NEC, Nov. 6, 1721, had carried a story noting that the governor of New York had forbidden the Maquois Indian residing in that province to enter negotiations with William Dudley, who was attempting to enlist them as allies against the Eastern tribes.

341 See, for example, the essay in NEC, Sept 3, 1722 on the hypocrisy of funeral sermons for the rich.
ceased Mohawk found favor with the Courant. The political purpose of the Mohawk funeral was, of course, to flatter the embassy and facilitate a military alliance.

The Mohawks continued their journey despite the death of one of the delegation. They visited the Norridgewalk village on the Kennebec in order to hear the Indians' side of the dispute. On November 5th, the Courant reported their arrival on the Kennebec, where they found the Indian village deserted and the war-chief Paugus gone. The Mohawk delegation was back in Boston by the end of the month and, despite the blandishments of the administration, avoided any firm commitment to the English cause. The Courant's account described their departure with the optimistic implication that the Mohawks would take the English side. A year later the provincial government was again involved in diplomatic efforts to find allies in the war against the Eastern Indians. An embassy of Mohawks arrived at Boston at the end of August. As before, the Indians were lavishly entertained by the provincial authorities. The Governor presented each of the delegates with a ceremonial plate engraved with the animal totem of his tribe. In return, the Mohawks presented His Excellency with a wampum belt. Following the demonstration of a repeating musket invented by a Mr. Pim, the Indians were given an ox, which they dispatched with bow and arrow. Thousands of spectators ringed the Common while the Indians feasted with ceremonial songs and dances.342 Despite the significance of the story and the appeal of its "local color," the Courant omitted many details of the affair.343

342 Details of the affair are given in Penhallow, 98.

343 "On Monday last the Mohawks had a Conference with the General Assembly, when they resolv'd to take up the Hatchet against the Eastern Indians, but desire that his Majesty may first be inform'd of their design; and as a Testimony of their Affection for his Majesty's Person and Government, they have left a Belt of Wampumpeeg to be presented to his Majesty by the first Opportunity. As soon as his Majesty's Pleasure shall be known, they desire to have Notice of it, and promise in the mean time to inform us of any ill Design of our Enemies against us, that shall come to their Knowledge, and desire the like Favour from us. They have since had another conference with the Assembly, the Particulars of which are kept private. They have several times diverted themselves and great Numbers of Spectators by their own manner of Dancing, and on Friday last in the
The principal essay of the issue in which the Indians’ feast was reported was dedicated to the question of traditional Puritan religious attitudes; the opening paragraph however, stood as well for the attitude of the Courant towards the Indians:

So great is the Power and Influence of custom and Education on Humane nature, that Men are commonly more tenacious by far of Errors, handed down to them by their Ancestors, that they are willing to receive & embrace Truth, when offered to them by their Contemporaries, tho’ with the clearest Evidence and Demonstration.²⁴⁴

To the Courant, the Indians represented an extreme case of people so bound by custom and education to a primitive culture as to be incapable of adopting the self-evidently superior values of polite society. A demonstration of English culture was offered the Indian delegation on Saturday, September 14, 1723, when they were “splendidly entertain’d at Castle William, his Majesty’s Council and the House of Representatives attending them.” The ceremony included toasts drunk to the King and a firing of the cannon. The Indians’ reaction to the program has not been preserved.

Indian attacks on the Maine coast continued and on July 25, 1722, Governor Shute issued a proclamation declaring “the said Eastern Indians, with their Confederates, to be Robbers, Traitors and Enemies to his Majesty King George, his Crown and Dignity; and that they be henceforth proceeded against as such.”²⁴⁵ The Courant declined to print the proclamation, observing laconically on the last column of the paper that “they were proclaim’d Rebels, and the English Forces at the Eastward, as well as those preparing to go thither, are accordingly directed to act offensively against them.” Such short coverage of the declaration of war seems significant when read in the context of the major article of the issue, a reprint of chapter 29 of the Magna Charta concerning freedom from arbitrary arrest

Afternoon they kill’d an Ox with their Bows and Arrows, and boil’d him in the Common, where they continu’d dancing till late in the Evening.” (NEC, September 7, 1723).

²⁴⁴ NEC, September 7, 1723.

²⁴⁵ Penhallow, 88-91.
and confiscation. This sort of essay, along with the Cato letters of Trenchard and Gordon, was a propaganda staple of the Old Charter Party in its struggle against the governor's prerogative. Reducing Shute's proclamation to a one-line note on the back page denied the governor the "good ink" accruing to him as defender of the province and leader in a popular war. The Courant consistently down-played stories about Dummer's War that reflected favorably on the governor and Council.

Events now moved swiftly and the superior numbers and mobility of the English began decisively to tip the balance. On August 6th the Courant reported the dispatch of a further 100 men to strengthen the forces assembled against the Norridgewalks at Casco Bay. The following week the paper reported the arrival of an offer of peace, which Massachusetts brushed aside as "insolent." The paper mentioned in passing Governor Shute's speech in favor of war, to which "the House of Representatives in their Answer promised their Excellency their Cheerful and ready Assistance in carrying on such a War," but did not carry the text. 346 The News-Letter routinely carried the text of Shute's speeches and proclamations, as did the Gazette; the Courant never did so. The response of the legislature, whose leaders had been inclined to war from the beginning, did not mean that all disputes between the assembly and the governor had been resolved. However, Shute did back down on the naming of a supreme commander and agreed to closer monitoring of military expenditures by the house. 347

Readers of the August 20, 1722, issue received a brief account of the recapture of the two sloops from Nova Scotia taken by the Indians in July. The concentration of forces in Casco Bay gave the English military superiority in the area, which kept the Indians on the defensive and reduced their operations to hit-and-run raids. The masters of the Nova

346 NPC, August 13, 1722.

347 Shute's concession on financial supervision gave the house prior approval of budgeted expenditures and was disallowed by London.
Scotia sloops now turned the tables on their attackers and the issues of September 3rd and 10th contained news of the success of Elliot and Blin in capturing Indians along the shores of Casco Bay. The English forces had achieved military supremacy in Casco Bay and the Indian threat subsided significantly in that region. Subsequent clashes would take place in the interior as the English shifted their attack to the fortified Indian village of Pigwacket.

As the threat from the Easter Indians was abating, the Courant of February 4, 1723, published an account of the funeral of the Narraganset sachem, Ninnicraft, in which the regressive effects of alcoholic excess and the transition of the Indian from a savage threat to a debased underclass were fused. The piece, from a Rhode Island correspondent, had the light-hearted urbanity which the Couranteers admired so much in Mr. Spectator; the irony with which the writer approached the peculiarities of the ceremony appeared to be a way of gaining distance from some of the emotional associations of the subject.

In the middle of the seventeenth century, Ninnicraft’s ancestor, the sachem Ninigret, had responded to a missionary’s request to preach Christianity by instructing him to “go and make the English good first;”348 but defeat in King Phillip’s War had overruled the old chief’s recommendation, bringing Calvinism and rum as consolations to a conquered people. Militarily impotent and economically crippled, the Narragansetts of the 1720s inhabited a twilight region between a still-remembered cultural autonomy and their final extinction as a society. The Courant’s description of Ninnicraft as a “great personage” was accurate but ironic.

The ritual of Ninnicraft’s funeral was an amalgam of traditional Narraganset burial customs and contemporary New England rites; as such, it reflected the transitional condi-

tion of his people. Indian burial ceremony as practiced in the period of first contact with Europeans had been described by Roger Williams.349

The similarities, as well as the differences, between the traditional ceremony described by Williams and the burial rites accorded Ninnicraft were clear from the Courant's account. The funeral procession, including colonial officials and the town militia as well as a contingent of armed Indians, was a European practice, as was the use of a coffin for the corpse and the firing of a musket volley over the grave. The other features of the ceremony accorded with Indian custom: the use of mats to line the grave, the inclusion of food and drink and voluble, ritualized mourning, all described by Williams. Even the curious burial of two lighted tobacco pipes accorded with Indian tradition.350

The Courant's correspondent, claiming that he found "the Account of this Monarch lately given in the Gazette to be very imperfect," recounted the funeral on King Ninnicraft with tongue-in-cheek solemnity.351 The cause of the king's death was said to be "that Princely Liquor vulgarly called Rhum, of which he is said to have drank two Gallons at a

349 "When they come to the Grave, they lay the dead by the Grave's mouth, and then all sit downe and lament; that I have seen teares run downe the cheekes of stoutest Captaines, as well as little children in abundance: and after the dead is laid in Grave, and sometimes (in some parts) some goods cast in with them, They have then a second great lamentation, and upon the Grave is spread the Mat that the party died on, the Dish he eat in; and sometimes a faire Coat of skin hung upon the next tree to the Grave, which none will touch, but suffer it there to rot with the dead." A Key into the Language of America, J. H. Trumbull, ed., (Providence RI: Publications of the Narraganset Club, 1st ser., 1, 56, First pub. London, 1643).

350 Archaeological excavation of Narraganset graves is the subject of William Scranton Simmons, Caumowwith's House: An Indian Burial Ground on the Island of Conanicut in Narraganset Bay (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 1970). An early seventeenth-century grave in which the body was buried with a white kaolin pipe of British manufacture held upside down between the fourth and fifth fingers of the right hand, with the stem pointing toward the chin is described on page 72. Although this practice is undocumented in the graves that antedate the arrival of Europeans, it represents a practice more than a century old at the time of Ninnicraft's funeral.

351 The issue of the Gazette containing the account of Ninnicraft's funeral has been lost.
Sitting." Like the funeral of the Mohawk ambassador at Boston in October of 1722, the
ceremony was an amalgam of British and Indian customs.352

The dependency of the Narragansetts on the English was indicated by English
proclamation of the succession of Ninnicraft's son and by English trusteeship of the tribe's
finances. The stated intention to send the young prince to grammar school as preparation
for Harvard was an early example of the policy of detribalization through European-style
education which has characterized white management of Indian affairs ever since.353

The important points of the story for the Courant were the king's alcoholism and
his son's future education. Whether Rhum — the Rhode Island correspondent preferred
the French spelling — was the cause or the effect of Ninnicraft's reduced condition is not

352 "His Bearers were some of the principal Gentlemen of the this government. The Town-
Company of English, and a considerable Number of Indians under Arms attended at this
Funeral. When they came to the Grave, his Queen open'd the Coffin, and pour'd in a
Bottle of Rhum, and it being the King's Favorite Liquor while living, she set two full
bottles in the Coffin, one on each side his Head: Afterwards she laid two Pipes of Tobacco
well lighted on his Breast, and a Cake or two of Bread, with a Pot of Nokaeg, where
likewise put into the Coffin. The Sachem being thus supply'd with proper and sufficient
Provision, the Coffin was nail'd up; upon which a great Mourning follow'd among the
royal Family. The Grave was very large and deep, lin'd at the Bottom and Sides with
Matts; and the Corps being let down, and neatly cover'd with Rails and Masts to keep out
the Dirt, a second Mourning follow'd, which lasted sometime; after which Six or Seven
volleys were fir'd." (NEC, February 4, 1723).

353 "... the young Prince who is about Seventeen Years of Age, named George Augustus
Ninnicraft, was declar'd King by one of the Trustees appointed by this Government to
take Care of Ninnicraft's Estate, which 'tis said is worth about Thirty Thousand Pounds.
The Narragansetts have a Crown among them made of Wampumpeeg, but the Day of the
young King's Coronation is not yet fix'd. The old King was between Fifty and Sixty
Years of Age when he dy'd. he was a Person of a comely Stature, and had a Princely
Aspect. I can learn nothing remarkable in his Life, but that he was a true Lover of Rhum to
the very last. 'Tis said the young King is to be sent to the Grammar School in order to be
educated at Harvard College, and 'tis not doubted but that in a few Years time he will be
able to write a Latin Epitaph on his Father: But that he may not be without one till that
Time, I take leave to borrow the two following Lines from the Tomb-Stone of a worthy
Magistrate at Narraganset, some time since departed.

He from this Vale of Tears, alas, did go,

Like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego."
(NEC, February 4, 1723)
clear from the story. The fact that he died from drinking two gallons of the “princely liquor” at a sitting and that the only remarkable fact in his biography was that “he was a true Lover of Rhum to the very last,” suggested that he was severely alcoholic. His widow’s gesture in pouring rum into the coffin and adding two bottles more to the traditional provisions supplied for the journey to Cautantowwit’s house may have been interpreted differently by Indian and English observers.\textsuperscript{354}

The description of the Indian Sachem as a great personage struck at that discomfort which sophisticated provincials felt in situations they suspected their metropolitan counterparts might find crude or ridiculous. The Narraganset Sachem was an important member of his own society and provincial political considerations dictated that his funeral be attended by a number of Rhode Island dignitaries; yet the cause of the chief’s death and the peculiar nature — to Europeans at least — of the ceremonies could only invite condescending laughter from polite society. The Courant responded with ironic detachment. Also characteristic of the Courant’s treatment was the way in which the satiric mode, once invoked, extended to other targets of the Courant’s mockery. After describing the educational plans for the future king, grammar school in preparation for Harvard, the correspondent added the observation that “in a few Years time he will be able to write a Latin Epitaph on his Father,” presumably in the Kitelic mode or one of the poetic styles of the “Harvard scribblers” whom the Courant frequently satirized.

\textsuperscript{354} Cautanowwit, the god of corn, was said to live far to the south-west, the source of spring weather and the site of the superior culture of the Midwestern mound builders. The afterlife in Narraganset culture consisted of residency in the domain of Cautanowwit, which William Wood described in 1634 as “a kinde of Paradise, wherein they shall everlastingly abide, solacing themselves in odiferous Gardens, fruitfull Corne-fields, greene medows, bathing their tawny hides in the coole streames of pleasant Rivers, and shelter themselves from heate and cold in the sumptuous Pallaces framed by the skill of natures curious contrivement; concluding that neither care nor paine shall molest them...” William Wood, New-England’s Prospect (London, 1634, reprinted Boston, 1967) 104.
King Ninnicraft's funeral served readers as comic relief from the threat of the Eastern Indians. Here, after all, was the leader of a once-threatening tribe whose death by alcoholism was observed in rites which would draw a disapproving scowl from Puritan traditionalists and a knowing smile from the more sophisticated. With Ninnicraft poised for his journey to Cautanowwit's house and his son preparing for a Harvard career as a Kiteelic poet, the Courant's readers could feel secure without reference to providential protection.

The frontier was not the only place where New Englanders were threatened by the savagery and barbarism of non-Europeans; a growing number of Indians and blacks were living in New England towns. Blacks were among the most advertised commodities in the pages of the Courant, and James Franklin served as broker in the absence of an organized slave-market. Although most slaves imported into New England came from the West Indies or southern colonies, the rapidly growing African population of the region was augmented by occasional direct importation. On October 16, 1725, the Courant reported that "Last Week a Sloop arriv'd here directly from Guinea, with about twenty Negroes." The growing number of blacks in Boston and the spectrum of social conditions in which they lived complicated the social order of the town of Boston and threatened the status of the

355 Advertisements such as these from the May 20, 1723, issue were typical:
"To be Sold, A likely young Negro Woman, fit for Town or country Service, with her young Child. Enquire of the Printer hereof.
A Negro boy about Seventeen or Eighteen Years of Age, born in New-England, to be sold by Augustus Lucas on Rhode-Island."

356 William D. Pierson, Black Yankees: The Development of an Afro-American Subculture in Eighteenth-Century New England, (Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1988) 3-7, estimates that although three fourths of New England's black immigrants were African by birth, most had been "seasoned" elsewhere in the Americas before arrival.
middling sort among the readers of the Courant. Their presence posed the overt threat of criminal or rebellious activities and more subtle issues raised by an alien presence.

In their capacity as menials, Indians and blacks in Boston intermarried with some frequency had approximately equivalent social status vis à vis whites. Unbalanced sex ratios among both blacks and Indians promoted the marriage of black men with Indian women. Because economic conditions were not conducive to the profitable employment of slave gangs, black slavery in New England was generally household slavery. Slaves customarily lived and worked — but did not eat — with their white masters. The familial nature of black slavery in New England meant that blacks were generally considered part of the family as eighteenth century New Englanders understood the term, ranking in status below apprentices and white servants. The familial nature of black slavery strengthened prevalent ideas about a household of non-autonomous, disenfranchised women, children, servants and slaves headed by an autonomous (and therefore enfranchised) white man. Both because it preserved the conceptual continuum on which both government and family could be placed and because it harmonized nicely with the Whig belief in the close relation between possession of property and civil autonomy, the familial nature of slavery reinforced the Real Whig political ideas of the Couranteers and inhibited the conception of blacks as a class or sub-culture.

357 "During the first half of the eighteenth century, the black population of New England was increasing at an average of nearly 50 percent a decade, compared to about 30 percent a decade for the white population in the same period." (Piersen, Black Yankees, 18).

358 Piersen, Black Yankees, 19, cites a male:female ratio of 76:100 in Boston in 1764.

359 The Narragansett country of Rhode Island and eastern Connecticut was an exception to this general rule. On "familial" slavery in New England, see Piersen, Black Yankees, 26-27.

360 Modern historians have concluded that blacks did consider themselves culturally separate. Piersen argues that "The Afro-American subculture they created was not the product of isolation but, instead, a body of shared traditions and values that black New
Cotton Mather had a “Spanish Indian Damsel,” who, he recorded, “was a very useful Servant in my family.”\textsuperscript{361} The woman died in August of 1718, and Mather’s diary entry for the eighteenth records, “She was buried this Evening. And I made as pungent a Discourse as I could, unto the many Indians and Negroes that came unto the Funeral.”\textsuperscript{362} The presence of both Indians and blacks at the funeral attests to the inter-penetration of these two non-European cultures in Boston. Further evidence of a close social interaction between the two groups can be found in legislation passed to regulate funerals such as the one at which Mather officiated. An ordinance passed by the Boston town meeting in 1723, observing that “great Numbers of Indians, Negroes and Mallettoes, have of late Accustomed themselves, to Attend the Burial of Indians, Negroes, and Mallatoes,” the law stipulated that “all Indians, Negroes and Mallatoes, shall be buryed half an Hour before Sun-set at the least, and at the nearest Burying Place.”\textsuperscript{363} Although the ordinance cited the numbers of mourners in attendance, the requirement of daylight burials and the restriction on funeral processions raises the possibility that heterodox religious practices may have played a part in provoking restrictive legislation.\textsuperscript{364}

\textsuperscript{361} Trade in Indians slaves from the Spanish Caribbean was not uncommon. The Courant of June 24, 1723, carried an advertisement by Thomas Byles of Newport offering a reward of £5 for the return of his Spanish Indian servant named Saffidillah.

\textsuperscript{362} Mather, Diary. 550.

\textsuperscript{363} Orders and By-Laws Made & Agreed upon by the Freeholders and Inhabitants of the Town of Boston (Boston: B. Green, 1725, Evans, 2607).

\textsuperscript{364} Piersen concluded from his study of black culture in eighteenth century New England that “the region’s black population maintained African values and approaches to life... In their religious beliefs and styles of worship... the black Yankees were truly Afro-American.” (Piersen, Black Yankees, ix)
The number of black and Indian funerals in Boston can be roughly estimated from mortality statistics. On October 9, 1721, the Courant reported the death count for the smallpox epidemic. There were 14 Indian deaths, 15 black deaths, and 174 white deaths, suggesting that Indians and blacks each comprised approximately 10% of the town’s population.\(^{365}\) In March of 1726, the Courant reported mortality statistics from all causes in Boston during the previous year. There were a combined total of 67 Indians and blacks, out of 335 total deaths, or 20%. Evidently, certain Boston grave-yards were the scene of heavily attended evening funeral ceremonies for people of color in the city. The Courant of July 29, 1723, carried an account of one such interment which took place the previous Thursday in which the body of a slave woman belonging to Robert Auchmuty “was carried in a Coach to her Mother’s House, at the North End of the Town, on Wednesday Night; and on Thursday Night she was magnificently interr’d at the North burying Place.” According to the account, 270 blacks attended the interment.

Mrs. Carlington’s funeral violated so many provisions of the new law regulating Indian and black funerals that this event may have precipitated the legislation. Auchmuty was a member of the Governor’s Council and an opponent of Elisha Cooke.\(^{366}\) The abil-

\(^{365}\) Since mortality is normally higher among the poor, this estimate of population should probably be interpreted as an upper limit. Pierson argues that black mortality from smallpox in Boston was lower than white because “of earlier African knowledge of variolation and because many blacks were purchased as seasoned slaves, thereby having immunity before their arrival,” but that “blacks contracting smallpox died from the disease at rates much higher than white averages.” (Pierson, Black Yankees, 21). The death rate he calculates agrees with the mortality figures in the Courant.

\(^{366}\) Samuel Sewall, The Diary of Samuel Sewall, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, Inc, 1973), 162, recorded an incident between Auchmuty and Cooke on January 29, 1729, which captures some of the adversarial flavor of the relationship between the two men: “Many went over to Boston. Mr. Cooke, Mr. Attorney Genl. Mr. Auchmuty, Robinson, Capt. Fullam being invited went to Capt. Douse’s (Mr. Cooke lodg’d there). They drank several bowls of Punch; At last Mr. Cook looked Mr. Auchmuty in the face and ask’d him if he were the man that caus’d him to be put out of the Council? A. answered No! I could not do it; but I endeav’rd it, I endeavoured it! Cooke, The govr. is not so great a Blockhead to hearken to you.” The anecdote suggests that Auchmuty’s
ity of wealthy councilors such as Auchmuty to provide more sumptuous funerals for their black slaves than most of Boston’s freeholders could afford for their families may have provoked resentment leading to the passage of restrictive legislation. Cooke and his caucus would have been strengthened by support for such a populist measure and any affront given to Auchmuty unregretted by Cooke.

In a similar vein, on December 25, 1721, the Courant published an account of an elaborate marriage party given by a prominent lawyer for one of his slaves in which the couple were transported to church in a sleigh and, after the ceremony in which “an Englishman stood as a Father to give the Woman in Marriage,” the couple were the guests of honor at a handsome diner party “for the Entertainment of several Persons of Distinction, who were present, particularly ONE of great Note.” The following morning, the couple were awakened by a trumpeter, who played until “the Bridegroom walk’d out in his Gown and Slippers, and rewarded him for his Service.”\(^{367}\)

The Courant’s correspondent concluded his report with a double-edged question: whether he intended by “making so publick a Wedding for his Negro” to call attention to the fact that he himself was living with “a certain French Lady” although they were not married, or, if he intended by the elaborate ceremony for his Negro “to ridicule and bid opposition to Cooke dated at least to the early 1720s, when Shute repeatedly negatived Cooke’s election to the Council by the Lower House.

\(^{367}\) In addition to questions of social status, marriage of black slaves could raise financial issues if the bride and groom had different owners. Samuel Sewall had brokered arrangements for such a marriage in 1700 and recorded in his Diary for Sept 26: “Mr. John Wait and Eunice his wife, and Mrs. Deborah Thair come to Speak to me about the Marriage of Sebastian, Negro servt. of said Wait, with Jane, negro servant of said Thair. Mr. Wait desired they might be published in order to marriage. Mrs. Thair insisted that Sebastian might have one day in six allow’d him for the support of Jane, his intended wife and her children, if it should please God to give her any. Mr. Wait now wholly declin’d that, but freely offer’d to allow Bastian Five pounds, in Money p. annum towards the support of his children [and of] said Jane (besides Sebastian’s cloathing and Diet). I persuaded Jane and Mrs. Thair to agree to it, and so it was concluded.” (Sewall, Diary, 83).
Deffiance to the Government?" The Courant's question conveyed a sense of the inappropriateness of such an elaborate ceremony for what was politely referred to as a bond servant. The disparity of the elegance of the wedding and social status of the couple seemed to suggest a mockery of the institution of marriage. Similar resentment must have been felt at lavish funerals for blacks and Indians. In a deeper sense, the questions designed to discomfit the lawyer revealed underlying assumptions about social and political stability, about the equilibrium between the one, the few, and the many that was endangered by the elaborate Negro wedding. Real Whig civic virtue was, in this essay, amalgamated with popular reaction to the economic threat posed to urban artisans by African slavery.368

In the November 16, 1724, issue, the Courant became more explicit on the disruptive effect of blacks whose masters' wealth permitted them exceptional social status. Arson had caused the town to institute a special watch. The Courant recounted that one patrol found "about half a Score of Negro Servants of both Sexes, assembled at a free Negro's House, with a large Bowl of Punch, and other necessary Inducements to Rudeness and Disorder." The Courant saw in this celebration the threat of anarchy and ascribed blame to wealthy slave owners who "are so much above Law and Justice themselves, that they will not suffer their very Slaves to be defil'd with it." Free blacks presented white artisans and journeymen with a source of potential economic competition and a threat to social status.369

368 On the emergence of a popular ideology among workers in seaport towns see Nash, Urban Crucible. That doughty Puritan justice, Samuel Sewall, observed that "Forasmuch as Liberty is in real value next unto Life: None ought to part with it themselves, or deprive others of it, but upon most mature Consideration. ... 'Tis pity there should be more Caution used in buying a Horse, or a little lifeless dust; than there is in purchasing Men and Women; Whereas they are the Offspring of GOD." (The Selling of Joseph, A Memorial, Boston, 1707, 88-89). The Courant expressed no disapproval of slavery; indeed the incapacity of non-whites for self-determination was a basic component of the paper's presentation of stories concerning blacks. Sewall's argument based on the universal value of human freedom is a place where the Puritan old guard was more open to Enlightenment values than the middle-class Couranters.

369 Piersen observes that "it was not considered threatening for bondsmen to rise to important positions of responsibility superintending their masters' farms, households, or

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"It has been always thought," the correspondent observed, "and is now apparent, that Gentlemen's Negroes nurs'd up for State only and kept in Idleness and Plenty, are the greatest Plagues of the Town, and communicate the Infection to their Fellow Servants." Liveried domestic slaves were an ostentation that threatened the social order, at least from the perspective of the Couranteers, because of their idleness and lack of responsibilities. The condition of such "Gentlemen's Negroes" paralleled in certain respects the fashionably idle wives which wealthy Bostonians were beginning to establish in growing numbers; however, their status as bondsmen did not provide the same incentive to civic responsibility that gave even idle wives an interest in their husbands' estates. "Gentlemen's Negroes," enjoying leisure and modest affluence without the stabilizing influence of property ownership, could subvert social order by vice or crime. The Courant carried a number of stories to illustrate both tendencies.

Boston's black population offered a direct threat through criminal acts. The Courant reported with concern a rash of fires in the town set deliberately by blacks. The trouble began on Saturday, March 30th with a fire at the lower end of King Street which destroyed a number of tenements belonging to Elisha Cooke. The fire may have been set in resentment over the public whipping that afternoon of five Indians and blacks for "some misdemeanors." On the following Tuesday, April 2, 1723, a fire was discovered on the exterior of the house of a merchant named Powel, near the Quaker Meeting House. A black suspect was apprehended and confessed to the arson. He also admitted to a previous attempt against Powel's barn and was committed to jail pending a trial in May.

business; but white society was hostile to free blacks adopting the same kind of job roles in their own interests; thus whites tried to make certain that freedmen too the menial jobs suited to subservient caste." (Pierson, Black Yankees, 46).

370 NEC, April 1, 1723.
371 NEC, April 8, 1723.
In the following week events moved rapidly as Boston found itself under attack from a black arson ring. Three more fires were discovered in rapid succession and a watch of 20 men was instituted to patrol the town. When the suspect arrested earlier named five co-conspirators a, group of fifty militiamen was detailed to be ready "upon the Cry of Fire, lest the Negroes should make an Attempt upon the lives of People who go to Extinguish it."\(^{372}\) Despite the increased patrols the crisis continued to grow. Four more suspicious fires were discovered in the following week and a shoemaker named Winter was arrested on suspicion of arson and confined in Bridewell jail.

Faced with something resembling a slave revolt and the possibility of a devastating conflagration should a structure fire get out of control, the town offered a £50 reward for information on the arsonists and a pardon for "any Person (whether Negro or otherwise) who has been concern'd in the combination, and shall make discovery of the rest."\(^{373}\) While the proclamation was being "published by beat of Drum" at the corner of School Street, a black jeered the news and was immediately confined to Bridewell for interrogation.

The military watch "for the better security of the town" instituted after the April 5th fire was put on a permanent basis on April 15th and a half-dozen arsons were discovered over the following month. When the property of Mr. Bridge was attacked for a second time, one of his servants was committed to prison on suspicion of the crime and five or six blacks and one white servant belonging to him were indicted for arson. On the following Saturday, May 11, 1723, one of the blacks was found guilty and sentenced to death.\(^{374}\) A

\(^{372}\) NEC, April 15, 1723.

\(^{373}\) NEC, April 22, 1723. Boston had suffered at least eight major fires since the 1650s, the most recent in 1711. According to the legend of Captain John Bonner's 1722 map of the town, Boston had approximately 3,000 houses, two-thirds of them wood.

\(^{374}\) NEC, May 13, 1723.
suspicious fire occurred a week later near the scene of the earlier fires on King Street but no arrests were made. Bridge’s other blacks continued to be held in prison pending trial. The Courant of May 27, reported that one of them had died while in confinement. The trials were held the week of June 10th and all were acquitted. The black previously convicted of arson was hanged July 4, 1723. With his execution the arson scare came to an end.

The black arson ring which alarmed Boston in 1723, represented a real threat to the safety of the town. It also represented an internal counterpart to the external conflict with the Indians in Maine. The hanging on July 4, 1723, represented the suppression of primitive and destructive forces within. The Eastern Indians, roaming a vast wilderness and supported by French allies, were an enemy to be met with English valor; Indians and blacks within the pale of settlement represented a potentially criminal element, an underclass to be contained and controlled. The Courant’s treatment of the arson incident was so restrained as to be sketchy. The Couranteers presented the subject purely in its political and economic dimension as a threat to stability and property. The black arson ring was perceived through a tautological bit of Real Whig reasoning in which the slave’s lack of autonomy justified his lack of property, which, of course, caused his lack of autonomy. Parietal authority was at least capable of considering the issue of the black arsonists in affective terms. Cotton Mather asked his congregation — which contained over thirty blacks — whether Boston’s blacks were always “treated according to the Rules of Humanity?.... Are they treated as those that are of one Blood with us, and those that have Immortal Souls in them, and are not mere Beasts of Burden?”

A reader of the crime news which occupied a significant part of the Courant for April 1, 1723, would have gotten a sense of the social cleavage separating the minority

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population from the circles in which the paper was read. The first item, from Martha’s Vineyard, gave an account of the arrest for murder of five Indian men and a squaw, accused in the death of a companion found partially buried under a bank. The suspects “own’d they were with him, but that he was so much in Drink they were oblig’d to leave him there; and they pretend the Ground fell upon him after they came away; but those who have view’d the Place conclude he was murdered.” In local news, “The same Day in the Afternoon, five Negroes and Indians, some for late Misdemeanours, were whipt through the Town at the Carts Tail.” A final item concerned the disposition of the case of a number of boys charged with window breaking outside a dancing school: “The Lads bound over to the Sessions for the late Riot at Mr. Gatchel’s School, had their Tryal last Week and we hear they are clear’d.” The theme of this triptych of crime stories was social status as much as race; the Courant never suggested that white crime was limited to stone throwing by schoolboys, but the contrast between the high-jinks of the wealthy young men at a dancing school, the degradation of Indians and blacks publickly whipped and, even more, the squalid drunkenness and murder among the Vineyard Indians, created an exemplary account of the value of polite learning such as dancing in contrast to the conduct of those at the lower margin of New England society.

Indians could be suspected of murderous violence towards whites because of cultural differences, as a story in the August 14, 1725 issue of the Courant revealed. A child in Stratford, Connecticut was found murdered “with the hands, head and Private Parts cut off, and a Hole under each Arm, suppos’d to be stabb’d with a Knife.” Indians were suspected, but no conviction obtained. “A little before this,” the story continued, “two Indians meeting with a Shepherd in that Place, commanded him to go along with them, which he refusing, they beat him, and haled him over a Fence, and left him for dead.”

The pattern of mutilation of the child, similar to that in the death of Moses Eaton at the hands of the Eastern Indians reported in the Courant July 23, 1722, and the climate of interracial animosity suggested by the item about the shepherd would have been familiar
details to the contemporary reader. Indian-white relations at this time occurred across a spectrum ranging from the Spanish-Indian damsel who was a domestic servant in the household of Cotton Mather to warfare on Casco Bay. The status of any Indian was somewhat suspect because of the cultural ties associating him with the unregenerate savages lurking on the edges of settlement. In this sense the frontier between Indian and Englishman was social and psychological as well as geographical. Within provincial society the Indian continued to be seen by the Courant as a brutal antithesis of the ideals of polite society. The moral depravity to which Indians were believed to be particularly prone was illustrated in a story from the March 5, 1726, issue which reported that, “an Indian Man at Colchester, kill’d two of his own children, and his Brother, then went and hang’d himself.”

The Courant was able to employ Indians to satirize English hypocrisy by contrasting their conduct with that of their social superiors. In another of those rare instances in which Indians made it off the back page of the paper, an essay concerning disregard of the Sabbath referred to “the fact that some few whales are taken First Day or on Sunday, as you call it.” The author, R.Z., cited an instance: “this last February another was also kill’d on First Day, by three Boat’s Crews, which consisted of four white Men, and the rest Indians, tho’ it must be said, these latter were more averse to the Action than the former.”

The history of early America is preeminently the history of the multiple and shifting frontiers between different cultures. ... The frontiers where these cultures met were thus human spaces, not geographical spaces accidentally occupied by people. ... Only when a group ceased to maintain control over its own destiny and definition did a particular frontier cease to exist.” (Axtell 110).

377 NEC. March 30, 1724. “First Day” was Quaker usage intended to avoid the pagan associations of the traditional names for the days of the week. Its use by R.Z. was intended to give the story about whaling on Martha’s Vineyard local color as Quakers figured prominently in the whaling industry there. J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, Letters from an American Farmer (New York: Penguin Books, 1983) 143, says of the Martha’s Vineyard whalers that “the majority of those inferior hands which are employed
The Courant was able to criticize the behavior of the white whalers by showing it to be more barbarous than that of Indian members of the crew. Such a satire depended on the unquestioned assumption that Indians, even within New England society, were incapable of full participation in European culture or of accepting Christian values.

In the phrase of Roy Harvey Pearce, "the Indian stood as a vivid reminder of what the English knew they must not become." At the opposite pole, of course, stood "Englishness," a collection of attributes and values associated with Britain. The content of Englishness in the culture of Massachusetts changed markedly in the early years of the eighteenth century as part of the process of "anglicization," but at its core remained two values which Indians clearly did not share: the traditional political rights of Englishmen and the Protestant religion. The Courant accepted the traditional vision of the Indian as "other," an alien being morally and culturally inferior to the colonists, who defined by contrast the identity of Englishmen in America.

The perceived cultural primitiveness and moral backwardness of the Indian stood on a different foundation from other non-Christian societies and served a unique function in the ideology of Massachusetts. For this reason the image of the Indian in the Courant was not susceptible to amelioration through the anthropological approach to non-European cultures characteristic of the English Enlightenment. Thomas Symmes expressed the new attitude in "A Discourse Concerning Prejudice In Matters of Religion." Symmes described prejudice as a function of culture, "Oftentimes these Prejudices are the product of Educa-

\[\text{in this fishery... who do not belong to the Society of Friends, are Presbyterians and originally came from the main.}\]

378 Pearce, "Captivity", 3.

379 Thomas Symmes, A Discourse Concerning Prejudice In Matters of Religion. Or, An Essay, to Shew the Nature, Causes, and Effects of Such Prejudices; And also the Means of Preventing, or Removing Them (Boston: S. Kneeland for S. Gerrish, 1722, Evans, 2388).
tion... They're often propagated from the Father to the Son, and from one Generation they're transmitted to another.\textsuperscript{380} He advocated a tolerant willingness to examine the content of even Catholic doctrine in search of truth and a realization that all churches are marred by human failings, "Alas the Truth is as precious in the Church of Rome, as in the churches of New England. This Truth can lose nothing of its Excellency because believ'd and profess'd by an Heretick."\textsuperscript{381} Symmes saw even the liturgy of worship as subject to the effects of time and cultural change: "And some Customs that were once Allowable and Laudable, may in Process of Time become inexpedient and Sinful, witness the Love-Feasts, and Holy Kiss practic'd in the Primitive Times, to say nothing of some obsolete Customs of the this Land."\textsuperscript{382} Liberal ministers like Symmes were expressing a new perspective on cultural differences and social values. The \textit{Courant}, inspired by the radical Whiggery of Cato and similar writers, was even more emphatic in denying the merits of tradition; yet when it came to the Indian, in his own society or within New England, the writers of the 1720s showed interest or understanding little greater than that of the generation of Cotton Mather and Samuel Sewall.

Both Indians and blacks were, according to the \textit{Courant}, rendered incapable of autonomy by their participation in inferior, primitive cultures dominated by superstition and ignorance. Difficult as the process might be, it was, at least in theory, possible for red or black people to cast off the shackles of primitive culture and adopt the liberating values of the Christian religion and British culture. King Ninnicraft's son, for example, seemed favorably disposed to enjoy the advantages of a Harvard education. In leaving behind the superstitions of their traditional cultures, however, both Indians and blacks came under in-

\textsuperscript{380} Symmes, \textit{Prejudice}, 7.

\textsuperscript{381} Symmes, \textit{Prejudice}, 19.

\textsuperscript{382} Symmes, \textit{Prejudice}, 8.
creased risk from the great destroyer of autonomy in white New England, alcohol. Drunkenness has for centuries been singled out as both a sin and a social evil and nowhere more vehemently in early modern times that in Puritan communities. The arguments against excessive drinking which were made in the 1720s by writers and readers of the Courant drew upon a long tradition. However, in the changed cultural context of the early eighteenth-century drunkenness was decried from a somewhat different perspective and abhorred for significantly different reasons than in preceding times.

However they viewed it, social commentators in Massachusetts during the 1720s agreed that alcohol abuse was on the rise. Urbanization and family dislocation because of war and hard economic times contributed to the problem. The issue of excessive drinking touched all segments of New England society. In the satyric pamphlet The Tryal of Sir Richard Rum, the anonymous author suggested that “Sir Richard Rum is preferred before poor James Wheat, by almost all Persons of all Ranks & Sexes.” He went on, however, to single out the artisan and shopkeeper class as particularly vulnerable:

There’s scarce a Tradesman in the Land,
that when from work is come,
But takes a touch, (sometimes too much)
of Brandy or of Rum.383

Tradesmen were not the only group in Boston whose drinking gave rise to concern. In October of 1723, a committee of visitation headed by Judge Sewall examined conditions at Harvard College and reported that “there has been a practice of several immoralities; par-

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383 The Tryal of Sir Richard Rum A Court held at Punch-Hall in the Colony of Bacchus (Boston: 1724, 3rd ed.) 8, 24.
particularly stealing, lying, swearing, idleness, picking of locks, and too frequent use of
strong drink."\textsuperscript{384}

Among Boston's well-to-do merchant class increased leisure time, a relaxing of
traditional Puritan norms of parental supervision, and the importation of social customs
from Georgian England resulted in home-based entertainment in which alcohol use and
sexual license reached unprecedented levels. The venerable minister of North Hampton,
Solomon Stoddard, condemned the new pattern of balls and parties in 1722, proclaiming
that "HOOPED Petticoats have something of Nakedness, Mixt Dancings are incentives to
lust; Compotations in Private Houses is a Drunken Practice."\textsuperscript{385}

The atmosphere of the new style of parties was captured in a letter to the Courant
describing a parlor game in which the female participants were tricked into an immodest
posture.\textsuperscript{386} Growing worldliness was, like the increase in drunkenness, a sign to those
who opposed it of moral decay and a loss of the social cohesion upon which the New
England Way had been built. Social tolerance which outran the limits of legal and moral
codes opened a gap between civil authority and citizens, between the "speaking aristocracy"
and the "silent democracy" of Congregational churches. Solomon Stoddard charged that

\textsuperscript{384} Quoted in Arthur Wentworth Hamilton Eaton, The Famous Mather Byles: The Noted

\textsuperscript{385} Solomon Stoddard, An Answer to Some Cases of Conscience Respecting the Country
(Boston: Green for Gerrish, 1722, Evans, 2387) 15.

\textsuperscript{386} Two rows of alternate men and women were seated facing each other on the floor
separated by a row of candles, their ankles tied together, men's legs spread wide. "The
Men, we thought, extended their Feet on Purpose that we might keep ours close, and to let
us see that they had no Design upon our Modesty. For our Parts, the worst we could
dream of, was to get up and dance round the Candles. But presently a Signal was given,
and the men of one Line clos'd their Feet, fell backwards with the womens Arms link'd
their's, and as they fell, rais'd their Feet a considerable Distance from the Floor; and there
- - Oh! --- there they held them, till the dismal Shrieks of their injur'd Partners forc'd them
to be as they were. After which the Opposite Line of Barbarians did the like,
notwithstanding the Struggles and Entreaties of the fair Ones to whom they were ty'd,
who now saw their Doom at hand." (NEC, February 22, 1725).
drunkenness and Sabbath-breaking were seldom punished because offenders were not denounced to the authorities, and that "the great Reason of this is the want of a Spirit of Religion." 387

The contexts in which the problem of alcohol abuse was considered give us a clue about how the issue fitted with other social concerns. The connection between drinking and sexual license expressed by Solomon Stoddard was also voiced by Boston's own censor morum, Cotton Mather, who advised "much Temperance in Eating and Drinking" as a preventative to lust. 388

Drink was blamed for sexual excess and criminal activity of all sorts. The year after the publication of his work on masturbation, Cotton Mather published an account of his conferences with two pirates shortly before their execution. His version of their confession (which may or may not have been accurate) made the connection between drink and crime explicit: "my Drunkenness has ruined me," the pirate White confessed. 389

The effect of excessive drinking, especially of "tavern haunting" on family life was vigorously condemned in New England, where Puritan tradition attached great value to family stability. 390 Concern was heightened by the rapidly growing number of licensed dispensers of beer, cider or strong drink in Boston during the period. In 1716, Boston had

387 Stoddard 10.
390 NEC, January 15, 1722, contained a letter of warning from a father to tavern keepers against "suffering Young Sparks to run up Scores of Ten or Twenty Pounds; lest by so doing the become Partakers of their Sins." During this time Cotton Mather recorded his concern with the problem, see Diary of Cotton Mather 1709-1724 (Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, ser. 7, vol. 8, Boston, 1912), 146.

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14 such establishments, by 1723 the number had grown to 63. In addition, the town had a large number of unlicensed establishments as well. At his trial, Richard Rum was accused of "bringing Thousands to Poverty, and many good Families to utter Ruin" because "many a poor Man's Wife & Children sit at home, wanting what is sinfully wasted in your extravagant Company." One of the witnesses against him testified that Rum "is never quiet till he gets me to the Tavern, and when I am there, I have no mind to come home again." Another witness testified about the effects of heavy drinking upon women, claiming that his wife came home from the tavern "every Night in a scolding Mood, and for my part, unless I am as boozzy as she, I dare neither speak nor stir, but am forced to be a true Passive-Obedience Man whether I will or no." \[392\]

The reference to "a true Passive-Obedience Man" brought the issue of drunkenness into the realm of politics, where the Courant showed the difference between traditional condemnations of excessive drinking and the perspective of the Georgian age. Passive obedience, non-resistance to royal authority advocated by High Church Tories, had been an odious catch-phrase among Whigs and Dissenters on both sides of the Atlantic since the 1710 impeachment of the English preacher Henry Sacheverell. \[393\] The joking comparison made by a husband in The Tryal of Richard Rum was premised on the ancient analogy of the church-as-mother and king-as-father. Here the woman who became shrewish to her husband when drinking typified the abuse of authority possible under divine-right, High Church doctrine. The loss of self control brought about by drink, while hardly desirable under the traditional conception of authority, had more devastating consequences for both

\[391\] An increasing number of tavern operators during this period were women, often widows. See Horner, 501-523.

\[392\] The Tryal of Richard Rum, title page, 4, 6, 7.

\[393\] Sacheverell was removed from his pulpit for criticizing High Church Policy and became a martyr to Whigs and Dissenters.
ruler and ruled under the new rubric of rationally controlled and circumscribed institutional authority advocated by the Courant.

Attack on authority figures for excessive drinking combined implications of immorality with accusations of irrationality and abuse of power. During the opening phase of the inoculation controversy the Courant mounted such an attack on Cotton Mather's nephew, Thomas Walter, the minister at Roxbury. So slanderous and violent were the Courant's remarks that they brought about the dismissal of the paper's principal writer, John Checkley, and almost closed the paper down. In a mocking imitation of the form in which theological questions were debated at Harvard, Gibbons also suggested that Walter was an addicted, daily drinker.

Civil as well as ecclesiastical authority could be satirized for drunkenness. Two years later the Courant published a portrait of "Justice Clodpate," whose demeanor on the bench was characterized by heavy reliance on drink.

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394 Checkley accused Walter of being "with another Debauchee, at a Lodging with two Sisters, of not the best Reputation in the World," and went on in verse to attribute Walter's attack on the Couranteers to the effects of strong drink, claiming that "'Twas Rum, raw Rum and Cyder both/That sous'd thy Grubstreet Ire." In the same issue Dr. Gibbons suggested that Walter "had no reason to murmur and repine at the Fates, since the tax had been taken off cider "and the Scourger in no Danger of continuing a Week S____r. (NEC, August 21, 1721)"

395 "Quare: Whether rectified Spirit of Wine may be drank, when there is no Rum or other Dram to be had. The young Str____ng is of Opinion, 'tis better to drink rectified Spirit of Wine than go to Sleep without a Dram." (NEC, August 21, 1721).

396 His left Hand holds a large transparent Mound, Within whose Concave is a Spirit found. Translations differ here; 'tis call'd by some, The outside Bottle, and the inside Rum.

And now once more on Clodpate cast your eye; Who having tiff'd a Dram to every one, At once the Business, and the Bottle's done: His worship (and they ought to thank him for't) Having dissolv'd their Doubts, resolv'd the Court. (NEC, July 15, 1723)
The vision of justice drunk on the bench implied not only self-indulgence but authority itself given over to passion rather than guided by reason. The issue was not, as later teetotallers would have it, that drink created such a travesty of justice, but that the parietal conception of authority based on divine-right patriarchy could tolerate inebriated justice.

The accusation of drunkenness leveled by the Courant against its enemies was reciprocated in kind. Cotton Mather spread the report that Elisha Cooke was a heavy drinker, and although forced to retract the statement, he continued to refer to opponents as “a party of tipplers.” The political organization through which Cooke controlled the Boston municipal government had a similarly bibulous reputation. Its name, “the caucus,” was believed by some to be derived from the Greek word for wine bowl, others attributed its derivation to “cork us;” whatever the origin of the name, Cooke’s Caucus exercised its election-day influence amidst barrels of free drink.

James Franklin opposed the role of alcohol in politics. In the September 5, 1721, issue of the Courant. He printed a letter addressed to him from a group calling itself “A Clan of Honest Wags” which protested the paper’s heavy emphasis on the inoculation issue. Remarking that “We are now Exhillerating our Spirits over a Capacious Bowl of Inebriating Liquor; and your Health is just going round,” the clan informed Franklin that:

> it is voted to send the Author and epistle urging him to drop inoculation as It is a very Insipid Theme to us, who have a most exquisitely nice and refin'd Taste; and not Superabundantly entertaining to your common Readers.

Franklin responded primly with his own set of resolutions which began “That you do not exhillerate your dull spirits over a Bowl that will contain more than a full Gallon; nor drink my Health, till your Heads are just going round.” While Cooke and the working politicians of the Old Charter Party apparently had no objection to using alcohol to build.

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397 Quoted in Silverman, Life 322.
398 NEC, September 5, 1721.
loyal enthusiasm for the Boston Caucus, Franklin was aware of the contradiction between these means and the goals of Real Whig politics, which depended upon self-discipline, emotional self-control, and rationally defined — rather than traditionally sanctioned — structures of authority.

Alcohol was condemned by its critics not only for its physical effects but because it was the basis of a social and political culture which threatened the hierarchical, family based culture of the New England Way. The free drink distributed by Cooke’s Caucus on election day was the public extension of a tavern-based group of clubs in which drinking and gambling merged with political discussion. A letter to the Courant printed in the issue of February 26, 1726, described the conditions in some detail. The author observed that “the abuse of strong Drink is become Epidemical among us,” and that “the Multiplication of Taverns has Contributed not a little to this Excess of Riot and Debauchery.” He pointed out that taverns were originally established to serve the needs of travelers and that while “our Schools, &c. do in a great Degree retain their primitive Purity, but our Taverns have shamefully Degenerated from the Ends of their first Institution.” The author revealed a pro-Harvard bias and in his outrage at unlicensed taverns he showed a decidedly Matherian style of rhetoric, claiming that “such Vile Houses will be kept, and such Devilish clans Abbetted, by evil minded Persons, whose wicked Arts elude the Care and Vigilance of them whose proper Business it is to look after and suppress them.” Internal evidence points to the authorship of young Samuel Mather, who had attacked the Courant under the pen name of John Harvard.399

399 Although some of the arguments advanced in by the author the essay in the Courant are to be found in Benjamin Wadsworth’s earlier pamphlet, An Essay to do Good by a dissasive from Tavern-haunting and Excessive Drinking, (Boston, 1710), the principal source seems to be the 1726 pamphlet by Cotton Mather et al., A Serious Address To those Who unnecessarily frequent The Tavern.
The author of the letter described three kinds of tavern clubs flourishing in Boston. The first, which he called the senior club, "consisting of Gentlemen of Honour, Probity, Temperance, &c. if either their Years, or their Vertues may be thought consistent with Tavern Haunting," met in private rooms. The concern the writer expressed about the presence of these men of affairs was not drunkenness but their use of the tavern as a place where "vast affairs of State and Government are Survey'd and settle'd, the Honest Schemes of Rulers are arraign'd and traduc'd, and their Arcana too freely intermeddled with." He went on to say that "Here no doubt, Domestick matters, Mens Estates and private concerns, are overhall'd and Canvas'd. And finally, 'tis to be fear'd that too often the Mysteries of Religion, which are too Sacred and Sublime to be droll'd on over Mugs and Bowls, make up part of the Conversation." Here was the heart of the writer's objection: in expanding far beyond the original mission to serve the needs of travelers, taverns had become a locus in the public sphere, a place where politics, religion, and private affairs could be discussed without the supervision of the authorities who controlled the meeting house or town common. Alcohol served as a social lubricant in the tavern setting but inebriation was not the real fear; indeed for the helpless drunkard the author evinced pity and a concern for the effects of his drinking on his family. Like the newspaper, coffee houses and the private rooms of taverns created a new forum for public discussion; indeed, these places played an important part in the operation of papers like the Courant both as a point of sale and as a source of news. Alcohol could contribute to a lessening of the inhibitory effect of deference. As taverns became the locus of political discussion, alcohol became a solvent of traditional restraint.

According to the Courant's correspondent, the presence of senior clubs in taverns lent respectability to a second group, the young clubs of rakes who "spend whole Nights in
Drinking and Gaming, it is to be fear'd at their Fathers and Master's Expence." What most offended the writer was the drinking and gambling which were the featured activities.  

Beneath the exaggerated pulpit rhetoric there seems to lie a kernel of fact: the young men of Boston were assiduously imitating their London counterparts in living the life of the rakehell. The threat to which the writer of these letters seemed most strongly to react was not the entertainment itself but the threat which such unsupervised behavior represented to the social order. In a society which had traditionally not allowed young adults to live on their own before marriage, the loss of patriarchal supervision —and an apprentice's master was legally and morally a kind of second father — threatened the foundations of the political as well as social structure. In the traditional psychology of authority, the undifferentiated power of familial, civil and ecclesiastical organization could all be threatened by the unsupervised revelry of apprentices and journeymen; accordingly, the writer reserved his highest note of outraged exhortation for this aspect of the issue. The third group of tavern haunters, dysfunctional alcoholics, did not constitute an organized group and so, not being a threat to the social order, were merely pathetic. The author's emphasis in discussing them was on the financial distress they caused their families.

400 "The quantitys of Wine and Brandy Punch drank (or rather destroy'd) by these Clubs, is incredible. So that their practice is an Excess of Riot with an Emphasis; they even deluge and drown themselves in Spirituous liquors. And with this prodigious flood of Drink, they have (as we are inform'd) a costly Supper almost every Night, and then the custom is, by a Game of Cards, to throw the whole Reckoning on one Member of the Club." (NEC, February 26, 1726).

401 "What monstrous pitch of Wickedness does such a practice import! And how industrious and vigilant ought Heads of Familys to be in the Suppression of them. We may say to very Father and Master, Arise and exert your selves, for this Business belongs unto you." (NEC, February 26, 1726).

402 "The next club is the Tippling Club, made up of Men who Drink for Drinking sake. Men who are at the Taverns at all Hours spending their Time and Money, while their Wives and Children want Bread and other Necessaries at Home. They can spend a Shilling or Eighteen Pence ever Night, which would find their Familys Bread, pay their House rent or other debts. It were to be wish'd, that the wholesome Laws against
The dangers of alcohol and the loss of control which it could induce were shrewdly observed by the most promising of the Couranteers, James' younger brother Benjamin. In Silence Dogood's letter number twelve he addressed the issue of drunkenness. Franklin approached the issue from a Stoic perspective. He attributed excessive drinking to "a false Notion of Pleasure and good Fellowship" since "no Pleasure can give Satisfaction or prove advantageous to a reasonable Mind, which is not attended with the Restraints of Reason. Enjoyment is not to be found by Excess in any sensual Gratification," and expressed approval of moderate drinking because although "drinking does not improve our Faculties, but it enables us to use them."

The aspect of drunkenness which interested Franklin was neither moral nor criminal, but rhetorical. Noting that some who are otherwise tongue-tied become eloquent when angry or after a moderate amount of drink, he concluded that "much Study and Experience, and a little Liquor, are of absolute Necessity for some Tempers, in order to make them accomplished Orators." Lest the significance of the oratory be taken too seriously, he quoted "an ingenious Author" who observed that although there were some men who "could talk whole Hours together upon any thing; but it must be owned to the Honour of the other Sex, that there are many among them who can talk whole Hours together upon Nothing." Continuing in this ironic vein, Franklin praised the apparent wisdom which some drinkers exhibit, pointing out that while "Some shrink in the Wetting, and others swell to such an unusual Bulk in their Imaginations, that they can in an Instant understand all Arts and Science.

Drunkenness were better Executed, and common Sots possed up, as the Law directs, in order to discourage and suppress such Wickedness." (NEC, February 26, 1726).

403 NEC, September 10, 1722,
404 The source of Franklin's quote is The Spectator, vol.3, 247.
Franklin concluded the letter with a psychological insight about the vocabulary of euphemism employed by drinkers, arguing that “It argues some Shame in the Drunkards themselves, in that they have invented numberless Words and Phrases to cover their Folly, whose proper Significations are harmless, or have no Signification at all. The letter ended with a score of popular expressions to describe the drunken state.

The argument of Silence Dogood’s twelfth letter was characteristically non-confrontational. Franklin reminded the reader that “A true and natural Representation of any Enormity, is often the best Argument against it and Means of removing it, when the most severe Reprehensions alone are found ineffectual,” and demonstrated the technique by damning moderate drinking with faint praise. Beneath the Stoic banner of moderation in all things, Franklin argued that, at its best, drinking permitted sonorous banalities and created the illusion of learning. At the core of the rhetoric made possible by drink lay euphemisms which covered the shame the tippler felt about his drinking when sober. The evil of drink was the damage it did to the drinker’s ability to use language and learning for rational argument; the inebriated state disabled precisely those powers upon which the inclusionary arguments of the Couranteers depended.

The disempowerment which drinking could bring about remained a motif in Benjamin Franklin’s thinking throughout his life. It was the theme which he used in his Autobiography to organize the story of his youth and temperance figured prominently in that work’s list of vices to be systematically cultivated. He told the story of his establishment in Philadelphia in terms of his relationships with three young men, each of whom became a failure because of drinking. John Collins, a friend from his Boston days, lived with him in Philadelphia, borrowed money from Franklin which he was unable to repay, and lost his job because of drunkenness. James Ralph, his companion during Franklin’s first stay in England, was a heavy drinker who had abandoned his wife and child, used Franklin’s name to get a teaching job under false pretenses, and also refused to repay a loan Benjamin had made him. Upon return to America, Franklin entered a partnership with Meredith, who
turned out to be a drunkard, and a disappointment to his father. Franklin broke up the partnership and took over the printing business when Meredith was unable to control his drinking. The incompatibility of drinking with business success was a major theme in the early part of Franklin's Autobiography.405

The emphasis on drinking as an impediment to social and career success rather than as moral depravity was characteristic of the treatment of the topic in the Courant. In the same issue of September 5, 1721, in which James Franklin rebuked the Clan of Honest Wags, he reprinted an following item datelined London, June 14, concerning a gentleman's clerk who acted imprudently while drunk and, filled with remorse, died of a fever instead of receiving a providential gift of money.406 Items such as this appear to have made a great impression on young Benjamin. The structure of the episode had some of the flavor of one of Cotton Mather's providential anecdotes but the context was entirely worldly. Not only was the immorality of the employer's behavior overlooked, but the reward which was lost was purely pecuniary. The values and tone of the news story can be found reflected in Franklin's autobiographical accounts of his youthful associates; the message, that drink has no place in the strategies of a young man striving for worldly success, was a major theme in the Courant which the young apprentice took to heart.

The Courant returned to the theme of the wastefulness of drinking in an original piece printed six months later. Dulcimira, defending women against criticism of their idle


406 "We hear that the Gentleman's Clerk, who first disclosed the criminal Intrigue, between the Gentleman at hackney, and the Young Lady, his Sister in Law at Clapton, making the Discovery when he was very Drunk, no sooner became sober, and was put in Mind of what he had said, than he sickened thro' Grief for opening the Secret; and falling into a Fever died in three Days time. A few Hours after his Death came a Bank Note for Twenty Pounds in a Cover, directed to him, from an unknown Hand." (NEC. September 5, 1721).
habits, asked Monsieur Corranto why he did not equally criticize men who "between the Punch-Bowl and the Cards, one or t'other of which Imploys the most of their Hours, except such as are devoted to Sleep to settle their Heads, and carry off the Fumes of their Liquor." Corranto agreed, stating that he had "promis'd to publish any thing that tends to Reformation, without regard to Sex or Station."\(^{407}\)

The theme of Stoic self-control and rationality was one of which the Courant never tired. On May 31, 1725, the paper reprinted Isocrates' Advice to Demonicus from The [London]Weekly Journal of January 9, which had the utilitarian flavor of a how-to-succeed in business manual. Young men were advised to have "a special Care how you associate with men of the Bottle; but, be sure (if Occasion makes you fall into such company) to withdraw before the Liquor gets the better of you. ... He whose Mind is overpowered with Wine," Isocrates counselled, "is like the Chariot, whose Driver is cast out of the box; this going at Random; for want of a Hand to guide it." Much of the approach to success which Franklin was to take with Poor Richard and in his Autobiography can be found in the pages of the Courant.

There would have been no point in Silence Dogood's condemnation of drinking if alcohol did not play an important part in the fashionable Georgian culture of which Monsieur Corranto and Doctor Janus were avid spectators. Commercial advertisements in the Courant provide a clue to the growing sophistication of New England's taste in alcohol. One such notice, on October 22, 1722, advertised the sale of "Canary, Madeira, and St. George's Wines, Rum and Spirits, by the Quarter Cask, or smaller Quantities." Nine months later a similar advertisement informed readers of an auction of "about Sixty Pipes of Extraordinary good Fyal Wines, lately imported, one Pipe in a Lot." A growing sophistication of public taste, at least among the more affluent members of New England society,

\(^{407}\) NEC, March 5, 1722.
was widening the market for imported wines as an alternative to beer, cider and the ubiquitous rum distilled locally and in the sugar islands.

Rum was beginning to have the lower-class association that, later in the century, would make gin notorious in Britain. In both cases cheapness and potency were the essential factors. A news item printed in the Courant of December 10, 1722, about price-gouging among the soldiers serving in Maine gave some sense of the price and importance of rum among common soldiers. The committee sent to investigate complaints found that “The Men pay 11s. a Gallon for Rum, and have an extravagant Price extorted from them for Cloathes; insomuch that 40 Men under the Command of Capt. Harmon, have sent a Petition to the Assembly; praying, that their Captain may be allow’d to supply them.”\(^408\) The economic significance of the trade in alcohol was one of the factors cited in defense of drinking. Prohibitionists and the economically unsophisticated were inclined to include rum in the list of imports responsible for New England’s chronic balance-of-trade deficit. In the Tryal of Richard Rum a spokesman for the mainland colonies was made to say “if we would keep this pernicious Prisoner our of our Countries but eight or ten Years, we might have Silver Money plenty as in other Countries, which would revive Trade,” and the New England colonies testified individually against rum.\(^409\) Sir Solomon Stiffrump, speaking for Massachusetts put the matter squarely in the terms of poplar concern at the time. Claiming that “the Medium of Exchange is gone, and we are in a sinking Condition,” Stiffrump warned that “if some speedy Course be not taken with this troublesome Fellow the Prisoner... in a little Time we shall not have wherewithal to buy our daily Bread.”\(^410\)

\(^408\) Lovewell’s rangers were paid two and half shillings a day (and a bounty of £100 per scalp) but had to supply their own food. Harmon’s men were regular militia, supplied rations and not eligible for the scalp bounty. For either group the alleged price of rum would have been excessive by Boston standards.

\(^409\) The Tryal of Richard Rum, 9.

\(^410\) The Tryal of Richard Rum, 12.

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The dissenting colony at the trial of Rhum was, significantly, Rhode Island. Newport testified that rum "hath raised many from almost nothing to a great Estate, in a very few Years, and helped to build many good Sloops, and employs a great number of Men daily, both by Sea and Land."\textsuperscript{411} Newport's growing wealth from the rum trade, quite possibly at the expense of the Bay Colony, added a mercantile dimension to Massachusetts' century-old vision of vision of Rhode Island as the latrina of New England.\textsuperscript{412} More sophisticated observers of the economic scene, including those who addressed the balance-of-payments issue in the pages of the Courant, agreed with Sir Richard Rum that the molasses trade was not the chief culprit and that "Silks, Bone-Lace, Silver and Gold Lace, Velvet, exceeding fine Holland, Muslin, Ribbons, Silk Stockings, with many other things of great Price and little Service, in short, Prodigality and Extravagance have had as deep a Hand in procuring their Poverty."\textsuperscript{413} Rhode Island's rapidly growing wealth and sophistication, in which the molasses trade played no small part, was not unrelated to the popularity of the Courant there, as evidenced by the growing number of letters from that place which Franklin printed in the paper.

At the other end of the social spectrum, the lucrative nature of the rum trade gave rise to illegal commerce on a small scale. In reporting these episodes the Courant indicated a certain scorn for rum as a drink of the lower classes, as illustrated by a letter published July 15, 1723, from a slave convicted of illegally selling rum at the Mohawk dances on the Common. The author, who described himself as Dingo, "an aged Negro Man (and a Slave to a Gentleman in this Town)," stated that during the Mohawk dances on the Common he

\textsuperscript{411} The Tryal of Richard Rum, 16.

\textsuperscript{412} Among the Congregational clergy, Rhode Island was guilty of worse than Anglicanism. In his An Answer to Some Cases of Conscience Respecting the Country, (Boston: 1722) Solomon Stoddard claimed that "Many in, and about Rhode Island, and in the Naraganset-Country have fallen into Heresy; and some almost into Heathenism." (Stoddard, 11).

\textsuperscript{413} The Tryal of Richard Rum, 21.

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had seized the opportunity "to sell a few Jills off Rum of my own, in order to gain a little Money, since Age has render'd me almost incapable to do it by hard Labour." Boston's slaves often found themselves in Dingo's position of dependency and poverty in old age. When Dingo refused to sell rum on credit to an Indian servant named Ben, the latter informed his master of Dingo's illegal rum sales, resulting in the black man's conviction before the authorities. The social setting, an Indian dance and a squabble between two non-white servants, was an anti-world to the cultured Georgian society whose social values and Whig politics the Courant retailed to its readers. Dingo's legal troubles would have been thought merely amusing, like the antics of a child; the real object of satire in the letter was the behavior of the Indian's master, "Mr. Delator," i.e. the "snitch" who took the whole business seriously and reported it to the authorities. Here was an example of the attitude which occasioned Solomon Stoddard's complaint that "such things are seldom punished, for want of information." Dingo was doing on a small scale what some of New England's leading merchants were doing on a vastly larger one: trafficking in untaxed rum. Somewhat in the style of Plautus, the author of the Dingo letter set the issue of illegal alcohol traffic in the world of the powerless, i.e. slaves, to emphasize a comic rather than moralistic interpretation of the defiance of authority.

The Courant employed the same approach in a story about smugglers in the issue of October 2, 1725, in which it was reported that during a raid by excise officers the wife of one of the smugglers attempted to hide a cannister of untaxed tea between her thighs.

The Officer observing, when she walk'd her legs were very stiff, and seemingly deprived of Muscular Motion, presently divin'd the good Woman to be grown pregnant with some prohibited Goods, and that the Hour drawing nigh, a speedy Delivery would

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414 Piersen claims that "slaves who became old in service to a white family often refused a 'reward' of freedom because they felt at home in their master's household and because they could have assurance that they would be cared for in their old age." (Piersen, Black Yankees, 33).

415 Quoted above from Stoddard, 10.
be necessary: he then lifting up the Hem of her Garment, brings forth into the World an Innocent Cannister of Tea, to the great Diversion of himself and the Spectators.

In this event it was the "pregnant" woman who gave the criminal behavior a comic flavor that obscured a moral viewpoint, making smuggling seem ridiculous rather than evil. That the figure of a woman in a quintessentially female role could be used in the same way as the figure of an elderly African slave demarcated that psychological fault line that separated (in their own minds at least) the Courant's readers seeking political inclusion from those whom they believed could make not such claim.
THE RHETORIC OF AUTHORITY IN THE NEW-ENGLAND COURANT

VOLUME II (CHAPTERS VI - X)

BY

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Chapter Six

Marriage and the Public Sphere

Throughout its controversial life, the Courant published a significant number of essays, poems, and letters on the subject of women in the family and in society. While the space devoted to the topic of women was smaller than that given to politics, religion, or literature, the often heated arguments over the status and behavior of women conducted in the paper’s pages were an integral and important part of the ideology presented by the Courant-teers. Figure 14 shows the number of items about women published in the Courant during its six-year existence. The ninety items upon which figures 14, 15, and 16 are based represent all of the major and most of the minor items which appeared in the Courant. Excluded from this analysis, however, are items related to ecclesiastical controversies (discussed in Chapters Eight, Nine, and Ten), reprints from the European press of stories about births and court activities of women in the aristocracy and items about black women.
The dramatic increase in the number of items about women which appeared in the paper in 1722, more than double the average of other years, paralleled the upsurge in political writing which occurred during that same year. The correlation between intense political controversy and writings about women was not a coincidence; themes of rationality, autonomy, and the nature of authority connected the two subjects in the minds of the Couranteers. Discussion of male-female relationships carried these broad, philosophical issues onto the terrain of family life and everyday experience.

Restricted by literary tradition, the conventions of eighteenth-century journalism and the ideological argument about gendered authority which they wished to make, the Couranteers printed items about women which described a restricted range of activities and experiences. Figure 15 illustrates the distribution of items about women by theme.

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417 Political writing in the Courant rose dramatically in the first quarter of 1722 and remained exceptionally high for twelve months because of the inoculation crisis and Shute's conflict with the Old Charter Party. See figure 11.
Nearly half of the items printed deal with the subjects of courtship and marriage. In these letters, poems, and news items the Couranteers discussed questions of language, money, and control which reflected a new perspective on family life. Another quarter of the items printed dealt with criminal deviations from accepted patterns of male-female relationships: violent or sexual abuse of women by men (and occasionally of men by women), incest and prostitution. The remaining items covered a miscellany of subjects: non-sexual crimes by and against women, criticism of female dress and deportment, and newsworthy events in which women were involved. A small but important group of items dealt with gossip as a quintessentially female form of oral communication and with issues surrounding the role of women as readers and writers of newspapers.

The items about women printed in the Courant varied in form from lengthy and elaborately worked-out essays written by the Couranteers themselves to seemingly trivial snippets reprinted verbatim from the London newspapers. It would be a mistake, however, to judge the significance of an item by its size or originality. In an age when authority and authorship were only partially differentiated, originality had yet to acquire the supreme value which later generations would assign it. The skill with which a politician selected a quotation from the Latin classics or which a minister employed in choosing a biblical text upon which to base his sermon was recognized as an important professional skill. When James Franklin selected news items from the London press to reprint in his newspaper, he exercised an editorial function analogous to that of the politician or minister. Both the printer and his readers saw in these reprinted accounts of crimes, misfortunes, and memorable occurrences themes and values which resonated through the more formal essays, letters, and poems which occupied the front page of the paper.418 The metropolitan orienta-

418 This is not to say that each brief, human-interest item reprinted from the London press was meticulously selected as a counter-text to the issue’s major essay but rather that Franklin exercised editorial judgement in picking from British newspapers stories which seemed interesting and relevant, and that there was a natural continuity of ideology
tion of the Couranteers imbued items from the London press with heightened importance. Such seemingly trivial items permitted readers of the Courant to calibrate their values to a metropolitan standard, to acquire information which could be used to give their own conversation a cosmopolitan flavor, and to celebrate their membership in the British empire.\(^{419}\)

Figure 16 shows the distribution of items about women in the Courant by geographical location. Most of the items about women appearing in the paper were local news. The Courant devoted more space to local news and locally produced literary pieces than either of its two competitors, but even for the Courant, the emphasis on local writing about women was unusual. Two factors seem to explain the focus on Boston as a source for items about women. First, women were frequently the object of satire and criticism in such London papers as the Spectator and the Tattler which aspiring writers among the Couranteers took as their models; accordingly, a number of pieces in the Courant appeared as exercises written after the style of metropolitan literary models.\(^{420}\) Second, topical issues in the fields of courtship and marriage customs in Boston had direct bearing on the matter of authority, civil and ecclesiastical, upon which the Couranteers lavished much of their concern. From the implications courtship and marriage had for larger questions of authority sprang the motivation for a number of pieces dealing with New England social customs.\(^{421}\)

\(^{419}\) Clark, Public Prints, makes the point that confirmation of identity as members of the empire was a fundamental factor in the rise of the American newspapers. In the literary newspapers, of which the Courant was the first and best, validation of imperial identity seems to have played an even greater part than in the more prosaic Boston Gazette and News-Letter.

\(^{420}\) Representative of this kind of writing was the proposal for a survey of wives' diaries published in NEC of March 22, 1725 and explicitly modelled after a similar essay in the Spectator.

\(^{421}\) Representative of this class of essays are such pieces as Anthony Fallshort's description of his difficulties with his father-in-law over his wife's dowry (NEC, March

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Material from the London press was, by the nature of the source, heavily weighted towards crime news. There were a scattering of unusual occurrences: a woman boxer, the pitiful death of a pregnant woman on a street in Gosport, or a soldier's wife who hanged herself when her husband was disgraced; but most of the accounts Franklin reprinted came from trials for crimes such as child abandonment, prostitution, marriage fraud, wife beating or murder.\textsuperscript{422}

Authority in early modern society retained the traditional integration of agencies of nurturing and control. In church and state, these archetypally maternal and paternal func-

\textsuperscript{422} For the boxing "Championess" see NEC, March 5, 1726, the death in Gosport was reported in NEC, February 18, 1726, the suicide in NEC, January 29, 1726. Of the fourteen items about women taken from the London press, three were printed in 1721, three in 1724, and the remainder in 1726, the paper's last year. This pattern may reflect the flagging enthusiasm which afflicted the Couranteers in the paper's final months, resulting in fewer original essays and a greater reliance on reprints from the metropolitan press.
Authority in early modern society retained the traditional integration of agencies of nurturing and control. In church and state, these archetypally maternal and paternal functions were becoming increasingly contrastive on both personal and institutional levels.\textsuperscript{423} Founded as mercantile capitalism was beginning its transformation of the conception of authority, New England had been profoundly shaken by the institutional changes which, beginning in the 1680s, reformed British political life.\textsuperscript{424} The restructuring of authority, which was the institutional dimension of a transition to modern culture, ended the Puritan experiment in New England. The new social ideal which rose in its place was characterized by a more explicit and thorough separation of the maternal and paternal functions of authority. The writers of the Courant accepted this gendered dichotomy for the description of authority as self-evident; their axiomatic use of it is the context within which the material about women in the paper was published and read.

The very limitations of the Courant's accuracy as social history make it more valuable as evidence of changing ideology. The Boston depicted in the paper was a fictitious simile created for the presentation of a set of social values. The Boston of the Courant differed from the island of Inania in the pamphlet News from Robinson Crusoe's Island (a

\textsuperscript{423} The king, and by extension civil authority, was quinessentially paternal and frequently described as a father whose duty was to protect and punish his children (i.e. subjects). The church was a maternal archetype. When, for example, the first planters of Massachusetts referred to the Church of England as "our dear Mother" and described their salvation as "received in her Bosom, and suck'd ... from her Breasts," (NEC, June 3, 1723), they used an ancient imagery.

\textsuperscript{424} Bushman describes the continuity of principle between political, commercial, and domestic structures in early eighteenth century New England as "monarchical in the sense that the essence of the relationship between king and people, the principle of dependence, was replicated endlessly through society at every level. The whole people's dependence on the king came from the same pattern as the relationship of landlords and tenants, masters and apprentices, fathers and children — that is, of patrons and clients" (Bushman, King, 56). It is because of the continuity of principle across the spectrum of social structures that the heterodox political theories advanced by the Real Whigs of the Old Charter Party and the social satire and news items about women run in parallel channels in the pages of the Courant.
contemporary satirical depiction) in that the raw materials with which the Couranteers worked were real fires and pirate trials that readers could readily identify.\textsuperscript{425} Such nuggets of journalistic fact, however, were set in the midst of interpretive essays and selective excerpts from the London press in such a way that they became ingredients in an ideological exegesis rather than an historical "thread of occurrences" such as the News-Letter attempted to give its readers in presenting foreign news.\textsuperscript{426} The Courant is more useful as a guide to what some New Englanders were thinking than as a record of what most New Englanders were doing.

The Courant’s treatment of marriage added two elements to the sturdy utilitarianism of New England tradition. Neither was new, strictly speaking, but there was a shift in emphasis and a change in tone in the paper’s depiction of marriage which contrasted with earlier pamphlet literature. The first was an increased sentimentalism about wives and marriage from the male point of view, accompanied by a growing emphasis on the erotic dimension of male-female relationships. Proceeding directly from the advocacy of increased gender separation and confinement of women to the household, feelings of protectiveness went hand in hand with the status value of maintaining a wife in luxury and idleness.\textsuperscript{427} Related

\textsuperscript{425} Defoe’s work enjoyed steady-seller status in New England from its first appearance in London in 1719 through the Revolutionary period, although its first American printing did not occur until after the Courant’s demise. Defoe’s re-articulation of Puritanism in the context of the eighteenth century spoke powerfully to Massachusetts readers. Fliegelman has pointed out that “it [Robinson Crusoe], more than any of the others, clarifies the moral, political, and spiritual significance the drama of filial disobedience held for the American reader” (Fliegelman, Prodigals, 67).

\textsuperscript{426} On the efforts of John Campbell to provide a “thread of occurrences,” see Clark, Prints, 233.

\textsuperscript{427} These sentiments, so publicly professed and in many cases doubtless genuinely felt, were concomitant with a loss of independent status and identity by women. As Demos expresses it: “This posture of admiration --almost of reverence-- contrasts sharply with the imputations of deviousness and inconstancy found in most earlier assessments of women. But it would be quite erroneous to infer from such flattering rhetoric any genuine improvement in women’s status.” (Demos, “Family”, 433).
to the new sentimentalism was an underlying fear based on the threat to male autonomy and status posed by the transition from traditional, patriarchal patterns of family relationship to a new ideal of marriage between loving partners who weaned their children from dependency to autonomy.\textsuperscript{428} The tension between gallant sentiments of praise and protection and an underlying anxiety resulting in a need for dominance and control produced, in the pages of the \textit{Courant}, an unstable attitude towards women as marriage partners, with frequent alternations between sentimental fantasy and hard-headed dealing in the marriage relationship as a commodity.

Idleness and profligacy, particularly among wives, had been attacked in New England sermons long before the \textit{Courant} appeared. The strong desire of the Couranteers to emulate the social mores of the British upper class caused the paper's treatment of this traditional theme to assume a new form in which beneath pro forma denunciation there could be detected a pride in the idle wife as status symbol and form of conspicuous consumption. Some of Boston's middling sort strove to emulate the new model of domestic arrangement even though the cost was for them disproportionately much greater.\textsuperscript{429} A correspondent claiming to be a recent immigrant observed the compulsion to adopt the customs of the rich among Boston women of more modest station. Noting a growing clamor for domestic help

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\begin{itemize}
\item $^{428}$ Susan Staves, "British Seduced Maidens," \textit{Eighteenth Century Studies}, 14 (1980-1981) concludes from a study of the theme in English law and fiction that the chief victim was not the daughter but her father, whose powerlessness and suffering elegize "the loss of an idealized older family undisturbed by the free exercise of the wills of its inferior members." According to Staves the traditional family structure was dissolving because "English society was changing from a society in which persons were defined in terms of their status, including their status in the family, to one in which persons were thought of as individuals" (Staves, \textit{Seduced Maidens}, 122).
\item $^{429}$ It is not clear how widely, in the 1720s, the new fashion of idle wives was adopted outside the confines of Boston's trans-Atlantic mercantile elite, but it appears that the new social status of the idle wife represented an innovatory ideal more than actual practice, even among wealthy Bostonians. Whether or not one's wife was living a life of idle luxury, it was considered stylish among the Couranteers to protest in print that she was.
\end{itemize}
among some Boston wives, he observed that "Women who have little more than the Name of a Fortune, live as if they were in Possession of the Indie." 430

A letter in the Courant of February 8, 1725 criticized the social pretensions of domestic servants in middle-class households, claiming that kitchen servants so closely imitated the dress of their employers that it was hard "to know Joan from My Lady by her Apparel." The same author described in detail the dynamic of class-conscious fashion and status competition whereby the bourgeoisie attempted identification with the upper class, who as strongly resisted it. The author criticized the "Superfluities" of "some of the Top of the Land," and pointed out that "while they are endeavouring to distinguish themselves by a costly Singularity, the lower Ranks are aspiring after a genteel Uniformity, and can no more bear the Thought of not being as high as their Superiors, than their superiors can of not being much above them." The contradiction between the author's disapproval of the similarity which made it difficult to distinguish between Joan and My Lady and his condemnation of Superfluities expressed the dilemma of the Couranteers.

The intense desire for social status and resulting imitation of those at the top of the social hierarchy was not confined to Boston, nor even to the English colonies. Observers of social life in New Spain remarked upon similar concern with status display and competition. 431 What made the Boston experience unique was not the sense of provincial inferiority which drove the status competition but the very developed political and intellectual institutions of New England society and, of course, the sharp contrast between the Puritan cul-

430 NEC, March 26, 1722.

ture from which Massachusetts Bay was established and the prevailing mores of Georgian

Britain. The case for New England exceptionalism in both the surefootedness of its founding
and in the atypical nature of Puritan culture is argued in Jack P. Greene, Pursuits of

Happiness.

Although not all members of the Boston elite joined in efforts to imitate the stylish
extravagance of their metropolitan counterparts — the elderly Samuel Sewall, for exam-
ple, resisted Madam Winthrop’s importuning him to purchase a coach and a periwig — but
to the writers of the Courant the issue of such ostentation was of great moment. The
degree to which Bostonians managed to replicate London fashion impressed British visitors.
Joseph Bennett visited the town in 1740 and recorded that “the ladies here visit, drink tea,
and indulge every little piece of gentility, to the height of the mode; and neglect the affairs
of their families with as good a grace as the finest ladies in London.”

The neglect of domestic duty by fashionable Boston women was decried in the
pages of the Courant almost twenty years before Bennett’s visit. Idleness being a vice long
condemned in New England society, the creation of a female leisure class was a social de-
velopment disparaged in traditional terms — but not necessarily rejected — by several of
the paper’s contributors. A commentator writing in the February 26, 1722 issue expressed
his condemnation of the fashionable new role for women claiming that they “rise in the

Morning, and spend the whole Forenoon between the Comb and the Glass, in dressing and

Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, 1860-1862, 124-126. The
accuracy of Bennett’s observation must be weighed against the fact that he intended to pay
his New England readers a compliment. Many of the provincial elite wished to see
themselves as indulging every little piece of gentility, whether or not they actually did so.

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prinking themselves; and then perhaps they pass the Afternoon (if not at Ball, yet) in Impertinent Visits." The preening behavior in which women were accused of spending the morning was, however enjoyable it might have been, "work" for women of whom fashion now demanded closer adherence to a stylized and eroticized standard of feminine beauty.435 Much of the often-condemned stock of luxury goods imported from England consisted of the tools necessary for the job. An advertisement in the June 3, 1723, issue of the Courant informed readers of "All Sorts of new-fashion'd Looking-Glasses, Sconces and Tea-Tables," for sale by William Price, "at his Shop over against the Town-House in Cornhill."

In the case of Silence Dogood, however, there is reason to believe that Benjamin Franklin sincerely believed in the ideas articulated by his alter-ego. Condemnation of idleness and unproductive ostentation were to be prominent themes in Franklin's writing all of his life. In her fifth letter to the Courant the widow Dogood laid the responsibility for idle wives squarely on their husbands, pointing out that "if Women are proud, it is certainly owning to the men still; for if they will be such simpletons as to humble themselves at their Feet, and fill their credulous ears with extravagant Praises of their Wit, Beauty, and other Accomplishments, (perhaps where there are none, too,) and when Women are by this Means persuaded that that they are Something more than humane, [sic] what Wonder is it, if they carry themselves haughtily, and live more extravagantly?"436

The confusion readers of the Courant felt over the issue of idle wives prompted the Couranteers to propose a survey. The issue of March 22, 1725 opened with a request that "our Correspondents will perswade their fair Partners to keep a Journal of their Lives, and


436 NEC, May 28, 1722.
send a Part of it to us under their own hands" in order to determine if “several Letters of late from some of our correspondents, fill’d with bitter complaints of the Idleness of their Wives” were justified. The editor then gave a sample of such a diary, taken from the London press, which catalogued the activities of a lady of fashion. Although the diary excerpt, filled with suitably giddy accounts of fashion, drinking chocolate in bed, novel reading, card playing and other indulgent pursuits, must have seemed to the complaining husbands to typify the idleness of which they complained, it seems at least possible that female readers saw in it a model for their own activities.

Female leisure was not limited to wives. Fathers with the means to do so might lavish similar luxury on their daughters. The January 27, 1723 issue of the Courant described the existence of a smart set of young adults containing a number of “young Ladies who flock into the Town from other Provinces, and Places adjacent, and reside wither at boarding Schools or with their wealthy Relations.” The author of the piece criticized a recent “Night-Frolick” involving some of these young ladies and the town’s own “Beaus and amorous Gallants,” which, he claimed, had caused “sore Disturbance of the Town, and Offence of many serious People.”

The social dynamic whereby each group copied the conduct of the one above it in the hierarchy caused some daughters of Boston tradesmen to aspire, as best their reduced means might allow, to the style of ladies of fashion. In the issue of November 5, 1723, a correspondent pictured the social life of such shopkeepers’ daughters, claiming that they “spend the Evening and half the Night in search after, or in Company with Apprentice

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The term “frolic” was often used in New England to describe such work-related social occasions as husking bees, at which young people of both sexes combined useful activity with socializing which might become preliminary to more formal courtship (see Ulrich, Midwife, 146). The difference between such supervised, traditional frolics and the “Night-Frolick” described in the Courant, in which supervision was minimal and productive labor non-existent, reflects the efforts of the urban elite to re-cast New England social institutions in the mold of fashionable London.

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Boys, young Merchants, &c." Perhaps exaggerating the leisured existence of the group, he claimed that they "rise in the Morning at about Nine or Ten of Clock... dress themselves till Twelve, and approve themselves in the Glass till One." Adding that "after Dinner they frisk away to some known Place of Rendezvous, where (at Night) every Jack has his Jill, and every Jill has her Jack," the correspondent claimed that such idleness in youth led to dissatisfaction after marriage because "when they come to be more confin'd by their young Children, they begin to be peevish and fretful, and are a perpetual Torment to their Husbands." Their disappointment upon marriage was a product of the change in their role as an outlet for conspicuous consumption by their own fathers to that of partner to a young tradesman struggling to build up an estate and establish a family business.

The marital problems caused by spoiling girls before marriage, as the Courant's correspondent described it, was one reflection of the paper's concern with domestic harmony. If patriarchal control were replaced by a partnership based on mutual affection, how could the proper relationship between husband and wife be maintained? The Courant, while encouraging the newer vision of marriage, was far from seeing the partnership as one of equality. A "Letter to a Young Country Gentleman, relating to his choice of an agreeable Spouse" in the May 4, 1724 issue of the Courant described the basis of marital harmony and showed that the Puritan notion of a contract between unequals remained as fundamental to the new mode of marriage as to the old. The author observed "no Match to be truly regular where the Woman is the oldest, for when it is so, she is prone to cast off the Yoke, and usurp a Superiority over the Man, which the Laws of God and Nature forbid."\(^{438}\)

438 As Kerber has shown, the Real Whigs "had a major ideological concern for parent-child relationships, but their discussions were restricted to the specific case of sons and fathers or to the limits of the obligations of sons to mothers. Other variants of familial relationships were less thoroughly explored" (Kerber, Women, 28). The concern shown for husband-wife relations in the Courant seems to derive as much from social satire in the Spectator as from Real Whig political theory.
The essay related the issue of psychological compatibility to the question of political power. It was because an older wife would resist the authority of a younger husband that such marriages were inadvisable. At the same time, the subordination to authority which was essential within the marriage relationship had no external counterpart. The husband, who sought full political participation in the larger society, need have no thought of applying the same ideal within the "little commonwealth" of his marriage. Extravagant wives, condemned in the language of thrift and traditional morality, seem to have been resented as discriminatory or unfair by some male readers of the Courant who found themselves unable to enjoy comparable leisure activities. In the February 26, 1722, issue a correspondent complained of being nagged by his wife, who, he claimed "denies herself noting to put her upon a Par with the best in the Town, as to outward Apparel [and] thinks what is ordinarily worn by Porters good enough for me, who take all the Pains to support her Extravagance." On a superficial level, this story drew upon the ancient comic stereotype of the hen-pecked husband; at a deeper level the anecdote reflected concern about the distribution of power in marriage. As the force of patriarchal authority gave way before a new vision of matrimony as loving partnership, the question of disequilibrium assumed changed importance. The exploitative wife became more than a comic product of male impotence, her violation of conjugal harmony could threaten the institution of marriage itself.

The defiance of a shrewish wife presented some readers with a serious threat to marital partnership. The husband of one virago sought advice in the Courant of March 5, 1722, claiming that "I once attempted to beat her into good Humour, but she came off Conqueror." Monsieur Corranto prudently declined to offer a suggestion but told of a similar woman who, in the ducking stool, "while her Head was under Water, she lifts up her Hands, and squeeze'd her Thumb-nails together, to ridicule him as a Louse-Cracker." Setting boundaries to the female sphere and controlling a wife within them was not easy for some husbands. A wife who overstepped the limits of her subordinate position within the household placed her husband in a precarious position between the stress of an aggres-
sively competitive male world of commerce and a domestic situation in which his autonomy and authority were also subject to attack.

Criticism voiced in the *Courant* of March 23, 1724 about the new fashion of women wearing men’s hats reflected the status anxiety felt by some of the Couranteers. The author claimed that women following the new fashion “have now rob’d us of the highest and most honourable Part of our Cloathing, the Hatt,” and expressed fear that, should the fashion continue, “our Streets will in a little time be fill’d with Hermaphrodites.” After castigating other fashion trends including the slender waist and pale complexion, Homespun Jack, as the author signed himself, related the story of Combusbus, favorite of Seleucus and passionately beloved by the Queen Stratonica his Wife, who “to avoid all Calummy and Suspicion, castrated himself.” The author warned “the notorious Fashion-Mongers among the Fair Sex” that, as a consequence of the new fashion, contemporary men might imitate Combusbus, which would serve women dressing in male clothing with “a just Reward for their Extravagancies.” The blurring of the line separating men and women, even by so trivial a detail as the wearing of men’s hats, was capable of setting off deep anxieties about male power and authority among those contributors to the paper who stood at the margins of social and political inclusion.

In the *Courant*, the depiction of marriage was shifted from that of a vow sanctioned by religious faith to a contract based on mutual advantage; that is, away from an instrument of community toward a commodity within the system of mercantile capitalism.\(^{439}\) Tension between the commodity view of marriage and the increased emphasis on falling in love was reflected in an item in the *Courant* of July 29, 1723. Commenting on news of a French

\(^{439}\) It is important to reiterate that this was a change in emphasis not definition. Traditional religious descriptions of the significance of marriage were nowhere contradicted in the *Courant*. The shift in emphasis in New England was made easier by the fact that Puritan teaching had minimized the ecclesiastical role in the marriage ceremony and stressed the nature of marriage as a contract (albeit a spiritual one). See Fischer, *Albion's Seed*, 84-86.
merchant in the Caribbean whose London correspondent was able to provide him with an
English mail order bride, the writer observed that "the Negotiation of a Marriage by way of
Correspondence in a mercantile Way, must certainly be allowed a new Way of falling in
Love."

Fraud and breech of contract in matrimony continued to work to the greater disad-
vantage of the woman as vendor of a perishable commodity. The Courant of August 31, 1724 carried a letter signed Standfast Trueman recounting a deception by a minister who
courtcd a young lady in the town of Falsingham for several years and even gave her money
to purchase household furnishings in anticipation of their marriage but “after he had by his
Pelavery got most of the money from the Girl, went and made suit to another, and is now
married to her.” The correspondent pointed out that the deception was facilitated by the
perpetrator’s ministerial status, a point with which the usually reserved Doctor Janus ve-
hemently agreed, adding that the minister in question deserved “to be piss’d at as he walks
the Streets for so black a Villany.”

The constraints which the minister had violated by his behavior were more secular
than religious. True, he was supposed to be a man of piety, but to Doctor Janus the fact
that the minister was one of those “Men of Honour and Sanctity, who are (or would be)
esteem’d the uppermost of their Species” was more significant. Violation of the social con-
tract by an authority figure was the political issue which most provoked the Whiggish ire of

440 Staves describes a number of legal remedies made available to the fathers of seduced
daughters by British civil courts, which took jurisdiction over fornication cases in the late
seventeenth century. Introduction of suits for criminal trespass and loss of the domestic
service of the seduced daughter were “convenient fictions” allowing the injury done the
father of the girl to be calculated in monetary terms. Changes in the legal treatment of
seduction in Britain dating from the first breach of promise suit, Dickison v. Holcroft.
(1673), reflect “the increasing secularization of the culture” (Staves, Seduced Maidens,
110). In the seaport towns of New England the forces of secularization, although perhaps
weaker in absolute terms than in the metropolis, appear to have burst forth with with
relatively greater impact when the ramparts of Puritanism were breached.

441 NEC, August 31, 1724.
the Couranteers. Of the two great sources of paternalistic authority, the church and the
king, it was the former which the Couranteers felt as a proximate threat.

The fraud perpetrated by the minister at Falsingham was only one variety of abuse
of the marriage contract for financial gain. The Courant of January 8, 1726 carried an ac-
count from the London press of the trial and acquittal of John and Hester Gregory, accused
of inducing John Cockerell to marry Abigail Cole, “a Person whom they pretended was a
lady that had an Estate of 1000 l. per Ann. in Barbadoes; when they well knew that she
was a Person of Ill Fame, and no fortune.” The plaintiff claimed he was the victim of an
elaborate scheme between Hester Gregory and her daughter.442 The defense established
that Cockerell was a fortune hunter. Gregory’s daughter testified that Cockerell “had teiz’d
my Mother 500 times to help him to a Wife: I my self have recommended him to at least 20
Women, all whom he left when he found their Fortunes fell short of his Expectation.” The
defendants received a directed acquittal when the Court instructed the jury that Cockerell
had vowed to take his wife “not for the Sake of a Barbadoes Plantation but to live with her
after God’s Ordinance.”

The Courant assured its readers that the trial had been “the general Subject of Con-
versation in most Parts of the Town [i.e. London]” and Franklin was sufficiently confident
that the story would interest New England readers, who had previously been treated to nu-
merous accounts of successful and unsuccessful fortune hunters, to devote two-thirds of
the issue to it. Acquittal of the defendants represented a reaffirmation of traditional values
and a repudiation of the idea of the marriage contract as merely a form of financial specu-
lation. Public interest in the trial suggested, of course, that many people were in some doubt
about the proper role of economic self-interest in choosing a partner.

442 As the story later makes clear, the daughter’s married name was Eccleston, not Gregory.
Carelessness in re-setting the story caused the Courant to give all the defendants the same
last name. Franklin also omitted the trial’s closing arguments, which, he claimed, “we
have not Room to Insert.”
Cockerell's shameless fortune hunting — a traditional comic theme — was roundly condemned, but no serious people advocated that marriage should be entered into without regard for economic circumstances. Finding the right balance between financial gain, compatibility, and other factors had become more problematical in a society where mobility was increasing, religious influence declining, and parental authority receding. Among those who saw marriage as a primarily financial arrangement, the way was open for sharp traders like John Cockerell or Abigail Cole to profit from a marriage bubble. Among the Couranteers the difficulty of the balancing financial and emotional aspects of marriage made Cockerell's example a useful object lesson on a topic which, to judge by the frequency with which it was raised, was very much on their minds.

A different sort of marriage fraud operated entirely by women was reported from London in the Courant of August 31, 1724. In this scheme, "three Women came in cloaks to a Public House and demanded a private Chamber, and a minister being sent for, the eldest of the three Women aforesaid undress'd herself and put on Man's Apparel, and was presently married to one of the other Women, and demanded a Certificate of such their Marriage." The story, which was notable because of the issue of gender change and the cleverness of the fraud, illustrated the use of marriage not to defraud the other party but as a conspiracy between two partners to defraud others. The marriage certificate, deceptively obtained, would have permitted the woman debtor to establish a new identity and escape her creditors. Such a ploy would have been less likely to succeed in Massachusetts, where the publication of banns and registration of both ministers and marriages was stricter than appears to have been the case in London. New England readers could see in the business an example of criminal fraud; the underlying assumption, that marriage as a contractual institution should be manipulated to maximize individual advantage, was an interpretation consistently condemned by the Courant.

Mutual affection and compatibility were important of course, but among some of the Couranteers the dazzling possibility that with skill and a bit of luck, marriage could be a
shortcut to riches continued to fascinate. An attractive young woman might drive a rewarding bargain in the right circumstances. The Courant of September 5, 1721 carried an item from the London press describing what must have been a fortune hunter’s dream: the marriage of a one-hundred-year-old man named Basser “worth near Thirty thousand Pounds,” who “hath lately married his Maid Servant.”

One young New Englander, unable to compete with the attractions of wealth, reflected on the emphasis on marriage as a commodity in verses to “Sylvia the Fair” in the December 11, 1721 issue. The poem described the failure of “A Swarm of Sparks” to win Sylvia, who yielded at last to the proposals of an older man named Dulman, who “was ugly but had Gold.” The poet concluded tartly “Some say, she’s Wed; I say, she’s sold.”

Not all New England girls were able to manage matters as deftly as Sylvia or the new Mrs. Basser. The October 5, 1724 issue of the Courant carried a lengthy notice by Christopher Champlin of Westerly, Rhode Island, giving an account of his unfortunate marriage to a young Irish woman. Champlin described himself as “in the Climacterical year of my Age,” and admitted that assistance in his old age “was the only reason for which I married her.” Instead of serving as a help to the elderly gentleman in his hour of need, the young wife proved to be impatient of her inheritance and, as Champlin lay ill in bed, she and her confederates attempted to strip the house and abscond with his possessions but were stopped by some of the husband’s friends. Evidently, there were limits to the benefits of female subordination to be gained by marrying a younger woman, at least in the case of an Hibernian. Champlin’s mistake seems to have been his marrying exclusively for assistance, i.e. without any evidence of love on either side. Love was the mitigating emotion that prevented the excess of self-interest to which commodity marriage could fall prey and, as such, played a vital role in the new style of marriage as partnership. The Courant was far from suggesting that love should be the sole basis for marriage, although there is the occasional suggestion that it might be the primary one; it was the commerce in marriage without any affective consideration that was condemned as unworkable and debasing.

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The possibility that a poor young man might marry a rich woman was also appraised in the Courant. The September 4, 1721, issue reprinted a story from London about a Mrs. Turberville, "a fortune of Sixteen Thousand Pounds," who married a blacksmith named Dibley. In this story, perhaps because a rich woman married a poor man, male autonomy versus parietal authority was a factor. The bride had been under the care of two women who "seized her a few Hours after she was married (having first been bedded) and detaining her from her Husband ever since. Reporting that "the said Guardians were, on Tuesday last, served with an Order, to produce her before the Judges," the story concluded that a legal decision was soon expected "whether the Man shall have his Wife or no." There are a number of missing facts in the story of Mrs. Turberville which would help the reader determine the nature of her guardianship and the details of the clandestine marriage. The consummation of the marriage was presented as an important point. The lady was evidently a widow and so of marriageable age, although why she was under the care of two guardians was not explained. It is easy to imagine, however, where the sympathies of journeymen gentlemen reading of the affair in the Courant would have lain.

The importance of careful financial calculation in choosing a marriage partner was the subject of an essay signed by Anthony Fallshort in the Courant of March 26, 1722. The author observed that most New England girls were raised to expect a life of idleness and went on to relate the results of his own marital miscalculations. Already successful in trade, Mr. Fallshort thought himself "worthy of a Woman whose fortune might contribute to the Increase of it." His choice fell upon one Sylvia, who "had then the Name of a Thousand Pound fortune, and this added so much to her Beauty & other Accomplishments, or supply’d the Want of them," that he "fell desperately in Love with her and soon gain’d the suppos’d Prize." There was no self-reproach in Fallshort’s account of his courtship. He took for granted that the increase in capital represented by Sylvia’s dowry should be the decisive factor in his decision to marry her. His account offered an explanation for the social utility of the new courtship ritual based on rhetorical excitation of the emotions: it
permitted the necessary feelings of love to be rationally controlled for profit maximization, in this case permitting Fallshort to "fall desperately in love" despite the monetary considerations which guided his choice. When Fallshort had determined that Sylvia was his most profitable available partner, he initiated the ritualized praise of her beauty and declaration of his own sentiments which stimulated love and passion first in himself, then in her. The extravagant declarations of love which such suitors declaimed was a form of self-stimulation, permitting passion to be harnessed to the objectives of calculated self-interest.

Fallshort was so named because he had invested his marital capital in a venture which failed to appreciate in value. Sylvia's fortune, he discovered, "consisted in land, or rather rocks and Trees, in which you could hardly find a clear Spot large enough to bury its Owner." In addition, his new father-in-law claimed that the dower-land "was daily rising in Value, and therefore thought it proper not to sell it, but let it lie for the Improvement of his Daughters Estate." Fallshort maintained his wife at considerable expense for ten years until "the good old Dad having lately taken the Liberty to die," he managed to liquidate the dowry for £350. The author provided a detailed list of expenditures showing that maintenance costs for his wife for the ten years they had been married were £1836, leaving a deficit over the value of the dowry of £1486. The essay concluded with a moral to be heeded by other young men intending to speculate in marriage, "let Batchelors look to themselves, and Beware of Counterfeits, for such are abroad... a good Wife saves more than she brings, and a bad one spends more than she pretends to bring." As a calculus of conjugal capitalism, Anthony Fallshort's woeful balance sheet was a parody which achieved its effect by reducing the whole of marriage to a profit-and-loss statement; but this was not to say that such a calculation was not a very real component of marriage as journeymen and gentlemen journeymen reading the Courant understood it.

A good part of Anthony Fallshort's problems could be traced to his father-in-law's continued control of his daughter's estate after her marriage, a Puritan custom which was
probably declining when the Courant satirized it. Nonetheless, the intensifying struggle of the younger generation to free themselves from parental control made the issue of a husband’s rights to his wife’s property a significant one. One strategy, the pre-nuptial agreement, was fraught with dangers of its own, as a story in the April 30, 1722 issue of the Courant related. The author, widowed in the smallpox epidemic, told readers that “I made my Addresses to several of the soft Sex, whom I thought were ample Fortunes, (for I must needs say it was Pelf directed my Choice,) but they all rejected my Offers with Scorn.” At last he found a suitable and willing young widow and they agreed to marry. The prospective husband then “advis’d with a Lawyer” and got him to draw up an “Instrument to secure all that she was worth to my self, before Marriage.” The lady, however, refused to sign the agreement and the marriage was called off. The following week’s issue concluded the story with an account of how the groom’s friends prevailed upon him to abandon the agreement and to marry without gaining legal control of his wife’s property.

The story of the failed pre-nuptial agreement upheld a woman’s right to manage her own property in marriage. In the Courant’s account it appeared a prudent precaution in a partnership where at least one of the members was motivated primarily by financial interest. Like many writers on the subject of marriage, the author of this story employed the con-

443 Philip Greven documents the enduring nature of parental control of this type in the Puritan era in Four Generations: Population, Land, and Family in Colonial Andover, Massachusetts, (Ithaca, N.Y., 1970). Kenneth A. Lockridge also found family control of dower land to be a frequent in A New England Town, the First Hundred Years: Dedham, Massachusetts, 1636-1736, (New York, 1970). Fliegelman points out that “the debate as to whether marriage was essentially a property transfer between father-in-law and suitor or a sacred contract between lovers was a very real one in eighteenth-century America — one that reflected a larger debate as to whether property or personal rights were more sacred, as to whether the possession of the former or the exercise of the latter conferred upon men a more real independence” (Fliegelman, Prodigals, 135).

444 The right of women, particularly widows, to manage their own property after marriage appears to have been recognized with growing frequency. In 1715 Cotton Mather, for example, signed a pre-nuptial agreement disclaiming control over the property of his wealthy second wife, Lydia Lee George. Details are given in Silverman, Life, 287.
ventional metonymy of referring to the estate as the woman, alluding to "several of the soft Sex, whom I thought were ample Fortunes." It may be that the ancient idea of the wife as chattel conveyed from her father to her husband fell away before the new style of courtship and marriage through a belief in the autonomy of capital as well as a belief in the autonomy of women.

The Courant also presented the issue of the fortune hunter from the woman's point of view. In the issue of January 29, 1722, a rueful Abigail Afterwit described the result of her deception by a young stranger who she thought had money but turned out to be a fortune hunter. Her husband, she complained, "thinks himself under no obligation to be agreeable in my Company, because he is already possess'd of my Love." In addition to spending his time away from the home, her husband "has gain'd the Reputation of a good natur'd Man abroad, and among my Friends, who look upon him only as unfortunate." The helpless bride ruefully confessed that her new husband "has already spent the little Money, and wore out the fine cloaths by which he deceiv'd me, and yet will betake himself to no manner of business for the support of his Family." Her statement that "he is already possess'd of my Love" seems curious to the modern reader for the import of her account was that there was little love between them and what her husband had possession of was her estate. Denied the support of her acquaintances because of her husband's charm, Abigail Afterwit turned to the anonymous readers of the newspaper to "ease herself by a complaint," a use of the public sphere that would eventually create an entire genre of advice to the lovelorn in women's magazines.

That the central theme of Abigail Afterwit's tale was a warning to women to beware of similar fortune hunters was made clear by the advertisement which immediately followed

445 In the previously cited articles, Anthony Fallshort spoke "of what Advantage it is to a Man to Marry a New-England fortune," and the English blacksmith, Dibley, was said to have "married one Mrs. Turberville, a fortune of Sixteen Thousand Pounds."
it in which "Several Journeymen Gentlemen, (some Foreigners and others of our own Growth) never sully'd with business, and fit for Town or Country Diversion," offered themselves to "old Virgins, who by long Industry have laid up 500l. or prov'd themselves capable of maintaining a Husband in a genteel and commendable Idleness," young widows "who have Estates of their first Husbands getting," or "young Ladies under Age, who have their fortunes in their own Hands." All three classes of women controlled their own estates and were therefore able to be independent investors in the marital market. The concern shown in the pages of the Courant over the issue of negotiation and investment in marriage suggested that the synergy of mercantile capitalism and the extension of political empowerment called for by colonial Real Whigs tended quite early on to expand, despite a religiously-based cultural predisposition to the contrary, to the domestic sphere.446

With so many fortune hunters about, a young woman might hesitate before entering marriage. Delay, however, brought its own risks. Silence Dogood's eleventh letter, published August 20, 1722, dealt with the plight of Margaret Aftercast, “a Virgin well stricken in Years and Repentance," who “in her younger Years with a numerous Train of Humble Servants, had the Vanity to think, that her extraordinary Wit and Beauty would continually recommend her to the Esteem of the Gallants” Having held out for too long and “finding her self disappointed in and neglected by her former Adorers,” the unfortunate Miss Aftercast made increasingly desperate attempts to find a husband by dressing in the latest fashions and employing “above Fifty Pounds Worth of the most approved Cosmeticks,” all to no avail.

446 That women gained greater autonomy through the control of their marriage portion suggests that capitalism may have indirectly facilitated empowerment of women who had some capital under their control. This possibility should be weighed against the widespread charge that capitalism gave new life to patriarchy: “The advent of capitalism, in this analysis, involved the application of patriarchal 'gender ideology' to economic practices, the importation, as it were, of ideas from one realm (where they could be explained by material relationships) to another.” Joan Wallach Scott Gender and the Politics of History, New York: Columbia University Press, 1988) 86.
The Aftercast case was presented in the form of a petition from her former suitors to Mrs. Dogood asking for a marriage insurance scheme similar to her project for the protection of widows. There was some sympathy for the condition of Margaret Aftercast, but also a sense of vindication if not revenge for the sufferings her former beaux had endured. That the plight of the spinster should be seen as comic was a reflection of an adversarial relationship between men and women which was intensified by the new style of courtship. The gentlemen journeymen who risked and suffered in the competition to win a profitable marriage had little sympathy for a formerly successful adversary brought low by holding her cards too long.

The topic of the benefits of marriage and whether they served the interests of men or women more was the subject of a lively debate that, while it ran throughout many issues of the Courant, reached a particularly intense phase in the autumn of the paper's first year of publication. The discussion began in the issue of September 25, 1721, with a poem by Lucilius, "A CAUTION to Bachelors," an example of traditional misogyny written as a young man's consolation for his inability to provide himself with a suitable female companion. The poet claimed that any woman was but "A gilded Weathercock, a shop of toys, / Tempting to none put poor unthinking Boys," and challenged his married friends to disprove his charge that marriage led to inevitable disappointment. Although it would be ahistorical to speak of the poem as adolescent (the term was not in use in Franklin's day and the psycho-social phase which it describes did not exist in his society), the mixture of fascination and frustration, of longing and bitterness which ran through the poem was characteristic of that transitional phase of male development in which adult sexual desire has been formed but not fulfilled. The disappointment which newly married men experienced may have been a product of the self-stimulation and fantasy of courtship rhetoric. The hyperbolic praise and exaggerated protestations of passion and suffering which fashion demanded of male suitors may well have had the effect of widening the gulf between anticipation and experience.
Responsibility for marital disappointment lay not with women but with the image of women which men created and before which they induced themselves to grovel, an observation that Amelia was quick to make in the next week's issue. In her "A REPLY, in Doggrel-Rhime, to his Caution to Bachelors," Amelia asserted that Lucilius' bitterness towards women was a product of his failure to attract one, that he was the oldest among his circle of bachelor friends, that he was, in short, a loser. Lucilius replied to Amelia in the issue of October 9, 1721 with a verse accusing her of failing to win the husband of her choice and suggesting that the force behind her wit was her own frustration.

The same issue contained an attack on Lucilius for his "Caution to Bachelors" by Renuncles. This attack was premised on the idea that Lucilius was a now-disappointed former bachelor and concluded with the advice to:

Put up your Horns in your Pocket,
Lest sooner or Later
( Without any Satyr,)
Your Nose it be sunk in the Socket.

Renuncles, like Amelia, saw Lucilius' disparagement of women as rooted in bitterness at his own failures as a suitor and husband. As an unhappily married man, the misogynist Lucilius was scorned as a cuckold and accused of suffering from syphilis. These defects stood as the marital counterparts to the frustrated fascination of the unsuccessful bachelor. The lack of virile charm which prevented young Lucilius from attracting a woman made him, after marriage, unable to maintain her fidelity and exposed him to venereal disease through his need to seek sexual gratification elsewhere.

James Franklin made the issue of his attractiveness to women and his difficulty in contracting a successful marriage an issue in his public identity as the "Author" of the Courant. A female correspondent warned Franklin in the January 29, 1722 issue to be "Cautious how you Affront and Abuse the Women, seeing you never yet had the Happiness to obtain one of them," to which he responded "I am contented to be call'd an old
rasty Bachelor for Once, for fear of being call'd dishonest a Thousand Times." In the April 9, 1722, issue Franklin presented an unflattering portrait of himself in which he mentioned a remarkable scar on his chin received in a childhood accident which, he claimed, was "the only Reason of my present Aversion to the fair Sex." The self-portrait was certainly unflattering but in the forthrightness of its revelation had a certain braggadocio since the "Author of the New-England Courant" was defending his description of a particular person and daring his critic to describe him publicly in the Boston Gazette.

Benjamin Franklin's self-description as Dr. Janus showed some of the same family characteristics but took an altogether more confident posture about his attractiveness to women, asserting that he had "(if I may believe the Females) a very Roguish Eye." Unlike his brother, young Ben Franklin characterized his behavior as well as his physical characteristics, claiming to avoid extremes and to steer a course "as near as I can between the Fop and the Clown."\(^{447}\)

These self-revelations in the pages of a weekly newspaper flirted daringly with the convention of anonymity. Such an exercise, as well as the public discussion of sexual attractiveness and the issue of finding and winning an acceptable mate, brought to New England readers a racy, personal and titillating style of journalism quite different from either the News-Letter or the Gazette. The Courant was modeling a new social style that in its daring as well as its preoccupations reflected a clear departure from Massachusetts tradition.

The marriage debate in these early numbers of the Courant spoke, as such discussions often do, not to the merits of marriage as an institution but to the fears and insecurities the debaters had of their own attractiveness or sexual adequacy. The poetic dialogue which James Franklin provoked with his "A CAUTION to Bachelors" addressed the ques-

\(^{447}\) NEC, June 18, 1722.
tion of marriage from a different point of view from that of the essays and news items. The central theme of the latter was the balance between compatibility and financial gain in the consideration of a marriage partner. On this question the Courant consistently rejected the primacy of monetary self-interest and argued for mutual affection as the basis of a successful marriage. The debate in verse explored the importance of good looks in the competition for a spouse and dwelt on the penalties (cuckoldry, syphilis, celibacy) suffered by those whose physical charms were insufficient for victory. The common thread in these two sets of views on marriage was the assumption that matrimony was a field for individual competition, whether in physical attributes or financial resources, in which each contender must employ his or her assets with skill and care in order to win the goal of a happy partnership. Absent from both presentations of the marriage issue was the view of marriage as an institute of the Christian religion or the idea that parental guidance in the choice of a partner was necessary or even helpful.

In addition to its extended coverage of strategies for success in courtship and marriage, the Courant presented a number of stories about criminal violation of the rules of the game. Adultery was the most frequently reported crime. As a violation of the institution of marriage, adultery was a threat to the stability of society and hence to the state and a particular object of criticism in the newspapers.\textsuperscript{448} From the ancient depths of the common law, social stability was invested in the person of the king, making adultery, like all felonies, a technical violation of the royal person. An advertisement in the June 29, 1724 issue of the Courant carried a notice signed by Arthur Hall, who could not write but signed with his mark, testifying that his wife had been “caught in Bed with Samuel Butler, they being both undress’d, and in a very indecent Posture, contrary to the Peace of our

\textsuperscript{448} “The newspapers’ sharpest barbs by far were reserved neither for fallen women nor reluctant brides, but for female misbehavior within marriage and for the husbandly shortcomings that allowed such transgressions to occur.” (Clark, Prints, 619).
Sovereign Lord the King." The facts behind Hall's solemn description of his cuckoldry have been lost, but Courant readers would have relished the juxtaposition of the scene with the solemnity of the traditional and widely-used legal phrase, "contrary to the Peace of our Sovereign Lord the King." The paper had used the same legal cliché to a similar effect two weeks later in a piece satirizing the Admiralty Courts through a mock-solemn account of a fracas at the Cambridge ferry following the Harvard commencement "wherein sundry Ethiopians were thrown overboard, contrary to the Peace of our Sovereign Lord the King." In both cases, a humorous effect was achieved by associating the formal phrase, and the dignity of the patriarchal authority which it described, with comic mishaps among the politically insignificant. Mr. Hall, like "the famous Ethiopian Ferryman," Toby, received little sympathy from the Couranteers. In terms of the Real Whig theories which the Couranteers were advancing, the illiterate and sexually irresponsible Mr. Hall, his wanton female companion, and the Negro, Toby, all exemplified groups whose condition and activities disqualified them from full participation in the political life of the province. Their behaviors, which disrupted the royal peace, justified the imposition of parietal control, whose apotheosis was the crown. "The Peace of our Sovereign Lord the King" might be invoked against child-like irresponsibility but, the Courant implied, had no place in the lives of those white males capable of demonstrating sexual and social self-control.

The Courant, although insisting on marriage as a partnership, generally presented the issue of a wife's adultery with traditional ribaldry and placed the blame for her transgressions on the husband, who was mocked as a denizen of "Horn Fair in Cuckold's Row." This stance, which had the same flavor as the marriage debate between Renun-

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449 NEC, July 13, 1724. The phrase "contrary to the Peace of our Sovereign Lord the King" was legal boilerplate used routinely in indictments and criminal charges.

450 The phrase was used in NEC, January 6, 1724, in a satire on a pompous Mr. Pickthank by one Monsieur Telltruth.
icles and Amelia discussed above, evidently did not find favor with some of the paper's readers. On December 30, 1723, the Courant printed a lengthy execration on its editorial policies from a reader who criticized Father Janus because with "lascivious Carrians daily committing Adultery, their poor Husbands you brand with the odious Names of Cuckolds, Cornutos and Horned Beasts, so to bear both the Shame and Sorrow, for being only passive and innocent, the guilty Gypsies themselves always escaping your Censure." This criticism hit the mark by pointing out a fundamental inconsistency in the paper's presentation of the topic of marriage. While generally even-handed and enlightened in its insistence on mutual responsibility and affective partnership, the Courant could sink unpredictably into the old-fashioned posturings of a Restoration rake. James Franklin himself seems to have been the instigator of the Courant's occasional presentations of male sexual rapacity and competitiveness. Part of the cause of the paper's duality on the subject of male-female relations may be attributed to the difference in social status and point of view between bachelors and married men. Swashbuckling fantasies of seduction and cuckoldry were part of a male social persona which the Courant's British models were attempting to discredit.451 Among some of the Couranteers, at least, the older model continued to exercise an influence.

The mockery with which male failure in relations with women was reported in the pages of the Courant was motivated by a fear of weakness, not simply weakness vis à vis one's wife but of a regression to dependency status. Those who the society judged to be incapable of maintaining their autonomy, women, children (including apprentices), Indians, and slaves, were compelled to forfeit full participation in the social order in return for the protection of parietal authority. Regression to such dependency status was the operating

definition of failure to the male, bourgeois readers of the Courant. To these tradesmen, artisans, and gentlemen journeymen, the maintenance of a clear status boundary between themselves and the disenfranchised, marginalized groups below them was essential for the preservation of identity and self-respect.452

Living outside of wedlock was a crime which the Courant prosecuted, for political ends rather than motives of moral prudery, in several issues beginning on December 25, 1721. Concluding an account of a lavish wedding ceremony given to one of his blacks by a politically prominent Boston lawyer, the Courant asked rambunctiously whether “the sagacious Gentleman of the Law, by making so publick a Wedding for his Negro, intended to put the Magistracy in Mind of their Duty, and provoke them to enquire into the Cause of his cohabiting with a certain French Lady as his Wife” or “whether he design’d by it to ridicule and bid Defiance to the Government?” Here was an example of muckraking that could not be ignored by the authorities. A letter in the January 8, 1722 issue signed by Lucilius (a pen name of James Franklin) gloated that the Courant’s piece against the lawyer “has induc’d the Grand Jury to find a Bill against him.”

The lawyer in question appears to have been a supporter of the Mathers in the inoculation controversy because in a story in the Courant of February 5, 1722, Franklin defended himself against the charge by Increase Mather that “he doth frequently abuse the Ministers of Religion, and many other worthy Persons, in a Manner which is intollerable” by pointing out that “One of these worthy Persons he hints at, has been since presented by the Grand Jury for cohabiting with a Woman as his Wife, who was never known to be so.” The effect of the criticism in the Courant was such that when the case came to court the defendant waived his right to a jury trial because of the pre-trial publicity. The Courant of

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452 “Workers, women, and children, for example, were excluded, and were, moreover, expected to accept a subordinate position in a partially hierarchical class structure in which inclusion, status, and rewards were reserved for ‘men’” (Weinstein and Platt, 203).
April 16, 1722 reported his claim that he had been "render'd odious by a Company of scandalous Writers." While the affair of the lawyer illustrated the power of the Courant as a censor morum, it also showed that Boston, for all the putative license of the new era, remained a socially conservative, Puritan town.

Incest, the ancient and quintessential "uncleanness," was a crime against marriage traditionally associated with anarchy and loss of social cohesion. The Courant of November 2, 1724 raised the question of incest in a "Letter from a Gentleman at South Carolina" which told the story of "a certain Sect here, whose Principles and Practices are abhorrent from the Laws of Christianity, and the first Principles of Nature, and destructive to Civil Society" who "deny the power of the Magistrate, have liv'd in Incest and Uncleanness, and disbanded themselves from all Society." The members of this community so resisted the power of civil authority that a full-scale attack by a company of the local militia was required to subdue them. The leader of the militia, Captain Symmonds, was killed in the attack. As a result, five men from the community were charged with murder and sentenced to hang. Most unsettling to the correspondent was the fact their family arrangements proceeded from religious conviction. The group's members were described as "extrem obstinate, and strangely bewitch'd and infatuated with delusive Inspirations, which are accompanied with a sort of Rage and Fury, discovered in their odd Gestures and ridiculous Actions." Placing their crime in biblical context, the writer claimed that readers "may read their Character in 2 Pet. 2: 10, Of which they are exact Copies." 453

To the correspondent, the connection between the group's rebellion against civil authority and the practice of incest was self-evident and confirmed by biblical authority. The account did not give details of their odd gestures and ridiculous actions; however, the

453 2 Peter, 2: 10: But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.
incomprehensibility of the group was semiotic and linguistic as well as theological. At some basic level, at least, they were capable of negotiation with Captain Symmonds for when he ordered them to surrender, "they refused and bid Defiance to him, and all that should dare to molest them." Only at the level of political and theological ideas did the English become unable to understand the group's communication. The author's use of the word "bewitch'd" seems to reflect an impulse to ascribe the group's condition to Satan, a temptation made doubtless more attractive by the congruence of the Bible passage to the situation. The satanic explanation was not developed, however, and the opinions of the sect were attributed to "delusive inspirations," i.e. insanity.\textsuperscript{454} The story of the South Carolina sect underscored the fact that that although the Couranteers were advocating a significant readjustment of the relationship between man and wife, they continued to accept the axiomatic view that a disciplined hierarchy of authority within marriage, based on the superiority of man over wife required by "the Laws of God and Nature," was the foundation of civilized society.\textsuperscript{455}

The view of women as a partners in marriage— albeit unequal partners — presented in the Courant was quite different from the role the paper suggested for women outside of the household. In public events and civil society the Couranteers advocated the segregation or even the exclusion of women as necessary for social order. In May of 1724, Boston was the scene of a sensational trial of a pirate crew captured off the New England coast. The Courant's correspondent noted the presence of women in the audience with disapproval, citing "the great Annoyance of his Majesty's good Subjects the Male Audi-

\textsuperscript{454} The association of incest and other forms of "uncleanness" with political heterodoxy was a traditional one which in Massachusetts went back as far as the Antinomian controversy. This letter, with its reference to "the first Principles of Nature" and its suggestion that "delusive inspirations" rather than Satan were responsible for the conduct of the Carolina group, illustrates the modulation of the ancient association between incest and anarchy into the new key of eighteenth-century rationalism.

\textsuperscript{455} NEC, May 4, 1724.
tors." The piece went on, in mock-legal style, to assert that a number of male spectators were nearly suffocated by the press of the women's hooped petticoats. The writer compared hooped petticoats to cannons which "fir'd upon several of his Majesty's Subjects at unawares, who were mortally wounded." The impact of the metaphor depended on the aspect of the garment most frequently referred to in the Courant's treatment of the topic of petticoats: the capacity of the hoop to tip up, revealing the forbidden sight of the wearer's under-petticoats or legs clothed in white stockings. Such a view was, metaphorically speaking, staring down the mouth of the cannon. The connotations of fascination and threat in the cannon metaphor were indicative of powerful and ambivalent feelings toward female sexuality.

Condemnation of the new fashion was couched in terms of modesty, but beneath moral concern lay a fear of female sexual power. Imprecation of hooped petticoats because of the opportunity for immodest display which they afforded put the Couranteers on the same side of the issue as the more conservative ministers of the province. To distance himself from the ministers who also condemned hoops, James Franklin published a parody jeremiad against the fashion in 1722, Hoop-Petticoats Arraigned and Condemned by the Light of nature, and Law of God. Franklin's satire attacked the fashion but also burlesqued pulpit rhetoric.

456 NEC, May 18, 1724.


458 The venerable Solomon Stoddard declared "There be many other Practices that are plainly Contrary to the Light of nature. HOOPED Petticoats have something of Nakedness, Mixt Dancings are incentives to lust; Complotations in Private Houses is a Drunken Practice." Solomon Stoddard, An Answer to Some Cases of Conscience Respecting the Country. (Boston: Green for Gerrish, 1722, Evans, 2387) 15.

Benjamin Franklin incorporated most of the points made by his elder brother in the fifth Silence Dogood letter. The widow, addressing the issue of pride of apparel, focused most of her condemnation on the new petticoat, which she described as "monstrous topsy-turvy Mortar-Pieces." Citing the obstruction posed by the new fashion, Mrs. Dogood asked whether women "who pay no Rates or Taxes, ought to take up more Room in the King's Highway, than the Men who yearly contribute to the Support of the Government," an argument which referenced the notion of male-gendered public space and, by implication, the confinement of women to a domestic sphere.460

By emphasizing the extravagant cost of the new fashion, the Dogood piece connected hooped petticoats to the importation of luxury goods which was widely believed to be a cause of New England's balance-of-payments deficit with England and of the hard times gripping the province in the wake of Queen Anne's War. Young Benjamin Franklin was a quick study and with his exceptional powers of mind managed to concentrate in a single critique the principal themes of the Courant's presentation of women in public: the wastefulness of female narcissism, the need to mask the power that sexual attraction gave women over men, and the disorder that resulted from the presence of women in public areas. Much of the paper's criticism of women in public rang changes on these three ideas.

The Courant's correspondent at the pirate trial expressed alarm that the presence of fashionable ladies of the elite presaged widespread attendance by women of all classes at trials because "We know that every custom taken up by Ladies of Quality, is presently follow'd by the Trulls and Gossips of the vulgar Herd." To illustrate the incongruity that would result if women were encouraged to attend trials, the author concluded his report with a sample of the dialogue that might result. The passage was a typographic tour de

force inspired by the idea of a cacophony resulting from female presence. The women conducted a conversation on the subject of clothes and pregnancy, oblivious to efforts by the sheriff and the judge to maintain decorum and conduct the court's business. The farce implied that only the confinement of women to a domestic setting suitable for their concerns would enable government to function.

Hooped petticoats, symbol of the fascinating, destructive power of female sexuality, and, by metonymy, of women themselves, figured in another news story illustrating the hazards of female attendance at public events. The August 17, 1724 issue of the Courant contained an account of a fire in Boston the previous Monday. Once again, the Courant's correspondent found himself under attack by "a Fleet of Hoop Petticoats." As in the trial, the women had a completely different interest at the fire than the men, having come in order to flirt with the young men attempting to extinguish it. By their obstruction and distraction women made the male responsibility of fire fighting very much more difficult. The correspondent proposed confining female spectators at a greater distance and the arrest of "every Female of full Age appearing at Fires with their Hoop Petticoats." The presence of women at the pirate trial and the fire was depicted in the Courant as dangerous and disruptive. The petticoat, as symbol of female sexuality, gave women irresistible force, but their preoccupation with gossip, fashion and flirting served to show that they could not integrate themselves into the activity in a productive way.

James Franklin selected for reprint items from the London press which reinforced the argument for exclusion of women from public events such as fires and trials. As with other topics, the Courant made no distinction between stories about women from the metropolis and those from local sources. An example was an item, which appeared in

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461 Lewis observes that "Americans drew no clear distinction between that which was 'fiction' and that which was not, between works addressed to men and works addressed to women, or even between British literature and original American creations, nor should we" (Lewis, "Republican Wife", 692 ).
the issue of March 5, 1726, describing a “furious Encounter” between “the famous Mr. Sutton, Champion of Kent, and a Courageous Female Heroine of that Country on the one Side; and the celebrated Mr. Stokes, and his much admir’d Consort, the Invincible city-Championess on the other.” Here was an instance of integration and sexual equality chosen to make the idea seem ridiculous. Female participation in public events, it was implied, would lead to a loss of feminine identity and the conversion of the female power of the petticoat into the masculine power of the boxer. If women behaved traditionally, their gossip and flirting would disrupt and endanger society’s business; if they attempted to step outside the limitations of the coquette’s role, they risked becoming grotesque.

Female vanity was one of the few topics which the Courant couched in religious terms or approached from the perspective of traditional morality. Female narcissism was presented as a violation of Christian morality (and not, for example, as a political right of self-expression) and its operation during divine worship was particularly excoriated. A notice in the Courant of September 25, 1721 warned that the misbehavior of women who “smile and play with their Fans” during church services would draw the humiliation of public exposure.

Although couched in the language of religious piety, the underlying issue was the uncontrolled power of feminine charm on young men. Church, a public gathering place where restrictions on sexual display were sanctioned by tradition, offered a particularly effective place at which to raise the issue. A letter in the Courant of August 20, 1722, put the nature of the threat posed by the new fashion in clear perspective. The writer criticized the wearing of hoops in church and described an incident in which “one of them tilted up in a Pew by the Justling of a boy and whelm’d over the top of Chair, which was not unloos’d without some blushes and Confusion.” The piece also criticized the new fashion of “the Naked Neck (as they call it),” and warned that it “is a most powerful incentive to Lust; it tends to draw mischivious Glances from our Wanton Youth, (who need no external mo-
tive), and materially stirs up in them impure Desires." Petticoats, with their irresistible temptation to voyeurism, offered a challenge to self-control of the male imagination that was a dangerous as a cannon. The Courant, a paper written principally by unmarried young men, was particularly sensitive to this issue.

The autonomy such self-control required — in social and economic as well as sexual behavior — was the credential upon which the Couranteers demanded fuller participation in the political life of the province. To put the matter another way, a loss of sexual self-control would be evidence of the need for continued supervision by parietal authority. Ministerial authority, a ubiquitous example of traditional patriarchy in New England, was particularly irksome to the Couranteers. Church services, when the congregation participated in ritual submission to that authority, presented Boston's gentlemen journeymen of Whiggish persuasion with a challenging environment in which to maintain their self-image as autonomous adults. On this testing-ground of independence versus parietal authority, the threat to self-control posed by the rustle of silk gowns and the glimpse of a forbidden ankle was acutely felt.

On both sides of the Atlantic the accelerating pace of mercantile capitalism was breaking down the ties of traditional patriarchy. To those able to take advantage of the new opportunities, the changes offered new scope for individual gain in marriage or in commerce; for others increasing urbanization and the cash nexus gave rise to want made more oppressive by anonymity. Women were among the most vulnerable, a situation which could give rise to pathos without prompting any impulse to amelioration. On February 18, 1726, the Courant reprinted an item from the British press about a pregnant woman who

462 The visual stimulation of the new fashion was accompanied by an auditory component. A letter in the issue of February 8, 1725, complained that "Those who have the Unhappiness of sitting near the Stairs that lead up into the Women's Gallery's, can hardly hear the Minister's first Prayer for the Rustling of Silk Gowns and Petticoats, and the Screiks of English Pattoons."
died on the street at Gosport. "It seems she came from London in the Wagon," the story reported, "and had taken little or no sustenance on the road, and having no Money, no body cared to take her in; so that the poor Creature perish'd purely through Want and In-humanity."

While urban poverty was growing in Boston, a scene such as the one in Gosport would have been rare. The pathos of the incident gave it interest to readers of the Courant and served to underscore the vulnerability of a woman alone in the world. Response to the sentimental pull of such episodes took two quite different directions. One was a growing interest in institutionalized charity, projects to do good: a penchant for such social welfare schemes was a common ground between the Franklins and Cotton Mather. The other was the developing social ideal of gallantry, a form of chivalry shorn of religious and martial connotation which made the vulnerable, particularly women, objects of graceful gestures of protection and concern.

Like modesty in ladies, gallantry in gentlemen was an important part of a code of polite social behavior which the Couranteers took from the pages of the Spectator and similar London papers. A clear lesson in how not to behave gallantly was presented to readers of the Courant in a story published December 18, 1725. The central figure in the account was a Will Woodside, captain of the garrison at Brunswick, Maine, who, as a guest at the home of a lady friend, attempted to share a bed with two female guests. When the startled women ordered him to leave the room, "he, with great Resolution and Bravery, affirm'd that he had as good a Right to the Bed as they... and that if they were not immodest Sluts, they would not have evil Thoughts upon his lying with them." Driven from the bed by this

463 NEC, June 1, 1724 reported baldly that "On Wednesday last an Indian Squaw was found dead on the Road at Roxbury," but the deceased was Indian as well as female.

464 James Franklin considered the Courant as such a project and pointed with pride to the paper's role in securing the indictment of a prominent lawyer for cohabitation (discussed above) and in protecting women from physical abuse in the home (see Chapter Seven).
attack, the two women descended to the ground floor "where a second Battle was fought between his Mistress and the two vanquish'd Females, who look'd upon themselves affronted by her, as well as the Brunswick Youth."

Woodside's behavior was the antithesis of gallantry from every point of view. Most broadly, he was not sensitive to the separation of the sexes as a fundamental principle of social organization. He believed that because he had no intention to have sex with the two ladies that there was no impropriety in sharing a bed with them. His insensitivity was more obvious because the encounter took place in a home belonging to his countrywoman, where his authority to command was non-existent. On top of these fundamental misperceptions his petulance and bullying self-concern completed the portrait of a rustic boor. A subsidiary note was struck by the behavior of the hostess who failed to protect the privacy of the ladies lodging under her hospitality. By failing to condemn Woodside, she failed in her female responsibility to the other women; that is, she also failed to maintain the separation of the sexes and to defend the primacy of women within the home. Gallantry may have offered only a theoretical and, at best, theatrical, protection to women travelling without male protection, but the case of Will Woodside suggests that, among New Englanders of the better sort, it was expected male behavior.

Woodside's behavior was merely boorish; a case of more violent and irrational violence against women was flamboyantly detailed in the April 20, 1724 issue of the Courant. The story concerned Constantine Macguinnis, "an Irish young Gentleman, who studied the Law at Chambers in Essex Court in the Temple," who "murder'd in a most barbarous and unheard of manner one Frances Williams his Laundress." The young man offered a defense in which he accused his victim of witchcraft. The story recounted that "he was instantly committed to Newgate, where the next Day he made an Attempt upon one of the Keepers, tearing his Shirt, and striking him in the Face, altho' he was in double Irons; and discovering great Tokens of Lunacy." The Macguinnis story had two details which caught Franklin's eye and induced him to reprint it from the London press. That the perpetrator
was an Irishman — although obviously a Protestant one if a student at the Temple — made him suspect; however, it was his witchcraft defense which gave the story its special twist. That his defense was not given the slightest credence by the court fitted nicely with the Courant's view of the supernatural. Witches had been powerful women as well as evil; the dismissal of witchcraft as a superstition of the insane was also a dismissal of a traditional concept of female strength.465

Women were not only victims of crime, they were occasionally perpetrators. Most female crime reported in the Courant was non-violent, or involved no direct attack on the victim. Arson was such a crime and well suited to perpetration by the powerless. In a town of predominantly wooden buildings, the potential for damage was enormous while at the same time the ubiquitous use of wood for cooking fires made access to and inconspicuous transportation of incendiary materials easy. The Courant published two accounts of women imprisoned on suspicion of arson between September, 1722, and April, 1723. Neither story gave the name of the suspect nor was the eventual disposition of either case reported. The fact of the attempt and the arrest of the accused were all that the newspaper recorded. Like blacks, women had the capability of inflicting potentially grave criminal harm.466 The

465 “New England witches were women who resisted the new truths, either symbolically or in fact. In doing so, they were visible — and profoundly disturbing — reminders of the potential resistance in women. ... The witch was both the negative model by which the virtuous woman was defined and the focus for Puritan explanations of the problem of evil.... For Puritans, hierarchy and order were the most cherished values.” Carol F. Karlsen, The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England. (New York: Vintage Books, Random House, 1989) 181. John Putnam Demos makes a similar point: “The association of witchcraft with a certain biographical type was dependent on traditional values, which were themselves more and more discounted after the middle of the eighteenth century ... In a word, nineteenth century women were left substantially disempowered but here lay a final irony. From powerlessness women gained a measure of protection against ancient forms of misogyny. Women's power had been, after all, key to witchcraft, and now that key was gone.” Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982) 394-395.

466 An organized arson ring of Negroes terrorized Boston in the spring of 1723. The Negro ring operated between Cornhill and the waterfront and was unconnected with the two female arsonists. No accounts appear in the Courant of arson by white men.

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Courant's interest did not extend to the identity or motivation of the women but was confined to the threat they presented to the town.

The provincial bills of credit issued by the Massachusetts government were a target for counterfeiters and another outlet for female criminality. On June 3, 1723 the Courant reported the conviction of a woman on counterfeiting charges and sentencing was carried out several weeks later. The paper reported on July 1, 1723, that "a Woman stood in the Pillory, and had one of her Ears cut, for counterfeiting the Parchment Money of this province." An account in the issue of August 19th may refer to the same case, or perhaps a second counterfeit ring was at work: "Last Week one Buttersworth, a Woman living at Seaconk, was committed to Prison, for counterfeiting Paper Money. She was discover'd by one Camp and his Wife, her Confederates."  

Prostitution, perhaps the quintessential female crime, received prominent treatment in the pages of the Courant for several reasons. Prostitution in Boston seems to have increased significantly in the early eighteenth century. The loosening of patriarchal au-

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467 The relative ease with which the crude provincial bills could be counterfeited attracted numerous criminals on both sides of the Atlantic. At the end of 1721 the Massachusetts administration had considered making counterfeiting a capital crime, according to Samuel Sewall, Diary, for December 21, 1721. On May 27, 1723 the Courant reported the arrest of Abel and Samuel Chapin from Springfield, arrested at Newport for attempting to pass 20 counterfeit Massachusetts £5 bills. "The Five-Pound Plate is cut very nicely, and suppos’d to be done in England; besides which they had a Connecticut 10s. Plate, but it had a Crack in the middle which render’d it useless," the paper reported.

468 The inclusion of the name of the Buttersworth woman was an exception to the anonymity the paper usually observed in such matters and was due, perhaps, to the fact that she was not a Boston resident.

469 "Newly emergent or declining elites seem to have been the greatest offenders and cities the worst centers of vice and corruption, but moral declension appeared to have spread through all strata of society and to every corner of the colonies." (Greene, "Identity", 202).
thority and religious control increased the possibilities while the presence of five thousand
British troops in the city during Queen Anne's War dramatically expanded the market. 470

The Courant's presentation of the topic of prostitution was consistently characterized by high-minded disapproval. In contrast to the ministerial attacks led by Cotton Mather, the Courant generally practiced emotional restraint, preferring irony to outrage. 471 An exception to this editorial policy appeared in the March 5, 1722 issue of the Courant in which readers were informed of the existence of a flamboyant house of prostitution by a correspondent intent upon the affront to religion presented by such an establishment. The author, concluding from his reading of several issues of the paper that "one great Intention of them is to detect Vice and Prophanness; which is certainly very commendable, especially at such a time as this is, when Wickedness prevails among us, more than has ever been known," claimed to be sending his letter for publication as a way of warning the madam to cease her activities or face "a Grand Jury Presentment." The use of the word "wickedness" and the claim that immorality was at an all-time high both point to one of the Mathers, perhaps Sammy, as the author. 472 The heavy-handedness of the threat was quite out of keep-


471 In his diary entry for April 14, 1721, for example, Mather spoke of "A wicked House at our End of the Town, which proves a Snare and a Ruine to young People; procure the Extirpation of it." (Mather, Diary, 612).

472 "Wickedness" was a favorite epithet of both Cotton and Samuel Mather. I can find no use of the word in any of the articles in the Courant whose authorship was identified by Franklin. Greene has suggested that much of the rhetoric of moral decay to be found in eighteenth-century colonial writing is exaggerated: "The prevalence of so many similar complaints about the "Swift and Rapid Progress" of "Vice and Wickedness" in Britain during the first half of the eighteenth century suggests that much of this rhetoric of decline was simply another example of indiscriminate cultural borrowing by the colonials that had little social meaning in America, little effect upon the colonists' attitudes toward their societies, and little relationship to their actual perceptions of themselves." (Greene, "Identity." 203). While the persistence of such rhetoric in the metropolitan press may have
ing with the tone which Corranto, Silence Dogood, Doctor Janus and other personae of the Couranteers adopted in imitation of Mr. Spectator, and suggested that the author had not quite mastered the techniques of the new journalism.

The success and elegance of the madam were as much a target of the author’s outrage as the activities of the residents. She was described as “a very remarkable British Woman, who in the Summer Season sometimes makes her publick Appearance in a handsome jacket, edg’d with a fashionable Gold Lace, wearing a monstrous hoop’d Petticoat and a black hat with a Gold Edging.” The fashionable nature of her attire and her British origin made the woman a suitable focus for the author’s resentment. Imported feminine finery was widely condemned as a principal cause of New England’s balance-of-payments deficit with the metropolis. The madam seemed to operate her establishment “not an Hundred Doors from the old South Church” in virtual competition with that pillar of Boston’s religious establishment, a situation which provoked the admonition that:

This little Prude of Pleasure would do well to advertise her Nocturnal Gallants (such as Lawyers, Sea-Officers, Journeyman Gentlemen, Merchants Apprentices, and the like) that they do not dance naked any more with young girls; and to give a very particular Admonition to Two or Three of the chief and most brazen fac’d of them, not to act over their loose Behaviour with herself, at her Window, on the Lord’s Day in the time of Divine Service, in the Hearing if not in the Sight of the Minister.

The detailed description of the madam’s dress violated a principle of eighteenth century journalism: the anonymity of the public sphere. The correct technique, as practiced by the Couranteers, was to identify the miscreant in such a way that he or she would recognize himself but not so specifically that others could do so. More detailed identification could be threatened, but not actually carried out. In this case, however, the correspondent attempted to hide behind the anonymity of the press while refusing to concede the same position to his subject.

legitimized its continuation in the Courant, Puritan New England had its own sturdy tradition of the jeremiad, in which accelerating moral decay was a central theme.
Beneath the exaggerated description of the carryings-on at the house one senses a real loosening of restrictions and increased public tolerance of immoral behavior. Also significant was the author’s reference to lawyers among the clientele of the house. Lawyers, at this time a small, emergent group in Boston, belonged to a profession not well received by the ministerial oligarchy.\textsuperscript{473} The handful of professional lawyers practicing in Boston in 1722 were engaged in facilitating trans-Atlantic commerce. On the purely local level, lawyers and untrained “petty-foggers” administered matters of debt and contract in which ministers and others on fixed salaries often felt themselves to be at a disadvantage.\textsuperscript{474}

In his thirteenth letter from Silence Dogood, Benjamin Franklin created a picture of Boston on “one of the late pleasant Moon-light Evenings,” which included “A Company of Females I soon after came up with who by throwing their Heads to the Right and Left at every one who pas’d by them I concluded came out with no other Design than to revive the Spirit of Love in Disappointed Batchelors and expose themselves to Sale to the first Bidder.”\textsuperscript{475} Franklin’s theme of the disappointed bachelor referred to the spirited debate about the value of marriage and the difficulty his older brother was experiencing with the ladies, which had run through several issues of the paper in the autumn of 1721. The idea ex-

\textsuperscript{473} Despite the fact that John Winthrop had been a lawyer in England, early Massachusetts law prohibited the making of a court appearance for another for money. Article 26 of \emph{The Body of Liberties} (1641) stated: “Every man that findeth himselfe unfit to plead his owne cause in any Court shall have Libertie to employ any man against whom the Court doth not except, to help him, Provided he give him noe fee or reward for his paines. This shall not exempt the partie him selfe from Answering such Questions in person as the Court shall thinke meete to demand of him.” The status of the emergent legal profession is analyzed by Stanley N. Katz, “The Problem of a Colonial Legal History” in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds. \emph{Colonial British America; Essays in the New History of the Early Modern Era}, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984) 457-490. Nash, \textit{Crucible}, 5 describes lawyers in the late seventeenth century as “untrained, unorganized, and little respected.”

\textsuperscript{474} In 1719, or example, Cotton Mather was beset with legal difficulties arising from his role as trustee of the estate of his wife’s deceased former husband, John George. Details are given in Silverman, \textit{Life}, 312-315.

\textsuperscript{475} \textit{NEC}, September 24, 1722.
pressed by Silence Dogood that prostitution as a consolation of the disappointed bachelor represented an alternative to marriage was a traditional commoditization of sex. The women who offered themselves for sale to a bidder were described to the reader without explicit commentary or judgment as artisans plying a trade.

The detached irony with which Silence Dogood described the group of prostitutes did not signify that either the readers or writers of the Courant approved of such women. A news item from the June 1, 1724, issue gave a more straightforward picture of the Courant’s attitude toward street-walkers: “On Saturday Night last, three Rogues broke out of Bridewell, and at two of Clock the next Morning, three Whores were taken up in the Street, and committed in their Room.” The three whores were the social equals of the three rogues who escaped and so could substitute for them nicely. The way the paper associated the arrests, implying that the women were taken in as a consequence of the vacancy caused by the escape of the men, gave the account that symmetrical separation of male and female roles through which the Courant preferred to present stories about gender.

Sympathy for the prostitute as victim was the theme of a story from the London press reprinted in the Courant on January 15, 1726. A Mrs. Sylvester accused a fourteen-year-old girl, Anne Mitchel, of stealing clothing from her. At the trial, however, it was revealed that “the said Sylvester kept a disorderly House; that there was a Contract between them in relation to this Affair, and that she furnish’d the Girl with the Cloaths to keep Company; which it seems she did till she got the foul disease, and then went off, carrying the Cloaths with her.” The jury acquitted the girl and recommended the prosecution of the

476 Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England 1650-1750, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980) points out that “the opposite of whore was rogue, a term which mixed sexual and more general meanings. ... A whore bestowed her favors indiscriminately, denying any man exclusive right to her body. A rogue tricked or forced a woman into submission with no regard for consequences. The words mirror traditional gender relationships. A woman gave; a man took” (Ulrich, Good Wives, 97).
madam. The innocence and vulnerability of Anne Mitchel in contrast to the "vile and infamous practices" of Mrs. Sylvester was the theme of the story, although the existence of a contract between the two women suggested that the younger one may not have been completely naive or coerced. The sorry plight of the young girl argued the case for the vulnerability of young women; however, the predatory success of Mrs. Sylvester reminded the reader that not all women were good.477

Britain, with its larger, better developed sources of depravity was able to provide stories on the theme of prostitution in greater variety than the town of Boston. One such story, reprinted in the Courant of December 17, 1724, had the flavor of a sentimental novel in synoptic form:

Some days ago a young Gentleman just come out of the Country, went into a Tavern near Covent Garden, and sending a Porter to fetch him a Miss, to his great Surprize, his own Sister came, who had been decoy'd from her Father's house in the Country about two Months before, by one who debauch'd her, and then thought to fit to turn her loose, when he had gratified his vicious Appetite; so that she was forc'd to prostitute herself for Bread, not daring to go near her Friends.

477 Landes points out that "In the libelous literature of Grub Street, sexual sensationalism and political opposition were indistinguishable. Sexual and moral disease signaled to a receptive audience the horrible maladies of political despotism. Even writers of the most pornographic texts deployed a powerful moral vocabulary. And where morality was at stake, a protest against public women was often implied." (Landes, Public Sphere, 56). Considered in this context the fact that both Anne Mitchel and the sinister Mrs. Sylvester were women suggests that while innocence could be feminine, coercive and depraved despotism could be as well. Ulrich discusses an incident of seduction in early New England in which Mary Rolfe of Newbury was seduced by an English visitor, Henry Greenland, in the spring of 1663. Goody Bishop, Mary’s mother, took the lead in investigating the incident and causing an indictment to be brought against Greenland. Ulrich comments: "The citizens of Newbury supported the pious mother against the dazzling stranger. ... What can we make of a plot which casts a mother as moral guardian, a dashing Englishman as assailant, and a pretty young bride as victim? ... Her [Mary Rolfe] dilemma was created by the coexistence in one rural village of a hierarchal social order (by no means limited to New England), a conservative religious tradition (not exclusively Puritan), and sex-linked patterns of sociability (rooted in English folkways)" (Ulrich, Good Wives, p. 91-93). The popularity of fictional literature of seduction on both sides of the Atlantic, despite the quite different social structures of the metropolis and New England, suggests that readers of the Courant enjoyed stories from the London press on these topics for the ideological issues they raised at least as much as the social conditions they criticized.
The sub-text of the incident was the suspension of parietal authority which had facilitated the behavior of both brother and sister. While some readers might see little wrong in the behavior of the young gentleman, such a view was far from universal among New Englanders.\textsuperscript{478} The seducer would universally be thought a villain, though his crime consisted of manipulating the sentiments of the sister rather than fetching himself a Miss through a commercial transaction.\textsuperscript{479} The account was unclear as to whether the vicious appetite the seducer gratified was simply a sexual urge or the don-Juan-like impulse to conquest of innocent maidens, but the light-hearted tone suggested the latter. The sister was portrayed as a victim, first of the seducer and then of the society which could not forgive or readmit her. Behind the three active characters, however, stood the father whose lax supervision allowed his daughter to be decoyed by a scoundrel and his son to solicit prostitutes in Covent Garden.\textsuperscript{480} The emotional power of the story lay in the theme of incest. Although no incest actually occurred, the titillating effect of a narrow escape gave the incident its shock value.

\textsuperscript{478} As Ulrich has pointed out, the double standard as a convention of elite literature — a category into which the Courant clearly falls — has little correlation to the social patterns of New Englanders as reflected in court records or diaries (see Ulrich, Midwife, 149). The disparity between printed narrative and social reality facilitated the use of the figure of the prodigal daughter as a parable or metaphor for the evils of patriarchal authority in the family or in the state, and remind the modern reader that stories such as the account in NEC, December 17, 1724 were not “news” in the modern sense, but essays.

\textsuperscript{479} Lewis observes “In many ways chastity was a fit emblem for republicanism, which when infused with evangelical ardor, could demand absolute and undeviating virtue from its citizens. Hence we must read the era’s popular literature of seduction not merely as cautionary tales addressed to young women but also as political tracts in which men and women explored the possibilities for virtue in a corrupt world.” (Lewis, “Republican Wife”, 716).

\textsuperscript{480} Popular stories of seduction are analyzed as secular versions of the biblical story of Eve by Lewis in “Republican Wife”, 689-721. The satanic figure of the seducer in such an interpretation implies the central figure of God the Father, a structural detail which facilitated a socio-political interpretation of seduction stories.
Fascination with the seduced and abandoned daughter was an enduring component of eighteenth-century literary taste, culminating, perhaps, in Samuel Richardson’s seven-volume epic, Clarissa: or the History of a Young Lady, (London, 1748). Although much of the form’s popularity can be attributed to the opportunities it presented for erotic titillation and melodramatic bathos, the genre served a larger purpose in providing a vehicle for the exploration of the conflicting demands of authority and independence in the younger generation. The young lady whose plight was described in the Courant’s story was a prodigal daughter whose transgressions prevented reconciliation with her parents in a way that the corresponding lapses of her brother had not. The unforgivable nature of female transgressions against chastity was the cornerstone of the double standard for sexual behavior upon which sentimental tales of the seduced and abandoned young girl were constructed.

The eighteenth century’s movement away from the patriarchal family in which individual identity was established by position in the family hierarchy to a marriage partnership rooted in mutual affection raised new issues between husband and wife; it had implications no less profound for the relation of parent to child. In the earlier family system an explicit father-figure whose mantle of authority was passed from generation to generation provided an external source of moral judgement-making to the younger generation, an authority whose control over children’s lives extended certainly up to marriage age and often beyond. The new family model required parents gradually to concede autonomy to their children as the latter’s maturation entitled them to increased independence. This was a

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481 Staves points out that Clarissa was raped, not “decoy’d” as was the girl in the Courant’s story; this important technical point aside, both heroines struggle to overcome shame and social opprobrium in order to effect reconciliation with their fathers, see Staves, Seduced Maidens, 114.

482 As, for example, in the case of Anthony Fallshort’s relationship with his father-in-law described below.
daunting responsibility and the consequences of mis-judgement could be catastrophic, as the Courant's story illustrated. "It is hard to say at what exact time the child is exempted from the Sovereignty of parental dictates," Isaac Watts declared, "Perhaps it is much justice to suppose that this sovereignty diminishes by degrees as the child grows in understanding and capacity, and is more capable of exerting his own intellectual powers." The young Couranteers, struggling to assert their adult independence in a society whose parental generation was not yet wholly won over to the idea of limited parietal authority, found in the story of the Covent Garden encounter an example of the risks inherent in the new freedom.

The narrowly-averted occasion for incest gave the Covent Garden story a special twist. Although the theme of incest was an ancient one, the anonymity of the city with its commercial network for the trafficking in sexuality gave the incident a contemporary, even fashionable, flavor. The possibility of violation of society's deeply-held incest taboo heightened the risks of independence. Nor was incest incidental to the issue of adolescent independence; control over the sex lives of all family members as exercised by the patriarch to prevent incest and other, less serious sexual transgressions, was an important function of parietal authority. It followed then, that loosening of patriarchal authority increased, in theory at least, the likelihood of the sort of forbidden encounter that the brother and sister in Covent Garden narrowly avoided.

The dangers to which children could be exposed by parental neglect was the theme of two stories of child abandonment presented in the Courant. On December 28, 1724, the Courant reported an incident in Windsor, Connecticut in which a gentleman stranger gained permission to leave a bundle at the home of a woman. Shortly after his departure, "the Woman unty'd the Bundle, and found there a Child dress'd very handsomly, with a good Quantity of Money by it." The unknown identity of the man hid the identity of the child's

483 Isaac Watts, Improvement of the Mind, (London, 1741), Quoted in Fliegelman, Prodigals, 184.
mother. The reader was left to speculate: was the man the father of the child? Was he the husband of its mother, her lover, her father, brother or other relative, possibly a criminal abandoning an abducted child? His exchange with the woman of the house suggested that by his speech and clothing he inspired her deference, i.e. that she believed herself to be of a lower social position than he. The quality of the child's dress and the money left with it also suggested that financial need was not the motive for the abandonment. The questions which intrigued the reader existed because the man escaped successfully.

On January 29, 1726, the paper reprinted an account from a London paper of a woman tried at Chelmsford, Essex for abandoning her child on the road. The woman was reported to have a husband "who left her just before her Reckoning was out." Being without funds, the new mother was turned out of the inn where she had delivered the child and abandoned it the forest, where it lay for several days until being discovered still alive.

As in other stories of mistreatment the Courant picked up from the London papers, the factors of anonymity and mobility played a large part in events. The woman and her husband were travelling, so that she was a stranger in the town where he deserted her. Isolation from kinship networks left the woman without resources. Turned out of the inn where she had given birth four days earlier, the unfortunate woman found herself beyond the reach of society's rudimentary social welfare system. The pathos of her situation moved the judge to reduce the charge, "but the Barbarity and Unnaturalness of the Action was so notorious, that the Judge thought fit to sentence her to the House of Correction for three Months, and so be whipp'd three Times a Week for the last two Months." Although the modern reader may find the sentence as barbarous as the crime, eighteenth-century readers apparently did not have that reaction.\footnote{\textsuperscript{484}}

\footnotetext{\textsuperscript{484} "Relatively little concern was shown for poor women despite the extensive magazine-type literature devoted to women and social manners." (Black, English Press, 263).}
The Connecticut story can be read against the case reported from Chelmsford, England, as a case of child abandonment by a man contrasted with abandonment by a woman. The centrality of the mother-child relationship in the Chelmsford story contrasted with the anonymity of the man in Windsor. The violation of the mother-child relationship was the cause of the "Unnaturalness of the Action," and made the woman deserving of severe punishment; the man, on the other hand, remained mysterious and escaped the censure of the law and of the reader. The woman's crime was forced upon her by necessity, the man's success was facilitated by his money. The higher standard of accountability to which the woman was held was explainable in part by the fact that her actions were more immediately life-threatening to the infant; at the same time, her lack of resources and desperate condition excited only a modest degree of mitigating sympathy. Her crime betrayed the female responsibility to home and family upon which the social order was perceived to be based.

New England women were also tempted to criminal behavior under the pressure of unwanted pregnancy. The Courant of August 10, 1724, carried an item about "a servant maid at Carr's Island, near Salisbury, murder'd her Bastard Child, which (by her own confession) she effected by beating it's Brains out against a stump, and afterwards threw it into the River." Bastardy and infanticide, especially by females of the underclass, was nothing new; the criminal records of colonial America recorded frequent prosecutions for these crimes from the earliest days. Despite a loosening of supervision and increased tolerance for sexual intercourse before marriage, the seriousness the situation in which the Carr's Island maid found herself remained unabated.485

485 The unfortunate servant at Carr's Island committed a traditional crime. Puritan New England had viewed both partners in a fornication as equally guilty; however, legal attitudes towards the consequences of illicit sex were changing and "by the middle of the eighteenth century, most historians argue, fornication had become a woman's crime" (Ulrich, Midwife, 148). The Courant, very much in the vanguard in matters of literature and politics, did not explicitly advocate a double standard in matters of sexual conduct.
The tragic possibilities inherent in a dysfunctional marriage included suicide. On October 2, 1725, the Courant reported the pathetic story of an Edgartown woman whose "Husbands Barbarity had made her weary of her Life." The woman had gone up to the garret "to make away her self; but her Heart failing her, she crept into that Hole, intending truly there and die" and was discovered by her maid. The wife's helplessness before the barbarity of her husband made the Edgartown marriage emblematic of the abusive despotism which the Courant vigorously condemned in public and private life. Earlier generations had condemned domestic abuse as well; the key question was the nature of an allowable remedy. Puritan society had vigorously pursued redress through civil and ecclesiastical institutions but rejected the legitimacy of rebellion against the husband's authority. Judge Samuel Sewall recorded his disposition of a case in which an abused wife had conspired with seven or eight other women to revenge herself upon her husband. The judge sentenced the wife to be whipped, observing that "a woman that had lost her Modesty, was like Salt that had lost its savor; good for nothing but to be cast to the Dunghill."486 Sewall interpreted the woman's taking of the law into her own hands as a loss of "modesty" i.e. female submission. The Republican ideology which was to develop in the second half of the eighteenth century legitimized rebellion against the tyranny of patriarchy; the Courant's position occupied a middle ground, suggesting that by public exposure in the newspaper, social pressure could be brought upon the barbarous husband to reform his ways.487

because indifference to male irresponsibility implied a need for the external controls of patriarchy. At the same time, the printing of traditional stories such as the Carr's Island murder, coupled with the Courant's humorous presentation of cuckoldry, contributed to the shifting balance of responsibility between man and women in crimes of fornication and bastardy.

486 The entry is for September 10, 1707.

487 James Franklin's ideas about the press as an agent of domestic reform are discussed in Chapter Seven.
The Courant's presentation of women spoke in two quite different voices, depending upon whether women were being discussed as wives or as individuals in the larger society. As a group, the Couranteers supported the ideal of marriage as a partnership rooted in mutual affection and they satirized and vigorously condemned both men and women whose conduct subverted that ideal. Individual weaknesses and shortcomings could effect particular marriages, but the threat which the paper most vigorously condemned was the exploitation of matrimony for financial gain. Materialism which eclipsed a loving relationship between the partners was condemned in those who married for money and in wives whose obsession with fashion and fashionably idle pursuits displaced active participation in the conjugal partnership. Although the Couranteers did not make the comparison explicit, they portrayed the values of capitalism, when transferred to the conjugal relationship, as a threat as great as the evils of despotic patriarchy. In their criticism of exploitation and abuse, as well as their advocacy of loving partnership, the Couranteers advanced the idea that a happy family in which the autonomy of the children was appropriately fostered was the cornerstone of a good society.

Outside their roles as wives and mothers, women received far less gallant treatment in the pages of the Courant. In a number of satirical pieces which contained some of the paper's best writing, it was suggested that the presence of groups of women (i.e. women without male partners) in public was at best a nuisance and at worst posed a threat to the ability of men to perform such important tasks as fighting fires and trying criminals. The paper criticized the conduct of all-female social groups within the home as well, suggesting that they engaged in socially destructive gossip and idled away time better spent on family responsibilities. The consistent disparagement of women in groups was a subtle theme in the Courant, one which reinforced the paper's view that the best place for a woman was in her husband's household. The paper's stories of crimes by and against women also suggested that there was much to lose and little to gain by female activity outside the household. The risks of prostitution and even murder were were recounted, nor were there any
accounts of useful or rewarding public activity by women against which such dangers might be set.

Courtship was a subject that loomed large in the pages of the Courant and the paper revealed an ambivalent attitude toward the way women conducted their role in its rituals. The Couranteers exhibited a good deal of sympathy (frequently mixed with humor) for bashful or inexperienced suitors and portrayed favorably those young ladies whose patience and cooperation assisted the gentleman over awkward moments. Women whose ritualized resistance was too effective or who merely toyed with a suitor were bitterly criticized and no sympathy was expended on the spinster who had too successfully defended herself against the importunings of all her beaux. The competitive aspect of courtship provoked occasional departures from the paper's editorial policy of Spectator-like mildness and gentility in which taunting mockery about physical attractiveness to the opposite sex was a prominent feature.

A striking aspect of the Courant's presentation of women's issues is the narrowness of the paper's focus of concern. The overwhelming majority of stories and essays concerning women deal with courtship and the early stages of married life. Virtually all the women who appeared in the pages of the Courant lived in an urban setting. Even the widow Silence Dogood, an exception in terms of her age and marital status, left her country town to report on Boston society firsthand. There is an obvious biographical cause for these restrictions in the age and location of the Couranteers, who were relatively youthful residents of New England's largest town. The demographic pattern of the paper's contributors suggests that the impetus behind its appearance was in part a "generation gap" separating young, urban tradesmen from their elders and from their rural peers. The source of this

488 The new rituals of courtship are discussed in Chapter Seven.
gap was the dedication of the Couranteers to the new, Georgian culture which conflicted with New England tradition in a number of areas, including relations between the sexes.

Because the Courant was as much a journal of ideas as a newspaper, it cannot be assumed that the material found in its pages was broadly representative of New England society as a whole. The young women mentioned in the issue of January 27, 1723, who flocked to Boston to attend boarding schools were hardly typical. In the same vein, the statement that the daughters of Boston shopkeepers slept until nine or ten o’clock and spent the rest of the day before the looking glass should not be taken as an accurate characterization of the lives of real women. The Couranteers were bent on importing fashionable culture as reported in the London press and seized upon — if they did not actually invent — the slightest evidence of a parallel between local conditions and those described in the metropolitan press.

Beneath the mimetic intent of the Couranteers there lay a commitment to marriage as an intimate partnership in which women, although subordinate, were entitled to express their individuality. The goal of a happy and profitable marriage was threatened by human weaknesses, notably lust and greed — the same vices which, according to the Real Whigs, threatened the “marriage” of the ruler and people. The Couranteers conceived of their mission as the reform of vice, civil and domestic, through public exposure. The delight they took in tweaking the noses of provincial authorities was legitimized (in their eyes at least) by their commitment to journalism as a project to do good. The pseudonym Silence Dogood which Benjamin Franklin adopted was a satirical reference to Cotton Mather, but it was not insincere.489 Perhaps as significant as the observations about women which were

489 Cotton Mather’s 1710 book, Bonifacius, subtitled Essays to Do Good, was his fullest expression of the pietism to which he turned in adapting his theology to the eighteenth century. Mather described three fields in which pious good needed to be done, the second of which paralleled in intent, if not in style, the ambitions of the Couranteers. “There needs abundance to be done, that the evil manners of the world, by which men are drowned in perdition, may be reformed,” he wrote. The name of Benjamin Franklin’s

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printed in the Courant was the fact that the paper introduced the topic of women's lives into the crowded world of Boston newspapers. By making female behavior a subject of journalism and by initiating an exploration of the issue of women as readers and writers of newspapers, the Courant opened the larger question of the relationship of the world of print to private life.

fictitious widow also reflects the title of another pamphlet by Mather, *Mara Spoken to. A Brief Essay to Do Good Unto the Widow*, (Kneeland, Boston: 1717). This work was given a second edition in 1721 and so was in the public eye as the Courant came into being.
Chapter Seven

Squaws' Tongues: Women and Rhetoric

The Couranteers perceived a basic difference between the way male and female New Englanders used language. The differences between male and female styles of communication paralleled perceived differences between men and women in social values and conceptions of authority, facilitating the establishment of two contrastive categories of social and political behavior. In both language and politics, the Couranteers presented the female style as irrational since it did not distinguish between logic and emotion and invoked the power of tradition rather than of reason. The paper's writers denigrated the female mode in both rhetoric and politics and advocated a style, which, they claimed, was characteristic of male behavior. The male mode, allegedly based on logical analysis, tolerance, and mutual respect, conceded authority to the contender whose argument was most persuasive in terms of rational axioms assumed to be of universal validity rather than on factors of social position or the pull of religious or patriotic tradition. The items about women in the pages of the Courant have significance out of proportion to the relatively modest amount of space they occupy because female modes of thought and behavior described in items about shop-keepers' wives, serving maids, and prostitutes were believed to operate — albeit in more elevated form — in the activities of feminine-style authorities such as Tory high churchmen, the Governor's Council, and the ministerial oligarchy of Massachusetts.

In her fifth letter, published May 28, 1722, Silence Dogood defended women against accusations of ignorance and idleness with the counter-charge that the fault lay with men "for not allowing the Women the Advantages of Education." This line of argument
was based on the idea that literacy offered women access to the public sphere despite their
domestic confinement. Although the Courant did not advocate political enfranchisement of
women, support for female education and the encouragement of female readers and writers
in the newspapers was a preliminary step to fuller participation in the public sphere. Access
to the republic of letters was a seemingly small concession in the context of the Courant's
support for the domestic confinement of women, but it was one which was, eventually, to
have large consequences.

Allowing women to write for the paper seems to have been a policy of the Couran-
teers as a group. At least one woman writer may have been contributing to the paper before
Silence Dogood issued her invitation to women to submit letters to the paper. On July 2,
1722, James Franklin stated that two female members of the Couranteers had been “lately
admitted” to the club. Earlier, in the issue of January 29, 1722, he had responded to Ann
Careful that “My two other Female Correspondents appear indeed to write with a Sense of
their Condition.” It is possible that, like young Benjamin Franklin, two women writers
were contributing to the paper in January but were not formally admitted to the Couranteers
until later in the year. The publication of articles submitted by women writers was unusual
by standards of the contemporary British press; the admission of two women as formal
 correspondents by the Couranteers was unprecedented.

The two women members of the Couranteers are not identified in the Franklin file.
The female pseudonyms (beside Silence Dogood) identified in the British Museum file of
the Courant studied by Ford all belonged to men. Nathaniel Gardner, the principal writer
after Checkley left the paper, used the names Fidelia, Hortensia, and Fanny Mournful.
Thomas Fleet used Ann Careful. No attributions are made after the forty-first number of the

490 In her third letter, published April 30, 1722, Mrs. Dogood invited “particularly those
of my own Sex to enter into a Correspondence with me.” The Courant of October 9,
1721, the paper’s tenth number, carried a satiric poem whose author is identified in the
Franklin file as “Madame Staples.”
Courant; the possibility cannot be excluded that additional women contributors appeared in the over two hundred issues of the paper which appeared after May 14, 1722.491 Whoever the two women writers were, they did not identify themselves as women. Female pen names were taken by male writers of pieces defending women and attacking men in the same way that male pen names were used for misogynist attacks. Occasionally a female persona would be adopted to give criticism of "my own sex" greater apparent credibility, but the gender of the pseudonyms used in the Courant was a function of the theme of the letter or article, not the real identity of the writer.492 Social attitudes about women writers and female participation in print culture generally was beginning to change from the days when Governor Winthrop recorded the sad tale of a lady who went insane "by giving herself largely to reading and writing," but recognition of a distinctly female point of view had still to come, even in the pages of so forward looking a paper as the Courant.493

Literacy in the limited sense of reading proficiency was not a new experience for women in the 1720s; in fact colonial Massachusetts had boasted of one of the highest literacy rates in the world — for women as well as for men — since its founding.494 The

491 The Gardner pieces appear on November 13, 1721; January 19, 1722; March 5, 1722. The Fleet piece is in January 19, 1722. The fact that all identified female pseudonyms belonged to men suggests that the female correspondents Franklin referred to were real women.

492 The requirement that women adopt a male point of view producing an "immasculation" of women both readers and writers is argued by Susan Schibanoff in "Taking the Gold Out of Egypt: The Art of Reading as a Woman," Flynn and Schweickart, eds. Gender and Reading.

493 Quoted in Demos, "American Family," 427.

494 The case for widespread female literacy in colonial New England is made by E. Jennifer Monaghan, "Literacy Instruction and Gender in Colonial New England," in Cathy N. Davidson, ed., Reading in America: Literature & Social History, (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1989) 53-80. Monaghan concludes that "Even in the seventeenth century, access to reading instructional materials was easy, and the teaching of reading was considered a female domain. There is every reason to believe that reading at some level was taught widely to girls by women, whereas writing, for a long time considered a male teaching preserve, was not." (Davidson, 71). A letter in the Courant of January 18,
novelty lay not in the fact that women were reading but in what they were reading and how they read. Most of the material read in the colonial period was religious. Pilgrim’s Progress and the Bible were books that New England Puritans read and re-read throughout their lives; indeed many New Englanders committed hundreds, even thousands, of Bible verses to memory. Reading such sacred and profoundly familiar material was a ritual act of intensive reading. With the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1694, middle and upper-class readers in England — and shortly thereafter in America — were presented with a swelling tide of newsletters and literary journals. This ephemeral literature of current events and of the imagination called for a different kind of reading, an extensive reading designed to stimulate the imagination and provide a wide range of vicarious experiences.495

Modesty, a virtue which the author of an essay in the January 28, 1726, issue of the Courant characterized as “the peculiar Ornament of the Fair,” was at once a pattern of social behavior and rubric which circumscribed language in print as well as polite conversation. According to the author, all women excepting only prostitutes aspired to modesty so that “the Female idea of this Vertue, pronounces her a Modest Woman who is not a publick Whore.” As modesty forbade certain topics, it limited the presentation in the public prints of subjects such as conception and childbirth which figured importantly in that oral form of female communication which the Courant denigrated as gossip. Although modesty also prevented the explicit portrayal of male sexual experience, the rubric of modesty, as the

1725, suggested that coeducational instruction by men had become more common, at least in the towns around Boston, by that date: “In many, if not most of our Country Towns Children are taught to read by a School-Master; so that the Girls must be idle between the Times of Reading, for want of a Mistress to teach them some suitable Employment.”

495 The rise of novel reading by women in post-Revolutionary America is the subject of Cathy Davidson’s Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). While Davidson’s thesis is undoubtedly correct, the pages of the Courant offer evidence that the newspaper facilitated similar changes in female reading many years earlier, albeit on a much restricted scale.
Courant presented it, foreclosed to a greater degree the presentation in print of subjects traditionally of importance to women.

Modesty precluded the use of words describing female anatomy so that "Women have neither Legs, Thighs nor Bellys, and by Consequence that they walk on Air, and possess Nothing below the Waist but their Petticoats." Moreover, modesty excised from the lexicon words which might, in another context, refer to male sexuality so that "it is not in the Power of a Man to throw Stones, tho' he may by the unlucky Cast of a Rock, break his Neighbours Windows." To such heights had verbal modesty grown, according to the author of the January 28, 1726 piece, that "those who unhappily derive the Immodest names of Hancock, Maycock, Morecock, Allecock, Peacock, Pocock, or any of the Cocks, from their Ancestors, are very rarely nam'd without Blushing," and he cited the story of a child who "being about to mention a young Gentleman of the Name of Hancock, very modestly call'd him Mr. Han-High-flown-Fowl." The restrictions on verbal expression imposed by the requirements of modesty had the effect of making the discussion of sexuality or gender differences very much more difficult.

The author reported a similar hypocrisy-as-modesty in courtship behavior where women were expected to avoid any suggestion of sexual awareness or interest. The ritualized resistance to male overtures which modesty required obligated the woman to "keep a Man at Arm's Length, and call him an Hundred Names, till she has Fairly retreated to a Corner; when (poor Creature!) she is quite tir'd! just ready to faint! and is forc'd to submit to Mr. Impudence's Caresses." Like the restrictions on vocabulary, the convention of female resistance gave courtship a ritualistic cast in which both parties played carefully defined roles.

496 NEC, January 28, 1726.
497 "Stones" was a common synonym for "testicles."
The theatrical rituals of courtship facilitated a tendency for men to see women as status objects under their control and erotic fantasy objects of their own creation. Silence Dogood observed the inconsistency between male behavior and male dissatisfaction with female reaction in her fifth letter, pointing out that if men “will be such simpletons as to humble themselves” at a women’s feet and “fill their credulous ears with extravagant Praises of their Wit, Beauty, and other Accomplishments... what Wonder is it, if they carry themselves haughtily, and live more extravagantly.” Rituals of male submission in courtship could lead to the mistaken idea that women were to continue their dominant position after marriage. Participation by courting couples in frolics and other events outside the direct supervision of parents provided opportunity for increased sexual intimacy between the lady and her “professed lover”; the courtship rhetoric discussed in the pages of the Courant was designed to excite passion and inflame the imagination in a less restrictive setting.

Wives, although expected to remain at home, could gain limited access to the public sphere through writing to the newspaper. Chastisement and the threat of public disclosure in the pages of the Courant offered literate women a new protection against domestic abuse. A letter from Hortensia in the Courant of January 29, 1722, suggested such a social function for the newspaper. Claiming that it was “as reasonable to publish the Complaints of our Sex as those of the other,” Hortensia accused her husband of beating her and wasting

498 NEC, May 28, 1722.

499 Benjamin Franklin’s observations on the effects of the rhetoric of male suffering and submission which formed a central component of the new courtship style were more critical than those of later writers who fashioned from the idea that periods of love and courtship “invest a lady with more authority than in any other situation that falls to the lot of human beings,” a belief in the ennobling influence of women over men. Franklin saw such rhetorical submission as insincere and hence foolish. (Quoted from New York Magazine, May, 1795 in Lewis, Wife, 702).
time in taverns and threatened that "if he dont mend quickly, I shall give an Account of him which will not be at all pleasing to him."

Hortensia's letter, premised on the supposition that the publication of women's writings was reasonable, opened the domestic sphere to criticism and redress through the public prints. Her style and intent was the same as that of male writers using the threat of public exposure to reform private behavior. Silence Dogood's solicitation of female correspondents and the editorial policy which brought the subject of wife abuse into the public sphere were not motivated exclusively by financial considerations. Repugnance at the ill-treatment of women was undoubtedly sincere in James and Benjamin Franklin; moreover, belief in the reforming power of public discourse could not be suspended at the threshold of the home, unless, as Hortensia observed, "you think that Women have no souls."

Wives were not the only victims of the untrammeled aggression of an abusive husband. The Courant of July 31, 1725 printed an article about a New York hatter who beat his wife to death with the comment that "this Article is partly inserted for the Admonition of a certain barbarous Fellow in Boston, who one Night this Week, and very often before, beat his maid so unmercifully." The editor went on to warn the Bostonian that if he continued to abuse his maid, "he may expect a particular Description of his body and Mind, even to his very Last." The technique of the story, a reference to a miscreant which would allow his acquaintances to identify him but still permit him to remain anonymous to the readership at large, was one that the Courant used consistently in its role of censor morum. The balance of denunciation and anonymity represented a new use of the public prints as an agent of reformation. Earlier, face-to-face denunciation within the church congregation had been attended by public admission of guilt and ritual punishment on the ducking chair or the

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500 See, for example the article in NEC, July 31, 1725 on Tom who beat his maid, discussed below.
stool of repentance. In Franklin’s day, the limits of privacy and the grounds for libel were not clearly established. The distinction between seditious and personal libel was generally accepted but the degree to which truth constituted an adequate defense for the publication of material damaging to the reputation of a private individual was not clear. Franklin’s British models, Mr. Spectator and Cato, both counseled greater reticence than the Courant practiced in presenting cases of wife abuse. The Courant was similarly rash in the field of seditious libel, a fact that cost James Franklin a month in jail and forced him from the editorship of the paper. The models of Steele and Trenchard only partly mitigated Franklin’s natural aggressiveness.

Bigamy was another violation of the marriage contract which the Courant attempted to frustrate by the threat of public exposure. On August 7, 1725, the paper ran an advertisement “to warn the Female Sex of a certain wandring Goat, that goes about in sheep’s Cloathing, and has the Tongue of a Saint, but a Devil’s Heart. The gentleman in question pretends to be a Widower, but is a marry’d Man; his Wife is near Pis-----a at Oy---r Ri---r.” The coy spelling of “Oyster River” and “Piscataqua” would not have baffled many read-

501 The persistence of this tradition is attested to by an item reprinted from the London press in the Courant of September 25, 1721, recounting that “Last Sunday a Goldsmith did Penance in Algate Church, for calling an Upholsterer’s Wife in that neighbourhood Whore.” The use of the public prints to reform domestic faults was a new technique whose use Franklin and the Couranteers pioneered in the American provinces.

502 In the April 9, 1722 issue Will Coatless offered the opinion that “Tho’ I highly approve of several Pieces in your Paper, yet I think there are some Things that deserve a severe Animadversion. To describe particular Persons, and point at them as it were with the Finger, is by no Means allowable. The rules of Charity and good Manners ought punctually to be observ’d.” Apparently some readers of the Courant felt that the paper went farther in identifying the objects of editorial criticism than the standards of the Tattler or the Spectator would allow. In response, Franklin invited the writer “to describe me particularly, and point at me with his finger in the Gazette” if his criticisms of specific persons were unjustified. Franklin seems to have had less concern about the anonymity of specific persons and to have relied more heavily on the truth defence than Steele and the British journalists that were his models.

503 The development of law relating to personal libel in the American press is discussed in Smith, Printers, 71-80.
ers. The reference to the wife’s residence was intended to ensure that the accused recognized himself in the description. The effect of this style of denunciation was akin to that of dramatic irony: readers who could not identify the accused could chuckle over his discomfort, knowing that, whoever he was, he had been embarrassed within his own circle of acquaintances. For those who could identify the subject of the piece, there was the added titillation to be gained from observing the effects of the subject’s discovery. While it would be difficult to measure what effect the threat of public exposure in the pages of the Courant had on those singled out for criticism, the claim was made in a letter printed March 5, 1722, that “Those Pieces you have publish’d of late, which some call Coats, they say, have wrought Reformation in several Families and particular Persons.”

Weakening parietal supervision was also to be observed in the Courant’s treatment of courtship customs which afforded the “constant lover” a new status with political as well as social implication. Despite its formalistic concern with modesty, the new style of courtship with its unsupervised contact outside the home permitted a higher degree of sexual intimacy than the older custom of meeting in the young woman’s home under parental supervision. The author of an essay on modesty in the Courant of January 28, 1726 favored the new mode of courtship and tried to defend it by turning accusations of immodesty and hypocrisy on the older fashion of “sitting up” together in the girl’s home. This

504 The reference to coats comes from a satirical piece by Defoe, News from the Moon, in which the peculiar custom of having “Coat made as such People are generally condemn’d to wear upon Publick Days, who upon Tryal are found guilty of such or such respective Crimes,” made for the person to be censured. Franklin printed a version of the story, in which the tailor was blamed because a fool’s coat he had made fit the magistrates, to criticize the prosecution of Benjamin Gray for printing of “A Letter to an eminent clergyman.” News from the Moon. A Review of the State of the British Nation. (Boston, 1721, Evans, 2281).

correspondent condemned the traditional style of courting because “all the Freedom allow’d by a young Girl to a profess’d Lover, is granted to a transient Visitor.” The writer attempted to dismiss charges by traditionalists that the relaxation of parental supervision led to immoral behavior, claiming to have heard “a Female of no small Reputation in the Place where she liv’d, in pleading for the Modesty of this Practice, use this among other Arguments; namely, that in those Towns which declin’d it, more Bastards were to in a Year than in those that follow’d it,” an argument by which, the the Courant’s correspondent observed, “Modesty is measur’d by Bastards.”

The key point in the author’s objection to the old custom was its refusal to recognize the status of “professed lover”. The new style of courtship broke down the prohibition on pre-marital sex by inserting a this new category into the social spectrum. The professed lover was entitled to obtain, after a protracted ritual of resistance, an undefined level of intimacy which, in practice, was often complete.

The change in courtship custom which the essay on modesty described was the product of a psychology of social relations that had a political dimension as well. The relaxation of parental control that allowed the creation of the social category of professed lover, and the enjoyment by the professed lover of intimacies previously reserved for the married (albeit under conditions of ambiguity and false modesty) had its counterpart in the demand for political inclusion by the Boston tradesmen who formed the Couranteers. The patriarchal authority under which Massachusetts Bay had been founded admitted of only

506 Lewis observes that “because eighteenth-century thought placed the family and the state on one continuum, that of ‘society,’ and did not yet — as the nineteenth century would — erect a barrier between the private sphere of the family and the public one of the world, it could dramatize issues of authority in terms of relationships between members of a family. Accordingly, the young woman’s quest for a suitable husband and her attempt to navigate between the eighteenth-century’s Scylla of overweening power and its Charybdis of seductive liberty was the nation’s plot as well” (Lewis, “Republican Wife”, 693).
two groups.\textsuperscript{507} For a century, the struggle of those in subjugation to gain full inclusion in the political process had been a major theme in the history of Massachusetts. Changes in the definition of political authority in 1688 and again after the death of Queen Anne — modest as they might seem in the light of later developments — represented a relaxation of patriarchal authority. In the new climate the Couranteers sought political inclusion in a status analogous to that of the professed lover: they advocated a somewhat ill-defined extension of some of the privileges of the elite to themselves, but not the overthrow or redefinition of the political structure itself.\textsuperscript{508}

Courtship rhetoric designed to stimulate the affections through fantasy was practiced by both men and women, according to a letter printed on December 9, 1723. This author claimed that the male suitor attributed to his mistress engaging qualities which, in reality she did not possess "and then adores the God of his own making." The woman, on the other hand, "accomplishes the Man with every thing she affects, and then admires his imaginary Qualifications." The linguistic resources for the expression of such idealized fantasies had been abundant in English poetic and dramatic literature for generations, what was new was the growing desire on the part of readers of the Courant to employ them. The dramatic conventions of the new style of courtship and the exaggerated rhetoric employed to stimulate fantasy had the effect of making falling in love a self-conscious act dependent upon ritual behaviors which either party could initiate or suspend at will. The risk existed,

\textsuperscript{507} The two political classes were starkly described by John Winthrop: "God Almighty in his most holy and wise providence hath so disposed of the Condition of mankind, as in all times some must be rich some poore, some highe and eminent in power and dignitie; others meane and in subjection." Winthrop, Journal quoted in Edmund S. Morgan, The Puritan Dilemma: The Story of John Winthrop, (Boston: Little, Brown & Co, 1958) 88.

\textsuperscript{508} Interesting in this regard is the recurrent use of the phrase "true Lover of his Country" in the rhetoric of the Real Whigs. The idea that true love formed the basis for social or political entitlement reflects the growing importance of sentiment (as distinct from passion) in eighteenth century culture. The limited nature of the political demands of the Couranteers sharply separates them from the republican aspirations of the Revolutionary generation.

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of course, that a relationship based on fantasy would lead to disappointment once the courtship was over. 509

As the Courant presented the matter, hyperbolic formulas with which young men praised the women they were courting affected the attitudes of both parties. For the male member of the couple, these verbal rituals served to stimulate affective sensitivity and increase feelings of attraction and desire. The heightened state of male emotion stimulated a stronger response from the female. These verbal procedures for the heightening of emotional intensity could be used in a calculated way to maximize advantage in negotiating a lucrative marriage. The February 19, 1722 issue of the Courant contained a letter from a forty-five year old spinster named Betty Frugal who asked for advice about the suit being pressed upon her by a young bachelor who “makes his Addresses in a Manner which is altogether new to me.” The young man employed the exaggerated rhetoric of the new courtship style, comparing her eyes to stars, her face to the sun, and her teeth to pearls. He

509 Two publications against the practice of masturbation which appeared in Boston at this time expressed concern with the power of sexual fantasy. Cotton Mather published a pamphlet whose running title suggests that alarm was growing among New Englanders of the parent generation: The Pure Nazarite, Advice to a Young Man, Concerning An Impiety and Impurity (not easily to be spoken of) which many Young Men are to their perpetual Sorrow, too easily drawn into. A letter forced into the Press, by the discoveries which are made, that Sad Occasions multiply, for the Communication of it (Boston: T. Fleet for John Phillips, 1723, Evans, 2458). Mather claimed that “Many, Many are guilty” of the practice and was uncharacteristically forthright in proclaiming his strategy “to write of those things, which it is a shame to speak of... so that you will be Ashamed, and also Afraid of doing them.” Mather emphasized the risk to marital relations posed by youthful masturbation, warning that “wonderful Trouble in the Married Life may befall them, to chastise the Faults committed before they came into it.” (Mather, Nazarite, 1, 3, and 8-9). A reprint of the English pamphlet, Onania; or, the Heinous Sin of Self-Pollution, and All its Frightful Consequences, in both Sexes (Boston, John Phillips, 1724, Evans, 2573), claimed that girls as well as boys were increasingly given over to the vice and attributed the cause to “Ill-Books, Bad Companions, Love-Stories, Lascivious Discourses and other Provocatives to Lust and Wantonness.” (Onania, iii, ii, 9). Both works claimed that the technique was taught by one young person to another and Onania denounced lack supervision by school-masters as an important factor in the spread of the practice. The connection between erotic fantasies in courtship and a perceived growth in the practice of masturbation among the young appears to have been reading of romantic or erotic literature which provided a vocabulary for the former and stimulus for the latter.

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threatened to drown himself if Betty rejected him and talked “of Flames and Darts and the like which has a strange Effect upon me, tho’ I can’t understand what he means.”

It would appear that Betty Frugal, at age 45, was unused to being courted in the style of the younger generation. Her suitor’s verbal praises affected her although she could not understand them because she was responding to the emotional energy of the speaker rather than the content of the speech. Her desire to order her affections suggested that although stimulated, she continued to withhold her response out of inhibition, confusion or both. Her anxiety was heightened by the warning she had received that there were young men with slight prospects attempting to marry women such as she for money and she asked the Courant’s Timothy Turnstone (James Franklin) for advice.

Turnstone’s reply was laconic and to the point: “Ay, Betty, he’s a Journeyman Gentleman as sure as you’re alive…. turn him off; I had rather have you my self than see you ruin’d.”

The complexities of the new courtship style posed difficulties which were rehearsed at length in the pages of the Courant. An common problem was the shy young man who was unable to perform the new verbal rituals. In the March 19, 1722, issue of the Courant Belinda wrote of her bashful suitor who, in his awkwardness spilled snuff into her apron and face, desiring him to know that she “shall like him better for a Husband than I do for a Humble Servant: and shou’d he once have Courage enough to declare himself, he will find that I want nothing but asking.”

Bashfulness could pose a serious obstacle between willing partners if it made the young man unable to perform the courtship ritual. Ben Treacle inquired in the issue of April 9, 1722, “whether it would be improper for the lady to pop the Question first” as he

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510 NEC. February 19, 1722.
was too shy to do so. The Courant's saucy reply, punning on the word "pop" in the sense of a kiss, reassured him:

Improper! No, by no Means, Mr. Treackle! Your entire Affection for and Esteem of the Widow, obliges her in Gratitude to pop Questions to you; especially since your Bashfulness renders you Incapable of giving her one single Pop for all the good Manners and Pleasantness with which she treats you.

Epistolary essays such as this one suggested that many young men found the theatrical display of passion required by courtship ritual difficult to produce. On December 3, 1722, the Courant published a dramatic dialogue signed by Amoroso which celebrated the awkward first encounter of the shy young Strephon, who for two weeks had walked back and forth before the door of his intended lady attempting to summon the courage to call on her. This night she appeared in the doorway and, snatching off his hat, Strephon began an awkward series of pleasantry about the moon above and the condition of the street. To keep the flagging conversation going, the lady enquired if he thought her immodest to stand in her doorway exposed to the public view. At this point the nervous Strephon took the lady's hand and squeezed it. She returned the squeeze and the stilted pleasantry continued.

Matters proceed in this fashion through several more topics of conversation. Her suitor became hopelessly trapped in an awkward conceit comparing the lady to her lamp-post. She first brought him back to earth by an abrupt change of rhetorical register, then called the hand:

Quoth she, This is a nice Come-off,
Like hiding broken Wind b'a Cough;
But yet I b'lieve your first Intent
Was only Jest and Merriment,

Good Nigh t'ye, Sir: The Bell will ring.
'Tis growing late: I must go in.
She went, and Strephon follow'd a' ter,
When in the Entry fast he caught her;
Where we will leave them to discourse,
And forward their begun Amours.

In both cases the counsel of the Courant to the bashful gentleman was boldness and in both cases the lady was depicted as mistress of the double signals of coquetry, able to exhibit formal resistance while sending covert signals of receptivity and encouragement.

Rituals of self-excitement and stylized messages of acceptance and rejection could lead to disappointment and hurt feelings when one player tired of the game. On April 1, 1723, the Courant printed a poem by Amyntor whose courtship of a young lady in a neighboring town had been brought to an unexpected halt through a letter informing him that she was not longer disposed to receive his visits. The rejected poet took his revenge in verses that criticized both his erstwhile lady and her new companion. In his bitterness, Amyntor somewhat childishly attempted to salvage his wounded pride by claiming that he had already determined to drop the lady before she spurned him. At issue was male control of the courtship ritual. The woman could be subtly encouraging, but not dominant as was the case in Strephon’s courtship; when the time came to end the affair matters were more difficult to manage. The letter to Amyntor informing him that his visits were no longer welcome was not only a personal rejection, it placed explicit control of the relationship in the hands of the lady.

Amyntor attributed his rejection first to the superior rhetorical powers of his successor, the ability of the rival suitor to invoke forms of praise and passion with greater skill; or, alternatively, that he possessed more wealth and so was a better catch. The requirement of overt male control of courtship caused the Courant to explore techniques whereby the woman could manipulate the relationship without violating appearances. The letter of termination sent to Amyntor failed, in its preemptive finality, to preserve nominal male dominance and was therefore unacceptable.
A letter signed by Cornelius Easy in the issue of October 28, 1723 raised again the issue of the female role in a courtship and the techniques of indirect control which women were required to employ. The author presented himself with some pride as a young bachelor whose “present Circumstances will not admit of a married State,” and must, in consequence content himself “with the pleasant Society of the fair Sex, as far as I may be permitted within the Bounds of Civility.” The author then described the practice of “sitting up” far into the night in the parlour of the young lady’s home and the recourse available to a woman wishing to cut short such an extended visit. He told of an experience he had returning a lady to her house after a country outing in which the lady feigned illness in order to prevent an extended visit. When next they met, she confessed to him that her illness had been a stratagem. “This smart Answer put me at first into some confusion,” Cornelius related, “wondering how she should expect any such thing from me, which she knew to be so contrary to my Inclination.”

Cornelius Easy was defensive about his having been taken in by her dissimulation. He not only protested that the stratagem was unnecessary, but pointed out that if her cousin had not chanced to hand, he would have stayed with her out of concern for her health, so that her tactic would have produced the very thing she sought to avoid. Both Amyntor and Cornelius Easy were quick to claim that female stratagems were only apparently effective: the former had already decided to drop his affair and the latter never intend to stay late anyway. Rhetoric in both cases remained a male domain, female response was through gesture, returning a squeeze or feigning illness.

The spoken word was not the only domain in which young men had to demonstrate proficiency in the new courtship ritual. Love letters required that the techniques of sentimental excitation be exercised in written form. Here was a challenge to the literary skills of
any young man, especially those not "bred up for college." The Courant of March 23, 1724, carried an essay ostensibly to instruct, which parodied the inept efforts of rustic gallants to follow the models published in correspondence books. The introduction described the letters presented as "a perfect Pattern for all Lovers (especially desperate ones) in communicating their tender Regards to their cruel, unrelenting, and stony hearted Mistresses." The author admitted that "the Style of them indeed is plain, but yet it is excellently well suited to the Subject, and insensibly gains upon the Affections." The plainness of style referred to suggested that the letters would illustrate the comic effect of applying the traditional Puritan plain style to a genre in which the tropes of euphuism were a central feature. Ritual declarations of suffering and the despair of the disappointed lover became ridiculous when deprived of rhetorical ornament:

I am in love with your self Mam ever since you was at my hous. You seemd to suit me, and it hath proved much to my sorrow. I have sought many ways to destroy my self, but I have been prevented. I am almost crazed. I would sire you to send me whear yu can love or not, if you dont I shall dye if you dont.

There was a comic inversion of roles in the visit by the lady to the house of the gentleman which the letter described. The reference to suicide may have been a topical dig at Cotton Mather, who published a pamphlet based on an old sermon of his father's "for a Charitable Stop to Suicides" in 1724. Besides a lack of rhetorical sophistication, the let-

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511 Although elementary literacy was nearly universal, writing was a more specialized skill taught in grammar or writing schools. Literary composition remained the province of sons of the elite and those preparing for a ministerial career. Access to training in writing and composition was far more accessible to the sons of Boston tradesmen than to those living in country towns. Benjamin Franklin recalled in that "I was put to the grammar school at eight years of age, my father intending to devote me as the tithe of his sons to the service of the Church.... But my father, burdened with a numerous family, was unable, without inconvenience, to support the expense of a college education. Considering, moreover, as he said to one of his friends in my presence, the little encouragement that line of life afforded to those educated for it, he gave up his first intentions, took me from the grammar school, and sent me to a school for writing and arithmetic, kept by a then famous man, Mr. George Brownwell" (Franklin, Autobiography, 14).

512 A Call to the Tempted. A Sermon on the Horrid Crime of Self-Murder. Preached on a Remarkable Occasion, by the memorable Dr. Increase Mather. And now Published from
ter parodied the pretentious philosophical and aesthetic speculation considered appropriate subject matter for polite conversation:

I would have come to see you long ago, but I hae been plagued with my Catle. My cow went to bull, she will cave next November, then we shall have milk anouf, if you will be plesed to com and see me, you shall be welcom to such as you find.... I have a great many Creaters to mind; I have too oxen and one horse, ten sheep and six hins, one layes an eg with two yolkys, and my Cat dyed.

The reference to cow breeding would have been a gaffe of the first order in those towns where Mr. Hancock might be called "Mr. Han-high-flown-fowl."513 The paratactic style and pointless enumeration of animals were a deft mockery of bumpkins attempting to write in the courtly idiom. The letter's crass closing sentence, "I am worth abot a hundred Pound; with our work we shall live I hope, so I remain your lover," compounded the awkwardness of reference to sexuality with an over-obvious reference to an estate which was laughably small. As a model of expression to discover passion the letter was comically inept because its central topics, sex and money, were baldly presented instead of elaborately camouflaged.

A second letter was also organized on the comic principle of making obvious sexual desires and financial benefits that should have been disguised by florid figures of speech. The author assured his lady that "my dear buny, my mother love you, my mother is hasty, but you must not mind that, I have a new duble house to live in, I am a trew lover to you."

As a final play on the absurd spelling of both letters, a note in the following week's issue informed readers that "In the last Letter of our last Paper, for, My Mother is hasty, read, My Mother is nasty." The author of these letters was ridiculous because he presented himself as under his mother's control. A courtship subject to scrutiny by the parents of the

his Notes, for a Charitable Stop to Suicides, (Boston: B. Green for Samuel Gerrish, 1724, Evans, 2563).

513 See above on the euphemistic use of "high-flown-fowl" for "cock" and "rock" for "stone".

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man, while expected in the Puritan society of the previous century, could be seen in this parody to be a demeaning restriction on the independence of the young. Both letters scorned life in country towns, and mocked the pretensions of those who boasted of double houses and an income of £100 a year. Such circumstances, and the literary skills of the young yeomen who enjoyed them, traced the boundary of a frontier of scorn, a social status just beneath the minimum aspirations of the young, urban bourgeoisie to whom the satire was addressed.  

The Courant recognized the existence of an all-female network of communication; however, the paper consistently denigrated such ideologically feminine systems and characterized them as mere gossip. Gossip, oral communication between and about women, was centered on those topics which modestly banished from print. It was gossip which provided information on "how many Boys and Girls were got out of Season at such a Husking, after such a Wedding or such a Ball," Gossip was the medium for an oral history of the female world of childbirth, being able to "catalogue the Women at all the Groanings for twenty Years past, and commend or reprove them for their Carriage." The Courant welcomed women writers provided they wrote like men; however, a medium in which women could communicate as women to other women was subjected to mockery or condemned as socially destructive.

While the Courant was capable of entertaining the occasional complaints of an abused wife, the idea of a collective grievance or collaboration among women for defense against abuse crossed the line separating reasonable redress of wrong from illegitimate disruption of the social order. The Courant of January 8, 1726 carried an account of London trial which had something of the flavor of a "class action" suit. A Mrs. Aziere charged her

514 The first letter is signed B.F., the second J.F. suggesting that the pieces may be a playful self-parody by one or both of the Franklin brothers.

515 NEC, September 16, 1723.
husband with assault and battery but at the trial evidence was produced that he had not assaulted her and that she had "run him in Debt for Velvets, Damasks, and Gold Watches." The jury acquitted the husband and the case was dismissed as "being instigated and carried on by a Contribution of scolding Women."

One would like to think that Mr. Aziere's acquittal was due entirely to the prosecution's failure to prove the assault charge; however the reference to the counter-charge of extravagance and the participation of a contribution of scolding women suggested that other factors weighed in the minds of the spectators, if not the jury. Mr. Aziere's citation of his wife's expenditures on costly fabric and jewelry indicated that control of conspicuous consumption remained in male hands. However much some women may have enjoyed their role as a symbol of family wealth and status, the ultimate purpose of the display was the enhancement of her husband's standing, not his wife's pleasure. The contribution of scolding women, presumably testimony by female relatives or acquaintances to support the charge of assault, was apparently discounted by the jury. It would be interesting to know the details of their depositions, whether they contained only hearsay or if the court was protecting the domestic sovereignty of the husband. The role of a contribution of scolding women in Mr. Aziere's difficulties supported the Courant's editorial position that groups of women and female networks of communication not under male supervision represented a socially destructive force.

With much courtship and social entertainment home-based, female interests and female styles of conversation constituted a challenging dialect in which men had, perforce, to achieve at least functional proficiency. Philanthropos complained in the April 23, 1722 issue of the Courant about both the content and the form of female conversation, noting that conversation among women had "no other Reason than to make spiteful Observations on those who are present, and to revile and backbite those who are absent." Reacting to the new norms of modesty and the restriction on verbal expression which they imposed, Philanthropos claimed that women * have clog'd and manic'd Conversation with so many
Fantastick Quirks and Punctillio's, that unless a Man conform exactly to their senseless Formalities, he shall be presently be stigmatiz'd with the Names of Rustic and Clown."
What this male author longed for was a style of conversation in which "there are none Superior to others, but all stand on a level, whatever Distinctions are to observ'd at other Times."
The ideal of an egalitarian conversation in which "all stand on a level" espoused by Philanthropos had never been characteristic of face-to-face communication. In the hierarchichal society of his own time (and for generations previous) social status imposed formal constraints on conversations between those from different groups. Verbal distinctions in forms of address, the difference between Goodwife and Madam for example, were accompanied by a scheme of deferential gestures involving the curtsey, hat honor and the like, all designed to locate the participants in any conversation on their respective positions on the social scale. Snobbery in conversation was protested in the Courant of August 20, 1722 by a correspondent who observed that "Many there are who walk the Streets (mincing as they go) who, if their suppos'd Inferiors meet them will look on them with a Scornful leer or turn away their Face with the utmost Disdain." The egalitarian communication Philanthropos wished for was available in the newspapers, not the sitting room. It was the republic of letters, that new extension of the public sphere, which, as a function of anonymity, offered all participants equal status. Philanthropos wanted to extend this characteristic of the male world of print to the female world of polite conversation. He did not succeed.

An essay signed by Solomon Silent in the Courant of March 9, 1724 recorded the frustration of another man attempting to reform, or even understand, the rules of feminine conversation. The author informed his readers that he had been present when Tabitha Talkative came to see her neighbor, Dorothy Lovetattle, ostensibly to borrow a kitchen item but in reality to gossip. Solomon's male presence "hinder'd the communication of something which she seemed as full of as a Barrel without Vent," so he withdrew to the other end of the room and pretended to peruse Pilgrim's Progress while he listened to the two
women discuss the sexual escapades of mutual acquaintances, Simplicia and Clarinda. The author expressed his disapproval of the female conversation with the observation that he had "often observ'd the Ladies chuse rather to calumniate their own Sex than the other, especially if any Man happen to be in the Company." At this point Mrs. Lovetattle invited Mrs. Talkative to an adjoining closet for a sip of her husband's private stock of liquor. When the ladies returned, Solomon Silent chastised them for slandering the reputations of the two absent women. To his surprise, his arguments about equal treatment and fair play were not accepted. Mrs. Lovetattle somewhat impatiently initiated her critic into the rules of female conversation, explaining to him that "if they were Gentlefolks, yet they were not too good to be talk'd of, and that she esteemed herself as good as either of them." Solomon concluded that it was "their Quality rather than their Crimes had render'd them obnoxious to her Censures" and that the two women would have "escaped as well as their neighbours, had not Providence smiled upon them with respect to their worldly Circumstances."

Mrs. Lovetattle's conversation had a certain parallel with the stated purpose of the Courant in that both threatened to expose the misbehavior of particular persons. It was the differences between gossip and the newspaper upon which the author, although he did not make an explicit comparison, based his criticism. Female gossip did not shield the identity of the miscreants; indeed it delighted in the injury done their reputations by exposure. The purpose of the revelation was not reform but the destruction of reputation; Mrs. Lovetattle's statement "that she esteemed herself as good as either of them" was not motivated by a desire for inclusion in the higher status group of Simplicia and Clarinda but by a levelling through denigration. The rules of the conversation as the women explained them made this kind of communication between neighbors anti-deferential, that is, the social status of Simplicia and Clarinda, what the author characterized as "their Quality rather than their Crimes," made them a target of verbal attack. Solomon Silent's account of the nature of female gossip contrasted male concern with fairness and reputation with female delight in denigration of a social superior. The conclusion to be drawn was the necessity of segregat-
ing women from the public sphere because of the danger inherent in their unprovoked, uncontrollable verbal savagery.\textsuperscript{516}

The idea that women were less rational, more intellectually primitive creatures reinforced the distaste many Couranteers felt for communication predicated on social status.\textsuperscript{517} As a result, female communication was denigrated as gossip and associated with the pre-literate culture of the Indians. A correspondent observed in the issue of September 16, 1723 that “I hear the five Nations of the maquois write all their Histories on the Squaws Tongues, and that the Delegates of those Nations now in Town, have brought several of their Squaws with them, to be present for that End at all their Conferences with the General Assembly.” Oral history, a feminine genre in contrast to the masculine world of print, was to the Couranteers merely gossip writ large.

A letter from Stonington, Connecticut, printed in the December 11, 1721 issue carried a jocular reference to the topic of emasculation whose language reflected the complex associations between female discourse and male social control. The report told of a husband and father who had castrated himself, “which has occasion’d abundance of Waggish Talk among the looser Sort of the Female Tribe, who are so incensed against him, that some of them talk hotly of throwing Stones at him.” The drollery characterized as waggish suggested the author’s feeling that the topic was not a suitable one for ladies because the

\textsuperscript{516} “Habermas also proposes that a seeming equality arose among discoursing subjects who claimed the right to speak and judge in ‘the translucent space of the public sphere’ on the basis of universal reason, not social power, privilege or tradition. Thus, owing to the exercise of rational judgement and enlightened critique by private citizens, a universal public body with great political force was forged.” (Landes, \textit{Woman in the Public Sphere}, 42). Solomon Silent and Mrs. Lovetattle hold conflicting ideas about conversation; his organizing criterion is universal reason, hers is social power. The gender of the two opponents in this debate is far from coincidental.

word "wag," while capable of describing "Any one oddly mischievous," had as its root meaning "A mischievous boy (often a mother's term of endearment to a baby boy); in wider application, a youth, young man, a 'fellow', 'chap.'" The characterization of the women who were discussing the incident as loose further suggested that the subject was not appropriate for women. The use of the word "tribe," besides indicating the perceived gulf separating men from women, associated women's gossip with the oral history of Indian tribes as an artifact of primitive, pre-literate culture. Finally, the use of the word "stones," a vulgar synonym for testicles, gave the anecdote its punch line. It was in risqué jokes such as this that the gendering of discourse and concomitant conviction that matters of male sexuality were inappropriate for discussion by women can clearly be seen. The idea of a "Female Tribe" underlined the connection between female gossip networks and the oral history of Indian primitives.

At least one correspondent, however, could see the value of female communication as a corrective to the self-images of men produced in the male sphere of social discourse. In response to the derogatory association of gossip with Indians, a writer in the following week's issue pointed out that gossip had a beneficial levelling effect as "the Ground would

518 O.E.D. definition. The September 5, 1721, issue of the Courant contained a letter to James Franklin from "a most generous Clan of Honest Wags" urging him to drop the inoculation issue.

519 See the comment on the article in NEC, September 16, 1723 discussed above. The Indians' lack of written history played a part in the confusion over land titles so common in the colonial period. Jeremy Belknap, The History of New-Hampshire, The Sources of Science, No. 88, 2 vols., (New York and London: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1970), observed that some English land deeds were "executed with legal formality, and a valuable consideration was paid to the natives for the purchase; others were of obscure and uncertain original; but the memory of such transactions was soon lost, among a people who had no written records" (Belknap, History, vol. 1, 198).

520 See the discussion of the article in NEC, January 28, 1726, in which the author claimed "In some Country Villages she can make it appear that it is not in the Power of a Man to throw Stones, tho' he may by the unlucky Cast of a Rock, break his Neighbours Windows," discussed above.
be presently too good for you to walk upon, if you were not told, that your Fathers were Porters or Plough-joggers." Besides humbling the newly-arrogant, gossip, the author facetiously observed, also served as a consolation to those whose families had lost status, allowing "Men of Merit who are reduc’d to Poverty" to learn "that their Fathers were Men of good Estates, and could thank God that they never did a Days Work in their Lives." Behind the flippancy of the piece lay the clearly articulated idea of gossip as a female medium of communication, differing from the male medium of print in its preoccupation with the identity and status of persons discussed rather than the intrinsic veracity of the content.

Opposed to the savage communication of the female tribe which so troubled Philanthropos and Solomon Silent was the uncorrupted dialogue between man and woman believed to have been possible in a now-lost golden age. The Courant of July 9, 1722 carried a verse on this topic from a Rhode Island poet, who invoked an idyllic past when "No soft deluding Art was then in Use,/ No haughty Female, nor was Man profuse." The undistorted communication and elevated discourse possible between men and women in an arcadian setting was discussed in "A Letter to a young Lady retir’d into the Country," published in the Courant of June 4, 1726. The author of this formal literary piece extolled the advantages of an idyllic countryside over the "Pomp and Entertainment" of the town in which "we are soon stunn’d with Noise and Compliment." Country life, however, could offer only temporary relief from the city because "no sooner are we there, but we hanker after the Pleasures, Visit, and Conversation of Town."

The idea of retirement into the country, especially as an escape from an unhappy marriage or love affair, was at the center of a pastoral tradition which, in English literature, 

521 The pastoral tradition had been re-cast in Christian terms by Milton, whose description of the prelapsarian bliss of Adam and Eve placed the pastoral eclogue in a biblical setting. Fliegelman identifies the Miltonic ideal of the prelapsarian condition of "the first form’d pair" with what he characterizes as "perhaps the most important historical phenomenon in the eighteenth century: the ongoing rejection of the theory of innate and transmitted depravity. (Fliegelman, Pilgrims, 129).
dated back to Elizabethan times. In the early period of American settlement, the pastoral escape, retirement into the country, was impossible, not because the American landscape was inhospitable, but because the pastoral required a civilized, if not urban, setting from which to escape. The first three generations of English writers on American soil might describe a garden of Eden or a howling wilderness, but in neither case was the core of settlement sufficiently established to stand in apposition to the peripheral countryside.\textsuperscript{522} Although in 1726, the frontier still ran less than a hundred miles north and east of the Town House, the urban culture of Boston had advanced sufficiently for a precocious admirer of the pastorals of Alexander Pope to congratulate his fellow Bostonian on her temporary retirement to a country seat. Like the Rhode Island poet, the author of this epistle ascribed the problems arising from separate male and female modes of discourse as a product of modern civilization. The \textit{Courant} did not explain how this idea was to be reconciled with the characterization of female communication as primitive, like the oral history of the Indians.\textsuperscript{523}

James Franklin's journal, in its advocacy of Real Whig political theory and of marriage as an affectionate partnership, was far in the vanguard of eighteenth century New England culture.\textsuperscript{524} The importation of the latest cultural and intellectual trends, which


\textsuperscript{523} Some explanation of this apparent inconsistency might be derived from the historical mythology of the Real Whig political theorists. The Indians could be seen as living in that barbarous condition characteristic of humanity in the interval between the Fall and the establishment of the Covenant with Abraham — an ascription made by New England Puritans as well. The era of uncorrupted communication and pastoral equality, like the easy democracy of the Anglo-Saxon \textit{wittena-gemots}, could be located in a second mythic period before Norman feudalism and its attendant corruptions opened the way to the degradations of the modern age. Although Real Whig mythology hailed the Glorious Revolution of 1688 as a turning point at which political disorders were cured, no corresponding remedy could be cited in the field of communications.

\textsuperscript{524} Recent scholarship has focused on the importance of the dismantling of patriarchal authority in civil and domestic life in the formation of a republican ideology in the late eighteenth century. See Mary Beth Norton, Kerber, \textit{Women}, and "The Republican
was the paper's stock in trade, facilitated its ambition, which was a fuller participation of
the bourgeoisie in the political and social life of Boston. Because gendered styles of au-
thority in public life and of political rhetoric existed on an ideological continuum with do-
meric counterparts in family life, the discussion of male and female rhetorical styles and
the difficulty of communication between men and women in social conversation supported
and reinforced the arguments made by the Couranteers in their criticisms of the Governor's
Council and the ministerial elite.

Chapter Eight

Inoculation, the First Planters and Ministerial Authority

In May of 1722, as the Province of Massachusetts Bay was preparing for elections to the provincial assembly, the Courant offered its readers an editorial which contained some of the principal features of Real Whig political doctrine as understood by Old Charter politicians. "The great Design of God in the institution of Government among Men," the author of this essay grandly asserted, was (next to his own glory,) the Weal and happiness of those who are governed." It was the responsibility of rulers to effect this divine intention; in conducting their office however, rulers "must not arrogate to themselves an absolute uncontroloable Empire, which appertains to God alone." With these first principles clearly established, the Courant's writer had no qualm at falling back on a parietal conception of civil authorities, who, he claimed, "are the Fathers of their People." The conclusion to be drawn from this exposition of broad principles was that in the coming provincial elections the voters should "fix their Eyes on them who are fit to Rule and govern, and that they carefully avoid them who are not."

The idea of authority and its relationship to political affairs which the essay presented was an amalgam of ancient and novel ideas. The confident assertion that God's "great design" was human happiness and that civil power was not only inherently limited but justified by the degree to which its exercise furthered that design, presented in synoptic form the application of Real Whig ideas of limited government to the Enlightenment heuristic of felicity. The statement that rulers were fathers of their people, on the other hand, invoked immemorial patriarchy and the conception of political relationships in familial terms which synthesized emotional and abstract elements. How to harmonize a derivative and limited human authority with the a priori authority of God was a central issue in both civil
and ecclesiastical thinking as Massachusetts adjusted its institutions to the new circumstances of eighteenth-century imperial politics.

Cotton Mather, the principal spokesman for New England Congregationalism, had made his own painful adjustment to a new view of the world in which God was a remote designer and the distance between God and man bridged by acts of human piety rather than providential intervention. In 1702, Mather began the sixth book of his Magnalia Christi with the observation that "to regard the illustrious displays of that providence wherewith our Lord Christ governs the world, is a work, than which there is none more needful or useful for a Christian." By 1721, Mather's cosmology had acquired a more deistic cast. In his work The Christian Philosopher, Mather rhapsodized that "God has contrived a mighty Engine," and become an observer of its operation. "He is infinitely gratified with the View of this Engine in all its Motions," Mather declaimed, "infinitely grateful to Him so glorious a Spectacle!"

Mather and the society he led struggled to establish a new understanding of the nature of authority because political and philosophical developments in the last quarter of the seventeenth century seemed to render important axioms of the New England Way invalid. The Courant articulated an ideology formed from Real Whig political and social ideas which, although not diametrically opposed to the tradition which Mather defended, differed from it in a number of important respects. It was perhaps inevitable that the Courant and Mather should clash; the smallpox epidemic of 1721, in which Mather took a leading role as an advocate of inoculation against the disease, ensured that the newspaper and the minister would be adversaries from the first issue.


526 Quoted in Silverman, Life, 250-251.
Smallpox had visited Boston in five epidemics before the town's station-ship, H. M. S. Seahorse, arrived from the Dry Tortugas on April 22, 1721, carrying several blacks infected with the disease. 527 This time, however, Cotton Mather was prepared to fight the epidemic using the newly-discovered technique of inoculation. Mather, who had received medical training in his youth and remained keenly interested in scientific matters all his life, had heard of inoculation from a slave in his household and had recently read of experiments with the technique in Turkey in the proceedings of the Royal Society lent him by Dr. William Douglass, the town's only physician with a university medical degree. Four days after the arrival of the Seahorse Mather recorded the presence of smallpox in Boston and speculated on the number of lives which might be saved by inoculation. "I will procure a Consult of our Physicians," he declared, "and lay the matter before them." 528 Mather promptly implemented his plan and circulated a letter among the physicians in Boston asking that they "meet for a Consultation upon this Occasion, and to deliberate upon it, that whoever first begins this practise, (if you approve that it should be begun at all) may have the concurrence of his worthy Bretheren to fortify him in it." 529

Mather's request was made at a time when medical practitioners in Boston, under the leadership of Douglass, were attempting to organize a professional association. The June 19th issue of the News Letter reported the formation of a "College of Physicians," which "ordered Prosecutions against several Quack Doctors in Town, who practice Physick without License." The formation of a professional association for physicians was a product of the eighteenth century's increased concern with specialization and categoriza-

527 The legend of Captain Bonner's 1722 map of Boston (Evans, 2318) lists major outbreaks of smallpox in the years 1640, 1660, 1677-8, 1690, 1702, and 1721. Details of the 1721 epidemic are given in Blake.

528 Cotton Mather, Diary, 620.

529 Cotton Mather, A Vindication of the Ministers of Boston, from the Abuses & Scandals, Lately Cast upon Them, in Diverse Printed Papers (Boston, 1722) 8.
tion. In the colonies, where no formal medical schools existed and many ministers healed
the bodies as well as the souls of their congregations, Douglass' effort represented a sepa-
ration of religious and scientific expertise. Such specialization limited the authority of the
clergy to what the anti-inoculators insisted was "their proper Sphere," i.e. liturgical and
theological matters.530

Most physicians were opposed to the new practice because the inoculated patient,
although more likely to survive than one contracting the disease in the normal manner, was
highly contagious and could spread the infection to others.531 Opponents of inoculation
saw the procedure as experimental; it also raised an ethical question since the practice ap-
peared to increase the chances of survival of the patient by putting others at greater risk.
Only one Boston physician, Zabdiel Boylston, accepted Mather's proposal and, breaking
with his colleagues, inoculated his six year-old-son and two black slaves.532

Alarmed at what they perceived to be a serious public health risk, a number of the
town's practitioners appealed to the selectmen to halt the practice and a resolution to that ef-
fect was passed on July 21, 1721. At this point the town's political divisions began to play
a role and the question of inoculation attached to a number of other issues over which

530 John Williams, An Answer to a Late Pamphlet Intitled A Letter to a Friend in the
Country, (Boston, n.p., 1722): "Our town seems to be Chafed in their Minds against
some of the Ministers of the Gospel for their intermeddling with things which do not
belong to their Function: and do say, that there is not that Care taken to keep them in their
proper Sphere." (Williams, Answer, 7).

531 Even Douglass admitted that the disease was "better taken by inoculation than in the
natural way" (William Douglass to Cadwallader Colden, May 1, 1722, Massachusetts
Historical Society Collections, 4th ser., 32 (1854): vol. 2, 170. Inoculation at this time
was with smallpox itself, not as Jenner would later use, cowpox.

532 Zabdiel Boylston, An Historical Account of the Small-Pox Inoculated in New England,
upon All Sorts of Persons, Whites, Blacks, and of All Ages and Constitutions, (2d ed.,
opinion was divided along party lines. A number of political leaders, including Elisha Cooke and other leaders of the Boston caucus which controlled the town's municipal offices practiced medicine occasionally, and consequently the opponents of inoculation felt themselves qualified scientifically as well as empowered politically to decide the question.

On July 24, 1721, Douglass published an essay in the News Letter under the pseudonym "W. Philanthropos," in which he conceded that Mather had "a Pious & Charitable design of doing good," but expressed alarm that Boylston, whom he dismissed as "a certain cutter for the Stone," was "propagating the Infection in the most Publick Trading Place of the Town." Here perhaps, Cotton Mather might have more prudently let the matter lie, since he had failed to gain the support of the town's medical practitioners as he had intended in April. Prudence was not always conspicuous in Mather's thinking, particularly when he believed his authority as spiritual and intellectual leader — Puritan tradition made it easy to blur those categories — of Massachusetts Bay was challenged. Mather orchestrated a response to Douglass in the form of a letter published in the Boston Gazette on July 31, 1721, signed by Increase and Cotton Mather, Benjamin Colman, Thomas Prince, John Webb, and William Cooper, in which Douglass and his followers were characterized as ignorant.

Although it appears in hindsight that Cotton Mather made a tactical mistake in initiating debate on the merits of inoculation in the newspapers, the question must have ap-

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533 Political parties in the modern sense did not exist in Massachusetts in 1721; however, there was a clear dichotomy described by contemporaries in terms of court and country or New Charter and Old Charter factions. The term party was still one of opprobrium; but since it was hurled freely by commentators on both sides, it appears that the existence of organized factions was widely recognized.

534 Douglass' reference was to surgery for kidney stones. In British medical circles at this time the highest social status was accorded university trained physicians such as Douglass. Surgeons like Zabdiel Boylston occupied a middle rank and apothecaries such as John Williams occupied the lowest place.
peared quite different in July of 1721. Both the News Letter and the Gazette were published by postmasters with little interest in science or literature. Both papers pretended to quasi-official status and were consistently deferential to civil and ecclesiastical authority. Pressure may have been applied to the printer of the News Letter, the ageing John Campbell, to discontinue Douglass' attack on inoculation; little pressure would have been necessary for Campbell had no taste for controversy. As a forum, the newspaper seemed safely under Mather's control and not terribly different from the pamphlet, of which he had made frequent use for years. There had been pamphlet wars in the past, most recently over the still-vexing issue of provincial paper money, but these controversies had not called into question the authority of the clergy. Cultural changes, some long-maturing others quite recently arrived from the metropolis, had, in the summer of 1721, produced conditions in which a very different kind of newspaper could come into existence. On August 7, 1721, the first issue of the Courant appeared, its lead essay a continuation of Douglass' attack on Mather and the inoculators begun in the News Letter of July 24th.

The Courant's appearance on the scene in medias res of the smallpox crisis was prompted as much by questions of authority as of prophylaxis. Douglass continued his August 7th essay against inoculation with arguments that were political rather than scientific. He blamed the inoculators for going ahead "notwithstanding the general Aversion of the Town, and in Opposition to the Selectmen." He described Mather's faction as "Six

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535 As late as August 18, 1721, Mather recorded in his Diary, 387, "I may propose some agreeable Passages, to be inserted in the News-Letters, which may have a Notable Tendency to correct and restrain the Epidemical Follies of the Town."

536 Michael G. Hall in his Increase Mather, 1639-1723, (Middleton, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1988) 360 states that with the appearance of the Courant "A new era had begun in the history of print in English America." Perry Miller said of the inoculation debate "The conflict was a crisis within the culture, of which the ultimate effects were to be felt in other regions of the mind than those in which scientific verification mattered. What had been risked and what had not been regained was the covenant conception itself." (Miller, Mind, 363).
Gentlemen of Piety and Learning, profoundly ignorant of the Matter* and claimed that they advocated of inoculation "on the Merits of their Characters, and for no other reason."

Douglass defended the medical credentials of his faction with an attack on the Harvard-trained clergy that was to echo through the pages of the Courant throughout most of its publication. "Why," he asked, "should Gentlemen otherwise well qualified, be called illiterate, Ignorant &c. because they did not idle away four Years at Colledge, as some of our learned Men have Done?"

Douglass' argument developed three points that were the central themes in the Couranteers criticism of the exercise of authority in the province. First, he painted the inoculators as autocratic opponents of the popular will and democratic institutions because they ignored the opinion of the Selectmen. Second, and most serious, they asserted an authority "on the Merits of their Characters* and admitted of no appeal to any higher or extrinsic standard or vox praetoria. Third, they subjected their opponents to a belittling, personal attack based on credentialism. Douglass objected to authority that was derived a priori from hierarchical position, e.g. ordination as a minister, rather than consentaneously established on the basis of demonstrated competence. The assertion of character as a basis for credibility and the denigration of opponents which Douglass attributed to the ministerial party were characteristic of a personalized, patriarchal authority in which the question of competence was subsumed into the issue of social relationship. Like fathers before their sons, the ministers claimed an ontological privilege by reason of prior existence and viewed dissent from their opinion as a personal challenge rather than a theoretical discussion.

The difficulties confronting the Couranteers in the assertion of their criticisms of inoculation were formidable because the authority of their opponents was not easily attacked. The core of the problem for the Couranteers lay in the integrated nature of ministerial authority: the inoculators did not recognize a separation between the care of the body and the care of the soul; consequently, the legitimacy of their authority in medical matters was, from their point of view, connected to their legitimacy as interpreters of Scripture.
This is not to say that either side claimed scriptural authority for the practice of inoculation as prophylaxis, although both sides cited the Bible on the question of disease as providential and the morality of exposing oneself and others to its risks. It was precisely because Mather and his followers integrated medical and religious authority in the person of the minister that their opponents were disadvantaged in public debate. In consequence, the strategy of the Couranteers was to tease apart the strands of the controversy, attempting the separation of the medical from the spiritual, the evidential from the traditional, the logical from the affective.

In dealing with the evidential dimension of the inoculation debate, the Couranteers attempted to define the question by axiomatic principles of rational analysis and empirical data, which the physicians saw as their strongest point. Douglass was the only person in Boston with a university degree in medicine; backed by the testimony of outside experts like Dalhonde and citing evidence from various European sources, the Couranteers were able to make a reasoned case for the dangerous nature of inoculation.537 The Couranteers did not address this argument to their opponents, for to have done so would have been to recognize the legitimacy of the ministers' claim to judge such questions for New England. Instead, the doctors writing in the Courant appealed to the Selectmen of Boston as the civil authority empowered to regulate public health and, beyond them, to the voters. Such a tactic not only furthered their strategy of separating the religious from the scientific, it pitched the combat on politically favorable terrain as Cooke's caucus controlled the office of the Selectmen and was hostile to the ministerial elite allied with the Royal Council. Dr. Steward used a rational-political argument in the August 14, 1721 issue of the Courant when he presented information about the contagion in Aix en Provence and concluded that "altho' the

537 Dr. Lawrence Dalhonde testified before the Boston selectmen on July 21, 1721, about fatalities caused by inoculation in Italy, Spain, and Flanders. His testimony was instrumental in the decision of the selectmen to ban inoculation in Boston.
People of this Place who are for inoculating the Small Pox, may have no respect to the Safety of their Neighbours, yet I hope Self-love may induce them to have some for themselves."

The integrated nature of ministerial authority, its ability to combine religious sanction, patriarchal tradition, and academic certification, posed a formidable obstacle to opponents. To neutralize the psychological effects of the minister’s authority the Couranteers employed satire. The ministerial tradition exercised its authority through non-syllogistic associations between the Bible and the psychology of patriarchy, fused in the person of the minister; satire permitted countervailing associations to be established between the idea of inoculation and figures of discredit. Douglass employed a satirical approach in the August 14, 1721, issue by proposing the formation of a corps of inoculators to reduce the Eastern Indians "armed with Incision-Lancet, Pandora’s-Box, Nut-Shell and Fillet, and led into battle by "our Inoculator General’s good Friend and intimate Acquaintance, Capt. General Timonius."

The piece made the obvious argument that inoculation was so dangerous a practice as to serve as a weapon of war; at the same time, the satire associated inoculation with the Indians, figures of primitiveness and superstition. Douglass also referred to Timonius, whose account of inoculation in Turkey was the subject of a Royal Society paper which Douglass had lent Mather. Placing inoculation among the Indians and the Turks served not only to make the practice seem foreign, it associated the proponents of inoculation with heathen credulity.

Underpinning the rather limited factual discussion — in which the advocates emphasized the benefits to the inoculated patient while opponents stressed the risk of spreading the disease — of the merits of inoculation lay a larger debate in which the ministerial faction attempted to present the medical question in a moral context in order to invoke powerful emotional habits of religious obedience, while opponents attempted to associate inoculation with superstition and barbarism. This larger debate involved drawing boundaries for
the role of religion in political and intellectual life. The very idea that such boundaries could exist suggested that the New England Way was no longer central to the belief system of the educated elite. That the limits of religious discourse might be set by physicians writing in the newspapers was a threat to the role of the clergy as pastors in the province's intellectual life.

Ministers in favor of inoculation published a number of pamphlets to prove that the practice was morally lawful and that opposition to the practice could not be made on the basis of conscience. Popular opinion remained hostile to inoculation and objection continued to be expressed in moral terms, defining the issue of inoculation as a conflict between individual conscience and the authority of the minister. When the Boston Gazette published a testimonial by four inoculated patients, the Courant described their statement as "a partial Representation of the matter, tho' under a Cloak of Piety and Devotion, concluding with a Quack Recommendation of the Operator." Turning to the clergy behind the testimonial, the Courant's writer criticized the clergy for questioning the sincerity of those who refused inoculation on moral grounds. "This in plain English (pardon the Indecency of the Expression)," he fumed, "is calling the Town Lawyer." Thus although the ministers may have been correct that most citizens were motivated by fear of catching the disease rather than religious conviction, they found themselves accused of questioning liberty of conscience over an issue in which religious freedom and the traditional rights of Englishmen had become intertwined.

On August 28, 1721, the Reverend Henry Harris, associate rector of King's Chapel, attempted to impose the separation of religious and political issues central to the strategy of the Couranteers. Writing as an impartial outsider and explicitly placating the Mather faction, whom he described as "Men of Piety and Learning, Men whom I sincerely believe to be highly valuable and great for both," Harris prefaced his review of the inoculation controversy by saying that he had not been present at the stormy meetings of the selectmen at which the inoculation issue had been voted, but accepted their decision as "the
properest Judges.” He characterized the refusal of the Mather-Boylston faction to accede to the decision of the selectmen as “a culpable Transgression of the charge given by the Ephors, and disputing the Opinion of the Judges.”

Harris’ reference to the ephors, a council of five magistrates with the power of review over the decisions of the kings of Sparta, would have been significant to readers of the Courant conversant with Real Whig political theory. James Harrington and the Commonwealthmen had followed Calvin’s understanding of the ephori as “popular officers ordained to moderate the licentiousness of kings,” and quoted Isocrates on the importance of the ephori in maintaining popular support for the government of the Lacedaemonians.\textsuperscript{538}

By invoking the ephors and the judges of Israel, Harris accused the inoculators of violating the delicate balance between minister and magistrate which lay at the heart of the New England Way. It is indicative of the complex relationship between civil and ecclesiastical authority in Boston during the 1720s that an Anglican clergyman should write in support of the selectmen of the Old Charter Party.

In the same issue in which Harris defended the Boston ephori, James Franklin published his poem “On the Distress of the Town of Boston, occasioned by the Small Pox,” in which praise for the selectmen was linked to a religious interpretation of the epidemic:

\begin{quote}
Long had the Rulers prudent Care  
(Which Heaven kind vouchsaf’d to bless)  
From quick Infection kept the Air,  
And sav’d the Town from deep Distress.
\end{quote}

Saints are secure of Life above,
And only mourn the Sinners Doom:
They know their Saviour’s dying Love
Will save them here, or call them home.

Providentialism was the ultimate bastion of traditional authority in religion. The belief in a personal God not only observing but intervening in human affairs in ways detectable to ordinary human beings formed a transcendental nexus between Biblical revelation and New England affairs. Among older traditionalists, the providential world view was not only still alive but respectable in Boston in the 1720s. Samuel Sewall noted that God’s punishment was prompt for a minister who abandoned the Congregationalism for the Anglican Church: “Mr. Dudley Bradstreet quickly after he had received Orders, dy’d of the small Pocks.” 539 The providential view welded past and present, secular and religious, personal and social in the incandescent reality of divine will. Modern conceptions of authority, based upon separation of reason and emotion could not share mental space with a providential interpretation of human affairs. Here was a rock upon which the stream of New England culture must divide. 540

539 Sewall, Diary, 2, 765, quoted by David D. Hall in “The Mental World of Samuel Sewall,” in Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgement: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989) 222. Hall says of Sewall that “His understanding of the world was magical in presuming that the forces flowing through it were not bound by ordinary rules of cause and effect.” (Hall, “Mental World”, 238).

540 “one of the crucial factors in the development of autonomy and inclusion has been the rationalization of traditional authority, the separation of emotional from abstract factors, and the reorganization of each in more functionally specific roles and institutions. Without this kind of separation and emotional withdrawal it would have been impossible to express the behavioral mandates typically associated with the demands for autonomy — rationality, competitiveness, and emotional constraint. The withdrawal of emotional content arising from and directed toward objects permits the abstract manipulation of these objects.” (Weinstein and Platt, 13).
Providentialism was inseparable from chiliastic because divine intervention in human affairs was teleological: its purpose was to drive human affairs along a predestined course to final judgment. A chiliastic tendency had been characteristic of Puritan religious thinking from the beginning. After the crisis which struck New England with the Andros Rebellion, emphasis on the approaching end grew rather than diminished in the writings of both Increase and Cotton Mather. Among the many similarities between Puritan tradition and the Enlightenment, the belief that history was in its final days stood out as fundamental point of difference.

In an age when few who no longer believed in an intervening providence denied the existence of God or the truth of the Bible, those who interpreted contemporary experience without reference to providence had to do so in a manner that cast no asperion on Christianity itself. In the eighth issue of Courant Nathaniel Gardner raised the topic of chiliasm and argued that it was presumptuous to attempt to foresee the end of the World. He cited as his example a recent prophesy from the city of Genoa that "the General Judgement of the Quick and Dead shall be in 1727" and a number of earlier cases of "Men, who because they would fain be thought wiser than Christ our Saviour, have ventured to mark out the exact Time of his coming to Judgement, whose Error Time has long since confuted.... These Examples (among many others)," he argued, "are enough to check Presumptuous Men in their Aspirations to be wise above that which is written."

541 In the last twenty years of his life, Increase Mather became "openly antirational, obsessed by death and profoundly alienated from the preoccupations of ordinary life... Unlike Cotton, I.M. believed His return was imminent but unlike C.M. he never tied his hopes to a particular date but by 1710 he was saying that the conversion of Israel and the last things had begun." Robert Middlekauff, The Mathers: Three Generations of Puritan Intellectuals 1596-1728 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971). Cotton Mather defended the chiliastic tradition in his Magnalia, observing "It is well known, that in the earliest of the primitive times, the faithful did in literal sense, believe the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the rising and reigning of the saints with him, a thousand years before the rest of the dead live again; a doctrine which however some of late years have counted it heretical; yet, in the days of Iramaus, was questioned by none but such as were counted hereticks." (Mather, Magnalia, vol. 1, Book III, pp. 300-301).
Gardiner’s argument against chiliasm was based on techniques characteristic of efforts in the Courant to limit and circumscribe the power of traditional, religious authority. He accepted divine authority while creating as wide a gap as possible between that authority and his own immediate concerns. At the same time that God was distanced from man, the divine nature was separated from human experience and converted into a principle. The dividing line between those who knew the future and those who did not was moved far off. Instead of falling between chiliastic prophets and the rest of mankind, the boundary separated God the Father from the rest of creation. The exclusion of the Son, considered in his humanity, from the all-knowing Father separated the attributes of suffering, compassion and emotion, identified with Jesus from the ordaining cognition of an infinitely remote Father. The containment and isolation of the emotional attributes of Christ from the more abstract functions of God was an attempt to sever the connection between Boston’s ministers and divine omnipotence. The religious tendency of some Real Whig thinkers in the direction of Deism, Socinianism, and Unitarianism (of which the Courant’s essay was an example), attempted to prevent the human passion of Jesus from conferring a share in the unlimited power of God upon the modern-day clergy.542

Although the Courant’s discussion of chiliasm was focused on the safely distant predictions of two prophets in Genoa, the issue of providential intervention in human affairs had an immediate object in the question of whether the Boston smallpox epidemic of 1721 was a punishment from God. The New England jeremiad leaned heavily upon the interpretation of war, famine, and disease as divine chastisements for breaking the covenant. Such reasoning had a majestic power a priori: to someone who already believed in God’s

542 The Courant’s posture vis à vis political authority paralleled its strategy against chiliasm, with the figure of the king substituted for God. The king’s supreme authority was accepted as an abstract principle; however, traditional rituals and symbols connecting royal authority with proximate authority (the governor) were ignored. The Courant claimed that it was the true follower of the king, and that the governor and his council were falsely arrogating to themselves powers that belonged to the throne alone.
covenant with the New England churches, calamities interpreted as divine retribution provided comfort, guidance, and reassurance. Used a posteriori, that is reasoning from the occurrence of Indian attack or a smallpox epidemic that the covenant was broken — or that a covenant existed — was more problematical.

Samuel Willard found himself somewhat unexpectedly arguing the other side of the question of providentialism when the leader of the Charlestown Anabaptists cited his sect's preservation in the smallpox epidemic of 1680 as proof of God's favor. Willard's first instinct was to quibble with the statistics but, recognizing that no decisive victory lay in that direction, he questioned the appropriateness of a providential interpretation of the preservation of the Anabaptists with the observation "who knows; but God might spare them in judgement, to harden them? These things are too high for us."543

The inoculation controversy which sprang up with the smallpox epidemic of 1721 found Cotton Mather and the ministers who joined him awkwardly positioned on the question of the providential significance of the disease. The Couranteers, whose objection to inoculation was on medical grounds, could bolster their position by describing inoculation as a presumptuous meddling in providential affairs. Mather, in advocating the new practice, was forced to defend the trickier position that such intervention was not inconsistent with the will of God. In the Courant of October 6, 1721, Gardner launched a full-scale attack on the inoculators Zabdiel Boylston, Cotton Mather, and their wealthy allies, the Dudleys. Gardner first seized the high ground of biblical authority by establishing that epidemic pestilence was the preeminent form of divine chastisement and so described in I Chronicles: 21:12.

Gardner turned the traditional interpretation of pestilence as a sign of God's displeasure at those who persecute his people against the ministers. He described the plagues

543 Samuel Willard, Tutor, 24.
that had fallen on Catholic persecutors of Protestants and warned that New Englanders were liable to divine retribution because of “the too general Contempt of the Glorious Gospel; and the irregular Conduct of too many who make the loftiest Profession of it.” Coming from a currier, Gardner’s arrogation of the jeremiad for a castigation of Boston’s ministers was unprecedented effrontery. The chief Couranteer went further, extending his indictment to Mather’s agents and supporters, whom he characterized as “Empericks and Mountebanks.... Let them who are rich in this World remember,” he warned, “that now God eminently calls for their Bounty and Liberality to the indigent and necessitous.”

Gardner concluded his daring attack by summoning his readers to accept the smallpox epidemic as a providential castigation, “And to sum up all, Let us give Glory to God, by acknowledging, that he is righteous in all that he has brought upon us.” The boldness of this attack on the ministry and the wealthy, i.e. on religious and secular authorities, was matched by the skill with which the author turned his opponents’ weapons against them. Characteristic of the Courant’s strategy was the way in which the essay deferred piously to the supreme authority of the Bible while distinguishing between it and the proximate authority of the ministers. The anonymity of the newspaper and the authority conferred by print allowed a Boston leather-dresser to turn the jeremiad against the leading minister of New England.

Gardiner’s essay of October 6, 1721, was based on a traditional Puritan conception of divine authority and made the argument that it was the town’s physicians, rather than the inoculators, who were submissively aligned to God’s will. The psychological dynamic of a traditional imaging of authority can be seen in a poem written about the onset of the epidemic in May but published in the Courant of November 27, 1721, when the disease had peaked:

Now on the Town and Angel flaming stands
Grasping tremendous Woes in his right Hand,
And in his left, a black and awful List

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Of all our Crimes. And shall we dare persist
In hostile Deeds, t’incense an Angry God,
And stand the Blows of his revenging Rod?
Stand clear ye fearless Sons of Vice, whose Breasts
With more than bruitish folly are possest,
T’engage Omnipotence! — His kindled Darts
Will chase, and reach, and pierce your flinty Hearts.
See! Now th’ infectious Clouds begin to rise
With sickly Gloom, to vail the healthful Skies;
The thunder soars, the Lightning flashes in our Eyes.
Then let him fight that will, my Soul shall fly
For speedy Shelter from the Storm so nigh:
I’ll hide me in Love’s Chamber, till his Rage
Is overblown, and Mercy mount the Stage.
Then of his sparing Grace I’ll gladly sing;
My rescu’d Life to him a thankful Tribute bring.

The organizing structure of the poem depended upon integration of nurturing and punitive functions. The dominating, aggressive, revenging God whose piercing darts and flashing lightening overawed the sons of vice was undifferentiated from the protective, rescuing chamber of love in which the poet intended safely to outwait the paternal wrath. The poet’s emotional gratitude at being spared the effects of the divine anger was heightened by the spectacle of a rebellious son chastised for daring to struggle against parental omnipotence. The commingled legal judgment of the awful list and emotional power of an angry and revenging God contributed to a depiction of authority in parental terms with the corre-
sponding infantilization of the poet. The poem captured in a concise fashion the integrated emotional and abstract attributes of providential deity.\textsuperscript{544}

To resist the coercive power of the oedipal archetype, the \textit{Courant} attempted to cut the connective associations between the components of the parental image and deny the figure its synthetic power. In describing authority the \textit{Courant} separated maternal from paternal functions, separated abstract from affective states, and separated biblical truth from current events. The poem consigned to its terrifying vision the status of a child’s nightmare as a way of desensitizing the reader to the image of an angry God of unlimited, vengeful authority.

The \textit{Courant}’s attempts to desensitize readers to the fear of God the Father struck Mather as the atheism of a Hell-Fire club. The similarity of psychology was there, but Mather oversimplified the issue by ignoring important differences between the eighteenth-century Christian belief of Nathaniel Gardner and the cynicism of Mayfair rakeshells.\textsuperscript{545} The forces of evil, witches and Satan, could be dissected and trivialized as a safer way of weakening the emotional power of religious images. A shift of tone from the moral and cosmic to the mundane and trivial facilitated a shift of mood from fear to humor and changed the viewpoint from awestruck to ironic. Illustrative of the desensitizing tactics of the \textit{Courant} was the story, printed in the issue of February 8, 1725, of a man in Plymouth

\textsuperscript{544} Lewis observes that “republican theorists endeavored to show how, in a post-patriarchal world, citizens could govern themselves, how they could form a society bound by love rather than fear.” (Lewis, "Republican Wife", 695.).

\textsuperscript{545} The \textit{Courant} of February 12, 1722, carried a lengthy account of London Hell-Fire Clubs in which members assumed the name of God and of the saints and practiced satanic parodies of religious rituals. Such attempts to deauthorize traditional religious patriarchy, although carried on in the tones of 18th century cynicism, really belonged to the ancient tradition of saturnalia, which attempted a temporary reversal of polarity in the flow of authority but did not in any way change its fundamental nature. The structural disassembly of integral authority in the \textit{Courant} had nothing in common with traditional saturnalia, especially not with its decadent, later forms. The indignant denial by the Couranteers of Mather’s accusations was quite legitimate.

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who, "in a Frolick," dared the Devil to come down the chimney. Shortly thereafter a pudding his wife was preparing over the fire mysteriously turned black, "which she attributed to the Devil's descending the chimney and getting into the Pot. ... Great Numbers of People have been to view the Pudding," the Courant reported, "most of them agree, that the sudden Change must be produc'd by a Preternatural Power. But some good Housewives of a Chymical Turn assign a Natural Cause for it."

The trivialization of the subject matter, pudding rather than pestilence, allowed the issue of diabolic intervention to be considered without invoking primal terror. Less obvious, but perhaps more important, was the autonomous character of human agency. The man, not the Devil took the initiative and his Satanic Majesty came because he was summoned. The ascription of active human agency was a major factor in reducing the supernatural intervention to the status of dream or fantasy and the entire episode was surrounded with a haze of alcoholic fuddlement. The citation of popular consensus about the changed pudding had the effect, in this comic context, of unhinging the force of traditional belief by showing it to be clearly mistaken. The passing reference to natural causes created irony as the reader was allowed to agree with the housewives of a "chymical Turn" while the narrator adhered to the opinion of the uninformed majority. The empowerment of the reader affected by this irony was the dynamic of the desensitization process of the piece. Finally, the "moral" of the story was reformist and psychological rather than religious and his Satanic Majesty was reduced to the status of a comic victim. The story of the blackened pudding achieved its desensitizing goal through an ironical restructuring of the elements found in traditional providential anecdotes in order to make the narrative a parable of human autonomy in which the supernatural was confined to the psychological sphere and empowered only by superstition. The efficacy of such exorcism through rhetoric upon primal conceptions of transcendent evil (Satan and witches) was dramatic; its indirect effects were equally profound. The vision of God as sweetness and rapture so effectively invoked by Jonathan
Edwards achieved popular currency in the room vacated by images of terror and revenge.\footnote{546} 

Opposition to inoculation was based on fear that the practice would spread infection; however, the medical objections of Douglass and his circle were politically compatible with popular opposition based on belief in pestilence as divine chastisement. Since the selectmen had made the popular decision to quarantine the inoculated with the concurrence of medical experts, anti-inoculators were able to recast the controversy in terms of a popularly elected government versus a self-perpetuating oligarchy of Harvard-trained ministers.\footnote{547} The willingness of the Courant to accommodate both technical and religious arguments despite certain inconsistencies of premise between the two was characteristic of political party rather than scientific investigation. The charge of hypocrisy which the Mather faction hurled at its opponents was prompted by knowledge that neither Douglass nor Franklin believed in providentialism as an historical force; what the ministers could not understand as anything other than lying was the coalition building of eighteenth-century politics and the role of the newspapers in establishing a new political mentality.\footnote{548}

\footnote{546} Perry Miller observes of witchcraft that "Only in 1721 does it begin to be that blot on New England's fame which has been enlarged, as much by friends as by foes, into its greatest disgrace. ... the very word witchcraft almost vanishes from public discourse." (Miller, Mind, 191).

\footnote{547} One of the final items in the inoculation debate was a news story in the Courant of May 21, 1722, which reported that the Selectmen had ordered Boylston to do no more inoculating in Boston without their order and consent, to which he agreed. The six persons inoculated Friday and Saturday the 11th and 12th of May "were by Order of said Select-Men and Warrant from Two Justices of the Peace, immediately sent down to the Hospital on Spectacle-Island," i.e. quarantined.

\footnote{548} Mather had followed a rather pragmatic political strategy in his alliance with the once-despised Dudleys since the beginning of the Shute administration, but tended not to judge his own behavior by the standard he used for that of his opponents.
The Courant of November 14, 1721, appeared as deaths from the disease passed the peak month of October and were beginning to decline. Figure 17 shows the smallpox mortality rate for the year 1721:

![Graph of Small Pox Mortality in Boston, 1721]

Source: The New-England Courant, February 26, 1722

In the November 14th issue an essay by Nathaniel Gardner made a particularly telling thrust when it claimed that "the crying Abominations that are found in the midst of us" for which the epidemic was a punishment included "the too general Contempt of the Glorious Gospel; and the irregular Conduct of too many who make the loftiest Profession of it." Here was providentialism turned against the author of the Magnalia Christi!

In the same issue John Eyre, writing under the name of Peter Hakins, attacked Mather's article in the previous week's Gazette which had declared inoculation a safe practice and accused opponents of the procedure of dishonesty. Eyre returned Mather's charges, insinuating that the pastor of Old North was guilty of "Equivocations, mental Reservations, and Jesuitical Evasions," and quoting Dr. Gumble's Monk's Life:
a Clergyman while he keeps within the Sphere of his Duty to God and his People, is an Angel of Heaven; but when he shall degenerate from his own Calling, and fall into the Intrigues of State and Time-Serving he becomes a Devil; and from a Star in the Firmament of Heaven, he becomes a sooty Coal in the blackest hell, and receiveth the greatest Damnation.549

With debate degenerating into invective, it was expedient for the Couranteers to employ humour to attack Mather’s language. In the issue of November 20, 1721, Gardner offered a parody encomium of inoculation in the florid declamatory style of the town’s most famous preacher. Attacks on style are often more painful for a writer to endure than criticism of substance and this was particularly true of Mather, who was both vain and insecure about his reputation as an author. The Couranteers reopened the wound made by John Oldmixon, who had faulted Mather’s Magnalia for confused form and faulty expression.550 Mather’s style was formed in an earlier era and was not well adapted to journalism. Unable to grasp the requirements of an anonymous audience in a world of print, his letters in the newspapers drew heavily upon pulpit techniques. The dramatic repetition (“Hundreds of Lives are lost, I say, Lost!”) of the sermon had a quite different effect when used in an essay and exhortation which roused a congregation (“O! Our Brethren in the Country, Be advis’d!”) merely threatened readers seeking the soothing urbanity of Mr. Spectator. The enormous authority which Cotton Mather exercised as New England’s foremost minister translated very poorly to the pages of the weekly press, a circumstance exacerbated by his inability to find a suitable style in the new medium. The Couranteers, the best journalists in the colonies, were quick to sense this weakness and skilled in their exploitation of it.

549 NEC, November 6, 1721.

550 John Oldmixon, The British Empire in America (London, 1708), “No other work of history ever published, ... is so confus’d in the Form, so trivial in the Matter, and so faulty in the Expression, so cramm’d with Puns, Anagrams, Acrosticks, Miracles and Prodigies, that it rather resembles School Boys Exercises Forty Years ago, and Romish legends, than the Collections of an Historian bred up in a Protestant Academy.” Quoted in Silverman, Life, 222.
Cotton Mather was not the only minister whose style was parodied by the Couranteers during the inoculation debate. The venerable Increase Mather published a broadside folio of theses on November 20, 1721, entitled *Several Reasons Proving That Inoculating or Transplanting the Small Pox, is a Lawful Practice and That It Has Been Blessed by God for the Saving of Many a Life*. In the issue of November 27, 1721, the Courant published "an Answer to a late Piece in Favour of Inoculation" which burlesqued Increase's ponderous, academic style and claimed to be "plain and familiar to the meanest Capacity, but withal, so strong as to convince all Gainsayers, but such as want a Purge of Hellbore." Two of the seven theses adduced reminded readers that inoculation was an African practice and mocked the solemnity with which the approbation of the Mathers was invoked in ministerial circles.

The Couranteers' parody of the style of Increase Mather's broadside, like their parody of the style of Cotton Mather's writing on inoculation, was an attack upon the "author" as "authority." It was a desacralizing of the text through a repudiation of its style. The rhetorical tropes of the pulpit did not invoke deference in the world of printed text; scholastic debate of theses did not persuade the newspaper reader. The invalidity of the rhetoric of Increase and Cotton Mather in the medium of the newspaper carried implications that went beyond the issue of smallpox inoculation. The traditional authority of these ministers failed to translate into a public sphere expanded and transformed by the appearance of newspapers.

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551 *Boston: S. Kneeland for J. Edwards, 1721, Evans, 2258*. This work was reprinted in 1726, *Evans, 2781*.

552 Cotton Mather's nephew, Thomas Walter, had described his own 1721 work *The Grounds and Rules of Music Explained* as "fitted to the meanest Capacities." In 1706, Mather's congregation had given him a slave named Onesimus from whom he learned of inoculation in African folk medicine.

553 The philological connection between the Latin *auctor* and *auctoritas* informed Mather's view of the role of the press in New England society. By opening the press to "leather-apron men," James Franklin diluted the strength of authority.
pers. The public prints henceforth would remain under the rubric of secular, Enlightenment values, a sanctuary where patriarchal authority might persuade but could not command.

Cotton Mather well understood the power of the press and sensed, if he could not entirely comprehend, that the new journalism of the Courant threatened to sever the bond between clergy and people. The rage which overtook Cotton Mather following the Courant's satire of his father's Several Reasons can be explained in part as a reaction to the Couranteers' violation of filial piety by a man who carried the burden of that virtue all his life, and in part by his impotence in the face of newspaper attacks whose rhetoric he could not master. The biblical injunction upon which Mather based his impromptu jeremiad on a Boston street, Deuteronomy 33:11, carried overtones of castration.

The boundary between newspaper and pamphlet was, in 1721, still quite fine; yet the newspaper differed from the pamphlet in the latter's homogeneity of tone. A pamphlet dealt with a single subject from a single point of view. The mood and tone of the work were unitary and controlled by the author. The newspaper, on the other hand, offered a variety of authors and subjects in every issue. Its content ranged from religion to commercial news and its tone from solemn to humorous. Unlike the author of a pamphlet or sermon, the journalist had to be able to take his place in a chorus of voices. The need to fit with the contributions of other writers meant that each contributor was, in a sense, under the authority of an editor (personified by the Couranteers as Monsieur Corrant). Since the limits

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554 David D. Hall has suggested that for the historian of ideas "Another task is to locate the breakdown of 'traditional' literary culture, a process that may well have been underway in Mather's time, and that was certainly occurring in the eighteenth century as upper-class groups began to detach themselves from popular culture." "The World of Print and the Collective Mentality in Seventeenth-Century New England" in John Higham and Paul K. Conkin, eds. New Directions in American Intellectual History. (the John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 1979) 177. The inoculation debate in the New-England Courant stands as an important milestone in the transformation of that traditional literary culture which had united minister and congregation.

555 Mather recorded in his Diary, vol. 2, 663, on November 27, 1721, that "the wicked Printer, and his Accomplices must be given another warning for this mockery."
of an individual piece were not the limits of the issue in which it appeared, journalistic style favored the muted expression of anger, indignation, or piety; above all, the new style required those emotional flavors characteristic of the new century: politeness, sweetness, and irony. It was Mather’s inability to modulate his style, at least as much as the nature of his beliefs, that prevented his adapting to the new medium.556

John Williams was a Boston tobacconist whose new-found authority was a product of the world of print. Williams wrote two pamphlets against inoculation which Franklin printed then advertised and excerpted in the Courant.557 That Williams could publicly challenge the great Cotton Mather illustrated the way the press was redefining authority, an issue Williams addressed in a preface “To the Worthy Select Men of the Town of Boston:”

Say not who hath written, but consider what is written, and I pray to God to give you Understanding. Say not that he is a Mechanick, and an illiterate Man; for there is good Mettal sometimes under a mean Soil; and if so, I hope for the more Favour from you in reading this my indigested Paper.558

Williams’ sense of the power which publication could give to the views of a shopkeeper was part of his larger understanding of the social and economic divisions within Boston which were defining the boundaries of political allegiance. He felt himself to be a spokesman for his peers, asking his readers at one point, “But, now Gentlemen, why do I

556 “The later stages of the debate are crude: yet the fact that antiministerial sentiment, mobilized against inoculation, persisted by shifting the point of attack to language marks an epoch in the training of the mentality.” (Miller, Mind, 361).

557 Little is known about John Williams. In his Answer to a Late Pamphlet he refers to “a young Scholar I knew in England,” (Williams, Answer, 8) and it is possible that as a recent immigrant he was a Church of England man who was introduced to Franklin and the Couranteers by Henry Harris, Assistant Rector of King’s Chapel and a member of the group.

558 John Williams, Several Arguments Proving that Inoculating the Small Pox is not Contained in the Law of Physick either Natural or Divine, and therefore Unlawful, Together with A REPLY to two short Pieces, one by the Rev. Dr. Increase Mather, and another by an Anonymous Author, Intitled Sentiments on the Small Pox Inoculated, AND ALSO A Short Answer to a Late Letter in the New-England Courant, (Boston: James Franklin, 1721) i.
sit here, burning of Candle, while my Neighbours are in bed and sleep, knowing that Sleep is sweet to the labouring Men."\(^{559}\) Like Nathaniel Gardner, John Williams was a member of that "silent democracy" which in the Courant suddenly found its voice.

The central point which Williams made in the inoculation debate was that the ministers were destroying their own authority by supporting political factions and interfering in issues that were not religious.\(^{560}\) Williams, like the other Couranteers, assumed that inoculation was a scientific and political issue in which theology had no part to play. He warned the ministers that by thrusting themselves into a public question where their warrant did not run, they weakened respect for religion and injured their own cause by "bringing the first Venders and Abettors, and Promoters of Inoculation, which every Body knows were certain Ministers of this Town into Contempt."\(^{561}\)

The hostility Williams expressed towards the Boston ministers for their support of inoculation was attached to the argument that the clergy had become aligned with the New Charter Party over the issue of bills of credit and were employing their religious authority in defense of economic self-interest. As a defender of the petite bourgeoisie of Boston against the ministers and the New Charter Party, Williams was aware that the new authority given to popular spokesmen by the Courant would be resisted by the ruling elite. He charged that the ministers wished to control the press for political rather than spiritual rea-

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\(^{559}\) John Williams, An ANSWER to a Late PAMPHLET INTITLED A LETTER to a Friend in the Country, attempting a Solution of the Scruples and Objections of a Conscientious or Religious nature, commonly made against the new Way of receiving the Small Pox, By a Minister of Boston, Together with A Short History of the late Divisions among us in Affairs of State, and some Account of the first Cause of them, (Boston: J. Franklin, 1722, Evans, 2407) 21.

\(^{560}\) Franklin himself was to employ this argument in the February 12, 1722 issue when, defending himself against a recent pamphlet vindicating the ministers, he remarked "Tis a sure Presage of Theism: For let men once be condemn'd as irreleigious, for opposing only the Humours of those who profess Religion, they will naturally be tempted to say, That Religion is nothing but Humour."

\(^{561}\) Williams, An ANSWER, 4-6.
sons and claimed that the alliance of the Mathers with the Dudley faction was driving a wedge between the clergy and the people.

Williams spoke for many small shopkeepers and artisans in Boston who saw the inoculation issue in the context of growing tension between the Royal Council and the Lower House in which the town’s ministers, by siding with the elite, were politicizing religion and promoting popular disaffection. The Courant, which had run advertisements for Williams’ pamphlets in the previous December, published “A Dialogue between a Clergyman and a Layman, concerning Inoculation, By an unknown Hand” on January 8, 1722, which summarized his position. Two weeks later the Courant continued the dialogue and this time points about the politicization of the ministry and the role of the press as defender against theocratic tyranny were made more sharply. Speaking of the opponents of inoculation, the clergyman was made to claim that “it is chiefly among the Vulgar Herd that this wicked Spirit of Party and Division prevails.” The layman answered smartly, reminding his clerical opponent of the involvement of the clergy in the witchcraft trials of the previous century and accusing the clerical party of “calling the Town a MOB.” The clergyman blamed the controversy on the fact that the “Command of the Press is fallen into Laymen’s Hands,” to which the layman responded that the clergy “cannot endure that Laymen should write or Know any thing: You would have them know but just enough to get to Heaven.”

Between the two installments of this dialogue the Courant again employed satire to attack the Mathers and discredit the inoculators. Writing in the persona of a bumbler named Ichabod Henroost, the author of a letter to Mr. Turnstone, complained that his wife had become an informer against the anti-inoculators and spent her time gathering and reporting “all the Impertinent Stories of the vile Fellows of the Town.” As an illustration of the sto-

562 NEC, January 22, 1722.
ries repeated by his wife, Ichabod recounted the story of a man whose head fell off when he blew his nose, but had it replaced by "Dr. B—n" (i.e. Zabdiel Boylston). Mr. Henroost finished his letter with an account of the damage to his household property caused by servants who were no longer supervised because his wife was a full-time supporter of the inoculators.

The letter from Ichabod Henroost took advantage of the dramatic possibilities of satire to associate Mather and the inoculators with prying, female gossip. By inventing the fantastic story of the man who lost his head, the Courant was able to make the charges that the paper was "a Hell-Fire Club with a Nonjuror at the Head of them" seem absurd rather than alarming.\textsuperscript{563} Beneath the broad comedy of the "hen pecked" husband lay a criticism of traditional authority, gendered as female because of its integration of emotion and argument, to which the Couranteers opposed their "masculine" authority of rationalism and irony.

The complex relationship between the Mathers and James Franklin took another turn in February when Franklin accused Mather Byles, Increase's grandson, then a student at Harvard, of altering a news item from the London Mercury on inoculation and submitting it for publication in the Courant. Franklin made his accusation after the senior Mather, along with a number of other ministers, had signed an advertisement placed in the other two Boston papers accusing Franklin of lying and libel. Franklin's essay on the affair in the issue of February 5, 1722, was remarkable for the way in which he placed himself, as publisher of a newspaper, on a par with Increase Mather. Claiming that he was an honest tradesman pursuing a livelihood, the Courant's printer asked the Rev. Mather "how it

\textsuperscript{563} James Franklin addressed this charge by Mather in a more serious way in the issue of January 22, 1722, asserting his impartiality and willingness to open the paper to both sides in the controversy.
would be taken if upon a Misunderstanding, between any particular Minister and my self, I should publickly advise his People not to hear him or contribute to his Support."

The charge of interfering with a workman's livelihood was a serious one and a point well taken in view of the call made by Mather and others for a boycott of the Courant. Given the nature of the newspaper business, the boycott was not successful for, as Franklin pointed out, "what they have already done has been resented by the Town so much to my Advantage, that above Forty Persons have subscrib'd for the Courant since the first of January, many of whom were before Subscribers for the other Papers."

Two aspects of the inoculation debate in the Boston newspapers seem to stand out in Franklin's essay. First, the long-simmering resentment of the ministers by the town's petite bourgeoisie was given impetus and focus by the appearance of a newspaper prepared to give voice to those sentiments in print. In this phenomenon Boston was a provincial example of the new role of the press in Walpole's Britain, where party politics and a politicized press went hand in hand. Second, the ministerial opponents of the Courant were as insensitive to the market psychology of newspaper readers as they were to the stylistic requirements of the new medium. Ministers were responsible for making the Boston press one of the most prolific in the British empire; however, the relationship of even so experienced and popular an author as Cotton Mather to the market for printed goods was fundamentally different from that of a tradesman like James Franklin. Their opponents had accused the Mathers of controlling the Boston press for years; the loss of control which occurred when first Thomas Fleet then James Franklin opened their shops was the greatest blow to ministerial authority since the Act of Toleration.

The nature of authority was a question which New Englanders had traditionally debated in terms of church polity as well as civil constitution; indeed, given the importance of church organization in Puritan theory and the central role of religion in the founding of New England, it is hardly surprising that constitutional theory received greater attention in the ecclesiastical rather than civil mode. A central aspect of the discussion of church organi-
zation was the purposes for which Massachusetts Bay had been founded and the intentions of the "first Planters," Winthrop, Cotton, Shepard and others, whom the filial piety of subsequent generations had elevated to patristic status.

Conservatives of the older generation such as Samuel Sewall ascribed the founding of New England to the Puritan desire to escape the requirements of Church of England ritual. Sewall's Diary for these years records several incidents showing how centrally this historical interpretation figured in his thoughts. In an entry for April 1, 1719, the judge recorded rebuking two boys for playing April Fool’s tricks and reflected "N.E. Men came hither to avoid anniversary days, the keeping of them, such as the 26 of Decr."

Like others of his generation, Sewall felt the uniqueness of New England slipping away in the new climate created by the Act of Toleration and the changing conditions of the eighteenth century. As an Overseer of Harvard College, Sewall took part in discussions concerning the offer of an endowed chair of divinity by an English benefactor. His diary entry for January 10, 1722, recorded his concern for maintaining doctrinal purity in the training ground of New England’s ministers. At issue was the acceptance of an endowed chair of divinity which carried the stipulation that the recipient be either a Congregationalist, Presbyterian, or Baptist. Objecting to the loss of Congregational purity threatened by the provision, Sewall recorded that he “finally said, One great end for which the first Planters came over into New England, was to fly from the Cross in Baptisme."

Tension between the status of the Church of England as the established church of the British Empire and the Congregational tradition of New England colored political discussions at the highest levels of provincial politics and contributed to the friction between Governor Shute and his Dissenting subjects. At the height of the crisis which caused him to leave Massachusetts for England, Shute and the Council discussed this factor as Sewall recorded in an entry for January 10, 1722. As a moderate Anglican, Shute objected to the General Court being in session on Christmas Day. Sewall defended the Puritan practice,
remarking that "the Dissenters came a great way for their Liberties and now the church had theirs, yet they could not be contented, except they might Tread all other down."564

Samuel Sewall spoke for many New England Congregationalists when he recorded his view that the founders of the Bay, having fled Laud’s persecutions in England, were entitled to maintain their Dissenter practices in the colony they had established for that purpose; the question of the rights of other non-conformists within the Bay Colony, however, was a thornier one. In the earliest days schism within the Puritan Church had not been tolerated, as the expulsion of Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson painfully attested. In the second generation a mellowing of attitude was observable in the toleration of sects immediately to the left and right of the Puritans. Quakers and Anglicans continued to be seen as a threat; Anabaptists and Presbyterians were the objects of an uneasy tolerance which could, at times, rise to the point of ecumenical brotherhood.

The Presbyterians, who differed from the Congregationalists in the greater power of the Board of Elders in church decision making, were regarded with wistful admiration by Congregational leaders attempting through an improvised structure of Platforms, Synods, and Associations to restrain the democratic enthusiasms of their own churches. In his election sermon as president of Harvard College, Uriah Oakes conceded that the Presbyterians were “as Pious. Learned, Sober, Orthodox Men, as the World affords,” and that their church “in the day of it, it was a very considerable step to Reformation.”565

The Anabaptists, a more radical persuasion of Dissenters who denied the validity of infant baptism, offered a greater threat to stability and were less welcome. The Anabaptist congregation which was established in Charlestown in the early 1680s was at first sub-

564 The issue of Christmas celebration was the occasion of a debate in the Courant of December 24, discussed below.

jected to both ecclesiastical and civil harassment. The leader of the Anabaptists, John Rus-
sel, published a pamphlet entitled *A Brief Narrative*, in which he charged the leaders of the
Bay Colony with hypocrisy in demanding religious freedom for themselves while denying
it to others. The controversy over the Anabaptists in the 1680s raised issues that were still
troubling forty years later. In the 1720s, the presence of the Courant gave the old contro-
versy new dynamism. The dissatisfied leather-apron men of Boston renewed John Rus-
ssel's quarrel with greater effect.

Stung by Russel's charges and threatened by a church whose levelling tendencies
made it a magnet for the disaffected from orthodox congregations, the colony's ministers
had called in a salvo of heavy artillery in the form of a pamphlet by Samuel Willard with a
preface by Increase Mather entitled *Ne Sutor Ultra Crepidam*. Mather's preface wasted
no time in polite formalities but accused the Anabaptists of deliberately falsehood
"inasmuch as the things by them misrepresented, were not done a far off (for then mistakes
about them would have been excusable) but at home, where right Information was easie to
have obtained." Willard was similarly direct in getting to the point about religious tol-
eration. Citing the persecution of the Congregationalists in England, he remarked that "it is
not so long since our own Necks bled under an intolerable yoke of Imposition upon con-
science as that we should forget what it is to be so dealt with." Sympathy did not imply

566 *Ne Sutor Ultra Crepidam, Or Brief Animadversions Upon the New-England
Anabaptists Late Fallacious Narrative Wherein the Notorious Mistakes and Falsehoods by
them Published, are Detected*, (Boston: S. Green, upon Assignment of S. Sewall And are
to be Sold by Sam Philips, 1681, *Evans*, 309). Willard succeeded Increase Mather as
president of Harvard College and their collaboration in the attack upon the Anabaptists was
meant to signal united opposition by the Puritan clergy. In political matters, Willard and
Mather were less friendly. Willard was a brother-in-law to Governor Dudley and was
appointed at Harvard to check Cotton Mather's influence. Willard was also a brother-in-
law to Elisha Cooke, Sr., who opposed the Mathers from the opposite end of the political
spectrum.

567 Willard, *Sutor* i.

568 Willard, *Sutor* vi.

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approval, however, and Willard quickly rebutted Russel's claim that New England's first planters advocated religious toleration, asserting that their "business was not Toleration; but were professed Enemies of it, and could leave the World professing they died for Libertines." 569

Willard's Brief Animadversions touched upon two other issues which were to continued to concern readers of the Courant forty years later: ministerial aristocracy and the use of civil power to enforce religious conformity. Much of the impetus which caused some Congregationalists to seek out the Charlestown Anabaptists came from frustration at being unable to express their views within their own churches. Thomas Gold of Charlestown held a meeting at his house on Sundays rather than attend services at his church. When his fellow parishioner, Thomas Osborn, was admonished for attending Gold's "Schismatrick Meetings," he told his accusers that, more important than the issue of infant baptism was the fact "that the Church gave no liberty to private Brethren to Prophesie, that they limited the ministry to learned men, and that he did not find his own spirit free to come." 570 The growing domination of the minister and the Elders to the exclusion of ordinary Saints was a source of frustration which, at least as much as the theology of infant baptism, sent converts to the Anabaptist churches.

The attitude of the Congregational ministers which enraged Gold and others shone through Willard's treatment of the issue. He asserted that it was a desire for "applause," i.e. a share in the minister's social status, rather than matters of belief which caused the dissidents to depart. 571 In addition to questioning the motives of his converts, Willard and

569 Willard, Sutor 4.

570 Willard, Brief Animadversions, p.14. Thomas Gold's congregation "told him his speeches and carriage were very sinful they had never seen the like, he replied, I did not come hither to be snub'd and snarl'd at by every one, and he turned his back to depart." (Willard, Sutor, 19).

571 Willard, Sutor 16.
Mather accused the Anabaptist minister Russel of “the sin of Jeroboam,” that is of elevating unqualified men to the ministry.\textsuperscript{572} Willard made much of the fact that Russel was a cobbler and not a Harvard man. The Latin title of his Brief Animadversions, \textit{Ne Sutor Ultra Cepidam}, means “let the shoemaker stick to his last.” Willard was not subtle about his scorn for such a pastor. If any tradesman could serve as a minister he observed, “we have but fooled ourselves in building Colledges, and instructing our Children in learning.”\textsuperscript{573}

The distancing of New England churches from the radical elements of the Protestant tradition was made the more irksome by the somewhat disingenuous way in which civil authority was employed to harass the Anabaptists. Thomas Foster of Billerica was brought before a grand jury when he attempted to argue the merits of his position with his pastor. Willard took the incredible position that his subpoena was a private act required by the Freeman’s oath, and not harassment by church authorities.\textsuperscript{574} The Charlestown group was frustrated in their attempt to get a building permit for their house of worship and when they proceeded without one, the authorities refused to let them occupy the premises. Willard’s account of the affair implied that the issue was one of zoning in which church authorities were not involved.\textsuperscript{575} The sting of Willard’s contempt for their minister and his bland denial of church involvement in the persecution of Anabaptists by the civil magistrate were

\textsuperscript{572} Willard cited the charge made earlier by Increase Mather in his work against the Anabaptists, \textit{The Divine Right of Infant Baptism}. The biblical text on which Mather based his accusation was I Kings, 12. 21: “And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi.” The argument based on this text was later to be used against the Congregationalists at the time of the Cutler apostasy when it was charged that their ministers were ordained by “midwives and cobblers.” (\textit{NEC}, October 8, 1722).

\textsuperscript{573} Willard, \textit{Sutor} 26.

\textsuperscript{574} Willard, \textit{Sutor} 17.

\textsuperscript{575} Willard, \textit{Sutor} 23.
hardly assuaged by his assertion "that our Churches have received some that were scrupulous about Infant Baptism, who were willing to carry inoffensively."576

The Anabaptists flourished despite the opposition of the ministerial establishment. In the new century they were joined by Baptists and Quakers, other sects with strong democratic tendencies. Although Williard was undoubtedly correct in his description of the motives of Winthrop and Cotton and so fulfilled his intention to dispute with "an Historian in point of Truth and Falsehood, and not with a Divine in matter of Orthodoxy and Error,"577 the feeling expressed by Russel that freedom of conscience and the right of inspired laymen to an active role in the church were a fundamental part of his Puritan heritage could not be altogether dismissed. The resentments expressed by Boston's Anabaptists in the 1680s did not evaporate, but continued to run underground, feeding the sense of exclusion felt by some artisans and tradesmen in the Bay Colony. Strengthened by arguments drawn from the Enlightenment as expressed by John Wise, these resentments resurfaced in pages of the Courant with renewed vigor.

In the changed political climate of the eighteenth century the separatist element in New England's Puritan heritage seemed to many both old-fashioned and disloyal. Progressive Boston Congregationalists disparaged the founders of Plymouth Plantation as Brownist fanatics and presented their own non-separating churches as loyal variants of Church of England practice.578 In the spring of 1723, the discussion turned upon a letter,

576 Willard, Sutor 22.

577 Willard, Sutor 2.

578 Increase Mather must be credited with founding this ingenious school of historical interpretation. When the 1689 Act of Toleration threatened to impose the establishment of the Anglican Church in Massachusetts, Mather argued that since the existing churches had never separated from it, they, in effect, constituted the Church of England as established in New England. Few people seem to have regarded this reasoning as anything more than sophistry. Fear of provoking an uproar prevented British authorities from establishing the Anglican Church in Massachusetts. Among modern historians Perry Miller has
written by the founders of Massachusetts Bay shortly before their 1630 departure for the New World to the bishops of England in which the Pilgrim leaders asserted their love and loyalty. The signatories of the letter described the Church of England as “our dear Mother,” and asserted that “such Hope and Part as we have obtained in the common Salvation, we have received in her Bosom, and suck’d it from her Breasts.”

In the same issue a writer signing himself Philalethes characterized as a lie imposed on ignorant people that “the design of their Fathers in coming hither, was to get from under the Yoke of the Church of England.” The idea that the founders of New England were good Anglicans with a slightly different liturgical emphasis was also the thesis of a correspondent of the Courant styling himself Anti-Pseustes. In a letter published May 27, 1723, he disagreed with Philalethea’s claim that the letter was a forgery and insisted that the first Planters of the Bay had not wished to separate from the Church of England but felt the necessity of distancing themselves from practices they found repugnant. Anti-Pseustes described the defense of the ministers at Salem against complaints they did not follow the prescribed rituals of the Anglican Church in language that shows how completely the ministerial faction in 1723 concurred with the position expressed by Samuel Willard over forty years before.

In the issue of June 3, 1723, a third champion entered the lists to defend Philalethes against Anti-Pseustes and to assert the loyalty of the founders of the Bay Colony. Styling himself “A.L.,” this author quoted several passages from the controversial letter and remarked that “they do not seem to be the expressions of a Persecuted People, or a People that were under any Yoke.” The confusion, he contended was due to a failure to distinguish

emphasized the importance of the non-separating church polity of the founders of the Bay colony.

579 NEC, June 3, 1723.
between the loyal founders of the Bay Colony and the detestable Separatists at Plymouth. A.I. 's description of the Plymouth settlers made them the scapegoat for subsequent charges of disloyalty in New England. "Robinson and his Crew," as A.I. termed them, "were a Sett of such wicked People, that no Country they ever tried could bear with them."

All the talk of loyalty and communion with the Church of England was too much for one Courant correspondent who saw in the matter of church polity a fundamental issue of individual conscience and autonomy. In the issue of September 7, 1723, he offered a radical interpretation of the intentions of the first planters. Reaffirming that the founders of the colony intended to establish their own church discipline, the author reminded his readers that "the very name of a Bishop sounds formidable to our Honest plain-hearted People; the bare mention of Forms and Liturgies, strikes Terror into their minds, and they desire to dwell at the utmost Distance from them." Continuing in this forceful tone, the author decried a declension of both knowledge and zeal among his contemporaries and a merely fashionable desire to uphold tradition for tradition's sake. "It is evident, that there are multitudes among us, who are zealous for the Traditions of the Fathers," he conceded, "but yet are in good measure ignorant of those Principles upon which our Ancestors settled in this Wilderness."580

580 Recent scholars have differed with the separatist interpretation offered by the Courant's correspondent in the September 7, 1723 issue. Stephen Foster, The Long Argument: English Puritanism and the Shaping of New England Culture, 1570-1700, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1991) interprets the relationship of American Puritansim to its English roots in a way which supports the position of the Mathers. According to Foster, Puritanism from the outset expressed a dualism. The majority of Puritans supported a corporate, inclusive religious system that Foster characterizes as involving a "plentitude of means," and were content to work within the Church of England. A more radical minority, inspired by the purity of voluntary religion, preferred a sectarian organization. Although the issue was never fully resolved, the distinction which a number of correspondents to the Courant drew between the founders of Plymouth Plantation and those of Massachusetts Bay was a real one, and the Mathers' insistence that the non-separating beliefs of the latter placed them within the Church of England was not wholly disingenuous.
Bringing the issue of church polity to the present time, the author accused the clergy of inclining to Presbyterianism in defiance of the true Congregational tradition: "of later Years some of our Clergy would seem to affect a Government in the Church, which vests a more absolute Power in themselves, and subtracts from the Privileges of the Brotherhood," and cited Increase Mather and Benjamin Colman to support his view. The fault, he concluded, lay not only with a clergy which had forgotten its own traditions but with a laity that had abandoned its autonomy. This correspondent charged that many of the Congregational clergy "especially of the younger Sort," were no longer true to the spirit of the Platform. He cited the number of church members changing churches without letters of dismissal as a sign of the loss of true Congregational polity. Responsibility for Congregational declension, he said "lies principally in the Laity, who thro' a supine Negligence, and veneration for (I had like to have said Adoration of) their Ministers Persons as well as Office, become Passive to their Encroachments."

The criticisms made by this correspondent raised issues beyond the historical question of the intention of the founders. In charging the ministers with ignorance of the Platform and the laity with veneration of the clergy, the Courant's correspondent indicted his contemporaries with abandoning the New England Way. The nature of clerical authority and its relationship to the congregation rather than to Lambeth Palace affected this writer, who addressed himself to that critical conjunction between Puritan ecclesiastical theory and Real Whig political ideas which, for him, was the fundamental value of Massachusetts. The traditional authority figure of the bishop which, along with the supporting apparatus of Forms and Liturgies the first Planters were alleged to have cast aside, was, in his view, inimical to democratic principles and personal responsibility in either church or state. These values, representative of the radical wing of the Couranteers, here described in an ecclesiastical context, were also the values for which Elisha Cooke was the spokesman in a secu-
lar political setting. The ignorance and sloth which lead to “backsliding” (i.e. passivity) before hierarchical authority in church matters was associated by the author with acceptance of a royal prerogative perceived to be an encroachment upon traditional liberties of Englishmen. Successive generations would make a political version of this analysis without regard to the dissenting church polity from which it sprung. The Courant advanced the argument in a form that was still more Dissenter than Real Whig but the language of state and steeple was becoming increasingly interchangeable.

As an exercise in apologetics the Courant’s essay was a rebuttal to the Anglican position argued by John Checkley in his Modest Proof. On a psychological level the statement that “the Fathers were so grossly erroneous in the great Doctrines of Religion” had a broader resonance, particularly in the minds of skeptical young gentlemen journeyman, than the theological context would imply. The coercive strength of traditional authority lay in its seamless unity; dissension within the ranks of the agents of authority had the effect of empowering the ruled by providing them with the opportunity — even the necessity — of choosing one claimant over another. In a broad sense, the divisions of the

581 During this period Cooke published three pamphlets defending his position and criticizing the governor’s negatory of his election by the house to the council: Letter to Mr. Speaker and Mr. Bridges, (Boston 1719, Evans, 2022), Mr. Cook’s Just and Seasonable Vindication; Respecting some Affairs Transacted in the Late General Assembly at Boston, (Boston, 1720, Evans, 2109), and a counter-attack on Mather, Reflections upon Reflections or More News From Robins Crusoe’s Island, (Boston, 1720, Evans, 2111).

582 John Checkley, A Modest Proof of the Order & Government Settled by Christ and his Apostles in the Church (Re-printed by Thomas Fleet, Boston 1723). In this work Checkley analyzed the writings of Irenaeus to demonstrate that in patristic times the title of bishop was given to an important cleric in charge of several churches, i.e. a superior in a hierarchical church structure rather than a simple pastor. The Courant essay discredited Irenaeus by pointing out that he “held that the Day of Judgement is so know to God the Father only, that the Son knoweth nothing at all of it,” and so was not doctrinally reliable. The rejection of Irenaeus for this Socinian proposition is interesting in light of its explicit acceptance by Nathaniel Gardiner in his essay on providence and smallpox which appeared in the eighth issue of the Courant. Checkley’s work was also attacked by Thomas Walter in his An Essay Upon that Paradox, Infallibility May Sometimes Mistake, (Boston, D. Henchman, 1724, Evans, 2592).
Reformation offered such empowerment to the propertied middle classes; in Boston in the 1720s the challenge to Congregational supremacy by the Anglican church offered readers of the Courant a similar opportunity to exercise the autonomy of choice.

The question of fidelity to tradition, indeed of the reliability of tradition itself, once raised in terms of the 1630 letter by the founders of Massachusetts Bay, would not disappear. The Courant returned to the topic in terms of the role of the bishop in the early Church in the issue of January 20, 1724. The matter of episcopal authority was one on which the more radical doctrines of the Calvinists distinguished them from the Church of England. Both sides saw in the issue something deeper than administrative procedure; the question involved the locus of Christ in the church, the very meaning of the word church in historical context. The Calvinist conception of a church formed by sanctified believers had led to a radical restructuring of ecclesiastical authority. Debate over the nature of the early church was as old as the Reformation; what gave it new urgency in the pages of the Courant was the accepted, if undefined, congruence between ecclesiastical and political legitimacy. "No bishop, no king" had put the matter with confrontational bluntness in the seventeenth century; now enlightened New Englanders sought a more delicate resolution of the issue.

The Courant of January 20, 1724 carried an essay intended to rebut the growing acceptability of hierarchical ecclesiastical authority, both Presbyterian and Episcopal, among New England churchgoers. The strategy employed by the author was traditional in Puritan apologetics: to establish a separation between the practices of the apostolic church as recorded in the New Testament and the interpretations of the patristic fathers in ensuing centuries when episcopal authority was well documented. As the Courant essay described it, "Our present Design therefore is, to set down some Errors and gross Opinions of some of the most Eminent Fathers, which we have Collected from a Celebrated Episcopal Writer, that ignorant People may see that the Fathers were not infallible, and that their Judgement is very little to be depended on, in Matters of Faith and Church Government." The major part
of the essay was given over to a recitation of theological positions found in various patristic writers which differed from canonical tradition. After citing a number of such heterodox statements in the early fathers, the author asserted that the nature of church polity in their time was no longer clear and concluded that "if the Fathers were so grossly erroneous in the great Doctrines of Religion, it is no wonder if they were so, with respect to Discipline."

So emphatic a denial of Anglican legitimacy could not go unchallenged. The Courant of January 27, 1724, contained a rebuttal whose chief tactic was the citation of John Checkley's Modest Proof." The Anglican counter-attack had a certain shrillness of tone suggestive of strong feelings. Although signed "T.B.," the letter appeared to speak for a group when the statement was made that "we shall bring forward some other Proofs." The pejorative characterization of the Congregational case as a "poor thread-bare Cause" pressed upon the limits of courtesy normally observed in the pages of the Courant.

There was some indication that emotions were getting out of control on the other side of the question as well. The following week's issue opened with a somewhat disingenuous statement of umbrage at the "Officiousness of this Gentleman in undertaking to vindicate the Church of England, when there is no direct Charge made against her, nor so much as the least mention of her in the whole Letter."583 The author went on to fault the charity of the Anglicans while appearing to pass over the matter. At the same time, he attempted to minimize doctrinal differences between the two sects and claimed that he had "industriously avoided all Controversy concerning Episcopacy, because I would avoid my Opponents Impertinences."

In the Courant the Congregational side frequent made the point that T.B. raised in this essay: that there was no quarrel over the Thirty Nine Articles and so no question of a separation between the New England churches and the Church of England. In retrospect, it

583 NEC, February 3, 1724

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is easy to dismiss this argument as disingenuous since it overlooked fundamental issues of church polity and a wide range of liturgical variations between the two denominations in order to focus attention on points of conformity in the Articles, which was a latitudinarian document designed to bridge differences rather than precisely to define controversial points of doctrine. It is easy to accuse the New England churches of wanting it both ways: of insisting on their non-Separating status to forestall the establishment of the Anglican Church yet refusing to accept the authority of the Bishop of London. Although at times tortuous, the position of the New England ministers was not insincere: they believed, with some justification, that the scope of Church of England membership was in fact wider than its episcopal structure.\textsuperscript{584}

Attempts such as the essay by T.B. to gloss over differences in polity between Anglican and Congregational churches founded on the issues of regicide and Commonwealth. Here was an historical event which seemed permanently to have severed any connection between Puritan Dissenters and the national church. This point was made in an essay from the Anglican side in the issue of February 10, 1724, in which the correspondent observed "As to the Dissenters Charity for the Church of England, we have oftener than once felt it; but it never came to us any otherways but back'd with Fire and Faggot: Witness the pretended pious and godly Times, from 1640 to 1660."

Passions were rapidly rising in the debate; in addition, both sides were complicating the original issue with increasingly technical theological points incomprehensible to the non-specialist. As the matter moved beyond the scope of journalism and into purely academic debate, the defenders of New England tradition made an offer of arbitration. In the issue of February 17, 1724, the Congregational spokesman offered to "submit the Decision of this matter to the Judicious and Unprejudiced, either of his Party or mine," and claimed that if his opponent would "write on any Point of the Episcopal Controversy like a man of Sense and Reason, I shall be ready to join Issue with him."

The assumption that "Sense and Reason" rather than piety should be the criterion of the arbitrators indicated the degree to which both sides had moved away from the values of the previous century to the scrutiny of even theological questions by the standards of enlightened thought. A corollary of the appeal to sense and reason can be seen at work in the attempts by each side to convict the other of fanaticism and persecution. T.B. first accused the Dissenters of persecuting Anglicans "with Fire and Faggot" during the interregnum in his February 10th essay. In a postscript to the essay of February 17, his opponent denied the charge, saying "The Reader is desir'd to take good Notice that what he says concerning Fire and Faggot, from 1640 to 1660 is malicious Insinuation, without the least Shadow of Truth," to which T.B. was forced to reply in the following week's issue that he had intended the phrase only as figure of speech, "But for fear this Gentleman should say, this does not come up to Fire and Fagot, as I told him in my last: He could not think that I meant anything else by that Expression, but that the English Dissenters did persecute their Mother the Church of England, like unnatural Children, whenever it was in their Power."

Sensing that once again the heat of debate over religious questions threatened the stability of the paper, Franklin exercised his editorial prerogative in the issue of March 16, 1724, by introducing a polemical letter on the subject of the nature of bishops in the early church with the notice that "the following Letters are the last of the controversial kind which we intend to publish for some Time." The debate over church polity was the most
furious and longest-running controversy in the life of the Courant. Stripped of its lapses into invective about "Crack-brain'd, Mad High Flyers" and quaestiones designed to show off theological expertise rather than address the central issue, the exchange remained an important milestone in the history of public discourse in America. The debate over the intentions of the first planters was a retrospective examination of the meaning of the New England Way in the light of the new ideas and new values of the eighteenth century. The Courant provided the form as well as the forum for this examination of the American experience; indeed, it is hard to see how the debate could have occurred anywhere other than in the pages of Franklin's newspaper. The anonymity of the newspaper format and the periodicity of weekly publication separated the opponents and cooled — for a while at least — the emotional impact so that sustained, adversarial discussion became possible. As the concurrently running pamphlet wars over the same topics illustrated, the pamphlet was too cumbersome a medium, inviting an excess of both detail and invective and so unable to sustain the interest of a wide general readership in the way the Courant, with its miscellany of other news items, shorter length and more frequent appearance, could. In these debates the Courant initiated a transformation of the public sphere that was to have profound repercussions on the intellectual life of Americans.
Chapter Nine

The Platform and the Light of Nature

The complex tensions between ministerial authority and the democratic structure of Congregational polity exploded in a scandal that began with the selection of a new pastor for the church at Eastham in the autumn of 1720.\textsuperscript{585} The Deacons and other leaders of the church had selected John Osborne, an Irish immigrant residing on Martha's Vineyard, to fill the post when a group of women members, headed by Hannah Doane, demurred, accusing Osborne of having fathered an illegitimate child on the island. Under Doane's questioning Osborne became flustered and contradicted himself, finally admitting he had behaved improperly but denied that the child was his. When the leaders of the congregation decided to go ahead with Osborne's ordination, Doane withdrew; when they attempted to pressure her into agreement, she sent notices to five other churches on Cape Cod summoning a council to judge the matter. The pro-Osborne faction refused to acknowledge Doane's right to summon such a council. Osborne was ordained, although the charges against him were later proved. Three of the five summoned churches met at Doane's house on November 8, but Doane's opponents refused to recognize the validity of the meeting, calling in turn for a separate council to consider censure of Doane's behavior. The schismatic squabbling of church councils scandalized Massachusetts. A new Eastham North church split off to accommodate the dissidents, and Doane moved to Boston where she was welcomed into Old North despite her lack of letters of dismissal.\textsuperscript{586} Doane's supporters took

\textsuperscript{585} This parish, then called Billingsgate, is part of modern-day Wellfleet, MA.

\textsuperscript{586} The Doanes were a Boston family connected with the Oakes who had moved to Eastham in support of Josiah Oakes, son of the Harvard president. Young Oakes had
their case to the public in a pamphlet The Result of a Council Held at Billingsgate in Eastham.587

The Billingsgate affair presented the issue of democratic church polity in a case in which the rights of the members seemed to have been violated by deacons and their new minister.588 The ideal of “a silent democracy in the face of a speaking aristocracy” seemed, in Eastham at least, to have produced unchristian behavior and a very bad decision.589 The key constitutional point for the Doane faction was that it was “unexceptionably clear from the Light of Nature and Scripture, and according to Congregational Principles” that an aggrieved member had the right to summon a council of churches to hear his or her complaint.

The citation of the “Light of Nature” as well as scripture and Congregational tradition suggested that if the authors of the pamphlet had not read John Wise’s Vindication of the Government of New-England Churches, they were thinking along very much the same lines and using the same language.590 In fact, the Billingsgate affair pushed the issue of

served as unofficial minister to the parish before the Osborne affair. The dissension which rent the congregation was fueled in part by resentment at the influence exercised by well-connected outsiders.

587 (Boston: Fleet, 1722). Fleet, the official printer of King’s Chapel, may have taken satisfaction in producing an account which reflected so unfavorably on the New England Way.

588 Courant readers enjoyed the connotation of the popular name for the Eastham parish. In NEC, May 13, 1723, a correspondent had noted the lack among Quakers of “that Scolding and Railing, which we commonly call Billingsgate Language.” The London fish market at Billingsgate was associated with uncouth verbal behavior.

589 Samuel Stone, assistant to Thomas Hooker at New Haven, coined this felicitous formula to describe the relationship between the constituent parts of a church in the Bible Commonwealth.

590 John Wise, Vindication of the Government of New-England Churches. Drawn from Antiquity: the Light of Nature: Holy Scripture; its Noble nature; and from the Dignity Divine Providence has put upon it, (Boston: J. Allen, for N. Boone, 1717), justified Congregationalism in terms of natural law and Real Whig theory.
democratic rights a step farther than almost anyone was willing to go in civil politics because, although a woman, Doane was a full member of the church. Attempts by opponents to invoke biblical texts traditionally cited to restrain female participation were, by Mrs. Doane’s astuteness, made to appear in contravention of long-standing Congregational practices since they refused to recognize Mrs. Doane’s case despite the fact that “they admit their Women to vote in their church Assembly as explicitly and formally as do the Men themselves.”

The unseemly bickering between councils summoned by rival factions could only remind good Protestants of the Avignon papacy, with its associations of despotism, corruption and decay and the Courant’s correspondent compared the situation at Billingsgate with the schism of the Avignon papacy, when disputants would “call Councils in opposition to councils; and those Anti-Councils would sometimes call the others pretended Councils.”

The questions raised by the Billingsgate affair were close to the central concerns of the Courant and in issue 94 readers were treated to an analysis of the case by a correspondent who was critical of both sides. The theme of his essay was that the scandal had done more harm to New England’s reputation than anything printed about religion in the often-vilified Courant. As for the pamphlet, the Courant found its style torpid and antique; the es-

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591 The Result of a Council, 21. Doane’s written responses avoided the injunctions in 1 Cor. 14:34: “Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law,” and 1 Tim. 2:11-13, “Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.” Doan was guided in her dissent by advice from Benjamin Colman who received her at Old North Church: “then, having a Sore in my Leg, and going to Boston to see if I could obtain a Cure, I consulted some Reverend Ministers there and was advised by them to enter my Dissent from his [Osborne’s] Settlement…” (The Result of a Council, 39). Colman was the most liberal and anglophile of Boston’s senior ministers. If the statement in the Courant that three Ministers of the Gospel were involved in the writing of the pamphlet (NEC, May 20, 1723, discussed below), Colman was probably one of them.

592 The Result of a Council, 29.
say also struck at the hermaphroditic nature of its political reasoning, part traditional Calvinist and part Real Whig, claiming that "In some Parts of the Book they pay a great Regard to the Platform, in others they prefer the Light of Nature & Law of Nations to whatever the Platform says." The correspondent cited the pamphlet's reference to conflicting councils in the Catholic Church as "a wild Intimation, that we have a Sort of Popes among us to fly to upon Occasion: For the sake of these Gentlemen I wou'd hope they are Protestant Popes; for none till now have been so daring as to say we entertain'd Popes of any Sort." The _Courant_, having been criticized for blackening ministers, took glee in modestly speculating "whether their severe Animadversions on the Reverend Mr. O——n's Character, (one of their Rev. Brethren in the Ministry) is the way to support our Church Government." The _Courant_ showed no sympathy for either side in the controversy despite the fact that Doane's position was supported by the facts of the case and a tradition of church polity not uncongenial to the paper's own Real Whig values; instead, the _Courant_ preferred to lump both factions together as examples of ministerial hypocrisy and obscurantism.

Mrs. Doane was denied the sympathy of the _Courant_ despite the justice of her case for to do otherwise would be to acknowledge the legitimacy of a female demand for inclusion. Despite the fact that Hannah Doane's position was quite similar to that of the Couranteers, the paper chose to present her arguments as comic, the author remarking "But I may not pass over Mrs. Doane's Discourse with Mr. O——n, which I think may very well be call'd a Joco-Serious Dialogue." The reference was to a recently-published book by Rev. Thomas Symmes, _UTILE DULCI or, A Joco-Serious Dialogue Concerning Regular Singing, and the Courant_'s raillery was a bit forced, its defense of Osborne chauvinistic. The author quibbled about the phrasing of Mrs. Doane's accusation and dismissed Osborne's lying about his paternity with the observation "Woman! What wou'd you have him say?"

Doane's younger brother Isaac, who testified that when Osborn asked about his sister: "What is she going about now? and I replied, How should I know?" was mocked
with the observation that “there is nothing in the said Deposition of the said Isaac Doane but
the Truth, that I know of, and therefore I am bound to believe him.” The author concluded
by restating his original observation that:

that if the Character of any Minister of the Gospel, or private Person, had been thus
treated in the Courant, and the Country so much expos’d, it would have been accounted
no less than Blasphemy, and the Author must have lain under the Charge of being a
Member of the Hell-Fire Club.

The Courant’s presentation of the Billingsgate affair was determined by the desire
to defend the paper against accusations of slandering ministers and bringing New England
into disrepute among foreign readers. The paper’s tu quoque (you’re another) defense, based on the criticisms made of Osborne in the pamphlet and the scandal caused by the af-
fair was intellectually shallow and passed up the opportunity to point out how the speaking
aristocracy was capable of oppressing the silent democracy. There appear to have been two
reasons for the editorial stand of the Courant: First, to have taken Doane’s side would have
been to offer at least implicit support to the powerful Boston ministers already defending
her. Although such support would be for Colman and his liberal policies rather than the
Mathers, neither the Franklins nor the King’s Chapel members of the Couranteers were in-
terested in making such a fine distinction in the face of a ministry united against them. Sec-
ond, to have upheld Doane’s case would have been to extend the mantle of republican poli-
tics to women by legitimizing what was, after all, a courageous and sophisticated struggle
by Hannah Doane for her full rights as a member of the Eastham church. This the Courant
would never do: their enthusiasm for Real Whig principles did not extend to women in the
public sphere.

The vehemence with which the Courant drew the line at excluding women from
church polity can be seen in a letter in the Courant of August 17, 1724. The church of Scit-
uate was engaged in debate over the selection of a new minister. Although there was none
of the titillating scandal that surrounded the Billingsgate affair, a woman member was again
taking a leading role in the proceedings. The three gentlemen authors of the letter describing
the situation made no pretense as to where their sympathies lay. They accused the leader of the opposition of pretending to a “Divine Right of Reverend Lay Ruling-She-Eldership” and declared that “in Defiance of all the Force of our She-Elders, we will defend our Ecclesiastical Breeches to the last Drop of Blood.”

The equality of status which the young Couranteers demanded for themselves was never advocated for those whom they considered incapable of autonomy: women, children, blacks, and Indians. The bantering tone with which the issue of She-Elders was treated did not obscure the significance of the connection between the “Divine Right of Dominion” in the home and the disruptive power of the woman the letter referred to as Mrs. Dishkettle. Sexual equality, far more muted in the Congregational churches of New England than in Quaker Meetings (and even there practice lagged considerably behind theory), found no sympathy among the Real Whigs of the Courant.

A letter from N.K. at Ipswich published in the Courant of October 26th involved the paper in another thorny point of Congregational polity: the call of a minister to another church. A little over a year after the death of the much respected Reverend Mr. Rogers, pastor of the church at Portsmouth, New Hampshire the members of that church, after considerable contention, settled upon a call to Mr. Fitch, assistant to John Wise at Ipswich.\textsuperscript{593} When Fitch requested the necessary letter of dismissal from his church it was refused, and the church at Portsmouth asked a council of Boston churches, headed by Cotton Mather, to arbitrate.

The Cambridge Platform of 1648, which was the constitutional basis for deciding such cases, was an ambiguous compromise between absolute autonomy of the congregation and the need for coherence and harmony among churches. Ample evidence could be found in it by both sides in the dispute; indeed, as the Courant’s correspondent observed,

\textsuperscript{593} NEC, October 7, 1723.
"opposite Factions in Churches always quote the Platform in their Vindication, as in the famous Billingsgate Controversy, and others; and in the no less famous Case of translating Mr. Thatcher to Boston, where the Writers Pro and Con, alledge the same Passages for their Defence." Like earlier disputes over the issue of dismissal, the Ipswich case revealed the tension between the theory of spiritual dedication and brotherly cooperation which was the ideal of the New England Way and the political and personal motives which lay beneath the surface of many controversies.

The Portsmouth church made its request on the basis of extraordinary need. The congregation was divided and all desired an experienced minister able to provide strong leadership. Fitch was such a man and his senior, the respected Rev. Wise was thought well able to train a replacement. The Courant’s Ipswich correspondent showed no sympathy with this brotherly appeal for assistance. He pointed out that Boston had several churches with two pastors; however, it was inconceivable for a Boston minister to accept a country call “unless the Country Benefices were fatter.”

For the Ipswich correspondent neither the steadfastness of the Portsmouth church nor the well being of the New England churches as a group could overmatch the independence and autonomy of the local church and he dismissed their threat to “turn to Episcopacy, and send for a Gown-Man with his Common-Prayer” as unworthy of consideration.

Here lay a sensitive point of doctrine for the Platform was clear that a council could only exhort, not force, a church to comply with its finding. The power of persuasion avail-

594 The reference to Thatcher was a not-so-sly dig at the Mathers. When Boston’s New North Church called Thatcher from his Weymouth pulpit in 1720, the Mathers first encouraged him, then changed course. Fearing that dissidents would start a new church should Thatcher come to Boston, the Mathers sided with Colman in ruling that pastors should not change flocks except under most unusual circumstances, and then only with the approval of a council. Enemies of Cotton Mather charged him with writing on both sides of the controversy and judging matters in terms of his own self-interest. The Courant’s raking up this old quarrel and Cotton Mather’s role in it was intended to weaken his credibility as a judge in the Fitch case.
able to a council, particularly one chaired by Cotton Mather, could be very great indeed. The following week the Courant reported that the Boston council had concluded that “Mr. Fitch’s Removal from Ipswich to Portsmouth, will be for the Interest of Religion, if the Consent of the Church at Ipswich can be gain’d.” A committee of the council journeyed to Ipswich to discuss the matter with the members of that church. When the committee was unable to prevail upon the church at Ipswich, the council re-convened in November and declared “That if the church at Ipswich persist in their Refusal to dismiss Mr. Fitch, it will be for the Honour of God and the Interest of Religion for him to remove to Portsmouth without their Consent,” a reversal of Congregational tradition upon which the Courant offered some critical analysis in the issue of November 30, 1724.\(^595\)

The Fitch case pitted the traditional concept of the minister as life-long father to his flock against the new idea (as yet not clearly articulated) of a trained professional selling his services. Fitch published a pamphlet on the subject of ministers’ salaries during the crisis as a defense of his actions.\(^596\) In his apology for ministers he revealed not only some of the financial pressures on the clergy in the 1720s but the penetration of commercial values into the religious life of New England. According to Fitch, ministers underwent a difficult and costly program of qualification, “they have spent the Prime of their Years in fitting themselves for this Calling; Their Friends have been at great cost in training them up to it; And 't

\(^{595}\) The Ipswich church refused to recognize the binding authority of Cotton Mather’s council and the issue of Fitch’s dismissal dragged on. In December, Fitch refused to perform his duties, which forced the congregation to dismiss him. He was installed at Portsmouth on April 14, 1725, and sued his former church for salary owed, collecting £65, 10 s. Fitch’s loss to Ipswich was serious because Wise died just as Fitch was assuming his duties in New Hampshire. The details of the Fitch controversy are given in Shipton, Vol. 4 of Sibley’s Harvard Graduates, Cambridge, Mass. (Harvard University Press, 1933) 203.

is a difficult and painful calling. It can’t be carried on without much Study, which is a weariness to the flesh.”

According to Fitch, biblical injunction as well as the investment represented by their training required that ministers be granted a liberal maintenance, which meant that they “have not only for necessity, but also for Delight. Ministers can’t be said to have a Liberal Maintenance allow’d them when they are confined to bare Necessaries.” A liberal maintenance was one which made the minister “capable of laying up something for those whom the Law of Nature Obliges them to Provide for. Parents ought to lay up for their Children” and be “capable of furnishing themselves with a suitable Collection of Books. Which must needs be of great Advantage to assist them in their studies; but cannot be procur’d without a considerable expence.” The ministers’ loss of purchasing power was due to a salary system which had not allowed them to keep up with inflation.597

Unlike his colleague John Wise, Fitch blamed provincial Bills of Credit for rising prices, noting that “the Merchants soon Practically undervalued the Bills of Credit, by advancing the Price of their Goods; the example of the Merchants was followed by the Farmers in raising the Price of their Provisions; and the Trademen and common Labourers have found themselves under a necessity of raising the price of their Work also… but they have serv’d to pay Ministers Salaries in several places, without raising the Salaries at all.” The growth of towns made the burden of ministers’ salaries less, yet “’Tis certain many places are more than twice as able to support their Ministers, than they were some Years ago, & yet in their way of paying them now, they allow them little more than half so much as they used to do formerly.” To Fitch, the reason was a change in New England’s estimation of religion. Congregations had “A mean Esteem of the Word” and “an excessive Love to the World” which made them indifferent to the welfare of their pastors. Fitch spoke for many

597 Fitch, A Plea, 4, 5.
of his colleagues — even Cotton Mather found himself in increasing financial distress in the 1720s — who suffered a loss of authority as well as purchasing power as the central concerns of Massachusetts shifted in the direction of mercantile pursuits.\textsuperscript{598}

In the analysis offered by the Courant’s correspondent, the key issue was the willingness of a minister to place his own financial benefit and the greater prestige of a larger, more affluent church above the spiritual requirements of his present church and the sanctity of Congregational tradition. The Courant’s sympathy was reserved not for the minister but for the less affluent congregations required to compete for a minister against churches offering more persuasive emolument. The issue became whether the quality of religious experience was to be controlled by the economic status of the congregation, in short, whether the church was to obey the laws of commodity trading. Under such conditions, the author suggested, economics would rapidly influence theology. Congregational churches would be tempted to accept a Church of England minister subsidized by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, or adopt Quaker beliefs in order to be free of the charge of maintaining a minister at all.

The Ipswich case, as the Courant presented it, showed the principles of economic self-interest and profit maximization through competition subverting older values of cooperation and community in the lives of the clergy and in relations between New England churches. Acknowledging that promotion of the ethics of mercantile capitalism was not the design of the council, the author indirectly exculpated Mather and the Boston ministers for the effect of their decision. The superior economic power of the Portsmouth church must have its way or the church there be lost to the Anglicans. The threat to send for a “Gown-Man” was not an idle one: the wealthy, imperially oriented oligarchy of Portsmouth was already inclined to the Church of England. To such men it seemed as natural that market

\textsuperscript{598} Fitch, \textit{A Plea}, 9, 14, 8.
forces should permit a wealthy congregation to attract the minister of its choice to fill the pulpit as that market forces should control the choice of a cabinet maker to build it. The church polity of the Cambridge platform was not being overthrown by theological argument; its assumptions about the society within which the churches were gathered were being invalidated by the growing influence of the cash nexus.

The corrosive effects of the decision of the Boston council in the matter of Mr. Fitch’s dismissal could be observed in an account published in the Courant two months later describing rituals surrounding the funeral of the Pope and the election of his successor. Such stories customarily came freighted with ritual animadversions against Papist superstition and authoritarianism; the Courant essay of February 1, 1725 was no exception. What was unusual was the condemnation of Protestant churches for similar shortcomings. The author condemned as vanity the tendency to judge the worth of a minister by the size and wealth of his congregation and compared such an attitude to Roman Catholic practice. Addressing himself to “some Protestant Divines, who roar aloud at the Degeneracy of the Times on Account of their Want of Respect from the People, as they term it,” (a reference to the Mather faction) he chided them for belaboring those who “keep them in constant pay for preaching to them once or twice a Week.”

The shock felt by some at the decision of the Boston council to let Mr. Fitch go to Portsmouth can be detected in the comparison between the simony of Rome and the growing tendency to evaluate the worth of a New England minister by the cash value of his living. Readers of the Courant could have had little doubt as to the identity of the chief roarer among the Boston clergy.

The view from the other side of the question differed in emphasis more than substance. Cotton Mather, sued by Andrew Faneuil in connection with debts against an estate

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599 NEC, February 1, 1725.
of which he was the executor, had testified to the Suffolk Court in July of 1721 that he was in considerable poverty, without "a Foot of Land in all the World. My Salary is not enough to support me comfortably, I meet with many Wants and Straits." Like other less famous pastors, Cotton Mather found himself squeezed by inflation and his congregation seemed indifferent to the financial status of its minister.

Not every attempt by a church council at resolving disputes over the summoning of a minister were unsuccessful. The Courant of July 17, carried an account of the satisfactory resolution of conflict at Dedham. The Dedham church, being "strictly Congregational," had asked the Boston pastor, Thomas Foxcroft, to send a delegation to assist them in resolving their dispute over the choice of new minister. The delegation was successful in achieving an amicable resolution to the crisis. The dominating fact in resolution of the conflict in Dedham lay in the nature of the delegation sent from Boston. The leader of the delegation, Nathaniel Byfield, was the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Allied politically with Elisha Cooke, Byfield was related by marriage to some of the leading families in the Bay. Townsend and Allen were also members of the Council. The Dedham dispute was resolved not by ministers exercising pastoral guidance but by powerful politicians adept at negotiation and compromise. A religious dispute was calmed by secular techniques.

In the new climate in which secular power and influence could translate into religious authority, either by a wealthy congregation wishing to lure away the minister of a poorer church or by powerful Bostonians like Byfield and Townsend who could invoke the

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600 Quoted in Silverman, Life, 346.

601 Byfield had emigrated to New England in 1674. In the following year he had married Deborah Clarke. A daughter by this marriage was the wife of Lieutenant Governour Tailer. In 1717 Byfield married Sarah Leverett, the youngest daughter of Harvard's President Leverett. His grandson and heir was the son-in-law of Governor Belcher. Details of Byfield's life are to be found in the funeral sermon published by Charles Chauncy, Nathaniel's Character Display'd. Mr. Chauncy's Sermon on the Death of Judge Byfield, Preface by Thomas Foxcroft, (Boston: 1733, Evans, 3640) 33-35.
deference due them to settle a dispute in a country congregation, it was only natural that influence should also flow in the other direction, that men should seek to use religious status for political advantage. To the Courant, the conversion of religious status into financial or political power was particularly alarming because it threatened to overshadow the merits of reasoned argument, natural law and individual talent with influence derived from the emotional power of tradition. The Couranteers perceived Cotton Mather's attempt to lead Boston's physicians in the inoculation controversy as such an illegitimate extension of religious authority into the sphere of medical science and attacked his efforts on that basis. In May of 1722, after the inoculation controversy had largely died away with the epidemic which provoked it, the issue of political influence and religious status reappeared when, shortly before elections, Paul Dudley made a lavish gift of plate to his church at Roxbury.

The Dudleys and the Mathers had been enemies during the governorship of Paul's father. At that time, Cotton Mather had collaborated in a pamphlet published in England in which Dudley was accused of trading with the French during Queen Anne's War. Subsequent events brought Paul Dudley and Cotton Mather into alliance in an assault on Harvard College. Mather had been a bitter enemy of Leverett since being passed over as president in favor of the latter, a personal injury (as Mather conceived it) to which was added his distaste for Leverett's worldly and Anglican leanings. Paul Dudley joined with Mather in opposing Leverett when his brother, William, was rejected as treasurer of the college. Paul Dudley was also the leader of the court party in provincial politics and the opponent of Elisha Cooke, whose seat on the Royal Council Dudley occupied when Shute negated

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602 THE DEPLORABLE State of New-England, by Reason of a Covetous and Treacherous Governour, and Pusillanimous Counsellors. With a Vindication of the Honourable Mr. Higginson, Mr. Mason, and Several Other Gentlemen from the Scandalous and Wicked Accusation of the Votes Ordered by them to be Published in their Boston News-Letter. To Which is Added an Account of the Shameful Miscarriage of the Late Expedition Against Port-Royal. The first edition of this work was published in London in 1708. During the Shute crisis a second edition was published in Boston in 1721 (Evans, 2214).
Cooke's election by the house. Animosity between Cooke and Dudley was fueled by financial competition as well. Both men were heavily invested in timber rights in the Maine forests and when Dudley attempted to gain election to the Massachusetts house as the representative of the Sagadahoc district, Cooke's faction questioned the legitimacy of his land titles. Dudley withdrew rather than face the risk of having the Cooke-controlled legislature declare his titles invalid. By family tradition and political alliance, Paul Dudley was well cast as an enemy of the Courant.

Opposition between Dudley and the Couranteers had a proximate cause in the matter of John Checkley's publication of Charles Leslie's Anglican tract *A Short and Easie Method with the Deists.* Dudley led the fight to suppress the work, causing the council to declare that it "would occasion Division & Contentions among His Majesty's good Subjects of this Province." As elections approached the Courant attacked Dudley for attempting to influence his tenants' votes and, on the eve of the voting, criticized his gift to his church. The Courant's account of the incident, datelined Roxbury, May 7, 1722, claimed that public gifts by covetous men were intended to help their personal advancement since "No covetous Person will use more Water to fetch the Pump, than he designs to pump out again." Immediately beneath this general observation was the news item, datelined Roxbury, May 8, that "This Day William Dudley, Esq; was chosen Representative for this Town."

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603 The Sagadahoc incident is related by Hutchinson, vol. 2, 193.

604 Charles Leslie, *The Religion of Jesus Christ the Only True Religion, or, a Short and Easie Method with the Deists,* (Boston: Thomas Fleet, 1719, Evans, 2029).


606 In NEC, April 30, 1722, Matthew Adams, writing as Elisha Trueman, made this charge, describing Dudley as one who "...commonly goes with one Eye half shut, and his Mouth screw'd up into a whistling Posture."
The Courant's barb hit a tender spot and on May 21, 1722, the Boston Gazette carried an advertisement datelined Roxbury, May 19, 1722, which denied any connection between the gift and the provincial elections. Claiming that Dudley regarded his detractors in the Courant as no more than "mastiffs barking at the Moon," the author of the letter expressed his outrage at the way in which the Courant had linked the essay on self-serving politicians with the news of the donation.

The author of this rebuttal made much of the point that although Dudley was about to give a gift of plate, he had not yet done so — in fact he might withdraw his gift because of the scandal and criticism raised by the Courant's report. The defense testified to the efficiency of the Courant's network of sources and to the influence which the paper had on public opinion in political matters. The Dudley faction may have wished that the readers of the paper shared its view that the Courant was nothing more than dogs barking at the moon, but evidently this was not the case, for the detail in which the advertisement denied the charges suggested that the paper's accusations were having some effect. In the face of the essential accuracy of the Courant's account, Dudley's defenders were reduced to quibbling about whether the gift had already been transferred and attempting to discredit the Courant's story by making it appear sacrilegious. Damaged by the facts, Dudley's party attempted to discredit the story by reminding readers of the Courant's reputation as the enemy of religion and to convict the writer of the story of a "verbal sacrilege" by discussing communion utensils in a political essay.

The weakness of Dudley's defense provoked the Courant to pursue its attack on his gift and the politics of which it was an example. The issue of May 28, 1722 treated readers to an exposition of the Real Whig political theory which the paper adopted for its own, reminding readers that rulers who exceed their lawful powers arrogate to themselves a supremacy that belongs to God alone and in so doing "prostitute Government to the Service of their own Lusts." The key concept in this passage was the separation between the unlimited power of God and the limited power which was conceded to government by its
subjects. The issue of the ruler and the ruled was presented in clearly gendered language in which the former was male and the latter, female. Arbitrary or despotic government was described in sexual terms of rapine and prostitution, its motive the satisfaction of the lusts of the ruler upon the persons of the ruled. The separation of civil authority from religious tradition was essential to the Real Whig strategy of limiting the power of government over citizens. The strategy behind the Dudley gift was based on the traditional interrelationship and cooperation between state and steeple. In attempting to sever that connection through the power of the press, the Courant, in the eyes of traditionalists, weakened the power of religion as well as the that of the civil magistrate. Such reasoning led Dudley's defender to the clumsy concept of verbal sacrilege, which the Courant was quick to exploit. Observing that "verbal sacrilege" was an entirely new crime, the paper suggested that Dudley supporters would soon propose "that a Law may be made against Verbal Riots &c. lest the Tongues of the People (by contracting a vicious Habit) should turn Thieves and rob the Churches." 607

Besides turning the quibble about whether the gift had actually been made against Dudley, the Courant managed cleverly to focus the argument on the ever-popular topic of the government's repression of traditional liberties. Although the election was over and Dudley victorious, the Courant kept the story alive as a gadfly to his faction. In the August 6, 1722 issue, the paper re-printed an account from the London press of the gift by Sir James Thornhill of an altar piece said to be worth £300 to the town of Weymouth and observed:

By this Paragraph we see it is no new Thing for the Churches to receive Presents before the Time of Elections, tho' we do not yet find that the publishing such things in England is accounted by the generous Donors a Verbal Sacrilege.

607 NEC, May 28, 1722.
The purpose of the Courant's attack was not simply to discredit Dudley for the gift but to persuade its readers away from the habit of deference which made the gift an effective tactic. The presence of the silver communion service on the table used for the Lord's Supper would be a continuing reminder that Dudley was, by birth and position, a member of the "speaking aristocracy" of his congregation. The political benefits which accrued from his position derived from the widespread assumption that "social eminence and political influence had a natural affinity to each other." The Courant's preamble on the derivative and limited power of government was intended to enable the reader to discredit the notion of verbal sacrilege. It was in passages like this one, where by application of Real Whig theory to New England affairs the Courant offered its readers a new concept of political authority, that the paper played an important role in forming the ideology which members of the next generation, men like Otis and Adams, grew up accepting as a matter of fact.

The Dudley gift was part of the politics of deference to which the Courant was strenuously opposed. Dudley's political strength was based on family prestige at least as much as individual merit. The easy familiarity with which the Dudleys blended political and religious alliances descended from immemorial tradition in which secular and ecclesiastical status were integrated. The gift of communion plate by one of the wealthiest members of the church was an act of aristocratic largesse which, by stimulating a traditional reaction of deference, facilitated the giver's election to the General Court. By the Courant's analysis, the Dudley gift was not at act of piety but an investment in a religious enterprise that would yield political profit. The Couranteers supported the rationalization of religion; however the

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608 "A traditional aristocracy did not in fact exist; but the assumption that superiority was indivisible, that social eminence and political influence had a natural affinity to each other, did. The colonists instinctively conceded to the claims of the well-born and rich to exercise public office, and in this sense politics remained aristocratic." (Bailyn, "Experience" 350).

609 "Major attributes of enlightened politics had developed naturally, spontaneously, early in the history of the American colonies, and they existed as simple matters of social and political fact on the eve of the Revolution." (Bailyn, "Experience," 349).
secular impulse that permitted rationalization also opened the way to commercialization, the establishment of a commodity value for religious activity. The Dudley gift, like Portsmouth's blandishments to Mr. Fitch, raised the threat that the economic elite could increase their control over religious affairs in a society in which money was talking ever more loudly.

In the summer following Dudley's re-election, Congregational churches of New England were rocked by the declaration of Timothy Cutler, president of Yale College, that he considered his ordination invalid and was resigning his post in order to seek Anglican ordination in England. Alarming as Cutler's defection was in itself, his action seemed to friend and foe alike to be part of a larger groundswell of Anglicanism. Cutler's decision was shared by several other ministers in the Connecticut colony and the Anglican Church seemed to be gaining adherents throughout New England. Immediately following the notice of Cutler's announcement, the Courant printed the intelligence from Boston that "Some Gentlemen of the Church of England have lately purchas'd a Piece of Ground in the North Part of Boston, in order to erect a New Church there." For over a year, the Cutler apostasy was one of the news stories to which the Courant gave frequent attention. To the Anglicans among the Couranteers the Cutler story carried the gratifying implication that their views were gaining acceptance, especially among the better educated and better off. To others the shocking events in New Haven raised questions about the validity of the New England Way and the legitimacy of beliefs which formed the foundation of provincial society.

The Cutler affair was profoundly unsettling to the Mathers. Cotton recorded in his diary the optimistic opinion that although the ministers "have made a great Noise at home, as well as here... they signify very Little, and can draw no Disciples after them..." His

610 NEC, September 24, 1722.
prediction that the apostates would serve "as a praeservative which antidotes our people against a Church, that have such people for the Only Pillars of it" reflects the deep fear which the defection of such prestigious ministers provoked among orthodox New England leaders. As for Cotton's aged father, Increase, Edward Taylor, the minister-poet of Westfield wrote that "Cutler's Cutlary gave th' killing Stob" to that distinguished pillar of tradition, who died in his son's arms the twenty-third of August, a little over a month after Cutler's horrendous pronouncement. Speculation was widespread that Cotton Mather, responsible for Elihu Yale's subsidy of the college and frustrated in his quest for the Harvard presidency, would, as the Courant reported on the October 1, 1722, "take the Charge of the College at Newhaven, in the room of the Reverend Mr. Timothy Cutler who has resign'd that Place." The death of his father and other personal reasons caused Mather to remain in Boston, but he played a leading part in the defense of "the good old cause, for which our fathers came into this land."

The Courant's first story on the Cutler apostasy occurred in the October 1, 1722, issue. The lead essay of the paper was based on an advertisement for a mysterious religious prophet "lately come from England holding forth at the Grey-hound in Roxbury." Commenting on the amazement which the description of his deeds was causing among the country people, the author informed readers that "An honest Neighbour of mine will undertake to demonstrate, that there has been no such Person in the World since the Apostles Days and concludes, it is nothing but a Pun upon Mr. C---r and the rift of the Ministers at Connecticut, that have lately turn'd Churchmen."


612 Quoted in Silverman, Life, 367. The phrase "good old cause" had a long history of being applied to the Roundhead side of the English Civil War.
The confusion of simple country people at Cutler’s declaration was the subject of a parody in the issue of October 8, 1722, in which a Jethro Standfast recounted in rustic spelling his concern with Cutler’s declaration:

Fokes sa, they have raun up a riting and find it wharin tha declar, that all owr Churches ar no Churches, and owr Ministurs no Ministurs, and that tha haue no more AThorriti to administrur the Ordenaneses than so mani Porturs or Plow-loggers: sum of owr Pepel danse ater thare Pipe, and tel us that owr Ministurs formorla ware ordan’d by Midwiuses and Coblurs, but others sa that this is folce Doktrin, and belongs to the Church of Rume....

Beneath the yokel pose of Jethro Standfast lay a concise statement of the most threatening aspect of Cutler’s announcement: that the symbolic interpretation of Apostolic succession which the Puritans adopted from Calvin might be an error and the more literal Anglican interpretation correct. Were the High Church Anglican view to prevail, few if any of New England’s ministers could claim valid ordination and the good old cause would indeed, in Mather’s phrase, “sink and be deserted.”613 Not only Congregationalism but all Dissenting churches were threatened by this possibility and Real Whigs would find their definition of the state fatally compromised if it were agreed that:

in ordur to Salushun, we must belene the unenterupted Sukeshus of Bishops from the Upostles, and the Heredere Endefezable Rite of Prenses, and that Parlementare Rite is a mere Nothun....

The matter of lay ordination versus what Mather in exasperation referred to as “that vile, senseless, wretched whimsy of an uninterrupted succession,” comprehended in stark outline the issue of authority so central to the concerns of the Courant.614 The election of the minister by the congregation represented the “derivative and limited” power of authority; the concept of apostolic succession, especially in the strict interpretation favored by High Churchmen and Rome, was an expression of the a priori concept of authority against which demands for inclusion were not merely futile but sinful. The civil counterpart of

613 Quoted by Silverman, Life, 367.
614 Quoted by Silverman, Life, 368.
apostolic succession was the divine right of kings, a theory excused from the British constitution with the last of the Stuarts. The return of Cutler and his associates to the Established Church was, on a superficial level, a turn towards a denomination made more fashionable by its official position in British culture; on a deeper level, their apostasy represented a return to an absolutist conception of authority and a repudiation of Whig-Dissenter political theories. Jethro Steadfast captured the discordant pull that the Cutler affair exercised on the minds of readers of the Courant. His ludicrous spelling and baldly unsophisticated summation of the issues parodied the rusticity of provincial New Englanders while, beneath the clownish surface his arguments went shrewdly to the heart of the matter in a way that summoned a rueful chuckle of agreement from the reader. The technique was one which Silence Dogood at her best used with more subtlety and which echoes down the pages of American literature in Mark Twain and Mr. Dooley. Forced to choose between the socially fashionable and the cause of individual liberty, the Courant came down squarely against Cutler despite the Anglican convictions many of the Couranteers.

From among the flood of writing in defense of Congregationalism the Courant picked pieces urging moderation, calm, and compromise. The issue of October 15, 1722 was largely devoted to an essay on the Cutler affair by one of the Couranteers whose central point was that many Anglican bishops did not go as far as Cutler in denying the validity of Presbyterian ordination. As the author of the essay phrased it, "The Rev. Ministers at Connecticut, mentioned in your last, are some of them my former Acquaintance, for whom I have a great Esteem, and am very sorry to see them take such large Steps, so as to far outgo many eminent Bishops." Here was a possible resolution to the problem which would allow readers of the Courant to enjoy the associations of loyalty and modernity of the Church of England without abandoning the democratic principles of Dissent. Cutler could be safely dismissed as a fanatical high flyer and the legitimacy of the Congregational churches of New England preserved by judicious moderation. The Matherian goal of
reproduction of the New England Way as a legitimate although separate branch of the established Church of England might yet be reached.

Cutler's abrupt rejection of his own religious heritage delivered a sharp jar to an ecumenical movement which had been gathering momentum in New England churches since the beginning of the century. The Anglicans among the Couranteers, influenced by the moderate Harris more than the contentious Checkley, chose to soothe rather than exult. By minimizing the points of difference between Anglican and Congregational views of ordination it might be possible to create a bridge over which many might cross. The reconciliation of church and chapel glimmered before the author of the October 15th piece with beguiling allure. The ecumenical spirit of the piece and the willingness to compromise which prompted a disavowal of Laud reflected yearnings for unity that were almost as nationalistic as theological. The author quoted King William on the necessity of "a Comprehension between Protestants" in which the only distinction to be observed is that which separates "those who were for the Protestant Religion and present Establishment; and those who mean a Papist Prince, and a French Government." Politics and the circle of enemies rather than theological differences became the focus of concern. Cutler's withdrawal from Congregational fellowship and his pilgrimage to England was a reversal of the separation affected by Thomas Hooker almost a century before; what made the discussion so different in tone was the great change in the position of religious doctrine in everyday life that had taken place in the intervening generations.

Matters had not proceeded so far along the lines of broadminded toleration that Cutler's decision could be accepted by either denomination with dispassion. Cutler's motives were questioned by many of his former co-religionists since, as a minister, he assented to Presbyterian doctrine at the time of his first ordination. The fact that Cutler was supported by wealthy Boston Anglicans also contributed to suspicion of his motives. Cutler was guided and financed by his sponsors through a rapid ordination in England complete with an honorary Oxford degree. He returned to his native land to assume the pas-
torate of the new Anglican church built in the North End to complement King's Chapel. To Congregational loyalists it seemed as if the blandishments of the Anglicans were little better than bribery.

Accusations of venality in the reception given Cutler by the Anglicans of Boston touched a sensitive spot among the Couranteers, whose involvement in King's Chapel made them liable to accusations not only of partiality but disloyalty. On October 22, 1722, the Courant defended Cutler's conversion against charges of self-interest with the somewhat lame observation that, according to the reasoning of his critics, no change of conviction could be considered legitimate "since to do so as an adult is ascribed to interests and to do so as a child to education." The essay closed with the ad hominem question to the author of an essay in the previous issue "Whether this Gentleman ought not to be out of Charity with his Wife for turning Church-Woman, who was a profess'd Dissenter, near of Kin to a dissenting Minister, and in close Communion with his Church before he marry'd her?" The Anglican Couranteers felt a certain degree of discomfort with the involvement of their co-religionists in the support of Mr. Cutler in his conversion. The Courant found the theological grounds for ecumenical toleration a more comfortable topic than the support given Cutler by Boston Anglicans and in the same October 22nd issue an author styling himself "an earnest Desirer of the peace of the Churches" hastened to supply additional examples of Anglican bishops upholding the validity of Presbyterian ordination.

Fascination with the social chaos which, at least in theory, could issue from acceptance of Cutler's views would not go away. On October 29 the Courant contained a letter signed Nausawlander in which Cutler and his associates were accused of tender-mindedness and arrogance for assuming that Congregational ordination was invalid. Warning of the chaos which could result if such a view were adopted in New England, the author warned gravely that "those Husbands and Wives who have been married by them ... will take the Liberty...to separate one from the other." He raised the issue of "those Persons do who have been christened, alias couzened, in plain English, cheated by their Ministry, who

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had no Commission to baptize" and suggested facetiously that they would be inclined to
desert their Congregational churches for the Anabaptists.

The possibility of anarchy which Nausawlander raised was safely located in the
realm of impossibility: baptism and marriage were the two ordinances of the Christian reli-
gion that Anglicans and Congregationalists — even Catholics — agreed did not require
an ordained minister. 615 Underlying the popular concern about the breakup of the family
were Presbyterian ordination to be widely considered invalid, lay a deeper concern about a
world turned upside down, and where denial of traditional authority might lead. This had
been a perennial worry among English Dissenters from the beginning and much of the ve-
hemence which the Puritans of New England exhibited towards Anabaptists and Quakers,
groups to their left on the spectrum of church polity, can be explained as the product of a
fear that Reformation, once started, could not be stopped. The concern expressed by
Samuel Willard about the Charlestown Anabaptists in 1681 shone through Nausawlander’s
flippant treatment of the sect forty years later. When and how to stop the dismantling of
traditional authority was a question of which the Courant was well aware but to which no
easy answer could be given.

In late October of 1722, Timothy Cutler and his associates arrived in Boston on
their way to London and three of them, James Wetmore, Samuel Johnson, and Daniel
Brown, took the opportunity to justify their decision in a letter published in the Courant on
November 5th. 616 The authors of the letter claimed to be writing in refutation of the unjust
attacks made upon Cutler and them in the previous week’s News Letter by the Mather fac-

615 Marriage is a contract performed between the consenting parties which the presiding
minister merely blesses. Any Christian may baptize another. The rituals surrounding
marriage and baptism, while sanctioned by tradition, are not essential to validity. The point
was that in neither Anglican nor Congregational doctrine would marriages or baptisms
performed by Cutler before his Episcopal ordination have been considered invalid.

616 At the outset, seven ministers including Cutler had declared their ordination invalid.
Three of these withdrew their objections under entreaty by the college trustees.
tion. Their two principal points addressed the concerns of New England readers. First, they denied the charge that “to have declared in favour of the Church of England, had been as bad as to have declared for Popery, or something worse,” and insisted that they sought to make only a modest correction in their own credentials. Second, they asserted that Cutler never denied the validity of Presbyterian ordination and that all four of them subscribed strictly to the Thirty-Nine Articles. In their moderate stance and reassuring tone the New Haven ministers reinforced the position of the Courant that adjustments such as Cutler proposed for himself could be carried out without initiating an irreversible slide into anarchy or papism. The calibration of ideology into degrees, the idea that rationally controlled change was possible, that there existed an alternative to the all-or-nothing absolutism of undifferentiated authority was, for the Courant, the central point in the controversy, not the technical details of the apostolic succession.

The departure of the Cutler group for England caused a lull in the consternation his actions had provoked in the New England churches, although the expansion of the Anglican church in seaport towns continued to cause alarm among those who saw New England tradition undermined by a new wave of conformity. On February 18, 1723, the Courant reported that “Dr. Williams, Master of the Grammar School in School-Street, is chosen Rector of Yale College in Connecticut.” As the dust raised by the furor the previous summer settled, Cutler’s opponents recovered their wits and went over to the attack. The March 11, 1723, issue contained a poem by Major James Fitch “occasion’d by the late Revolution at Connecticut.” Using the infamous Kitelick mode of jangling verse preferred by a number of contributors of satire, Fitch attacked Couranteer John Checkley for his involvement at New Haven and suggested that Cutler had in fact joined the circle of New England’s enemies by assisting the Cutler apostasy, as the New Haven ministers “may to the Pretender and to the High Church fly.” In addition to the circle of enemies argument that associated Anglicans with the Pretender, Fitch’s satire ascribed a pecuniary motive to Cutler’s decision and in the final verses, the poet assumed the posture of a defrauded consumer whose
financial contribution had been mis-spent. When the threat of widespread defection subsided, Cutler's opponents abandoned the issue of social chaos and returned to a more modest and more believable attack on his motivation. The association with High Churchmen and the Pretender, although made less credible by the statements of the Cutler group before their departure, continued to be the fundamental argument against them by orthodox New Englanders. The loyalty issue was made more acute by the conspiracy of the Bishop of Rochester, whose ineffectual intrigues with the Pretender caused a sensation in England at the time of Cutler's arrival. That this treason was undertaken by a High Churchman and not a Dissenter both confirmed colonial prejudices and heightened by contrast the appearance of New England loyalty.

Cutler's ordination was reported in the Courant of April 29th with the news that "Mr. Cutler is design'd for this Place, and has a Salary settled on him of 70 l. Sterling per Annum," a modest living and far less than the £4 a week paid Cotton Mather by his congregation.617 The same issue of the paper reported the success of another traveller from New England, Samuel Shute. The Shute story had potentially ominous implications for Massachusetts as the rebellion in the House which had occasioned Shute's departure might provoke new restrictions on the autonomy of the province. "We hear his Excellency has wrote Word to the Lieutenant Governour," the Courant reported, "that he expects to be here sooner than he intended when he left us."

Both Shute and Cutler were eventually to have their credentials confirmed by the British Establishment; in neither case, however, did the feared loss of local control occur.618 On July 22, 1722, the Courant reported that "the University of Oxford have pre-

617 Silverman, Life, 194.

618 NEC, June 10, 1723 continued to link the imminent departure of Shute and Cutler in a late bulletin announcing "the arrival of Capt. Barlow in 7 weeks from London, with whom came the Rev. Mr. Usher, Minister of the Episcopal Church at Bristol; Mr. Brown, who was designed for that Place, being dead of the Small Pox in London. We have Advice,
sented the Rev. Mr. Cutler, lately come from New-England to receive Episcopal Ordination, with the Degree of Dr. of Divinity; and the Rev. Mr. Johnson another of those Gentlemen, with the Degree of Master of Arts." The arrival of Cutler and his surviving associates in Boston was noted in the issue of September 30, 1722. On December 30th the paper reported that Cutler had delivered the opening sermon in the new Episcopal church in the North End to which he had been appointed pastor.

New England Congregationalism survived the apostasy of Timothy Cutler although the anglicizing tendencies of which his conversion was but a part left a lasting mark on religious observance. The Courant, some of whose writers were at the center of the controversy, treated the incident with restraint and calls for moderation. Had the paper remained in the hands of John Checkley, the conversion of Timothy Cutler would doubtless have been presented with greater stridency as a refutation of the false doctrines of the Dissenters. During the crisis, the Courant covered the issue with evenhandedness and a complete lack of proselytizing zeal. Disdaining fears that New England society could be subverted by the issue of apostolic succession, the paper satirized the question of Presbyterian ordination as a preoccupation of plow-joggers and cobblers and upheld the right of New Englanders to make rational adjustments of church polity without fear of anarchy or papist domination. Although the growing popularity of the Anglican church accorded well with sentiments of pride and patriotism, the traditional nature of episcopal authority remained very much at variance with the thinking of the Real Whigs upon which the Couranteers fastened their demands for inclusion. As a result, the Courant remained a detached observer of the revolution at New Haven.

that the Bishop of London is dead, that His Excellency our governour designs to return very speedily; and that Mr. Cutler and Mr. Johnson were to set sail the Beginning of this Month."
The role of the Anglican Church in Massachusetts was debated in the Courant as a result of a tax dispute that arose in Bristol in February, 1723. As the paper reported in a story dated February 11th, the Reverend Mr. Orum, Episcopal minister at Bristol presented a petition to the Lieutenant Governor on behalf of twelve members of that church imprisoned for refusal to pay rates for the support of the town's Presbyterian minister. The Lieutenant Governor "promis'd Mr. Orum to use his Interest for their Relief at the next Meeting of the General Assembly, the men being imprison'd by Vertue of the Laws of the Province." Population growth and the even more rapid growth of religious pluralism had made the Massachusetts law requiring tax support of the first church in the town unpopular in areas where the growth of an Anabaptist or Quaker population made a Congregational church an established church comprised of only a minority of the population. In the case of the Anglican church at Bristol, the effect of the law was to disestablish what was the established church of the British Crown. On February 18, the Courant reported that "The 12 Men (mention'd in our last) belonging to the Episcopal Church at Bristol, have been let out of Prison upon paying their Rates to the Presbyterian Minister of that place," but the legal issue remained unresolved and the tax acts of the Massachusetts legislature were appealed to the Lords of Trade.

By the time the case reached London, the Bristol Anglicans had been joined by Quakers from Dartmouth and Tiverton, towns where their denomination was in the majority. The Quakers also objected to tax assessments for the maintenance of "a Presbyterian, whom they call an Orthodox Minister."619 The requirements of toleration had become accommodated within the Puritan tradition of the church-centered town by compromise, affording tax support to the denomination of the majority of residents in each town. This solution worked reasonably well when the church of the majority was Presbyterian or Bap-

619 NEC, September 14, 1724.
tist, denominations with which the Congregational establishment of Massachusetts felt comfortable. Quakers and Anglicans, denominations significantly to the left and right of the provincial establishment respectively, posed a problem for the provincial legislature. Exclusion of these churches from tax support, especially in towns where one of them was the denomination of the majority, amounted to legal recognition of Congregationalism as the established religion of the province. At stake was not only the question of religious toleration and pluralism but the historic identity of Massachusetts and the degree to which indigenous Puritan tradition could withstand the increasing force of imperial centripetalism.

Not surprisingly, the Quakers and Anglicans won their tax case on appeal to the Lords of Trade. In a ruling in council on June 2, 1724, the Massachusetts tax assessments on the Quakers of Dartmouth and Tiverton were overturned and the non-cooperating officials jailed in New Bristol were ordered released. The ruling of the Lords of Trade was a significant victory for the Anglicans Church in Massachusetts and the presentation of the news in the Courant of September 14, 1724, had a certain gloating air. By way of introduction, the paper defined the tax case in very large terms and interpreted the rulings as a comeuppance to the ministerial elite of the province and their supporters on the Council. "The mighty Dispute that is now upon the Carpet," the Courant observed, is "Whether or not, the Province Laws, made by Virtue of our charter, are equal to Act of Parliament."

The vindication of the Quakers brought a significant extension of toleration to Massachusetts legislation for the tax support of local churches. Quaker practices were derived from the radical conception of authority of the Commonwealthmen and carried the democratic principles of Congregationalism a significant step further. The Quakers steadfastness in upholding their religious independence drew praise from the Courant; other aspects of Quaker practice received favorable notice in the paper not because of the specifics of Quaker doctrine, but because the values of self-control, individual autonomy and limited
authority which the Couranteers detected in Quaker society were their own most cherished values.\textsuperscript{620}

The \textit{Courant} expressed approval of the Quakers although admiration was usually balanced by observations that members of the sect were subject to the same vices and foibles as their more doctrinally conservative fellows. In an essay on pride in the August 20, 1722 issue, for example, the \textit{Courant} observed that “the Sect which we distinguish by the Name of Quakers (who would be though Eminent for their Humility, and mortification to the World,) are as proud of their plain Attire, as any others are by that which appears Modish and Fantastic.” The observation that Quakers were as capable as any others of human failings was a way of denying that any spiritual grace or supernatural assistance was responsible for Quaker achievements in favor of a rational analysis of the merits of Quaker practices.

In the \textit{Courant} of May 13, 1723, at the height of Quaker defiance at Dartmouth and Tiverton, a correspondent writing under the name of Amindar offered a lengthy apologia for the New England Quakers. The central theme of Amindar’s essay was that the Quakers had most fully achieved the goal of happiness. “I profess I never met with a People so generally and universally happy as the Sect of the People called Quakers,” Amindar asserted, “nor will it seem strange to a considering Person, if I pronounce them the happiest People under Heaven.

\textsuperscript{620} The values which the Couranteers saw reflected in Quaker life drew part of their effectiveness from the heightened gender differentiation to be observed in Quaker polity. Landes has described what seems to be a parallel phenomenon in France, where, she observes “the early modern classical revival --with its political linguistic, and stylistic overtones-- invested public action with a decidedly masculinist ethos. Curiously, this was compounded, not undermined, by the eighteenth-century bourgeois repudiation of aristocratic splendor and artifice in favor of the values of nature, transparency, and law, ... In their preferred version of the classical universe, bourgeoisie men discovered a flattering reflection of themselves --one that imaged men as properly political and women as naturally domestic.” (Landes, \textit{Woman in the Public Sphere}, 4-5).
According to the Courant, the first cause of Quaker happiness was their worldly prosperity: "Poor Quakers are scarcer than poor Jews; not one to be found in an Age: They all enjoy a competent Portion of the good things of this Life and God's Blessing with them; so that in this Respect they are far happier than any People I know of." Amindar cited other contributing factors: "they are sensible, that War is a chargeable, toilsome, dangerous thing... you shall seldom see two of the Brethren at Variance in your Courts of Judicature... good Order and Mildness in their Speech is no small part of their Happiness."

According to Amindar, the social felicity of the Quakers was a product of the deportment, what we might call the self-image, of individual Quaker men and women. The author praised the wisdom of eschewing the trends of fashion, for "how many Perplexities and Difficulties do the Quakers hereby avoid?" Plain dress was associated with modest behavior and self-control: "The Cleanliness of their Women is admirable. Who ever saw a Quaker-Slut? A Quaker-Slut! 'Tis a Contradiction in Terms, there's no such thing in Nature: They are all (even to a Woman) from the old and tough, to the young and tender, as clean as a Penny."

The modesty of Quaker women, according to the article, was paralleled by the denial of hat honor among Quaker men. Women avoided the vanity and status competition of modish dress, men removed themselves from the rituals of hierarchy and deference in their social relationships. The refusal of Quaker men to exhibit deference implied no insult, according to this writer, because "they respect you as much in their Hearts as any one else." The secret of the Quaker religion was to be found in the character of their religious study and expressed in their sermons which the Courant's author characterized as "a compleat Body of honest, plain divinity; and were it faithfully commended on, would be more than sufficient for the Conduct of Life."

From the viewpoint of the Courant, the victory of the Dartmouth and Tiverton Quakers in the tax cases of 1722 and 1723 was more than a victory over the established Congregational orthodoxy, it was the vindication of a different concept of authority and of
a different approach to social relations. The fundamental cause of Quaker differentness was the abandonment of hierarchical authority and the intellectual tradition, the "fine metaphysical Intricacies of the Schools," upon which that authority was founded. Absent the force of traditional authority in religion, Quakers were free to withdraw from hierarchies of social deference, expressed by women through fashion (established by those at the top of the social scale and imitated as their finances allowed by those below) and by men through rituals such as hat honor. Freed from authoritarian constraints, Quakers became immune to the temptations of anger. They foreswore war with outside groups and avoided contention with each other. The result was a rational organization whose greater efficiency created a happier society. Quaker life, as the Courant described it, was a model for enlightened men and women. The victory of the Quakers in the tax battle of 1722-23 was a significant victory for the principles of rational authority, individual conscience, and a more efficient, happier society.

The presentation of Quaker practice made by Amindar omitted three important points on which the Couranteers differed from the Quakers. The first was any mention of the importance of the Spirit and the role of religious inspiration in Quaker belief. Except for the praise given to their practical sermons, the Courant's article overlooked the fact the Quakers were a religious sect; instead, they were presented as a social utopia. Second, Amindar made no mention of the Quaker doctrine of the spiritual equality of men and women or of the elements of church polity designed to implement that ideal. Quaker women were praised for their cleanliness, simplicity, and modesty. The authority of the women's meeting and the institutionalized equality of women was ignored entirely. Finally, the Courant's exposition omitted any reference to the centrality of family and the power of family (but not patriarchal) authority in controlling the younger generation. Amindar simply

621 NEC, May 13, 1723.
ignored the points at which Quaker practice departed from the ideals of the Courant because the point of the article was not to present a balanced analysis of Quaker practices but to hold up the Quakers as an illustration of the values of the Couranteers.

The question raised by the Courant in the Quaker tax case as to "whether any sort of Sect or Party in Religion among the Dissenters, is established in this Province by Virtue of our Laws" surfaced in August of 1724, with conviction in Judge Byfield's court in Bristol of the Rev. John Usher, an Anglican minister, for marrying a couple whose names had not been previously entered in the books of the town clerk as required by Massachusetts statute. Usher became an object of sympathy for those who felt that his Anglican affiliation was responsible for his prosecution because the registration requirement which he was convicted of violating was not required in England. Byfield, a pillar of his Congregational church and the Old Charter Party, may well have been influenced by personal opinion, but he also had the facts of law on his side; many legal requirements in Massachusetts were different from those of English counties and, as long as they were within the scope of the province charter and were not disallowed by the Lords of Trade, were valid nonetheless.

The provocative efforts of Mr. Usher and his supporters to bring on a crisis over the status of the Anglican Church in Massachusetts got no support from the Courant. In the issue of August 17th, a letter signed H.H. — in all probability written by the Rev. Henry Harris, assistant rector of King's Chapel, Boston — placed the paper unequivocally on the side of Judge Byfield: The Courant went on to claim that Usher's tactics

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622 This trial was one of the last presided over by the aging Judge Byfield in Bristol, where he was one of the founding Proprietors. Byfield moved to Boston and joined Thomas Foxcroft's First Church of Boston. He led the delegation to Dedham in 1725 referred to above and sat as a judge in the Court of Common Pleas for Suffolk County from his return to Boston in 1725 until his death in 1733. Byfield also served several times as Speaker of the House and was a prominent member of Cooke's Old Charter Party.

623 My ascription of the letter to Harris, based on its moderate tone and the signature H.H., must be weighed against the published denial in the Courant of August 24, 1724 that "Whereas a certain Clergyman in the Town of Boston, is by some thought to be the
were not endorsed by English church authorities and quoted a pastoral letter, whose views were very much in accord with the paper’s own, in which Anglican ministers in America were instructed “to confine themselves to their proper Business as Ministers of the Gospel.”

The spokesman for the Courant underscored again the way in which the paper’s support for the Anglican Church differed from the authoritarianism of the Tory Party. The church was valued for its patriotic associations and its reputation for tolerance in contrast to the fanaticism — real or imagined — of the Dissenters. When Anglican partisans emphasized conformity and the unity of civil and religious authority, the Courant opposed them with arguments similar to, although less vehement than, those they used against the Massachusetts establishment lead by Cotton Mather. It was the moderation of Harris rather than the zeal of Checkley that presented the Anglican position for the Courant.

Usher was not without his defenders; the following week the lead essay of the Courant, signed by Orthodoxus, asked Mr. H. H. a series of rhetorical questions designed to vindicate the marriage performed in Bristol. The first two of the five questions established the constitutional basis for Usher’s defense:

1. Whether the Church of England, as established in England, is established in the Plantations?

2. Whether there be any thing in our charter, that prohibits the making any Laws repugnant to the Laws of England?

Author of the Letter in our last Paper, sign’d H.H. relating to Mr. Usher. These are therefore to give Notice, that no Clergyman of any Denomination, either directly or indirectly, was concern’d in writing or publishing the said Letter.” It is plausible that Harris was the author and that the retraction was forced upon him by his immediate superior, the Rev. Samuel Miles, Rector of King’s Chapel who, like Governor Shute and other prominent Anglicans, had no desire to see internecine quarreling among Churchmen in the pages of the notorious Courant.

624 NEC, August 24, 1724.
Orthodoxus, anticipating a yes answer to these questions, closed with the inquiry
"What may be the meaning the Word Orthodox in our Law Book, and whether it has the
same meaning with the word Orthodox in the Laws of England?" Orthodoxus made a case
for what might be called the Tory position on the Usher affair. He insisted upon conformity
and the uniformity of established church supremacy throughout England and the planta-
tions. Such an interpretation was at variance with Whig emphasis on local control and
compromise. It was on this point in the debate about the status of the Anglican Church in
Massachusetts that the Couranteers drew the line between the patriotic Low Church of the
Real Whigs and the despotic High Church of the Tories, High Flyers and Jacobites.

In the issue of September 7, 1724, a writer signing himself Philodes sought to an-
swer the questions posed by Orthodoxus concerning the Usher case in such a way as to
comprehend the issues raised by the taxation of the Quakers as well. To the charge that
Massachusetts was disloyal because its laws differed from those of England in regard to the
registration of marriages, Philodes responded that "The Laws concerning Matrimony
established and executed in the Massachusetts Province of new England are the King's
Laws, and have actually had the Royal Approbation." Since all clerics were bound by the
Oath of Supremacy to obey the king, an Anglican minister who knowingly broke the laws
of the province of Massachusetts "proclaims at the same time his disposition to set the
Clergy above the King." In defending the prosecution of the Rev. Usher as an act of loy-
alty, the Courant followed the tactic of the Old Charter Party: profession of loyalty to the
king and demonstration that their faction — in this case Judge Byfield — carried out the
royal will while the opponents were violators of it.

Having settled the legality of the Usher prosecution, Philodes turned his attention to
the Quaker tax case, remarking that "since there has been another Case a little akin to this,
and likely very much to affect our publick circumstance; it may not be amiss for a private
Person to offer some Thoughts upon that also." In the tax case, Philodes asserted a parallel
argument: that the king's law had established both the tax and the ministry, therefore "The
Tax raised for this Purpose is raised for the King, and it is the King who gives it unto this Minister. The Quaker involves not himself in any Guilt by paying the Tax that is imposed upon him.” The arguments Philodes adduced were based on two principles that predominated in pre-Revolutionary American legal theory. First was the clear identification of provincial legislation with the will of the Sovereign; however much they might dissent from the errors of the king’s mistaken advisors or unconstitutional acts of Parliament, the colonial legislatures insisted on their loyalty to the king and the conformity of their laws to his will. Second, there was the assertion that local law rather than extension of English law was the appropriate expression of the royal will. The marriage laws of Massachusetts may have differed from those of England and the privileges of the Anglican church been quite differently interpreted, but the enactments of the provincial legislature had received royal approbation and were fully legitimate even though they differed in detail from the Parliamentary statutes covering comparable situations in England.625

The conflict over what prerogatives, if any, the Anglican Church was to enjoy in Massachusetts and, conversely, the degree to which the provincial legislature could establish Congregational or Presbyterian churches in towns where a majority of the ratepayers were otherwise minded, revealed how much dearer the Real Whig conception of authority was to the Couranteers than their attachment to the socially fashionable Church of England. The Anglican Church was closely associated with many of the ideas of cosmopolitan sophistication and polite learning cherished by the Couranteers in the field of arts and letters. In addition, the Dissenter cause was powerfully associated with Puritan authoritarianism in the person of Cotton Mather and the ministerial faction which he led against the Courant.

625 “The popular party, the men in the assembly who formed an alliance against the government when they thought it endangered the people, considered themselves loyal subjects of the crown. They simply turned the king’s premise to protect the people against royal officials when it seemed as if they were abusing their power. Under that pretext, the popular party was entitled to be assertive, litigious, and suspicious.” (Bushman, King, 89).
Yet in the Usher case, the Courant supported the prosecution because to do so was to uphold the authority of the provincial legislature and the Old Charter Party against a defendant with putative ties to the Tory High Church. When the same principles of local autonomy were used against the Quakers however, the Courant's response was ambivalent. The paper showed great admiration for the Quakers, who, on May 13, 1723, it had somewhat misleadingly described as enlightened rationalists, and came out strongly for their freedom from taxes for support of an orthodox minister in their community. At the point of an open break with the Old Charter Party in the Lower House however, the Courant drew back and offered the somewhat disingenuous rationalization that the tax levied by the legislature was paid to the king and not to the Presbyterian minister whose living it provided.

Running like a thread through the issues of state and steeple which the Courant covered as news stories was the obvious but unstated fact of the declining power and influence of the Mathers. The death of Increase was a sign of the passing of the old order and added to the family and financial burdens which weighed heavily upon his son. Careless aspersions upon the Anglican Church, prompted perhaps by resentments which he struggled to repress, caused Cotton Mather to be dropped from the inner circle of the Royal Council. When, in the summer of 1725, he attempted to rally the churches to the good old cause, he found New England no longer sympathetic.

The Courant of July 3, 1725, carried the text of a petition from Mather as head of a convocation of ministers held under his auspices on May 27th. Citing "the Great and Visible decay of Piety in the Country, and the Growth of many Miscarriages," and that "about

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626 Mather was publishing a series of articles on "The State of Religion" in the Boston News-Letter in which he reprinted extracts from an earlier work casting aspersions upon William of Orange and the Church of England for embracing him. These passages may have been inadvertently included in the newspaper series; they contributed little to the topic and were at best indiscreet in the contentious climate of 1722. He was humiliated by having Governor Shute suspend the series and the Council instruct him "look upon it as a piece of proper modesty, to be as little as possible in their presence." (Silverman, Life, 365).
Forty Five Years have rolled away since these Churches have seen any such Conventions, the petition requested the General Court to "Express their Concern for the great Interests of Religion in the Country, by calling the several Churches in the Province to meet by their Pastors and Messengers in a Synod" to consider "what may be the most Evangelical and Effectual Expedients to put a Stop unto those or the like Miscarriages."

Mather's petition suggested that, for all his opposition to the Old Charter Party, he was at heart an Old Charter man, for a synod of the type that he called for had not been held since the Andros Rebellion and the new charter issued subsequent to the Act of Toleration. Not only would the summoning of such a synod by the provincial assembly constitute the official establishment of Congregationalism in the province, the growing power and wealth of the Anglican Church, not to mention Quakers and Baptists, was in the forefront of the miscarriages which Mather intended the Synod to address. The petition had the devious naivete characteristic of much of Mather's maneuvering in the final years of his life; notwithstanding, the Council voted on June 3, 1725, that "the Synod and Assembly proposed in this Memorial will be agreeable to this Board." The Lower House, after long debate voted to defer consideration of the memorial until its next session.

The Anglican ministry was not to be outflanked by so transparent a maneuver. The front page of the Courant of July 10, 1725, was given over to the question of the Mather petition and a memorial by Boston's two Anglican pastors, Samuel Myles and Timothy Cutler, objecting to the plan. The Anglican objections struck first at the question of establishment in the Bay Colony. Noting that the purposes of the proposed Synod involved all the people of the province, they observed that "it is presumed to comprehend the Churches of England, wherein the Petitioners have no right to intermeddle." Citing the reference to the previous synod over forty five years ago, "when there was not Church of England in New England," the Anglicans voiced the suspicion that "the Synod petitioned for is to prejudice the People of the Land against the Church; and we have little Reason to expect, that in such a Synod she will be treated with that Tenderness and Respect which is due to an
Established Church." After protesting their equal concern with the purity of New England's faith, the ministers sprung their legal trap: royal edict having placed the American colonies under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London, it would be disloyal to the king "to encourage or call the said Synod, until the Pleasure of his Majesty shall be known therein."

Here was the challenge to the New England Way which the Mathers had been dodging for thirty-five years: if the churches of New England were truly in communion with the Church of England, then they must acknowledge their submission to the Anglican bishop appointed by the king to supervise them; if they insisted upon their independence as Dissenters under the Act of Toleration, then they must cede to the Anglican Church primacy of place as the Established Church of the province. The General Court refused to be drawn by the dilemma posed to them by Cutler and Myles. The Council resolved that "Whereas this memorial contains an Indecent Reflection on the Proceedings of this Board, with several Groundless Insinuations" the Anglican Memorial be dismissed" The Lower House concurred.627 Cutler and Myles appealed the matter to London and were upheld. On this uneasy note the matter dropped, but the grandson of John Cotton and Richard Mather was left no longer master in his own house.

The autonomy of the congregation enshrined the Cambridge Platform offered the Courant a widely venerated precedent for the Real Whig political theory which the paper imported from Trenchard and Care. In grafting Real Whig rhetoric onto New England's tradition of democratic church polity the Courant had to deal with a number of points at which Whig and Dissenter views were at variance. The Puritan tradition was, within the tightly circumscribed field of church polity, more radical than the Whig. The church at Billingsgate admitted women to full voting participation, a fact which the Courant sidestepped with derision. The increasing influence of mercantile capitalism was transforming the relationship

627 NEC, July 10, 1725.
between minister and congregation by making the former a seller of professional services to
the latter. Although alarmed at the prospect that the commoditization of ministerial function
would permit religious institutions to be controlled by financial interests, the Courant feared
even more the growth of ministerial authority through the church councils and Presbyterian
polity by which traditionalists hoped to stem the tide of secularization. The paper reserved
its shrillest condemnation for efforts by powerful conservatives like Paul Dudley to make
political capital out of religious ceremony.

The Courant stood vehemently for the separation of state and steeple because the
emotional power of religion, if allowed to reinforce the habit of deference traditional in
provincial politics, would yield an unchallengeable hegemony for the mercantile elite.
Although attracted to the Anglican Church for patriotic and aesthetic reasons, the Courant
sided consistently with the Old Charter men of the popular party in resisting the union of
secular and religious authority which an Established Church represented because they were
fearful of the threat to liberty which such an institution could pose under Tory control.
Thus at a time when authority was slipping from the hands of Cotton Mather and Congre-
gational traditionalists, the Courant opposed the substitution of any ecclesiastical agency in
its place. The result, insofar as the paper could exert an influence, was the strengthening
— for men at least — of individual autonomy in religious matters which could be pro-
claimed in terms both of the tradition of the Platform and the philosophy of the Real Whigs.
Chapter Ten

The Conspicuous Smile of Divine Providence:

Anglicanism in the New-England Courant

In the first decades of the eighteenth century, the Church of England renewed its efforts to regather Dissenters into the fold of a unified, national church. In New England these efforts were strenuously resisted by a Congregational establishment which had no desire to lose autonomy. Both sides deemed it appropriate to keep discussion of the struggle out of public view; the Courant, for its own purposes was a highly vocal violator of the gentlemen's agreement and in its pages the tug-of-war for control of New England churches was shrilly discussed and even provoked.628

Beyond the theological issues lay the psychological significance of religious division: the weakening of the monolithic facade of ecclesiastical authority and the legitimization of rebellion against that authority. While Anglican or Congregational Couranteers were sincere in their beliefs, they also found in the struggles an opportunity to assert independent judgment and to distance themselves from the control of either side. The opportunity to serve as a self-appointed arbiter in the dispute between the Anglican and Congregational

628 The efforts to strengthen the Anglican Church in America in the time of Walpole were motivated by political considerations as much as spiritual ones. Expansion of membership in the Established Church was a palliative for growing but generally unacknowledged friction between New England and the Crown. "Public discussion of the worsening relations with the Crown in newspapers or sermons was taboo." (Miller, Mind, 153).
churches enhanced the sense of autonomy of the Couranteers and offered readers of the paper the opportunity to submit the claims of both sides to rational analysis.

For the Anglican side of the struggle the chief argument was patriotism and the suspicion of disloyalty which attached to those who refused to submit to the ecclesiastical as well as secular authority of the king. In the issue of May 11, 1724, the Courant made such an attack upon the pretext of a news story from London about the king's reaffirmation of his acceptance of the Thirty-Nine Articles (which New England Congregationalists took pains to point out they had never denied) and his desire to reunite all English Protestant churches on the basis of that creed. The author asked "Venerable Friend Janus" to reprint the royal declaration, averring that "Nine Tenth of his Majesty's subjects in New England never saw nor heard any thing of it." The author stated his hope that those who had been "bent and dispos'd to obstruct their Sovereign's Designs and Endeavours to unite his People into one Church" would "immediately supply themselves with new Common Prayer Books."

The plea, like the Thirty-Nine Articles themselves, glossed over differences in church polity which Dissenters on both sides of the Atlantic considered fundamental. The author acknowledged that little effect was to be expected from the obstinate, i.e. the Harvard-trained ministry, and aimed his plea at lay readers. The thrust of the argument was patriotic rather than theological, offering closer unity with the sovereign and a sort of implied amnesty for 1641, which fell upon receptive ears in a segment of New England society anxious to identify itself with the crown and the empire.

Imperial efforts at reunifying the Dissenters of New England were given practical as well as hortatory impetus which the Courant was at pains to record. In the issue of July 6, 1724, the Courant reprinted news from London that the king had announced a bounty of £20 for any ordained minister of the Church of England taking up the pastorate of an Anglican church "in the Plantations abroad," and instructed the Bishop of London to send to the American provinces "university graduates who were "good Preachers, and Persons of
sober and Virtuous Conversation, and of known Affection to his Majesty's Person and Government."

Reprinted in a Boston newspaper, this announcement served as an encomium of the Anglican ministry in America. The patriotic qualifications of the minister candidates was perhaps the central argument of the piece but there were two other fields in which Anglican ministers had important credentials: they were qualified, university-trained preachers, and they were to be of "virtuous conversation," (i.e. personality). These were fields in which New England ministers may have been, in the eyes of Anglican sympathizers at least, thought inferior by comparison. The lack of a royal endorsement for Congregational ministers touched the sore spot of 1641, the lingering association of Puritanism with republicanism and regicide. Congregational ministers might facilitate reconciliation with divine authority; they could not, in the Anglican view, exercise an analogous role in the relationship between sovereign and subject.

The university qualifications of Anglican candidates raised the troubling issue of the lack of a royal charter for Harvard College. Without such a charter the college could not offer the doctorate degree and was tinged with the provincial status of a non-accredited institution.629 The sobriety and virtue of the ministers to be sent constituted, along with their educational credentials, a claim to politeness which was implicitly contrasted with the enthusiasms and fanaticism of which Puritans were accused by the orthodox.

The superiority of university trained Anglican ministers was only part of the argument made in the Courant for the Established Church. The issue of December 21, 1724, was headed by a story from Whitehall about royal control of the quality and pricing of

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629 The Harvard charters drawn up by the Massachusetts legislature were disallowed by British authorities because they made no provision for royal oversight. Cotton Mather was awarded a doctorate of divinity by the University of Glasgow in 1710; his gratitude and pride in the award reflected in part the lingering sense of provincial inferiority he felt because of Harvard's lowly status in the international academic world.

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Bibles and Common Prayer-Books. The new regulations required all editions to meet the standards for paper quality and type of model copies on deposit in the offices of the Secretary of State for South Britain, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Bishop of London. In addition, printers were required to maintain proof-readers approved by the archbishop primate and to print the fixed price of volumes on the first page. Recounting these royal policies allowed the Courant to portray the king as a zealous protector of consumers of religious goods and to underscore his function as head of the church.

Efforts in Britain and New England, strengthened by the increased appeal of the Church of England's perceived advantages, produced a rapid growth of the denomination in New England. From its beginnings in 1712, the Anglican movement assumed a posture of recantation and reconciliation. Samuel Sewall noted in his Diary for February 27, 1712 that 22 Massachusetts notables had petitioned the governor "declaring that they were of the pure Episcopal church of England, would no longer persist with their mistaken dissenting Brethren in the Separation; had sent to their Diocesan, the Bp. of London, for a Minister, and desired Protection."

That reconciliation with traditional authority was a motive of the petitioners could be seen in the statement that they "would no longer persist." The posture of recantation was suggested by the words "mistaken dissenting Brethren." Perhaps more ominous for New England was the implication of the statement that the petitioners "desired Protection," for accusations of persecution might be taken seriously by High Church Tories seeking a pretext for tightening control over the fractious province. Fortunately for New England Dissenters, the Whig oligarchy in power at the time had no desire to provoke confrontation and the Anglican Church in New England received limited support from the government in London.

630 The Bishop of London was, by royal decree, the primate for overseas plantations.
The pages of the Courant carried several stories of the construction of new Anglican churches. The same September 24, 1722 issue that carried the first account of President Cutler's apostasy at Yale included the notice immediately following that "Some Gentlemen of the Church of England have lately purchas'd a Piece of Ground in the North Part of Boston, in order to erect a New Church there." The issue of April 22, 1723 carried the announcement that "On Monday last they began to lay the Foundation of the new Church in the Place, for the Worship of God according to the Liturgy of the church of England, and the Reverend Mr. Miles laid the first Stone." Miles and his assistant, Henry Harris, were inclined to follow a non-confrontational line in dealing with the Congregational establishment; the new church, whose first pastor was to be Timothy Cutler, freshly returned from ordination in England, was more assertive and sympathetic to John Checkley's view that the Church of England was being persecuted in Massachusetts by usurping Dissenters.

The growing popularity of Anglican worship outside of Boston was attested to by an advertisement inserted in the Courant of July 15, 1723, describing the rapid and successful completion of an Anglican church in Providence, Rhode Island. The advertisement gloated that "during the whole Time of said Raising, all things were carried on with great Success, and not the least Damage done to any Person: There was a conspicuous Smile of Divine Providence upon the whole Affair."

The typographical character of the announcement was significant. Headed as an advertisement in florid, ornamental type, the item was presented to readers as a statement of the committee of the Providence church, not the editor of the Courant. The use of italic type was a convention Franklin followed to indicate that the text was taken verbatim from another source. Advertisements carried under the upper-case banner in ornamental italic were not usually set in italic. The previous week's issue, for example, had carried advertisements for capers, wine and a house for sale under the advertisement banner in the paper's standard roman font. The other items in the advertisement column beneath the announcement about the Providence church were similarly set in roman. By the way in which the ac-
count of the raising of the Anglican church in Providence was printed the Courant was being doubly sure to disassociate the editor from a story about an Anglican congregation claiming to observe "the true Apostolical Constitution" in their worship.

The reasons behind the growth of the Anglican Church in New England were many and complex but the advertisement by the Providence committee suggested two important characteristics which appeared across the range of doctrinal and social issues. First, the account fairly radiated an atmosphere of power, wealth, and success. The speed of the construction and the lack of any injuries in raising the frame were cited as evidence of divine providence; to many readers who had seen the construction of their local churches plagued by dissent and delays over money, the swiftness with which the Rhode Island project was carried out suggested strong financial backing as well as divine favor. The Anglican Church in New England counted among its members a disproportionate number of well-to-do merchants whose commercial ventures involved them in trans-Atlantic trade. The metropolitan orientation of these families fostered profession in the Established Church; however, Anglicanism addressed psychological as well as social needs. Growing prosperity, particularly in the mercantile sector of New England society, increased the threat of worldliness and put newly prosperous Congregationalists in a position of increasing tension between the pleasures of their material circumstances and the abjunctions of Puritan tradition to be "in the world but not of it." The Anglican Church offered an escape from the Puritan dilemma which made it particularly attractive to those enjoying worldly success.

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The second aspect of Anglicanism which was broadly attractive to New England elites was suggested by the “conspicuous Smile” with which God observed the proceedings.\footnote{632} In contrast to the angry and vengeful God who hurled his lightening bolts of retribution in the Puritan jeremiad, the God of the Anglicans presented himself in the guise of sweetness and reason, an affective disposition more in harmony with the aesthetic cannon of the Georgian Age. The more tolerant dispensation of the Church of England not only offered relief from guilt over worldly prosperity, it fostered new and more sophisticated opportunities for its enjoyment. Representative of the many examples of Anglican social elegance that could be adduced was the “School of Manners or Dancing School” maintained by Edward Enstone, the organist of King’s Chapel. Samuel Sewall had forcibly entreated Governor Shute not to attend a ball at the school, reminding him that such entertainments were inconsistent with New England values.\footnote{633}

The choice between Puritan tradition and the Anglican Church offered readers of the Courant entailed two different approaches to the question of religious authority. In substance, Congregationalism, with its historic ties to the political philosophy of the Commonwealth and its Dissenter status, offered a sharper cleavage between civil and ecclesiastical authority; moreover, Congregational church polity was decidedly more democratic

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life after 1700 was rapid expansion — in population, in the number of new settlements, in commercial opportunities and involvements, and in the economic horizons of the ordinary man... The whole society suffered from a painful confusion of identity. ... the pleasurable rise which prosperity afforded carried one at last to destruction." The Puritan goal of being in the world but not of it is the theme of Edmund S. Morgan’s\textit{ The Puritan Dilemma: The Story of John Winthrop}, (Boston: Little, Brown & Co, 1958).

\footnote{632}{The phrase was used in a paid notice announcing the raising of the first Anglican church in Providence, Rhode Island, NEC, July 15, 1723.}

\footnote{633}{Sewall, \textit{Diary}, 3, iii. Enstone’s difficulties with the Boston Selectmen are recorded in \textit{A Report of the Record Commissioners of the City of Boston}, vol. 13, 3. Despite criticism from the town’s traditionalists, the dancing school was able to continue because of the prominence of its patrons.}
and was in this sense more progressive. On the other hand, the strong strain of providentialism in the Puritan tradition tended to unify abstract and emotional modes of religious experience while Calvinist theology minimized the role of human autonomy in salvation, factors which inclined the believer toward acceptance of traditional concepts of religious authority. By emphasizing the unity of civil and religious authority, Anglican church policy was, in theory at least, more regressive; however the remoteness of the court and episcopal palace tended to diminish the authoritarian aspects of their integration, as did the obvious dominance of Dissenter views within New England. Although theoretically more authoritarian, the latitudinarian character of the Church of England under the Whigs, as well as its patriotic and modernist flavor in the colonies, made it appear to some New Englanders a less confining institution. Freedom from the rigors of Calvinism and a more frank approbation of the pleasures of wealth offered psychological as well as theological inducement. The choice between Anglican and Congregational affiliation was delicately balanced in New England, where the roles of established and dissenting sects were reversed. To those New Englanders who left the faith of their fathers in order to return to the national church, psychological and social factors seemed to have been at least as important as theological issues.

One of the two points of attraction of the Anglican Church, its patriotic association with the monarchy, was undercut by the conspiracy led by Francis Atterbury, the Bishop of Rochester, to overthrow the house of Hanover and restore the Old Pretender to the throne. In the context of English politics this abortive effort reflected the fears and frustrations of High Church Tories displaced by the Whig ascendency. This penultimate effort to restore the Stuarts—the rising of 1745 was the last gasp — was a profound if unlikely threat to New Englanders for whom local autonomy in both civil and ecclesiastical matters was dependent upon Whig latitudinarianism. Since the plot was uncovered long before any practical steps had been taken by the participants, the predominant reaction was one of shock rather than fear.

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The Courant of June 17, 1723, reprinted a letter from the Flying Post of April fourth with some of the details of “the late hellish Conspiracy,” including Atterbury’s banishment, which interpreted the story in the context of church politics, observing that “the high Party say that the Sentence is severe, the Low that it is too mild, and only a sending him to Rome for a Cardinals Cap.” The sentiments of Low Churchman were held in even more emphatic form by Dissenters to whom the incident served as a counterweight against traditional charges of disloyalty dating from the Civil War. A lengthy historical essay by an author signing himself “A true Lover of Passive Obedience and Non Resistance” in the Courant of June 24, 1723 reviewed the past sixty years of English political history in an indictment of the High Church Tories and vindication of Dissenters. In his opening statement the author took pains to distance himself from the Commonwealthmen, referring to “the Death of the Royal Martyr,” the “Usurpation,” of Cromwell and “the Glorious Restauration of King Charles the Second.”

The theme of the essay was a defense of the Whig doctrine of passive obedience through a demonstration of the hypocrisy of Tories who invoked the policy only when it suited their interest. The author accused Rochester and his supporters of claiming to uphold high principle while practicing high treason. He went back into the turbulent party politics of the last years of Queen Anne to demonstrate that when they were out of power the Tories invoked the doctrine but denied its validity when they were once more in control. The thesis of the author’s review was the accusation that High Church Tories, despite their protestations of loyalty, had been actively engaged in treason even in recent times in attempting “to set up a Popish Prince whose Religion obliges him to the Extermination and Destruction of all others.” According to this author, The conclusion to be drawn from Tory behavior since the Glorious Revolution was that Dissenters had proved a more reliable buttress to the crown than many high Churchmen.

The Rochester conspiracy offered glaring proof of the association of Tories with High Churchmen and support for the Pretender; the essay in the Courant lifted the issue
above the disloyalty of a small group of influential High Flyers to a vindication of passive obedience and non-resistance as legitimate strategies under the British constitution. These Whig principles, although not given the same name, underlay the rationale of Elisha Cooke and his party in their quarrels with the royal governor and, in slightly different form, the defense of Congregational hegemony vis-a-vis Anglican efforts to gain recognition as the established church in Massachusetts. At the heart of both passive obedience and non-resistance lay an attempt to establish a middle ground for conscience between active support and active resistance. Essential to such an undertaking was a separation of the abstract and emotional dimensions of authority. In the traditional, integrated relationship between ruler and subject, the king offered love and protection, the subject offered love and obedience. In the event that the contract between king and subject were broken by the former, the latter responded with sorrow and rebellion. The affective domain offered no middle ground between devotion and overthrow and had therefore to be set aside or rendered inoperative in order for passive obedience to function.

The Rochester conspiracy was the most dramatic incident which the Courant cited to show the threat to liberty posed by Tory High Churchmen but there were others which, because they touched more directly upon New England experience, had equal persuasiveness. The November 5, 1722 issue reprinted an item about smallpox inoculation from the London press which described High Church opposition to the new practice and concluded "so it happens to be a party Controversy among us." On the surface, the item seemed to undercut the Courant's editorial position on inoculation by associating it with Tory High Churchmen. The key idea in the piece was contained in the last sentence, which established inoculation as a "party" (i.e. political) rather than theological issue. Party controversy, although condemned by virtually all political writers on both sides of the Atlantic in the early years of the eighteenth-century, was the force behind the political press sponsored by the Whig ascendancy. The Courant was not a party press in the British sense, although its sympathies clearly lay with Cooke's Old Charter Party. Franklin and his associates did

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wish to establish in America the concept of the newspaper as a forum for debate of public issues such as smallpox inoculation, a concept that would give the newspaper authority over public discourse. The London news item reprinted in the Courant served to further this larger editorial purpose by demonstrating the impartiality of the paper and secularizing the controversy over inoculation.

Opposition to inoculation was perhaps the least controversial policy of the Tory High Church; the real danger, as the Courant saw the matter, lay in the threat to restore the Pretender and force a return to Roman Catholicism. Even if such a revolution seemed increasingly unlikely, the principles which motivated Tory interest in a Stuart restoration remained a lively threat to the autonomy of New England. In the Courant of August 12, 1723, a correspondent recalled the reasons for the establishment of the Church of England in the reign of James II and reprinted a dialogue in verse between "a Red-hot Jeroboam Tory, and a "Jerusalem Whig," which, the paper's correspondent asserted, was applicable "to that Fiction at Rome called the Pretender, as well as to his Adherents of the High Church among us, or elsewhere."

The subject of the poem, the twelfth chapter of the First Book of Kings, was based on an incident in the reign of King David when a schism had caused all the tribes save that of Judah to give their allegiance to the false king, Jeroboam, who set up golden calves to be worshiped in the towns of Dan and Bethel as an alternative to true worship at Jerusalem. The story was a favorite type for Protestant theologians who saw in the remnant of Israel that remained with David the image of those churches which separated from the false Church of Rome in order to remain true to original church practices. In the poem, the type was applied to "Jerusalem Whigs," who remained faithful to their Protestant heritage and resisted the efforts of James II to reunite with Rome.

A Tory encountered a Whig on the way to pray at Jerusalem and urged him to bow before the new idols instead. When the Whig asked how these images had been sanctified, the Tory responded "That Thing's a Secret, lodg'd in King and State," and urged his inter-
locutor to conform to the new dispensation. The Whig, unimpressed, refused to worship the golden calf. Enraged, the Tory accused him disloyalty but the Whig reaffirmed that “I love the King, love him as well as you. ... How can you love the King, and not his Gods,” the Tory asked. Unfortunately, the Whig did not address the issue of emotion versus law or how he could continue to love the king while not worshiping his gods. Instead, the Whig insisted rather repetitively on the illegitimacy of the idols and suggested that “Knaves set up Images, Fools make ‘em Gods,” causing the enraged Tory to declare “The next Advance you make, No Calves, no King,” a reference to the old jibe at the Puritans that in rejecting episcopal authority, they implicitly denied the divine right of the king. The Whig’s final retort suggested that his professed love of the king was at the least tepid: “Go Blockhead! set a Broomstaff up, and know / That such a God will serve your King and you.”

The poem’s repetitive condemnation of idolatry and its failure to address the issue of separation of church and state gave the impression of a poet more dependent on the tradition of Foxe’s Martyrs that the writings of the Real Whigs. Harsh condemnation of the king was allowable because the poem referred to James II, whose overthrow had become a pillar of British constitutional myth. Read in the context of contemporary politics, the poem would have been a grave act of lèse majesté and a near-treasonable accusation against the Church of England by Dissenters. The Courant skirted this aspect of poem, but in claiming that the work was “applicable to that Fiction at Rome called the Pretender, as well as to his Adherents of the High Church among us, or elsewhere” revealed how intensely the issues of the Glorious Revolution continued to burn in the minds of New Englanders who expressed their faith in the Low Church or Dissenter chapel in terms of the idolatry of King Jeroboam and wished to attach the heroic achievement of parliamentary supremacy in 1688 to their colonial legislatures. That the Courant would reprint the poem, whose typologically defined premise that Whigs enjoyed the legitimacy of the House of David harkened back to seventeenth-century modes of political analysis, suggested that typological thinking, per-
sisting in the form of poetic metaphor, continued to shape the self-image of colonial citi-
zens.634

On the topic of religion as a social ritual the Courant pursued its policy "to expose
the Vices and Follies of Persons of all Ranks and Degrees under feign'd Names" with
avuncular detachment modeled on the Spectator.635 In following Addison's even-handed
manner of reproof the Courant was able to criticize the ministry as well as the laity without
appearing to be hostile to either. A letter from Rhode Island in the October 16, 1721,
signed An Du, Spinst., criticized "the Indecent and irreverent Deportment of most of our
Sex, during our Approaches before that awful Being, whose Majesty commands Adoration
from all his Creatures with the utmost Veneration," but immediately went on to attribute
much of the responsibility to preachers for "that Prolixity, which has heretofore been too
much affected." While decrying the decline in piety, the detached viewpoint of the writer
placed the fictional spinster and her readers outside the purview of ministerial authority.

The Addisonian style, with its emphasis on courtesy and avoidance of invective,
guided the Courant away from identification with those Boston rakes who scoffed at tradi-
tional observance and boasted of their unbelief. A letter in the issue of March 19, 1722,
chided those who "idle away the Time (to say no worse) in and about the 'Change, on the
Thursday Weekly Lectures ... ridiculing those that frequent that sacred Place."

634 Bernard Bailyn and Jack P. Greene debated the issue of "mimesis," that is the degree to
which eighteenth-century colonial politicians consciously imitated earlier British
parliamentary leaders in their struggles with the crown, in the American Historical
Review, 75 (December 1969). Greene's article "Political Mimesis: A Consideration of the
Historical and Cultural Roots of Legislative Behavior in the British Colonies in the
Eighteenth Century," argued the case for imitation and Bailyn responded with an essay
asserting that local conditions rather than a mimetic impulse conditioned colonial behavior.
From this distance, it seems that both distinguished scholars were correct and that the
question is one of "and" rather than "or." My point in terms of the typological influence in
the Courant's poem is that the dramatic concept of mimesis may be less appropriate for
explaining the political psychology of New Englanders (who had no theater) than the
exegetical concept of type.

635 NEC, January 29, 1722.
The sting of a reprimand by older adults to the fashionable rebellion of the younger generation could be drawn by gentle parody. The following week’s issue, March 26, 1722, contained a letter signed by Poligraue, whose grumpy, self-righteous tone burlesqued adult authority. Addressing himself to “a certain Atheistical Spark, who sometimes goes to a Church in Brattle-Street,” Poligraue solemnly informed the young man that “a great deal of Notice is taken of his Gestures every Lords Day in the Forenoon... and that if he don’t behave himself more seemly when there, he may expect a Severe Rebuoke from one of that congregation, who has a due Regard and Value for his Laborious and Pious Ministers, and can’t bear to see them slear’d at by such a Fellow.”

Locating the issue in the town’s most elegant and liberal Congregational church, whose members were suspected by some traditionalists of being more concerned with fashion than salvation, gave the satire a double-edged quality. Poligraue’s claim of “a due Regard and Value for his Laborious and Pious Ministers,” captured the sententiousness of pulpit rhetoric which An Du had characterized as prolix, and created in a phrase the image of a self-righteous older sycophant upbraiding a bored young man for his lack of deference.

To the issue of age the Courant added the matter of class by criticizing a growing tendency to use public worship as an opportunity for status display. In the December 17, 1722 issue the Courant addressed the use of liveried coaches by fashionable Bostonians attending Sunday service. Observing that “New-England has been famous for a strict Observation of the Lord’s Day, the author claimed that he “cannot but wonder that a constant Profanation of it, should pass so long unobserv’d and un改革’d.” In prosecuting his charge that driving carriages to church violated the Fourth Commandment, the author followed the academic convention of objection and answer to make a statement of dissatisfaction with the ministers for placing social position above the law, claiming that “humane Laws are not (or ought not to be) like Spider’s Webs which catch the small flies but cannot
hold the great ones." When it was objected that the ministers had said nothing to condemn
the practice, the author replied that "if the Common People had followed this Practice,
the Pulpits had rung with it long ago," and that "the Clergy are not Lords over our
Consciences."

In this essay the New England heritage of radical Puritanism boiled to the surface.
In the post-war economy of the 1720s, when economic depression was widening the gap
between those who could afford the cost of carriages, and hard-pressed tradesmen, the
spiritual democracy of the New England Way provided a rhetoric that came easily to hand
for the expression of secular concerns. The assertion of equality before "humane Laws"
was more comfortably expressed in the context of equal obligation before the laws of God.
The association between secular and religious authority could be invoked in the other direc-
tion as well by denying the clergy status as "Lords over our Consciences" who would re-
duce their flock to "Servitude and Ignorance." The Courant accepted unquestioningly the
inherent applicability of Congregational church polity to the defense of the traditional rights
of Englishmen and vice versa. At no point did its writers adopt the radicalism of the Lev-
ellers, much less of a mob; they did, however, see the church as a place where all were
equal before the law of God and where liberty of conscience supported the inviolable rights
of Englishmen.

The air of hypocrisy and preference which hung over the issue of carriages for
travel to church was the subject of a satire signed by a Roger Plywell in the issue of March
30, 1724. In this essay all reference to the Fourth Commandment was dropped in favor of
a purely economic argument against the injustice of "permitting Hackney-Coachmen to earn
a living and be praised for it by working Sundays transporting people to church." The au-

636 This colorful comparison is first attributed to Solon; the Courant's correspondent was
perhaps echoing Jonathan Swift's observation in A Critical Essay upon the Faculties of the
Mind (1709) that "Laws are like cobwebs, which may catch small flies, but let wasps and
hornets break through."
tor, taking the role of a porter — an occupation whose minimal capital investment and skill requirements placed at the lowest rung of the hierarchy of tradesmen — claimed to have invented a superior contrivance (in fact nothing more than a closed-in wheelbarrow) “to improve the Business of Porters into a Divine Science, and make it (like Musick and Coaching) a Handmaid to Divinity.”

The idea that the church should not favor the economic interest of one group of workers over another, like the idea that the church should not support the social hierarchy in such a way as to prevent upward mobility, also had deep roots in Puritan social and economic theory. Roger Plywell showed no sign of having read this extensive literature: like other writers in the Courant he was able to reconstitute its basic premise from popular Real Whig essayists read in the context of New England Congregational tradition.

The approach of December 25, 1722, brought before the Courant’s correspondents the topic of the celebration of Christmas. With the fading of the old Puritan intensity, the joyful and — and occasionally bibulous — celebration of Christmas Day in the style of the Anglican Church had become increasingly popular among more progressive New Englanders. In the Courant of December 24, 1722, James Franklin, claiming to be “like the old

637 On the lowly status of porters, compare the remark in NEC, April 2, 1722, by a husband complaining of his wife’s expensive clothes that “what is ordinarily worn by Porters [is] good enough for me,” the statement in issue no. 112 that “your Fathers were Porters or Plough-joggers, as poor as Rakes,” and the disparaging comment in issue no. 164 that the Boston militia “for the greatest part, consists of Irish and Jersey Boys, Porters and Draymen.” The mention of music as a handmaiden to divinity is a reference to the issue of regular singing, discussed below.

638 Arguing that “The roots of liberal social thought did not lie in past politics or classical theories of government, but rather can be traced to the first writings on the free market economy,” Joyce Appleby summarizes the development of market autonomy in seventeenth century writers such as Mun, Misselden and Davenport. J. G. A. Pocock discusses the connection between the Dissenter idea of a mixed constitution and the theory of free markets in his essay “Early Modern Capitalism — the Augustan Perception,” Kamenka and Neale, eds, Feudalism, Capitalism and Beyond (Canberra, 1975) 63-70.
Prophet at Roxbury, neither Conformist nor Nonconformist," gave the front page of the paper to two poets to debate in verse the merits of traditional Christmas.\footnote{539}{The mysterious prophet of Roxbury was discussed in \textit{NEC}, October 1, 1722, and dismissed as a jocular reference to Timothy Cutler.}

The question of Christmas celebrations was no longer a legal one.\footnote{540}{The legal history of Christmas Day is discussed in David Cressy, \textit{Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England}, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989).}
The General Court, which had banned all celebration of Christmas in 1658, repealed the measure in 1682.\footnote{541}{The prohibition, "for preventing disorders arising in several places within this jurisdiction, by reason of some still observing such festivals as were superstitiously kept in other countries, to the great dishonour of God and offence of others," carried a five shilling fine, the same, nominal amount levied for absence from militia practice. (\textit{Record Commissioners of the City of Boston, the Colonial Laws of Massachusetts ... 1660 ... to 1672}, (Boston, 1889) 153.)}

New England ministers continued to defend Puritan tradition in the face of the growing popularity of Anglican custom among the more sophisticated residents of New England's seaport towns. Cotton Mather employed traditional Puritan arguments against Christmas festivities in his \textit{Testimony against evil customs} and warned that "such vanities ... are good no where; but in New England they are a thousand times worse."\footnote{542}{Cotton Mather, \textit{Testimony against evil customs, Given by several Ministers of the Gospel, Signed by Cotton Mather, Benjamin Wadsworth, Benjamin Colman, With the Concurrence of others Ministers of Boston}, (Boston: Kneeland for Gerrish, 1719, Evans, 2051) 40.}

Mather continued to regard the celebration as irreligious and contrary to the spirit and purposes of New England.\footnote{543}{Mather \textit{Diary} (Massachusetts Historical Society Collections) \textit{ser. 7}, vol. 8, (1912) 146.}
The debate on Christmas in the \textit{Courant} in December of 1724 was the re-fighting of an old battle with now familiar arguments.

The significance of the Christmas debate lay not in the novelty of the opinions expressed but in the efforts of the \textit{Courant} to extend the cosmopolitan values of the Anglican
elite to Boston tradesmen and the sons of ministers and country gentry at Harvard.\textsuperscript{644} Indicative of the social as well as theological distance separating Anglican from Puritan belief was the contrast in mood between the two poems on Christmas observance. The Anglican presentation was calculated to arouse emotions of joy and nostalgia while the Puritan argument was judgmental and dry. The yearning after joyful memories associated with such immemorial rituals as the Christmas feast gave a Janus-like appeal to the Anglican Church. On one hand, Anglican ritual offered a fashionable alternative to New England tradition, one associated with enlightened thinking and imperial patriotism. On the other, the traditional rituals of the Established Church offered reconnection with a rich folk culture which, since Elizabethan times, Calvinists had rejected as superstitious. Condemnation of popular culture as superstition had been a binding force between clergy and laity in the Puritan experiment. The seductive attraction of traditional ritual acted to dissolve that common bond from quite a different direction than the latitudinarian possibilities of Socinianism; in concert they acted to weaken the power of Puritan culture from both ends of the emotional spectrum.\textsuperscript{645}

The poem entitled "On Christmas Day" opened with a Miltonic review of man's fall from grace and the traditional story of the Savior's birth, then asked:

And must the solemn Feast neglected be?

The welcome Day, the Christian jubilee?

\textsuperscript{644} An analysis of the family background of Harvard students in the classes 1722-1725 shows that 14% of the 120 students in Sibley's Lives had minister fathers while another 12% were the sons of deacons. The sons of merchants accounted for 11% of the group, while those whose fathers were styled Captain (either maritime or militia) accounted for 14%. These four groups, along with the sons of artisans (15%) accounted for approximately 70% of the undergraduates. The remainder were the sons of high military or political officials (19%) or came from families headed by tradesmen, mariners, or farmers.

\textsuperscript{645} David D. Hall observes that "Lay people and the clergy shared much common ground. That common ground included the rejection of traditional popular culture." (Hall, Worlds of Wonder, 241).
Ungrateful Men! Is it too much to pay
One Yearly Tribute to the joyful Day?

Anticipating the rebuttal from the Puritan side, the poet concluded:

Well, take your Course; but as for us, we'll sing
The Glories of the Day, and Israel's King.

The poem's reference to the glad organ suggests that the "we" who will sing was the Anglican congregation of King's Chapel, as does the patristic argument for the celebration of December 25, placing this poetic debate over Christmas in the context of the on-going debate between Anglican and Congregational writers which was a principal source of tension in the Courant. 646

The second poem, "A Testimony for the true BirthDay of Christ, and against the Popish Christmas" was introduced by a labored attempt on the part of the poet to establish an appropriate nom de plume

Tho' in Person I never saw you, so as to have any Idea of your outward Aspect, yet Ingenuity appearing in your Management of your Weekly Prints, invites my Desire of Correspondence with you by Writing; since my dwelling Place of Sojournment in my Pastoral Care, has been for almost a Week of Years as far distant from you, as the Number of Threescore and Ten Miles in Latitude.

This ponderous and sophomoric preamble might almost be a parody of John Checkley's introduction of himself in the first issue, "As for my Age, I'm some odd Years and a few Days under twice twenty and three..." but the tone of the poem suggested that the writer was serious. The fifty-five line verse was annotated by thirty biblical citations for the Puritan argument that Christ was born on the first day of Sukkoth. Following the poem was a postscript with two biblical passages cited as warning against any effort to make a peace treaty with the Eastern Indians over the course of the winter.

646 The first church organ in Boston was, however, in the Brattle Street Church, a gift of Harvard's President Leverett.
The letter was dated December 3, 1722, with the notation "For Christmas Week" and signed Phinehas Micajah. The dating suggests that the poem was sent to the paper well in advance and the opposing work solicited to accompany it, a chronology that would explain the Anglican's statement "I know what Arguments you have in Store." The author of the Puritan poem and accompanying prose may have been Samuel Mather; the pseudonym Phinehas Micajah suggested a clerical affiliation and the statement that his "dwelling Place of Sojournment" lay seventy miles to the west was taken lightly by Franklin, whose reply to Micajah's praise implied that the versifier was affiliated with Harvard College.647

On December 31, the Courant printed a letter from a moderate urging a compromise between the two views expressed a week before. Noting the lack of biblical or patristic authority for the date of Christmas, this correspondent also concluded that "your Friend Phinehas has but very lamely prov'd that it was in September," and urged that Christians who wished to celebrate modestly on that day be permitted to do so without censure. The author continued "lest any of our Brethren of the Episcopal Communion should be offended at what I have said, I shall only transcribe a Passage in a Sermon preach'd by the most Reverend Dr. Tillotson on a Christmas Day," and quoted a passage from the Latitudinarian bishop on the evils of drunkenness during the traditional twelve day feast of Christmas.648

The Christmas debate of 1722 in the Courant illustrated the importance of the Congregational-Anglican controversy to the Couranteers and the centrality to the dispute of ar-

647 Samuel Mather, born Oct 30, 1706, was a member of the Harvard class of 1723. The biblical Phineas was the grandson of Aaron, one of the heads of the Levites (Ex. 6: 25). He was a champion of orthodoxy (Jud. 20.28) against the Benjamites. Micaiah, a minor prophet, testified destruction by the Syrians before the kings of Israel and Judah (1 Kings, 22: 7-29). The inventor of the name Phineas Micaiah doubtless thought it a learned joke.

648 Tillotson was much favored by Addison for his tolerant rationalism in matters of religion and his faith in free market economics. See Edward A. Bloom, and Lillian D. Bloom, Joseph Addison's Sociable Animal: In the Market Place, on the Hustings, in the Pulpit. (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 1971) 177-178.
gument from the fathers of the early church. The celebration of Christmas was a political
touchstone at the level of the Royal Council as well; it was an easily identifiable issue
which crystallized a division that was on other matters abstruse or confused. The debate
tested the rhetorical limits of the shared language of contributors to the Courant in part be-
cause of the idiosyncratic weaknesses of Phinehas Micajah as a writer but in a larger sense
because his self-image as a author and his concept of the uses of authority violated some
important rules of the Courant’s new public forum.

The citation apparatus of the poem, while pedantic, was not a disqualifying feature;
more serious was the author’s unstable and excessive emotionalism. His obsequious ad-
dress to the editor with its obscurantist specificity about time and distance suffered from
more than dullness, it fairly radiated insincerity. Similarly, the characterization of advocates
of traditional Christmas as antichristian fools was unacceptably dogmatic and hostile. The
jarring impact of the essay violated the Courant’s unstated editorial rule: all submissions
had to be in the style of the London press, preferably in the idiom of the Spectator.

A comparison of the harsh letter of December 24th with a more conciliatory essay
from the same camp in the next week’s issue shows how poorly the first author represented
his cause. The evenhanded urbanity with which the second correspondent criticized both
sides and the deferential courtesy with which he introduced the fashionable Anglican au-
thority Tillotson in support of his own case made the second essay a model of the new po-
liteness in printed debate.

The issue of politeness in the forms of religious worship was one which, like the
intentions of the first planters, involved defenders of Congregational tradition in complex
issues of memory and the reconstruction of history. Puritan insistence on the plain style in
sermon oratory, church ornament, and hymn singing was an aesthetic based on interrelated
psychological and political considerations. Advocates of the plain style, conscious of the
susceptibility of the emotions to manipulation through sensory stimuli, distrusted aesthetic
experiences which might distract the mind from God’s word. The early leaders of Mas-
sachusetts advocated a minimalism which went beyond the biblical injunction against
graven images they cited as precedent.

Emotionally stimulating art, music and rhetoric, as the idolatry of golden calves,
had a political implication as well. Such aesthetic manipulations were often employed by
sinful rulers for the purpose of keeping the people far from God and under control. Refer-
ences to High Church Tories as modern-day Jeroboams — not to speak of the notorious
excesses of the Roman Church — show how enduring was Puritan suspicion of art in the
service of a corrupt ruling caste. The slaking of Puritan zeal in the last decades of the sev-
enteenth century, the increasing desire to replicate the norms of metropolitan culture, and
the arrival of Georgian design in first decades of the eighteenth century ended the era of the
plain style in church architecture and music.649 In the new atmosphere of the 1720s the old
fear of aesthetic manipulation was entirely transformed. Music, poetry, and the visual arts
were harnessed in quest of the religious sublime.650 Issues of authority and the use of
aesthetic experience as means of control were not so easily resolved. An immediate out-
come of the tensions introduced by the new aesthetic was the controversy over regular
singing.

Regular singing, the use of hymn books with printed musical score, facilitated a
higher level of musical accomplishment than the unstructured efforts of the congregation to
sing together a melody learned by imitation and passed on in oral tradition. The movement
for regular singing was therefore an aesthetic one which aimed at a more sophisticated per-

649 Cotton Mather located the turn toward worldliness in the generation of Josiah Franklin,
the father of James and Benjamin: “But when people began more notoriously to forget the
errand into the wilderness, and when the enchantments of this world caused the rising
generation more sensibly to neglect the primitive designs and interests of religion proposed
by their fathers; a change in the tenour of the divine dispensations towards this country,
was quickly the matter of every body’s observation.” (Mather, Magnalia, vol 2, Book V,
270).

650 "The generation of poets that came to artistic prominence during the 1720s in New
formance of traditional liturgy through specialized instruction; as such it was in keeping with the norms of the eighteenth century but, to some at least, at variance with the New England tradition of simplicity in worship. To others, especially those for whom the technique of sight-reading notation was baffling, the whole business smacked of ceremonialism or even popery.

Significantly, the leaders of the regular singing movement were ministers to some of the largest and most sophisticated congregations in Massachusetts. The publication which spread the message of regular singing, The Grounds and Rules of Musick Explained, was written by Thomas Walter, a nephew of Cotton Mather and minister at Roxbury. The "Recommendatory Preface" to the work was signed by fifteen of the province's leading Congregational ministers. The essay to which they lent their names declared that the signing ministers "encourage all, more particularly our Young People to accomplish themselves with Skill to Sing the Songs of the Lord according to the Good Rules of Psalmody."

The emphasis on the aesthetic aspect of liturgy and the description of regular singing as an act of piety were characteristic of the renewal of Congregationalism at which these ministers had been laboring, in some cases since the first years of the century. Cotton Mather had announced the theme of piety as a solution to the inherent conflict between Calvinism and the new temper of the eighteenth century in his 1710 book Bonifacius, an Essay upon the Good that is to be Devised and Designed by those Who Desire...to Do

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651 Thomas Walter, The Grounds and Rules of Musick Explained; Or, An Introduction to the Art of Singing by Note Fitted to the meanest Capacities, (Boston: J. Franklin for S. Gerrish, 1721). Charles Chauncy (H.C. 1721) expressed the view of his generation that "Walter was the most polished yet orthodox young man of the colonies."

652 The signers were: Increase Mather, Cotton Mather, Nehemiah Walter, Joseph Belcher, Benj. Wadsworth, Benj. Colman, Nathaniel Williams, Nathanael Hunting, Peter Thatcher, Joseph Sewall, Thomas Prince, John Webb, William Cooper, Thomas Foxcroft, and Samuel Checkly.

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Good While they Live. Regular singing was part of a larger effort to contain the religious aspirations of the province's elite within the structure of a renovated New England Way.

A major objection to regular singing was precisely its elitism. Musical notation was not easy to learn and those who were unable to master the new skill felt scorned or excluded by those who could. The condescension evident in Walter's book heightened the tension. Speaking of the music of untrained singers, Walter declared to his readers that "this bears no more proportion to a Tune composed and sung by the Rules of Art than the vulgar Hedge Notes of every Rustic does to the harp of David." Church members unable to read music, whether rustics or not, were told that their productions "necessarily create a most disagreeable Jar in the Ears of all that can judge better of Singing than these Men, who please themselves with their own ill-sounding Echoes." The author's modesty was hardly conspicuous in his observation that "It would be but an unintelligible Amusement to the vulgar Reader, (for whom this little Book is chiefly designed) to give the Physical and Mathematical Solution of the Grounds, Cause, and Effects of Harmony as also the Reasons of Descant, which I might easily do." Whatever the reader felt from these shaming admonitions, they signaled a loss of that close identification by the minister with his flock and that unity of outlook between the speaking aristocracy and silent democracy which gave the New England Way its strength.

Walter's book raised questions about the role of reading which made the controversy over regular singing a microcosm for issues of religious epistemology. As Walter expressed it, "For to compare small things with great, our Psalmody has suffered the like Inconveniences which our Faith had laboured under, in case it had been committed and trusted to the uncertain and doubtful Conveyance of Oral Tradition." Reading of musical notation gave psalmody a precision and repeatability which other techniques could not

653 Walter, Grounds, 3
match. In the singing of a trained chorus, Walter pointed out, “The Tune will answer the Gamut in all points, as much as the figures and Inches upon two Carpenter’s Squares are alike, and answer one another.” Here in the field of music was the issue of literacy and historicity contrasted to oral culture which underlay Puritan beliefs of biblical inerrancy and the rejection of popular religious traditions.

Walter’s association of the act of reading music with the act of reading text revealed how a changing concept of literacy was an integral part of the new culture descending upon New England traditionalists. Singing, Walter informed his readers “is reducible to the Rules of Art; and he who had made himself Master of a few of these Rules, is able at first Sight to sing Hundreds of New Tunes… Just as a Person who has learned all the Rules of Reading is able to read any new Book, without any further Help or instruction.” Walter explained the new standard of musical competence:

We don’t call him a reader, who can recite Memorize a few Pieces of the Bible, and other Authors but put him to read in those Places where he is a Stranger, cannot tell ten Words in a Page. So is not he worthy of the Name of a Singer, who has gotten eight or ten Tunes in his Head, and can sing them like a Parrot by Rote, and knows nothing more about them, than he has heard from the Voices of others.

The old definition of literacy, which encompassed the “intensive” reader able to do little more than sound out the Our Father from a hornbook, here was supplanted by a higher standard of swift, silent, and accurate "extensive" reading. The ability to transfer the concepts of alphabet reading to the different conventions of notes on a stave implied abstract literacy skills of a high order. Only among readers with well developed decoding skills and exposure to a wide range of printed texts could a transition to the musical symbol system be expected successfully to occur. It was not a coincidence that James Franklin,

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who had expanded the possibilities of the newspaper with the publication of the Courant, was the printer for Walter’s book, the first to print music on stave produced in America.656

The superiority of written over oral transmission was, according to Walter, more than technological. In printing the traditional psalm tunes in notation form he claimed to be recovering the original form in which the liturgy had been recorded. Walter emphasized that notation was not an innovation but a return to the purity of the original melodies because old Psalm books contained melodies “pricked down” in notation.

Walter’s defense of the regular singing was a recapitulation comparing “small things with great” of the central argument of Puritan theologians against Laudian traditionalists in the Church of England. Despite its alleged harmony with Puritan tradition, regular singing provoked a fierce reaction precisely among the more conservative congregations of country towns and produced the most dramatic controversy to shake Congregational churches in the period between the Half-Way Covenant and the Great Awakening.

Regular singing was first discussed in the Courant on March 5, 1722 when the paper reported on a service conducted by Thomas Walter at the New Brick Church sponsored by the Society for Promoting Regular Singing in the Worship of God. According to the Courant, Walter preached “an excellent sermon on that Occasion, from 2 Sam. 23:1. —

The sweet Psalmist of Israel, — The Singing was perform’d in Three Parts (according to Rule) by about Ninety Persons skill’d in that Science.”

656 Sophisticated consumers had enjoyed access to music books printed in England. The technical problems presented by the publication were formidable and not completely solved. In the preface a number of musical conventions (sharps, flats etc.) were introduced with the observation “The Reader is desire to observe the subsequent Characters, which are omitted in the following Sheets, by Reason of the Difficulty of inserting them in their proper Places among the printed Lines,” Walter, Grounds, iv. Franklin was the Boston printer with the most recent London training; given the animosity between the Couranteers and Walter, author of the “Little-Compton Scourge, or the Anti-Courant” it seems likely that technical rather than ideological considerations forced Franklin’s selection as printer.
The impressive debut of regular singing in one of Boston’s most forward-looking and fashionable churches was the beginning of a campaign to bring the practice into Congregational worship. Two weeks later, on March 19, the Courant reported on a service in Reading with the assistance of out-of-town experts, presumably from the Boston-based society. In this “Singing Lecture” the Rev. Mr. Brown preached from Psalm 100:2, Come before his Presence with Singing. The Reading performance was part of a larger plan to bring the new liturgy to the outlying towns, for the article concluded “Tis said a Singing-Lecture will shortly be held at Newbury.”

While the Society for promoting Regular Singing was carrying the new liturgy to the North Shore, reaction against the innovation was building in Boston. The Courant of November 26, 1722 carried an essay signed Harry Consort reporting an angry scene at New North Church. Prefacing his observations with a quote from Congreve’s Mourning Bride on the power of music to soothe the savage beast, the correspondent observed that “the Spirit of Singing has possessed this Place, that it now seems almost impossible ... ever to eradicate this transcendentally noble Employment.”.

According to the Courant’s correspondent, a member of the congregation who had threatened to walk out of the service if regular singing continued, did so in the midst of a bass and tenor duet, observing that he “could not bear to be nuisanceed with such pleasant Notes.” Regular singing had achieved victory in Boston but a discontented rear-guard re-

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657 New North Church had been the scene of another violent controversy in 1720, when a faction of the congregation forced through the summoning of Peter Thatcher, minister of Weymouth, against the wishes of his congregation. By the time of the publication of Walter’s work on singing, the rift had been mended and Thatcher was one of the ministers who signed its Recommendatory Preface. The losing side in the Thatcher controversy hived out and founded the New Brick Church. The gentleman unhappy at regular singing in New North may have been still smarting from the dissention of 1720. At New North and many other congregations, regular singing brought to the surface tensions brewing for a generation as Congregationalism struggled to adjust to the new climate.
fused to accede gracefully to the specialization and professionalism which trained singers were bringing to the liturgy of their fathers.

The improved quality of psalm singing stimulated a demand for a translation of the Psalms better suited to vocal performance. Cotton Mather, who was at the center of the movement for regular singing, made an effort at such a translation in 1718 with the publication of his Psalterium Americanum.658 Mather's translation was not successful and attention shifted to the translation published by Isaac Watts in 1719, The Psalms of David.659 The Courant of January 21, 1723 contained a letter in praise of the Watts book and included Psalms 56 and 58 as examples. A comparison of the first four verses of the Fifty-sixth Psalm in the translations of Mather and Watts shows how differently the New England divine and the English poet balanced the demands of accuracy and art:

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658 Printed by S. Kneeland, for B. Eliot, S. Gerrish, D. Henchman and J. Edwards, Boston, 1718. At 426 pages, this book was one of the most ambitious printing efforts yet undertaken in Boston. The running title makes clear that the work was intended as a source for sung liturgy: Psalterium Americanum, The Book of Psalms, In a Translation Exactly conformed unto the Original; but all in Blank Verse. Fitted unto the Tunes commonly used in our Churches. Which Pure Offering is accompanied with Illustrations, digging for Hidden Treasures in it; and Rules to Employ it upon the glorious and Various Intentions of it. Whereunto are added Some other Portions of the Sacred Scripture, to Enrich the Cantional. Mather's Diary for June 17, 1718 contains the entry "I now at length put into the Hands of the Book-sellers, a large Book from whence I expect a sensible Service to the Kingdome of God, if ever it shall be published."

659 Isaac Watts, Hymns and Spiritual Songs, (Boston: 1720, Bristol, 593).

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Psalm LVI by Isaac Watts

O Thou whose Justice reigns on high,
And makes th' Oppressor cease,
Behold how envious Sinners try
To vex and break my Peace!
The Sons of violence and Lies
Join to devour me, Lord;
But as my hourly Dangers rise
My Refuge is they Word
In God most holy, just and true
I have repos'd my trust;
Nor will I fear what Flesh can do,
The Offspring of the Dust.

Psalm LVI by Cotton Mather

Pity thou me, O God; for man
me seeks for to devour;
continually opposing me
he still oppresses me.
My Enemies are all the Day
me seeking to devour:
many are they who do contend
against me from on high.
At whatsoever time I am
afraid I'll trust in thee.

Mather prided himself on the accuracy of his scholarship and the degree to which his translations captured the flavor of the Hebrew original; indeed, he boasted “We have tied ourselves to Hebraisms, more scrupulously than there is real occasion for.” Textual accuracy added to the challenge of rhyme and meter; Mather dismissed rhyme as mere “clink,” which was “of small consequence unto a Generous Poem; and of none at all unto the Melody of Singing.” However much literal accuracy might have impressed the scholar, the lack of a verse pattern and rhyme scheme to hold the singers together made Mather’s translations unworkable and his translation was not widely adopted.

The author of the letter printed in the Courant on January 21, 1723, prefaced the two psalms from Watts’ translation with the observation:

It is greatly wonder’d at by all Ingenious Foreigners who have travell’d among us, that such a polite People as we are should be contented, in our solemn Worship, to sing so miserable a Version of the Psalms of David, when there are many now extant that excell it as far as Light does Darkness.

660 Mather, Psalterium, ix.
Sophisticated New Englanders such as those active in the Society for the Propagation of Regular Singing took their values from the metropolis; in consequence, they placed great value on judgments of Boston by English visitors. The new importance given to the norm of politeness was a product of the influence of eighteenth-century English taste on provincial values. The need to be thought “a polite people” by Englishmen back home was a powerful motivating force for change. Isaac Watts, whose hymns and poems were extolled by the new generation of New England writers as the acme of Christian politeness, stood at the extreme liberal wing of English Dissenters. His 1722 treatise *Doctrine of the Trinity* denied that a belief in the Trinity was necessary for salvation and was suffused with a strong Arian flavor. Watts’ translation of the Psalms were, if not a Trojan horse for Unitarianism, at the least a force to make liberal theology popular as well as respectable.

The *Courant*’s praise of Watts’ Psalter drew a response from a Rhode Island correspondent published on February 4, 1723. While agreeing about “the Beauty and Elegance of Mr. Watts’s Version of the Psalms,” this correspondent advocated the translation by Dr. Brady and Mr. Tate as superior, at the same time claiming somewhat coyly to agree with Cotton Mather “the stile and Verse of our New-England Singing Psalms, is so poor and Lifeless, that the Singing of them tends rather to Flatten than heighten Devotion."

The discussion of psalm translations brought on by the growing movement for regular singing demonstrated that in poetics as in politics, enlightened New Englanders in the 1720s continued to frame issues in ecclesiastical rather than civil terms. The praise the Rhode Island correspondent gave the Brady translation, whose “Stile and Verse runs Charming and Easy,” was based on a broader aesthetic than simply the mechanics of meter, although consistent smoothness of rhythm was an absolute requirement for any poet wishing to avoid the Couranteers’ sarcastic epithet, Kitelic. Praise of Brady’s translation as “charming” was the result of an aesthetic based on Lockean notions of the effect of sense impressions on the emotions. Forward-looking poets in New England of the 1720s found in the verse of Isaac Watts and Richard Blackmore a model that through the elegance of its
rendering of sensation would invoke feelings of the sublime. Regular singing, by its technical proficiency, brought the charm of the polite-sublime to Congregational liturgy, where it was not always welcomed by traditionalists more inclined to awe than sweetness.

Traditionalists charged ministers advocating the new liturgy with abandoning their flocks. It was to forestall such accusations that Thomas Symmes, minister at Bradford and not one of the signers of the preface to Walters' book, UTILE DULCI. In this work Symmes employed the style and tactics of the new politeness to demonstrate that regular singing was compatible with traditional New England Congregationalism. Symmes wrote his dialogue "for a Particular Town, (where it was publicly had, On Friday, Oct. 12, 1722)" and claimed he had attempted, "to give the Hearer all the advantage I possibly could in the Dialogue, and to set his Arguments & objections in the best light, my little skill in arguing would allow me." The heart of Symmes' defense of regular singing was based on his interpretation of the intention of the first planters. He quoted the 1663 election sermon by Higginson to demonstrate that "the Professed Design of our Fathers of Blessed Memory" was not to start a reformation but to further advance the great Reformation already begun in England. Symmes asked rhetorically "how many amongst us, thro' a misunderstanding & miserable misrepresentation of the Errand of our Fathers into the Wilderness, have still Retarded and very much Obstructed the execution of the Noble & Glorious Intention, in coming hither?" The examples that Symmes cited of misrepresentation, a denial of the power of presbytery as stated in the Cambridge Platform and resistance to the Half-

661 The increased concern with the religious sublime among New England poets in the 1720s is discussed in Shields, "Sublime", 231-248.

662 Thomas Walter, UTILE DULCI or, A Joco-Serious Dialogue Concerning Regular Singing, (Boston: Green for Gerrish, 1723, Evans, 2481).

663 Symmes, Utile, 70.

664 Symmes, Utile, 2.
Way Covenant, were the basis of his charge that New England churches were falling into Brownism by questioning the authority of their ministers. He denied that hymn music written in note form was a novelty and asserted that regular singing had been highly esteemed "by the Wisest & Best of the First Generation of New-England." Symmes concluded that resistance to regular singing was not only unjustifiable by church history, it represented insubordination to ministerial authority in violation of the intention of the colony's founders.

Symmes' Presbyterian reading of Congregational history and his charge of Brownism leveled at those who questioned ministerial authority was mitigated by the tolerance and reasonableness with which he dealt with subsidiary objections to regular singing. Relying on Mather's Magnalia Christi as a source, Symmes argued that printed-note psalm books were in use from the earliest days of New England and told his interlocutor that "your Usual way of Singing is but of Yesterday, an upstart Novelty, a Deviation from the Regular, which is the only Scriptural good Old Way of Singing." When it came to charges of Quakerism or Popery, the author of A Discourse Concerning Prejudice In Matters of Religion exhibited the rational tolerance for which he argued in that work.666

Symmes' praise of Quaker modesty was echoed in the pages of the Courant.667 His suggestion about papist singing was more extreme both because of the anathema that still obtained against them and because the remark seemed to ignore the issue of ceremonialism,

665 Symmes, Utile, 4.

666 "Tho' we understand Quakerism and Popery as well, and hate them as much as you do; yet, I'll never despise what is Laudable in them. I admire the Quakers neat and modest Dress, and condemn nothing in it; but the wearing it with Affected Singularity. And if the Papists sing a better Tune, or with a better Air, than we do, I'd as soon imitate them, and a thousand times sooner, than the Honestest man among you, that has no Skill in Singing." (Symmes, Utile, 34).

667 See for example the essay on modesty in the Courant of August 20, 1722, discussed above.

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which remained the best card traditionalists had to play against regular singing. Like the Couranteers who claimed to follow the teachings of the first planters, Symmes was conveniently oblivious of the Puritan attitude toward ceremony when it conflicted with his own desire for a more aesthetically pleasing ritual.

As the phrase "Joco-Serious Dialogue" suggested, Symmes used humor to rebut some of the charges against regular singing. He deflected accusations that regular singing would lead to instrumental music (High Church ceremony clearly at variance with the practices of the first planters) with humor rather than logic, claiming that the congregations which were too parsimonious to equip their churches with bells "will never be so extravagant as to lay out their Cash, (especially, now Money is so scarce) to buy Organs, and pay an Artist for playing on 'em." 668

The passage and a number of others in which Symmes reassured his interlocutor that "I speak in jest, and to show you the Absurdity of this Objection," 669 brought a new voice to pamphlet literature. By his even-tempered wit and effort to establish rapport with his adversary, Symmes introduced some of the flavor of the Spectator to the religious pamphlet. His effort to mollify the opposition rather than defeat it was the result of an ironic detachment lacking in earlier religious polemics. The secular rhetoric of the literary journal strongly influenced Symmes' religious writing.

The non-confrontational style of the Joco-Serious Dialogue stood Symmes in good stead in trying to defuse the hostility toward the clergy which the regular singing controversy brought to the surface. Symmes recounted the story of a defender of regular singing who rebutted charges that the new style was favored only by young upstarts in the pulpit

668 Symmes, Utile, 34.
669 Symmes, Utile, 36.
by getting endorsements from middle aged and elderly ministers such as those who had endorsed Walter’s book:

yes, cry the Ministers will band together right or wrong! — Horrible dictu! I’m amaz’d to think of the Perverseness not to say, Atheism, some discover when under the power of inveterate prejudice. 670

Those who saw a ministerial cabal in regular singing believed the principles of Congregational polity were being violated. The alternative they proposed was that the matter be put to a vote, either of the whole church or of the communicants, a position which paralleled the minister with his deacons to the governor with his council and the whole church to the popular assembly. This analogy cast the decision for regular singing in terms of a prerogative unjustly extended over the rights of the people. If Symmes borrowed the humorous tone of the Courant, his opponents adopted the stance of Elisha Cooke; the importation of secular norms into questions of church polity could cut both ways.

The idea that ministers were subordinate to the vote of the church or congregation was an assertion that Symmes could not allow to pass unchallenged. 671 Claiming that the Cambridge Platform, in Chapter 10, Section 5, restricted the power of the worshipers to selection of deacons and admission of members, Symmes asserted that “the Pastor is Master of the Assembly, and unless he Preach false Doctrine, or introduce any part, or means

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670 Symmes, Utile, 47.

671 The church referred to those who paid taxes to support the institution; the congregation consisted of those members of the church who had made a profession of faith and been admitted to the Lord’s Supper. The congregation at this period was normally less than half the church membership. In the eighteenth century, gender and the exercise of ministerial authority played an increased role in determining membership in the congregation: “women regularly outnumbered men in congregations (as much as three or four to one in Congregational New England where the easier rules of profession may have favored women members as half-way membership was more equally divided among the sexes) with the most likely reason being the dominance of a professional minister. Where power remained in the hands of a male vestry, sex ratios were more equal.” Patricia U. Bonomi, Under Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in Colonial America, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) Chapter 4, “The Churchgoers.”
of Worship, not warranted by the Word of God; he's Justifiable before all the World." 672
Here was an interpretation of ministerial prerogative fully compatible with the position of
Governor Shute in his struggles with the Lower House; in the affairs of both state and
steeple however there were growing numbers of provincials unwilling to accept a limited
and essentially passive role in decision making.

In addition to constitutional argument, Symmes invoked traditional deference to-
wards ministerial leadership to dismiss the demand for a vote on regular singing. Symmes
informed his opponent that "some of your Party said, if Old Dr. Mather approv'd of it, they
should then suspect they were out of the way in opposing it," and that, in response to an
inquiry on the subject, Increase Mather had sent him a copy of his son's book The Ac-
complished Singer with a hand-written endorsement stating "I do concur with what is here
Published by my Son, and heartily wish, that Young People may be Encouraged to Learn
to Sing Regularly." As if the authority of the two Mathers were not enough, Symmes said,
"After this, I shew'd them Mr. Walter's Singing book, recommended by Fifteen Minis-
ters." 673

Even this barrage of arguments was unable to quell the demand for a vote on the
subject. Baffled, Symmes abandoned his "Joco-serious" style and rebuked the dissidents in
the wounded tones of an aggrieved parent. His sudden recourse to emotional entreaty, his
identification of the minister as messenger of God, and his shaming his listeners for sub-

672 Symmes, Utile, 52.

673 Symmes, Utile Dulci, 47. Either Symmes' memory failed him or he received a pre-
publication copy of the manuscript because the quoted endorsement by Increase Mather
was printed as a prefatory page. Cotton Mather took an active part in spreading the new
ritual. The Courant of June 3, 1723, reported "On Thursday last a Singing-Lecture was
held at the Brick Church in Cornhill and the Rev. Dr. Cotton Mather preach'd."
verting traditional piety, were a recourse to ancient forms of undifferentiated, parietal authority.  

Although fractious in many churches, it was on the South Shore, where the "Brownistical principles" of Plymouth had taken deepest root, that the issue of regular singing led to open division. In the summer of 1723, resistance by those opposed to the new liturgy in the church at Brantrey (Brantree) broke into open defiance. Here the cause of the regular singing was confronted by a pastor who opposed the new practice.

Samuel Niles (H.C. 1699) came from a Braintree family but had grown up on Block Island, where he served his first church. He was summoned to the South Parish of Braintree and ordained on May 23, 1711. Niles was considerably older than his classmates at college and of a decidedly conservative bent in matters of religion. He believed that regular singing would lead to popery, an attitude that the Courant satirized in the issue of March 25, 1723 in a letter signed Ephraim Rotewell which warned with mock alarm that "if we once begin to sing by Rule, the next thing will be to pray by Rule, and preach by Rule; we must have the Common Prayer, forsooth, and then comes Popery." Old Master Janus was able to reassure the perplexed traditionalists of Braintree while taking a sly dig at Cotton Mather's unsuccessful Psalterium Americanum. "Chear up, Mr. Rotewell," Master Janus exclaimed, "There's no danger of Popery... especially if we keep close to our own Version of the Psalms, which is a sure bulwark against Popery."

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674 *Quis talia fendo temperet a Lacrymis? Is this to Obey the voice of the Lord's Servants? To believe his Prophets? To learn the Law at the Mouths of Christ's Messengers? I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, — 'Tis a Lamentation, and should be for a Lamentation! And especially that it should be so in a place so famous for Religion as this has been!* Symmes, Utile, 49. *Quis talia fendo temperet a Lacrymis may be translated as 'that such sacred things should be mingled with tears.'*

675 Niles was one of the leading opponents of George Whitfield and the Great Awakening. Details of his ministry can be found in Sibley's Harvard Graduates, Vol. 4 (Cambridge, 1933) 485-491.
The regular singers continued to make converts among the congregation but Niles remained adamant in forbidding the new style. A council of churches was called to resolve the dispute but Niles interpreted their decision as a vindication of his authority and suspended a number of members for continuing to sing by note. The regular singers, now a majority, decided to defy the minister. A correspondent to the Courant of August 19, 1723 recounted the demonstration by regular singers that had taken place during the Sunday service, claiming that "every one may see the hand of the Devil in the new Way of Singing."

A second council was summoned to adjudicate what was now open rebellion. Their decision, reported in the Courant of September 16, 1723, was that "by this Council the Suspended Brethren are restor'd to Communion, their Suspension declar'd unjust, and the Congregation order'd to sing by Rote and by Rule alternately, for the Satisfaction of both Parties." This undercutting of the authority of the minister when a majority of the congregation were already opposed to his ban on regular singing dramatically exacerbated the tension in the church. In the issue of December 9, 1723, the Courant reported that Niles, in effect, had been driven from the pulpit and forced to perform "the Duties of the Day at his Dwelling House, among those of his Congregation who are Opposers of Regular Singing."

Niles' refusal to serve was a severe but not unknown tactic. Mr. Fitch was employing it almost simultaneously at Ipswich to protest his retention there after being summoned to Portsmouth, New Hampshire. It would be anachronistic to describe the withholding of ministerial services as a strike or boycott, but Niles' action does signify at the least a breakdown in the parental conception of authority traditionally invoked in church polity disputes. Like Governor Shute's abrupt departure on the Sea Horse, the abstentions at Braintree and Ipswich marked the passing of an era in relations between the ruler and the governed. No new structure was yet ready to emerge, but the ancient rampart of deference had been breached.

The resolution of the Braintree controversy was one that seems paradoxical but which reveals the alignment of forces at work in the regular singing debate. In the issue of
February 17, 1724, the Courant reported "We have Advice from Brantrey, that 20 Persons at the South Part of the Town, who are Opposers of Regular Singing in that Place, have publickly declar'd for the Church of England." The degree to which these declarations were simply tactical cannot be determined because the threat of defection forced Niles to come to terms with his opponents. However, since regular singing was an accepted practice in Anglican Church, it seems likely that issues of authority as well as liturgy prompted the declaration. The Braintree controversy tested the limits of the power of the congregation, in this case dominated by regular singers, to override the decision of the minister. The twice-invoked mechanism of the church council proved unable to bring the warring parties to an accord; indeed the second attempt exacerbated the controversy by overruling the minister. Rote singers, threatened by innovation in the liturgy, found democratic polity equally distasteful. The Anglican Church, despite its tendency to ceremonialism, offered a hierarchic organization in which the authority of the minister was better protected from the turbulence of disaffected parishioners.

On February 24, 1724, approximately a year after the Braintree controversy began, a correspondent signing himself Jeoffry Chanticleer attempted to put the issues of authority and tradition as they had been raised by the debate over regular singing into perspective. He observed that, "Custom and the Practice of our Forefathers, are the most convincing Arguments with most, for the Practice or Non-practice of any Mode of Worship; and perhaps this may be the chief Reason why this reading the Psalm, has not been more frequently declar'd against." The practice of "lining out" the psalm by the Deacon, the New-England custom "was first introduc'd out of Condescension to ignorant people who attended the public Worship" and was an expedient in the primitive conditions of the colonial period. By 1724, according to Chanticleer, there was scarcely "one in a Thousand among us that have not been taught to read." Abandoning rote singing was justified because "if a Body of Christians, or their Governours, are allow'd to make new regulations in things indifferent, as the Time, Place, &c. shall require, they may by the same Power lay them aside when the
Necessity of them ceases." Chanticleer argued that flexibility in non-essentials rather than blind adherence to custom was one of the things that distinguished Congregationalism from Anglicanism and pointed to the continued use of godparents at baptism as an anachronism for which Congregationalists justly criticized Anglicans. In insisting upon rote singing because it was a tradition, Congregationalists, he argued, assumed that deferential posture toward purely human authority which it was the intention of the first planters to reject.

To this political argument Chanticleer added a linguistic one, observing that singing the psalm by line obscured or even destroyed the meaning of the verse. He gave as an example a line from Psalm 119, "Like Dross thy Laws I love therefore," which "if I sung that Line without knowing what came before, or what follow'd my own voice would have been a Witness against me." Chanticleer's point that meaning depended on context was derived from the experience of extensive (i.e. rapid and silent) reading of a wide range of secular and religious text. Traditional beliefs in biblical inerrancy, strengthened by intensive reading techniques (i.e. devotional reading in which the organs of speech were activated in the decoding process), did not emphasize context in the establishment of meaning. In his translation of the psalms Cotton Mather had instructed his readers that "There is a way of Reading the Scripture, which is now particularly and pathetically to be demanded for the Reading of the Psalter. .... Make a Pause upon every Verse, and see what Lessons of Piety are to be learned from every Clause. Turn the Lessons into Prayers."676 Intensive readers of Scripture saw each word, even each letter, as a divinely created artifact which, because it was pure truth, must have intrinsic meaning.677 Between intensive and extensive reading of the Bible lay an important difference in the understanding of the way God communicated to people. For the intensive reader, truth was received whole and entire as a spiritual object;

676 Mather, Psalterium, xvii.

677 This is the assumption of Cabalism.
in contrast, Jeoffrey Chanticleer assumed that truth lay in the meaning of the text, which each reader discovered through a decoding process dependent upon contextual clues. By continuing a singing technique which separated form from meaning, he argued, the churches of New England became guilty of the formalism they abhorred in Anglican and Roman rites.

Chanticleer concluded his indictment of rote singing with a misogynous anecdote:

I am credibly inform'd, that a certain Gentlewoman miscarry'd at the uncareful and yelling Noise of a Deacon in reading the first Line of a Psalm; and methinks if there were no other Argument against this Practice (unless there were an absolute necessity for it) the Consideration of it's being a Procurer of Abortion, might prevail with us to lay it aside.

In the context of the essay, the introduction of this story was a product of the gendering of oral tradition as female in contrast to the masculine mode of text. The characterization of the deacon lining out the verse as a procurer of abortion drew upon this gendered association. The procurer of abortion, traditionally an old bawd also dealing in love philters and assignations, was an agent of illicit female sexuality. By associating the deacon with this figure, the Courant did more than draw attention to his rusticity and musical ineptitude: the image denigrated the idea of rote learning of tunes, of tradition as diachronic imitation, and of collective oral knowledge. Reading music was a sophisticated extension of the act of literacy. In supporting regular singing progressive New Englanders turned their backs on the tradition of intensive reading and collective oral culture. What ministers like Mather, Walter, and Symmes were attempting in Congregational ritual had its analog in

678 The idea that the meaning was discovered rather than created by the reader distinguished Chanticleer's position from that of modern theorists such as Wolfgang Iser or Jaques Derrida; his assignment of a vital role to human agency was somewhat at variance with traditional Calvinism which preferred to see truth, like grace, immanent in the Word of God. The rise of extensive reading strengthened subjectivism, which Puritans battled as one of the many tentacles of the antinomian beast.

679 See for example NEC, September 16, 1723 in which the gossip of New England women is compared with the oral tradition of Indian tribes.
what the Courant itself was attempting in provincial politics. In the 1720s, the music book and the newspaper were natural allies.

Singing was not the only part of Congregational ritual which was buffeted by the winds of change. Burial rites were another field of conflict between traditionalists and those wishing to incorporate the aesthetic values of the new century. Funerals played a conspicuous part in Boston's daily life, especially during the peak of the smallpox epidemic of 1721. Over four hundred people died of the disease in October of that year and the town's graveyards saw more than a dozen funerals a day. With funerals so common in Boston, a news item from the London press caught the eye of James Franklin and he reprinted it in the Courant of November 6, 1721: "On Saturday last, at a Funeral in St. Olave, Southwark, one of the Bearers died suddenly on his Knees, to the great Surprize of the People, as he was assisting to deposit the Corps in the Earth."

Other burials went off without dramatic surprizes. A year later, in the issue of November 5, 1722, the Courant gave its readers a detailed account of the planned interment of the Duke of Marlboro. The elaborate state funeral served as a commemoration of the greatest hero of the age and the details of the ceremony offered provincial readers a guide and inspiration in the planning of their own more modest rites. The account described the lengthy funeral route to be followed after "The Body is to be received into an open Hearse with a Velvet Canopy over it in St. James's Park." In addition to the solemn procession and military tattoo, the Courant reported four thousand commemorative medals were to be struck warned that "None to be admitted to see the body lying in State, but Quality, Persons of Distinction, and such as are furnish'd with Tickets." The funeral was estimated to cost £10,000, "defray'd by his Grace's Family."

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680 The London account used by the Courant was dated July 18th. The hero of Blenheim had already been gathered to his fathers when Boston readers learned of the planned ceremonies.
The funeral ceremony of the Duke of Marlboro contrasted with the traditional ritual of Puritan New England in its military and secular character as well as its pomp. In making the transition to a new style of funeral, New Englanders confronted a difference in the interpretation of death which could only with difficulty be minimized. Failure properly to implement the new rituals could give rise to charges of greed, vanity, or even worse, provincial ineptitude in the pages of the Courant. In the issue of August 10, 1724, the Courant reported ironically on the funeral of the wealthy Mr. Israel Cole, whose son, the paper facetiously observed "order'd the most magnificent Interment for him that has been known in New England." The Courant's chief objection to the ceremony was the rustic touch of using oxen rather than pall-bearers to carry the coffin to the grave. The account pointed out that the oxen were not supplied with the fashionable gift of gloves, scarves, or rings for their service and attributed the gaffe to the "Traders in these Parts, who deal in such funeral Ornaments as are fit only for Humane bodies," rather than the parsimony of Cole's son, "whose spacious Soul extends to the utmost Bounds of his Land, and to the very Bottom of his Chests."

The Cole funeral was criticized for combining elements of the old and new rites, the former motivated by parsimony and the latter by vanity. Failure to follow the metropolitan model by having an ox-drawn hearse rather than porters and pallbearers excited derision, as did the omission of the gift of gloves or rings. Like feminine finery, these ritual gifts and the mourning clothes required of the principals (whose omission was another gaffe by young Cole) were an important element in the conspicuous consumption whereby the living honored the deceased. A correspondent to the Courant cited expenditure on such imported

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681 Funeral rituals are among the most significant in any society. Perry Miller, commenting on the changes in New England society in the early eighteenth century, observed that by the 1730 centennial, New Englanders "were forced to look upon themselves with amazement, hardly capable of understanding how they had come to be what they were." (Miller, Mind, ix).
luxuries as a major cause of the province's chronic balance-of-payments problems with England, observing that it was by the sale of "Wedding Cloaths, pompous funerals, and the like" through which "the Merchants are drawing off our Money."

Since the changing fashion in funeral ceremonies forced New Englanders to confront the widening gap between tradition and practice, between ceremony and belief, it was understandable that the minister, as the master of ceremonies, became the focus of insecurity over the province's changing values. An essay on flattery in the Courant of September 3, 1722, decried the way in which material wealth could be converted to spiritual merit in the modern funeral, claiming that funeral complements were reserved for the rich because those of more modest means "are not able to bequeath such large donations to the Orators, to Embalm their memory." Puritan society had feared great wealth almost as much as poverty; the new era in which mercantile capitalism was transforming the norms of culture, imbued death with an increased economic significance as the cash nexus between the living and the deceased gave death increased financial significance. The Courant's essayist passed from condemnation of financially motivated funeral orations to the question of inheritance. He criticized fathers for refusing to endow even their own sons and compared the wealth such men left behind to a great dunghill which, upon their deaths "spread abroad for the publick Advantage."

Resentment over parental financial control expressed in this essay was part of the changing attitude towards traditional forms of civil and parietal authority frequently expressed in the Courant. Tensions between fathers and sons, which developed in farming communities as available land became scarce, surfaced in urban settings in terms of money inheritance. In the depressed economy of the 1720s, when sons of the mercantile class found it difficult to develop their estates without parental subsidy, inter-generational ten-
sions became focused on funerals and inheritance. The association made in the essay between ministerial eulogies for the rich and parental control of wealth suggested that resentment of the clergy had a psychological basis in the perception of the minister as father-figure as well as a social dimension based on the alliance between influential ministers and the colonial elite.

Anger at parental control of family resources and perception of the minister as an ally of patriarchy was, upon the death of a parent experienced as guilt. Such conflicted feelings contributed to the vehemence with which the Courant satirized inept funeral elegies; beneath the sophisticated scorn which the Couranteers delighted at expressing towards amateur versifiers there lay ambivalent feelings about a ritual which celebrated parental authority. Silence Dogood’s devastating criticism of Kitelic poetry was motivated by resentment at demands for emotional response which the art of the poet intended to stimulate.

The ineptitude of the elegy on Mrs. Mehitebell Keitel upon which Benjamin Franklin lavished mock praise was the first of a series of essays in which the paper satirized poetic tributes to the departed. On November 12, 1722, one of the Couranteers published a lengthy review essay on the New England elegy whose theme was alarm that young poets at Harvard were attempting to continue the tradition. Observing that “There is scarce a Plow-Jogger or Country Cobbler that has read our Psalms and can make two Lines jingle who has not once in his Life at least exercised his Talent this way,” The author traced

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the history of the New England elegy from the early days of Massachusetts and quoted from an elegy on Bradford. Turning to modern times, he criticized an elegy on Mr. Samuel Topliff for satirizing the Church of England and plagiarizing from Hudibras. Approaching the real target of the piece, the author confessed that the real danger of such verse was the fact that it inspired "a young Stripling of the Harvardinis" to imitate it. After a critical review of the younger poet's recent elegy on the death of Joshua Lamb, the author called on the Harvard authorities to suppress such works as "a Disgrace to the Academy and a Scandal to the Whole Country." 683

The exaggerated concern expressed about the disgrace to the country if such literary works were allowed to flourish was a tactic the Courant used on other occasions when reproving Harvard students. When James Franklin accused Mather Byles of altering a story about inoculation from the London press, he asked "When your Letter comes to be seen in other countries (under the Umbrage of Authority) what indeed will they think of New England!" 684 The Couranteers enjoyed posing as an older brother reproving "a young scribbling Collegian" for disgracing the younger generation before the adult authority of European opinion. Such a pose studiously ignored the opinion of provincial authorities. In taking this young member of the Harvardini to task, the Courant was subtly admonishing the Harvard faculty for not doing the job sooner and so setting the paper in judgment over the president and fellows of the college.

On August 5, 1723, the Courant again excoriated a young elegist, Mr. J. Calf of Newbury. Remarking that "The Dead have been long abus'd, and the Living disturb'd, by the very Dregs of the College and the Plough in their Elegiac Performances," the author

683 Joshua Lamb was a member of the Harvard class of 1722 who, on the eve of his graduation, fell from the roof of the college while engaged in high-jinks and died a pious, lingering death. The event was seized upon the Boston clergy as an exemplum of piety and irresponsibility.

684 NEC, February 5, 1722.
condescendingly praised the young man's attempts to master the art of poetry, saying that "he had got it all by heart twice in a Week."

None of the Courant's principal writers had any reason to be fond of Harvard. To the Franklins and Nathaniel Gardner the students were privileged dilettantes; to Checkley and Harris they were the next generation of Dissenters tricked out as an established church. Criticism of the literary skills of Harvard men was, like Silence Dogood's dream-vision, a way of undermining the authority of Harvard College and the provincial establishment for which it was the training ground. Since the ultimate arbiters of literary taste, the London press, were equally available to the Couranteers and the Harvard men, literary criticism was a favorable ground upon which the Courant might do battle. The fact that the most admired poets in Boston at the time, Pope and Watts were, respectively, a Catholic and a liberal Calvinist who denied the doctrine of reprobation, strengthened the Courant's argument that New England poetic tradition was old-fashioned intellectually as well as aesthetically. The funeral elegy, in which the younger generation paid homage to

685 Benjamin Franklin may have been intended for a Harvard scholar by his father but prevented by the cost. Franklin recalled that "I was put to the grammar school at eight years of age, my father intending to devote me as the tithe of his sons to the service of the Church.... But my father, burdened with a numerous family, was unable, without inconvenience, to support the expense of a college education." (Franklin, Autobiography, 13). When, later in life, Franklin was awarded an M.A. honoris causa by Harvard, his name was inscribed on the class list for the year in which he would have graduated, making him an honorary member of the class of 1722.

686 In her fourth letter, NEC, May 14, 1722, Silence Dogood reflected upon "the extream folly of those Parents, who, blind to their Children's dulness, and insensitive of the Solidity of their Skulls, because they think their Purse can afford it, will need send them to the Temple of Learning, where, for want of a suitable Genius, they learn little more than how to carry themselves handsomely, and enter a room genteely, (which might as well be acquir'd at a Dancing School,) and from whence they return, after Abundance of Trouble and Charge, as great Blockheads as ever, only more proud and self-conceited."

687 Later in his life, Watts published a treatise on education, The Improvement of the Mind, (London, 1741), in which he drew back from the inter-generational rebellion which his works had fostered on both sides of the Atlantic. He observed that "in this century when the doctrine of a just and reasonable liberty is better known, too many of the
the authority of a passing older one, therefore provoked attack on cultural as well as psychological grounds.

Although the jeremiad was a traditional New England rhetorical trope, the expression of religious decline and changing social values voiced by a correspondent to the Courant in the issue of April 8, 1723 had the ring of sincerity:

Iniquity does abound among us, and the love of many to Religion, and the serious Professors of it waxeth exceeding cold; that there is a universal Degeneracy and Declension from the good Ways of God, which our Fore-fathers walked in ... all manner of Wickedness seems to be breaking in upon us, and threatens to beat down like an irresistible Torrent all before it .... Is there not abundance of Oppression and grinding the Faces of the Poor? Abundance of Fraud, Deceit, and over-reaching Dishonest Practices, to the Grievous Scandal of the Christian Name?

The growth of the Anglican Church in New England of the 1720s was the result of efforts by British authorities to foster imperial harmony through the Established Church. These efforts found a ready response among some of the readers of the Courant for several reasons. Patriotic identification with the national church provided, in addition to political and economic advantages, a sense of connection with English traditional culture which it had been a goal of New England's first planters to sever. Anglican ritual was also aesthetically pleasing to those seeking more polished musical performance and richer visual elements. The Church of England was more congenial to those who sought relief from guilt over material success and preferred a theology which emphasized love rather than fear.

Congregationalists defended the good old way of the first planters and attempted to modify their liturgy without violating tradition. Efforts of the reformers were made more difficult by the democratic tradition in Congregational polity which empowered those unhappy with such innovations as regular singing. Congregational writers vigorously defended the loyalty of Massachusetts' founders and denied any intention to separate from the Church of England, citing their adherence to the Thirty-Nine Articles and minimizing the present youth break all the bonds of nature and duty and run into the wildest degrees of looseness both in belief and practice” (quoted in Fliegelman, Prodigals, 19).
significance of differences over liturgy and the episcopate. They cited the Rochester conspiracy as proof of the loyalty of Dissenters and the threat posed by High Church Tories. Through improved musical training, the adoption of new hymn texts, and increased emphasis on piety, the leaders of the New England Way struggled hard to adapt their church to new conditions.

The Courant reported on the tension between Anglicans and Congregationalists thoroughly and knowledgeably; indeed, the religious debate received more attention than any other issue after the inoculation controversy faded away in the spring of 1722. Essays by the Couranteers Harris, Checkley, Gardner, and Franklin were supplemented by contributions from Samuel Mather and other young “Harvardini” who argued all sides of the case with knowledge and passion. The Courant did not take a consistent position on the issues because its writers were unable to resolve the dilemma posed by a choice between the two sects. The patriotic, aesthetic, and psychological aspects of the Church of England exercised a strong attraction; however, the democratic polity of Congregationalism was identified in New England tradition with political rights that were at the core of the Couranteers’ beliefs. Even the rebelliousness the Franklins and other young writers felt towards Cotton Mather and the ministerial tradition for which he stood could not induce them to give their allegiance to a church in which civil and religious authority were integrated.

The importance of the debate conducted in the pages of the Courant over the historical relationship and comparative merits of Anglicanism versus Congregationalism in New England went far beyond issues of theology or denominational preference. In opening its pages to both sides of the controversy, the Courant extended the range of subjects presented in the newspapers to what was, after all, the ideological bedrock of the British Crown and the province of Massachusetts Bay. In doing so, the Courant offered a readership that included but extended far beyond the Harvard-trained ministry a conceptual and metaphorical framework for the discussion of the nature of religious authority and its relation to the individual believer. Out of this debate the Couranteers developed a political dis-
course that amalgamated Puritan ideas of church polity with Real Whig theories of limited government. In creating and disseminating this discourse the Courant gave New Englan-
ders a cultural resource that had applicability to the state as well as the steeple.688

688 J. G. A. Pocock, in his introductory essay, “The State of the Art,” in *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century*. (Ideas in Context, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) 9, distinguishes between “style,” or mode of utterance of a given author, “and “language,” or mode of utterance available to a number of authors for a number of purposes”. In Pocock’s terms, it is possible to say that the Courant played an important role in the development of a political language for eighteenth-century Americans.
Conclusion

A newspaper, even a literary weekly, is to a significant degree driven by current events; the Courant, which devoted an unusual amount of space to New England news, had therefore to present a number of stories which, because they dealt with distinctly American experiences, had no model in the London press nor precedent in Real Whig literature. In reporting these stories the Couranteers had to go beyond imitation of the metropolitan press and rhetoric, they had to apply ideology to the understanding of indigenous conditions. Figure 18 illustrates a "circle of enemies" formed by American events discussed in the Courant.

![The Circle of Enemies](image)

Among the news stories which the Courant reported, the war with the Eastern Indians was among the longest running and most important. In interpreting the conflict, proximity to the brutal realities of frontier warfare obviated the idea of the Indian as a noble savage living in a lockean state of nature. From its first issue, the Courant portrayed the Eastern Indians as "treacherous Barbarians." The Courant explained the Indians' barbarity as ignorance and prejudice maintained by the force of custom. The instrumentality of custom was "squaws' tongues," oral history maintained by the women of the tribe which made the
adoption of more rational, polite forms of behavior impossible. The dual significance of this belief integrated the issue of Indian savagery with other important elements of the world of the Couranteers. The linking of print with rationality in opposition to an oral tradition associated with superstition was a postulate which legitimated the expansion of the public sphere through increased circulation of printed matter in general and the Courant itself in particular.

The barbarous and illiterate Eastern Indians were supported by French authorities who were neither. Why this was so was explainable on a superficial level by the exingen- cies of imperial politics; on a deeper level the Courant assumed a natural connection between Protestantism and print which implied a contrastive affinity between Catholicism and superstitious tradition. The idea that Scripture read by the light of human reason was a sufficient guide for a virtuous existence was a central idea in the proto-deism to which the Couranteers contrasted Sebastian Ralle's gaudy banner and deceptive promises of heavenly reward.

That the oral history of the Indians was written on "squaws' tongues" associated their barbarism with a cluster of beliefs about gender since what, according to the Courant, in Indian culture was considered history, in polite society was scorned as gossip. In associating New England women with Indians because of their reliance on oral rather than printed transmission of information, the Courant continued an ancient misogyny.

Sebastian Ralle, the Jesuit advisor to the Eastern Indians not only represented the pernicious effects of Catholicism, his actions as a political and military leader were inappropriate activities for a minister of the gospel. Ralle was an example of an evil that the Couranteers attacked within Boston society as well: the minister outside of his sphere. The idea that a minister must keep "within the Sphere of his Duty" was the axiomatic assumption upon which the Courant, speaking for the Old Charter Party and the popular discontent embodied in the Boston Caucus, presumed to criticize Cotton Mather, first, with the support of the town's medical authorities, on the subject of smallpox inoculation, then on the
topic of press freedom, and finally on a diffuse series of questions of authority and rhetorical style.

The idea of a minister’s sphere of duty was a structural component of a complex of ideas about the nature and organization of authority which the Courant articulated piecemeal as contributors argued a series of cases arising from provincial politics and church polity. In place of the integrated, parietal authority of God-king-father, the Couranteers asserted an segmented authority whose operation in each of the spheres of society was largely independent, but harmonious because of adherence to universal principles of reason and nature.

The minister was a public figure and his proper authority was publicly exercised; however, the Courant insisted that religious and secular authority, although both public, be separate. Cotton Mather’s lobbying efforts for the Shute administration and William Dudley’s election-day gift of communion plate to his Roxbury church were strongly condemned because they were perceived by the Couranteers as efforts to breach the separation of civil and religious spheres. Because Real Whig political theory defined corruption as a disruption of equilibrium between the components of the state, the activities of Mather and Dudley were condemned in the florid rhetoric of decay which the Couranteers adopted from the metropolitan opposition press.

Imperial relations were evaluated in terms of the ideas of separation of the spheres and the ennobling nature of property. The reading of British constitutional history which the Couranteers took from Henry Care exalted the role of the people as the repository of traditional liberties and so favored an expansive role for the popular assembly. The argument over Governor Shute’s use of the prerogative had its root in disagreement over the limit of the authority of the General Court vis à vis the royal governor. In conflicts with royal authority over Maine timber rights and smuggling, the Couranteers presented the issue as one in which gubernatorial authority had exceeded its proper sphere and trespassed on the property rights of the people, the position Elisha Cooke, Jr. argued in the assembly and in his Just and Seasonable Vindication.
The Courant defended property rights for moral reasons; although greed, luxury, and aquisitiveness were frequently and invariably condemned, private property itself was revered as the basis of civic virtue. In unjustly depriving subjects of property, a ruler destroyed the basis of morality as well as constitutional balance and hence was guilty of the most heinous act of corruption of which civil authority was capable. Such activity was described in sexual terms, the ruler “satisfying his lust” on the person of his subjects.

Indians and blacks within Massachusetts society, bereft not only of the benefits of printed history but of private property, formed a racially distinct underclass to be controlled. Rendered incapable, for practical purposes, of the civic virtue necessary for political autonomy, the black and red residents of Boston were treated as potentially dangerous children. Within white society two factors could produce an analogous incapacity for participation in civil affairs. Alcohol obscured reason and hindered communication. Femininity caused socially destructive emotionalism sexual and distraction. As the Couranteers traced the profile of those whose condition rendered them incapable of participation in public life, they associated themselves by contrast with the elite in whose hands the affairs of the province rested.

The brief but spectacular career of the Courant can be viewed as the result of interplay between two major forces of cultural change in Boston in the 1720s: development and diffusion. The force of development had, for a generation, drawn New England centrifetally into the orbit of England’s burgeoning Atlantic empire. In the slack times following the period of Queen Anne’s War, a widening gulf separated the mercantile elite in the trans-Atlantic sector from the worsening fortunes of shopkeepers, artisans and yeomen farmers. In the political life of the province this separation produced a growing tension between the oligarchy, represented by the Governor’s Council, and the Old Charter Party which, led by disaffected members of the elite such as Cooke and Noyes, powerfully represented the interest of the bourgeoisie in municipal politics and in the Lower House of the General Court.
The forces of development comprehended elements of provincial culture which were, if not unique, indigenous in nature. The religious experience of the New England Way, which from its seventeenth-century roots drew upon the radical Puritanism of the Commonwealth, had created a highly literate society, politicized in both ecclesiastical and civil affairs. The wilderness frontier, peopled by hostile Indian tribes supported by the French, lent Massachusetts an air of wildness and danger unmatched by provincial capitals of comparable economic power or cultural sophistication within the British isles.

The elements of diffusion spread to Boston from the metropolitan center were, by their nature, more discrete and identifiable. The Georgian culture which developed rapidly in England from the Queen Anne period onward carried to Boston new ideas and values in science, the arts, and religion. Medical advances such as inoculation were paralleled by increased interest in astronomy, botany, and physics. A neoclassicism in the arts was reflected in the architecture of Wren and the poetry of Pope. In religious thought the Unitarian views of Watts were part of a religious trend which balanced increased interest in piety with a growing Socinian rationalism in theological speculation. All phases of high culture responded to a growing concern with classification and symmetrical organization. Sophisticated New Englanders embraced the new forms with eagerness heightened by a desire to escape the stigma of provincialism.

Two products of Georgian culture were immediate causes of the Courant. The political doctrines of the Real Whigs enunciated by Care, Trenchard, and Gordon provided an historical theory and rhetorical structure for the presentation of the interests of the bourgeoisie which gave new importance to the role of the press in an expanded public sphere. As a result, the London press had, by 1721, established a new genre: the literary newspaper, combining customary news with essays on society and the arts. James Franklin imported the form of the literary newspaper and the content of Real Whig political ideas to Boston when he established the Courant. Through that newspaper and their subsequent ca-
reers in journalism he and his apprentice, Benjamin Franklin, disseminated these forms and ideas to other centers of American culture.

London print culture was the signifier and New England's autochthonous culture the signified. The career of the Courant suggests that a significant minority of New Englanders found the style of the Spectator and the ideology of the Real Whigs satisfying tools for the articulation of their own experiences. Given the differences between the metropolitan origin of these forms of expression and provincial conditions, it was inevitable that their adoption should alter the terms of political and religious debate in Massachusetts, heightening the importance of some issues and minimizing the significance of others. A mimetic impulse, born on the rhetorical forms of the metropolitan press, flourished with increasing vigor among the New England elite. The traditional analytical technique of typology was reduced to the status of metaphor as readers of the Courant interpreted the meaning of local events with tools brought from London.

In adopting the format of a London literary newspaper, James Franklin provided an effective, new vehicle for the transmission of Real Whig rhetoric to New England. The efficacy of Real Whig rhetoric as it appeared in the Courant had three causes: its modernity, its harmony with Puritan tradition, and the appeal of its psychology to the Courant's community of readers. Acceptance of Real Whig doctrine by the Courant's readers owed much to the deep congruence between Real Whig political theory and Massachusetts' Puritan heritage; although often startling, the ideas of Care, Trenchard, and Gordon made sense to New Englanders. To the authority of patriarchal tradition, with its synthesis of emotional symbolism and traditions, the Real Whigs offered an alternative ideology based on rational analysis and the division of authority's functions into distinct political, religious, and aesthetic spheres. The dominant heuristic which the Couranteers adopted from the Real Whigs was a separation of authority's cognitive from emotional components and the confinement of political discourse to a realm of rational analysis. In applying the political values of the Real Whigs to the simpler, more egalitarian social structure of Massachusetts, the Courant
gave those doctrines a more radical and democratic effect than they had achieved in the metropolis. The new concept of political authority that the Courant articulated in the 1720s played a central role in the American ideology which members of the next generation — men like James Otis and John Adams — grew up accepting as a matter of fact. It was by articulating the ideology of the Real Whigs in the medium of the literary newspaper that the Couranteers began the tradition of an opposition press in America.

The Courant depended as much upon its successful exploitation of the form of the literary newspaper as its Real Whig content to develop a political language for eighteenth-century Americans. The two newspapers being published in Boston when the Courant started up provided a market preconditioned to accept an expanded new role for the press which Franklin and his associates offered. It was from Cato's Letters that the Couranteers adopted the idea of the newspaper as a forum for public debate on political and cultural affairs, a role which gave the press greatly increased authority over public discourse. The assertion of that authority by "the young printer and his accomplices" was bound to bring them into conflict with the ministerial establishment which had exercised authority over public discourse since the colony's founding. Although some younger ministers such as Thomas Walter and Thomas Symmes were successful in adapting their writing to the stylistic requirements of the new medium, none of the three generations of Mathers, Increase, Cotton, and Samuel, were able to do so.

The inability of the Mathers to develop a prose style suitable to the literary newspaper must be accounted a principal reason for the "failure" (in the phrase of Perry Miller) of the Courant. Had the Mathers been able successfully to engage in debate in the new medium (as Mather Byles, Samuel's cousin, and increasing numbers of the younger generation of ministers were eventually able to do), the Courant would not have been perceived as a lethal threat to ministerial authority and the Good Old Cause. The Mathers failed to find a suitable journalistic voice not from lack of ability but because the stylistic requirements of the literary newspaper differed radically from the tradition of Puritan rhetoric and the ax-
ions of authority upon which it was based. In his handbook for ministers, *Manuductio ad Ministerium*, published in 1726 as the *Courant* was coming to the end of its life, Mather observed ruefully that “After all, Every Man will have his own Style, which will distinguish him as much as his Gate;” consequently, men should “handsomely indulge one another in this, as Gentlemen do in other Matters.” Opponents had accused the Mathers of controlling the Boston press for years; the loss of control which occurred when first Thomas Fleet then James Franklin opened their printing shops was the greatest blow to ministerial authority since the Act of Toleration. Partly as a result of the Mathers’ inability, the *Courant* was able to create a new zone in the public sphere, exempt from ministerial control.

Absent ministerial control, it was natural that the *Courant* should become a spokesman for the disaffected bourgeoisie represented by Elisha Cooke’s Old Charter Party. Such advocacy not withstanding, the *Courant* was not a party paper as the term was understood in contemporary British politics. James Franklin made much of his paper’s independent status and his willingness to print submissions from advocates on both sides of a controversy. His editorial position was a corollary to the Real Whig theory which anointed the press as arbiter of public discourse; it was important to Franklin personally as the expression of his own adult autonomy as well. In his vision of the *Courant* James Franklin made a lasting contribution to American letters, for in his avoidance of party journalism in the narrow and negative sense in which he and his contemporaries used the term “party,” he created the medium of expression for a new definition of the individual in his relation to society’s agencies of control.

The field upon which the *Courant* exercised its new-found role was, after the fading away of the inoculation controversy in the spring of 1722, principally that of church polity.

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Mather defended what he called his “Massy Way of Writing” against the criticism of a “Lazy, Ignorant, Conceited Set of Authors” — a final jibe at the wicked printer and his accomplices who had bedeviled him in the pages of the *Courant*.

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The presence of two of Boston's most prominent Anglicans, Henry Harris and John Checkley, among the Couranteers ensured that the issues separating Episcopal, Presbyterian and Congregational forms of church governance would become the topic upon which was fastened more general questions of authority and autonomy. The patriotic, aesthetic, and psychological aspects of the Church of England exercised a strong attraction; however, the democratic polity of Congregationalism was identified in New England tradition with political rights that were at the core of the Couranteers' aspirations. Even the rebelliousness the Franklins and other young writers felt towards Cotton Mather and the tradition which he embodied could not induce them to give their allegiance to the Anglican Church in which civil and religious authority were integrated. The Courant accepted unquestioningly the inherent applicability of Congregational church polity to the defense of traditional rights of Englishmen and vice versa. Out of the debate over ecclesiastical structure the Couranteers developed a political discourse that amalgamated Puritan ideas of Congregational autonomy with Real Whig theories of limited government and popular sovereignty.

The intermingling of political and religious ideas about authority which occurred in the pages of the Courant not only invoked the New England Way to support a Real Whig political agenda, it accelerated changes in New England religious practice by presenting church matters in the rhetoric of Cato and the style of the Spectator. In the pages of the Courant theology and aesthetics travelled side by side. The enthusiasm the Courant echoed for Pope and Watts —respectively, a Catholic and a liberal Calvinist who denied the doctrine of reprobation — strengthened the argument that New England tradition was old-fashioned and provincial. Unlike the traditional monographic genres of the broadside and the pamphlet, the newspaper facilitated cross-pollination and so accelerated the dialectic of development and diffusion.

The Courant exacerbated the effects of the commoditization of religion (evident in the struggles between rich and poor congregations for popular ministers) by presenting its readers with comment on a spectrum of religious sects and the suggestion that denomina-
tional affiliation was a matter of preference. The tax case of 1722-23 afforded an opportunity to discuss the Quakers and Baptists who refused to support a Presbyterian ministry. The Quakers' steadfastness in upholding their religious independence drew praise from the Courant; other aspects of Quaker practice received favorable notice in the paper not primarily because of their specifics, but because the values of self-control, individual autonomy and non-patriarchal authority which the Couranteers detected in Quaker society were their own most cherished aspirations. The Anglican Church offered an escape from the Puritan dilemma which made it particularly attractive to those enjoying worldly success. To those New Englanders who left the faith of their fathers in order to return to the national church, psychological and social factors seem to have been at least as important as theological issues. On one hand, Anglican ritual offered a fashionable alternative to New England tradition, one associated with enlightened thinking and imperial patriotism. On the other, the traditional rituals of the Established Church offered reconnection with a rich folk culture which, since Elizabethan times, Calvinists had rejected as superstitious. The detachment with which the Courant could present sectarian matters weakened the control of orthodoxy.

In its support of more aesthetic religious ritual the Courant aided the diffusion of metropolitan influences which were eroding the foundations of the province's Puritan tradition. Advocates of the old, plain style, conscious of the susceptibility of the emotions to manipulation through sensory stimuli, distrusted aesthetic experiences which might distract the mind from God's word. Regular singing accompanied by the organ offered such a temptation. Dependent as it was upon highly developed reading skills, regular singing associated literacy with theological controversy. Traditional beliefs in biblical inerrancy had been supported by intensive reading techniques which did not emphasize the role of context in the establishment of meaning. The spread of extensive reading strengthened subjectivism, which Puritan tradition condemned as antinomian. In supporting regular singing, the Courant and progressive New Englanders turned their backs on the tradition of inten-
sive reading and collective oral culture. What innovatory ministers were attempting in church ritual had its analog in what the Courant itself was attempting in politics.

The nature of authority was a question which New Englanders debated in terms of church polity as well as civil constitution; indeed, given the importance of church organization in Puritan theory and the central role of religion in the founding of New England, it is hardly surprizing that constitutional theory received greater attention in the ecclesiastical rather than civil mode. The Courant stood vehemently for the separation of state and steeple because the emotional power of religion, if allowed to reinforce the habit of deference traditional in provincial politics, would yield an unchallengeable hegemony for the mercantile elite.

The transposition of ideas between civil and religious matters in the Courant was facilitated by the use of gendered language for the discussion of authority. The issue of the ruler and the ruled was presented through rhetoric in which the former was male and the latter female. Arbitrary or despotic government was described in sexual terms of rapine and prostitution, its motive the satisfaction of the lusts of the ruler upon the persons of the ruled. Gendered language allowed the Courant to associate political issues in the public sphere with domestic relationships. In its recognition of the increased separation of male and female spheres and its exploration of male gallantry and female modesty, the Courant was far in the vanguard of eighteenth century New England intellectual life. In both public and private spheres the Courant gendered the traditional rhetoric of authority as female because of its commingling of emotion and tradition. To feminine authoritarianism the Couranteers opposed a “masculine” style of rational analysis and irony in which emotional and intellectual components were clearly separated.

In its presentation of Dummer’s War with the Eastern Indians, the Courant applied concepts of gender to indigenous conditions. In its reporting about New Englanders captured by Indians the Courant diverged sharply from the tradition of the captivity narrative, emphasizing the role of the male redeemer rather than the female captive and focusing on
the political rather than psychological aspects of the captivity experience. By its consistent
gendering of political and social reporting the Couranteers adapted to local conditions a
rhetoric of authority through which they could press their case for greater inclusion in the
political and cultural life of Massachusetts.

The interplay between the objective forces development and diffusio which charac-
terized the Courant had a subjective, interior counterpart in a psychological dynamic in the
minds of its creators and readers. The values and style which the Courant brought to New
England touched directly upon the identity of its readers as provincial members of the Bri-
tish empire. It was paradoxical that as the society of Massachusetts developed culturally
and economically, the sense of superiority which its founders had brought to their errand
into the wilderness was supplanted by a pervasive sense of rustic deficiency. As in other
colonial societies, the elite attempted to assuage the pangs of inferiority by devoting a sig-
nificant amount of its increased leisure time and surplus wealth to objects of conspicuous
consumption in imitation of its metropolitan counterpart. The idle wife, a favorite target of
criticism in the Courant, became a badge of status among the elite and a goal of the sophis-
ticated bourgeoisie. The need to be thought "a polite people" by Englishmen back home
was a powerful motivating force for change. What made the Boston experience unique was
not the sense of provincial inferiority which drove status competition but the very devel-
oped political and intellectual institutions of New England society and, of course, the sharp
contrast between the Puritan culture in which Massachusetts Bay was established and the
prevailing mores of Georgian Britain. A sense of provincial inferiority accelerated the repli-
cation of metropolitan elite culture advocated by the Courant.

To the force of provincial status anxiety the Couranteers added the influence of
conflict with parental authority figures over issues of resources and autonomy. The
Courant's frequent satires of funeral sermons and elegies in Kletic verse had a psychologi-
cal basis in the perception of the minister as father-figure as well as a social dimension
based on the alliance between ministers and the elite. Like parents and despots, ministers

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exercised authority through manipulation of symbols and associations having powerful emotional force. Freedom from parietal control was a *sine qua non* for the *Courant*'s younger readership because those whom the society judged to be incapable of maintaining their autonomy, women, children (including apprentices), Indians, and slaves, were compelled to forfeit full participation in the social order in return for the protection of paternal authority.

James and Benjamin Franklin singled out the loss of inhibition and self-control associated with alcohol consumption as particularly destructive to the maintenance of adult autonomy and condemned it. Female sexuality posed a similar threat to self-control and both men satirized hooped petticoats as canons threatening any young man who approached them. The Couranteers expressed the acute perception that beneath the new fashion of the Augustan libertine and his "hell-fire club" lay the temptation of abandonment of self-control which justified the imposition of parietal authority. In culture, as in politics, the *Courant* insisted upon the rational control of behavior as a prerequisite for autonomy and rejected the emotional appeal of symbolism and tradition conducive to hierarchical paternalism.

The *Courant* did more than connect new journalistic, political, and social values from the metropolis to Massachusetts's century-old culture; it synthesized the elements of diffusion and development into a new entity, itself capable of defining the aspirations of the next generation of New England's leaders and of stimulating similar developments in other centers of American culture. It is for this reason that James Franklin's paper cannot, despite its brief and stormy life, be called a failure.
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