Transplanting Disorder: The Construction of Misrule in Morton's New English Canaan and Bradford's Of Plymouth Plantation

In his "Authors Prologue" to New English Canaan (1637), a work devoted to extolling the virtues of, and promoting, that portion of the New World largely dominated by its early Puritan settlers, and to deriding satirically these same Puritans for preventing people like himself from playing a formative role in its development, Thomas Morton likens New Canaan to "a faire virgin, longing to be spred/And meete her lover in a Nuptiall bed,/... being most fortunate/When most enjoy'd." Continuing in a vein that calls to mind John Donne's "Elegy XIX. To His Mistress Going to Bed," Morton declares that "our Canaan" would be most fortunate "if well impoy'd by art and industry" but concludes that her "offspring now, shewes that her fruitfull wombe,/Not being enjoy'd, is like a glorious tombe,/Admired things producing which there dye,/And ly fast bound in darck obscurity" (p. 114). 1 The representation of the New World as a virgin awaiting insemination and cultivation by resourceful and energetic Europeans is a concept that by this time had already become an iconographic cliche. 2 What is new in New English Canaan is the way the concept underwrites the possibly facetious but nonetheless suggestive representation of an alternative to the prevailing mode of development of the New World, couched in the form of a spirited indictment of the protocols of belief and behavior currently enforced by the Puritan overlords of New England, a defense of the habits and customs of New England's native inhabitants, and an elaboration of Morton's more expansive attitudes toward free trade and "consoiation." 3 According to Morton, so caught up are the "cruell Schismaticks" in transplanting to New England their dissentious Old World practices that the opportunity to develop more productive forms of interaction between New World settler and native, and more profitable methods for exploiting the New World's resources, is in danger of being permanently lost.

Morton broached his alternative to the severe dispensation of Plymouth Plantation retrospectively, some thirteen years after his first visit to New England and seven years after his second enforced departure. He did so in large part as an act of revenge against those who had twice expelled him from their New World domain and continued to dictate the terms of settlement in New England. Possibly informed by Morton's hope for a triumphant return to New England, New English Canaan was also "intended to act on the well-known prejudices of Archbishop Laud, the head and controlling spirit of that Board of Lords' Commissioners of Foreign Plantations that had supreme authority over the colonies" to whom the book is dedicated. 4 For such reasons among others, New English Canaan generally operates more as a scathing satire of the Puritan community's abuses of its authority over New England than it does as a practical proposal for enlightened colonial practices.

As a satire of Puritan abuses, New English Canaan occupies an ambiguous space in New World literary history. While it bears obvious resemblances to contemporaneous promotional tracts such as John White's The Planters Plea (1630) and William Wood's New Englands Prospect (1634), New English Canaan draws heavily on conventions of

1. Citations from New English Canaan are drawn from The New English Canaan of Thomas Morton, ed. Charles Francis Adams, Jr. (Boston, 1883).
2. As Louis Montrose observes in "The Work of Gender in the Discourse of Discovery," Representations 33 (1991), "By the 1570s, allegorical personifications of America as a female nude with feathered headdress had begun to appear in engravings and paintings, on maps and title pages, throughout Western Europe" (p. 1).
3. John Seelye, Prophetic Waters (New York, 1977), writes of the same passage: "Here Hakluyt's fair Virginia is tricked out in Cavalier trumpery, yet the result is a remarkable analogy, Morton having combined several of the dominant (indeed, rampant) motifs of early propaganda concerning the New World... The result is a metaphysical conceit recalling John Donne's erotic geography, but where Donne uses 'my America, my new-found land' to compliment his mistress's charms, Morton employs the erotic burden to complement his concept of America, an available virgin whose womb, though fertile, is like a prison, in which 'admired things' languish, 'fast-bound in dark obscurity'" (pp. 172-73). Robert D. Arner, "Pastoral Celebration and Satire in Thomas Morton's New English Canaan," Criticism 16 (1974), discerns "an implicit assumption that if the promise of the land is to be fulfilled, if Eden is actually to be rediscovered, and 'art and industry' are to be wed in fruitful union with nature, the evil spirits must first be exorcised" (p. 223).
anti-Puritan satire established toward the end of the Elizabethan period by Thomas Nashe and Ben Jonson, among others.\(^5\) Composed only a few years prior to the assumption of Puritan control over old England, New English Canaan expressly affiliates itself with the (soon-to-be-superseded) exuberant imaginative life of that period, most fully exemplified by the stage plays of Marlowe, Shakespeare, and especially Jonson, whose influence is often apparent in Morton's writing.\(^6\) It also implicitly associates itself with the state-sponsored strategies of “the conservative cultural revival” of the 1630s which attempted to direct nostalgia for the Elizabethan age into popular opposition to growing Puritan authority.\(^7\) Indeed, the event that is central both to Morton's recounting of his experiences in New England and to William Bradford's account of Morton in Of Plymouth Plantation—namely, the contention about, and subsequent destruction of, the maypole that Morton raised in his settlement at Ma-re Mount—resonates strongly with the intensifying Puritan attack against popular festive practices that began some fifty years earlier and would lead, several years after the publication of New English Canaan, to the closing of theaters and abolition of maypoles and kindred practices in England.\(^8\)

The competing accounts of this event produced by Morton and Bradford deploy discursive constructions of disorder and misrule that were frequently applied to the anti-theatrical debate but that also often appear in writings unrelated to the theater, most notably in relation to the widespread fear occasioned by the growing numbers of masterless men in England and the bitter contention between Puritan reformers and Anglican defenders of popular festivals.\(^9\) These constructions were regularly employed by opposing parties to the fears and conflicts in question, as well as by similarly situated characters in the fiction and drama of the period. Prejudicial depictions of the “many-headed mob” in plays such as Shakespeare's A Henry VI and Coriolanus, and in the work of Sidney and Spenser, for example, appear at much the same time as antitheatricalist constructions of the potential threat to civic peace embodied by idle and masterless men in the vicinity of the playhouses.\(^10\) Puritans, who played a dominant role in the antitheatrical movement and in corresponding efforts to suppress popular festivals like Mayday celebrations, were themselves often associated with masterless men and communistic Anabaptists in contemporary satires and polemics. In his recounting of Anabaptist doctrine in Hells Broke Loose (1605), for example, 


\(^6\) Cf. Donald F. Connors, Thomas Morton (New York, 1969): “Published in 1637, the same year that Milton’s mask of Comus first appeared in print. [New English Canaan] contains some of the bright spectacle and song of that work. Other qualities of Renaissance writing are present also. The ringing enthusiasm of Michael Drayton’s ode ‘To the Virginian Voyage’ is heard in Morton’s account of the beautiful and bountiful land of Canaan, and the biting satire of Ben Jonson is evident in his attack upon the Puritans” (p. 7). Morton’s “Elizabethan vision of the New World” has also been previously remarked by Seeley, Prophetic Writings, pp. 66–69; Richard Slotkin, Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600–1860 (Middletown, Conn., 1973), p. 59; and Daniel B. Shea, “‘Our Professed Old Adversary’: Thomas Morton and the Naming of New England,” Early American Literature 23 (1988), 53–57.

\(^7\) See David Underdown, Revell, Riot and Rebellion (Oxford, 1983), pp. 63–72. Robert Dover's Cotswold Games were a particularly interesting development in this revival. As Christopher Whitefield writes in Robert Dover and the Cotswold Games (London, 1962), their purpose was to relate old, quintessentially English rural sports “to classical mythology and Renaissance culture, whilst linking them with the throne and the King's Protestant Church” (p. 2). According to Underdown, the games constituted “a conscious attempt to bridge the gap between genteeel and popular culture and unify the whole community under its traditional leaders” (p. 64). Dover's efforts were celebrated in the Annals of Doveriue of 1636, a collection of poems and pastoral and pastoral that includes a rather slim contribution by Ben Jonson and another by Thomas Randolph whose speaker states that “harmless Maypoles ... are nall'd upon. As if they were the towers of Babylon.” According to E. R. Veysey, Dover's Annals of Doveriue (Cheltenham, 1878), the games continued “even till the rascally rebellion was begun by the Presbyterrians, who gave a stop to their proceedings, and spoiled all that was generous and ingenious elsewhere” (p. v).

\(^8\) Cf. Connors: “Behind the strikingly different interpretations by Bradford and Morton of this local New England affair is the long history of conflict in England over sports, revels, pastimes, and Maypoles” (p. 99). As David Cressy observes in Bonfires and Bell (Berkeley, 1989): “Throughout the country, in the period following the Reformation, disputes over May customs agitated the friction between competing cultural traditions. Maypoles could easily become a source of trouble and provocation pitting ‘jealous brothers’ against ‘harmless mirth’” (p. 24). Cressy adds that “The annual fuss about Maypoles came to a head in the Parliamentary Ordinance of 1644 demanding their permanent suppression” (p. 23). The closing of theaters occurred in 1642.


ple, Samuel Rowlands effectively makes John of Leyden's millenarian program indistinguishable from the political agenda attributed to Jack Cade in *Henry VI*, and implicitly links both to the rising Puritan tide: "all things should be common, and no Magistrate to govern, but every man at his own libertie to doe what he list; take whatsoever he stood in need of, without pay; ... and such like villainous rogueish stuffe, that neuer a theefe in the world would refuse to subscribe to it." 11 The "reforming frenzy" of some Puritans was such that the reformist movement itself may be said to have produced for some the same destabilizing threat that Puritans took as their special charge to monitor and suppress. 12 As Christopher Hill observes, the "mockery of bishops" advanced in the Marprelate tracts opened "Presbyterians themselves ... to the charge that they were unleashing the many-headed monster." 13

In the following pages, I would like to explore how Morton and Bradford employ and exploit the same established discourse of misrule in support of radically opposed political, religious, and cultural agendas. I am specifically interested in demonstrating the extent to which their manner of framing the same New World events remains rooted in the social and cultural divisions of the Old World. At the same time, I am committed to giving Morton's text and position a more sustained hearing than they have heretofore received at the hands of those who have made Bradford's account the preserve of fact and Morton the product of malicious fantasy. As Jonathan Goldberg has recently noted, mainstream American historians and literary critics have accorded Bradford's Of Plymouth Plantation "an originary status in a national imaginary," 14 repeatedly preferring its versions of history as history in spite of its explicit ideological positioning as a foundational text in the Puritan master narrative. This failure or refusal to acknowledge the constructed or self-justifying basis of Bradford's representations has effectively natu-

13. Hill, *Change and Continuity*, p. 191. Discursive inversions of this sort were so commonplace in the period that in response to Puritan hostility toward festive display a "Dissent gentleman Richard Christmas ... in 1616 put a cat on a post in the street, scared him at the best preacher in the county, and said that 'there were none but rogues and whores that would hear sermons'" (Underdown, p. 69).

16. Seelye argues that Morton's representation of his dealings with the Indians is consciously duplicit. Relying on charges lodged by the Puritans against him, Seelye states that "Morton does not bother to mention the fact that he traded guns for furs with those same amenable savages, then took poisons at them and stole their canoes" (p. 171).
doing Laud's work in the New World, his penchant for stressing the exclusionary, tribal character of the Puritans—while both valorizing and culturally normalizing that of the Indians—constitutes a striking intervention in the generally undistinguished practice of English New World ethnography, made possible by Morton's status as a free-ranging agent of economic opportunism, by the Puritans' insistence on their own difference or separateness, and by the broadly skeptical sensibility Morton brings to bear on their protocols and professions.19

This sensibility is clearly at work in the chapters of New English Canaan that offer a satiric inventory of preferred Puritan methods for dealing with those who remain "without" and for seducing some who are "without" to come "within" the Puritan dispensation. In these sections Morton presents the Puritans as seducers of "the illiterate multitude" (p. 261) and all honest Protestants, as sowers of religious intolerance and social disorder. In one instance, they allegedly make a rejected pastor run a gauntlet of musketeers in what Morton terms a "solemn invention" of banishment (p. 264). In another, a bumbling "Master of Ceremonies" Morton names "Master Bubble" sallies forth with several loyal Indian guides to trap beaver only to become "mazed" by his own paranoia, beat a barefoot retreat from his supposed tormenters, and make "a discourse of his travels, and of the perilous passages, which did seeme to be no lesse dangerous then these of that worthy following manner: "And surely it is good to overthrow heathenisme by all good wyes and means. But there hath not been any sent forth by any Church to leare the Nathiues language, or to instruct them in the Religion: First, because they say they have not to do with them being without, unless they come to heare and leare English" (Lechford, pp. 54–55).

17. In his edition of William Wood's New England's Prospect, (Amherst, 1977) ed. Alden Vaughan notes that although Wood's Prospect is a promotional tract cultivating favorable impressions of native New Englanders, Wood "appears to have assiduously collected information from other settlers to augment his own observations, and he presents his findings with refreshingly little of the cultural ethnocentrism so common to seventeenth century Englishmen" (p. 7). According to Wood, "If it were possible to eke out the contents [of the Indians] have showed the English, since their first arrival in those parts, it would not only tend to the encrease of those that never saw them, and wipe off that needless fear that is too deeply rooted in the conceits of many, who think them envious, and of such meaner and inhume disposition, that they will one day make an end of their English inmates. The worst indeed may be surmised, but the English hitherto have had little cause to suspect them" (p. 73).

18. Scelle, however, contends that "Morton makes abusive misuse of William Wood's Prospect throughout, setting it up as a tilting post with which to refute the Puritan purpose in the New World" (p. 170). In a slightly later and equally idiosyncratic depiction of Puritan governance of New England, Thomas Lechford, Plain Dealing or News from New England [1642] (Boston, 1867), concludes his account of the Puritans' adoption of "a new dating system substituting numbers for the offensive names of the days and months" (Cressy, p. 198) in the
Knight Errant, Don Quixote” (p. 272). As Morton presents it, the well-meaning but bewildered Indians do all in their power to track down the paranoid Puritan in order to return his store of beaver and preserve themselves from suspicion. Displacing normative attributions of civility from Puritan to Indian, Morton recounts this incident so that his readers “may observe whether the Savage people are not full of humanity, or whether they are a dangerous people, as Master Bubble and the rest of his tribe would persuade you” (p. 273, my emphasis).

At this point Morton recounts the celebrated events that took shape at a place he calls “Ma-re Mount” (formerly Mount Wollaston) but which Bradford, in his own account, chooses to name “Merrymount.”20 According to Bradford, Morton came to New England in the company of “one Captain Wollaston (a man of petty parts)” who “with three or four of some eminency . . . brought with them a great many servants, with provisions and other implements for to begin a plantation” (p. 204).21 Bradford pointedly describes Morton as a man “of some small adventure of his own or other men’s amongst them” who “had little respect amongst them, and was slighted by the meanest servants” (p. 204). When Wollaston chooses to decamp to Virginia, he takes along “a great part of the servants . . . where he puts them off at good rates, selling their time to other men.” Morton, “having more craft than honesty,” remains behind to seduce the remaining servants to rebel against Wollaston’s representative, one Lieutenant Fletcher, and remain with him at Mount Wollaston (p. 205). Preparing “some strong drink and other junkets [to make] them a feast,” Morton allegedly addresses the now “merry” indentured servants in the following manner:

You see . . . that many of your fellows are carried to Virginia, and if you stay . . . you will also be carried away and sold for slaves with the rest.

20. Cf. Shea: “As students of Merry Mount recognize, even as they write ‘Merry Mount,’ our own usage grants the victory to Bradford’s text, which if unknown to Morton is nonetheless adumbrated in his image of those who threaten ‘to make it a woeful mount and not a merry mount’” (p. 59). Morton never refers elsewhere to his place of settlement as Merrymount, the name that has otherwise been universally employed to identify his home and indicate the nature of the events allegedly sponsored there. Hawthorne’s retelling of the story has no doubt been more influential than Bradford’s account in naturalizing what is, after all, a conspicuously moralized place-name in the predictable Puritan manner. Morton’s preferred name for his settlement, Ma-re Mount, is notably short of all but geographical reference insofar as it merely seeks to describe a place at which hill and sea converge, or “mountain by the sea” (Kupferman, p. 662).

21. Citations from Of Plymouth Plantation are drawn from Samuel Eliot Morison’s edition (New York, 1953). Although Bradford apparently completed work on his MS in 1650, a representative edition of the complete text was not published until 1856.

Therefore I would advise you to thrust out this Lieutenant Fletcher, and I, having a part in the Plantation, will receive you as my partners and associates; so may you be free from service, and we will converse, plant, trade, and live together as equals and support and protect one another (p. 205).

While this passage harbors Old Testament echoes of Satan’s seduction of Eve, it also resonates strongly with other early modern constructions of rebellion and disorder, many of which (as noted above) were typically employed to demonize religious dissenters such as the Puritans and Anabaptists.22 Bradford, however, clearly intends to associate Morton’s alleged seditious rabble-rousing with the notorious pronouncements of expressly secular English rebels like Jack Cade, Jack Straw, and John Ball. The association becomes more pronounced as Bradford recounts the effects of Morton’s discourse on his hearers, who allegedly “took opportunity and thrust Lieutenant Fletcher out o’ doors” and subsequently “fell to great licentiousness and led a dissolute life, pouring out themselves into all profaneness” (p. 205).

In going on to recount how “Morton became Lord of Misrule, and maintained (as it were) a School of Atheism” in the company of his “conscirates,” Bradford conflates discursive constructions employed in the attack on theaters and their allegedly freethinking supporters in the 1590s with language currently employed in the ongoing Puritan campaign against the “pagan” practices of popular festivities allegedly sponsored by a corrupt Church of England.23 Applying the pressure of his civil authority to the representation of orthodox Puritan positions toward the “pagan” trappings of festivity and theatrical display, Bradford assembles what will subsequently become the historically authorized version of Morton’s “revels at New Canaan”:

They also set up a maypole, drinking and dancing about it many days together, inviting the Indian women for their consorts, dancing and frisking together like so many fairies, or furies, rather; and worse practices. As if they had anew revived and celebrated the feasts of the Roman goddess Flora, or the beastly practices of the mad Bacchanaclians. Morton likewise, to show his poetry composed sundry rhymes and verses, some tending to lasciviousness, and others to the distraction and scandal of some persons, which he affixed to this.

22. See Brent Stirling, The Populace in Shakespeare (New York, 1949), on the “campaign to impress on the public consciousness a linkage of nonconformists with extremist sects” like the Anabaptists (pp. 103–21, 128–31).

23. Cf. Goldberg: “If the proof of [Morton’s] profligacy is the allegation that his followers (lower-class men whom Morton rescued from being sold into slavery) take ‘Indian women for their consorts’. . . , Morton’s ‘School of Atheism’ implies even worse deeds . . . ‘atheism,’ as Alan Bray points out, is a charge regularly made against sodomites” (p. 66).
Having placed Morton’s revels in the context of his disorderly bid for control of Wollaston’s plantation, Bradford makes their festive energies seem dangerously free of all constraint and capable of destabilizing the Puritan settlement itself. At the same time Bradford’s choice of words reveals a voyeuristic fascination with the very actions that arouse his moral indignation. Indeed, as “dancing” cedes to “frisking together” and “fairies” cede to “furies,” with the scene as a whole descending, first, to “worse practices,” and then to “the beastly practices of the mad Bacchanalians,” it appears as if Bradford’s overstimulated imagination actually produces his indignation. So vividly has this passage played on its readers’ sexual fantasies and anxieties that even latter-day defenders of Morton have taken Bradford’s allegations for undisputed truth, failing to remark the extent to which the “rhymes and verses” tending “to the detract and scandal of some persons” might have shaped Bradford’s construction of the event.

Bradford’s emphases are characteristic of any number of contemporary Puritan diatribes against festive practices, and echo those of what is probably the most notorious example of the genre: William Prynne’s The generall Historie of the Controversie (1643). As Jonas Barish, The Anarchitical Prejudice (Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1981), remarks of a characteristic passage from Prynne: “His emphasis falls heavily on two sorts of offenses: on sports and games and festive activities ... and even more obsessively on sexuality and effeminacy. ... The effect of the whole passage ... is to raise the specter of an endless feast of fools, a perpetual carnival, or parody of the good society, in which effeminate will replace ordered work, a regnum diabolicum dominated by the anarchy of the sexual instincts” (p. 83). Barish’s comments help to indicate that while Morton’s revels may have been singular and unprecedented in New England, Bradford’s representation of them in the conventional idiom of Puritan outrage probably exaggerates the threat posed by Morton to New English society. This particular devil’s reign was in any event short-lived, as both Morton and Bradford indicate in their respective accounts. Morton’s revels were summarily brought to an end by his subsequent arrest and expulsion from New England, their revival precluded by John Endicott’s cautious “that maypole be cut down” and ordering that “there should be better walking” (p. 260). In addition to reproducing similar early modern abridgments of maypole celebrations, these actions flagrantly violate King James’s proclamation of 1618, detailed in the Declaration of Sports, against the suppression of such events. In his Declaration (revised and reinforced by Charles 1 in 1631), James proclaims that “no pleasure ... is, that after the end of divine service our good people be not disturbed, letted or discouraged from any lawful recreation, such as dancing, either men or women; archery for men, leaping, vaulting, or any other such harmless recreation, nor from having of May-games, Whittamale, and Morris-dances, and the setting up of May-poles and other sports therewith: so that the same be bad in due and convenient time, without impediment or neglect of divine service.” See Samuel R. Gardiner, The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution (Oxford, 1906), p. 101.

For example, Michael Zuckerman, “Pilgrims in the Wilderness: Community, Modernity, and the Maypole at Merry Mount,” New England Quarterly 50 (1977), writes that “[Morton] and his men ate and drank with the Indians, spoke their language, and kept sexual company with them” (p. 263).

25. Understandable as it may seem, the fear of gun-toting Indians would not have been entirely rational. As Kupperman states: “Historians who feel that Morton’s expropriation by the Plymouth colonists was justified because he endangered English settlements with his gun sales are making the wholly unwarranted assumption that Indians equipped with seventeenth century matchlock guns were much more dangerous than Indians whose weapons were bows and arrows.”
(Strictly speaking, Morton's claim was accurate since a royal proclamation held force only during the lifetime of its proclaimer.) In so doing, he discursively invokes the old Elizabethan specter of "the masterless man," linking Morton's irreverent remark about King James to the threat posed to all civil society in New England—not just to the Puritan settlements—by Indian and "the meaner sort" of Englishman alike.

Morton offers a decidedly different version of these events in *New English Canaan*, but one that operates within essentially the same discursive construction. According to Morton, it was not his alleged traffic in guns that aroused the hostility of his Puritan neighbors, but his burgeoning trade in beaver and persistence in endeavoring "to advance the dignity of the Church of England; which [the Puritans], . . . would labour to vilifie with uncivile termes" (p. 283). Morton renders the Puritans' assault on his person in a mock-heroical display of the allegorical language they presumably favored. Prefacing Chapter XV with the epigraph "Of a great Monster supposed to be at Ma-re Mount; and the preparation made to destroy it," Morton writes that "The Separatists, envying the prosperity and hope of the Plantation at Ma-re Mount, (which they perceived began to come forward, and to be in a good way for gaine in the Beaver trade,) conspired together against mine Host especially, (who was owner of that Plantation,) and made up a party against him; and musted up what aide they could, accounting him as of a great Monster" (p. 282). Morton subsequently asserts that the nature of his response to the charges against him was immaterial since the Separatists had already "resolved what hee should suffer, because, (as they boasted,) they were now become the greater number: they had shaken of their shackles of servitude, and were become Masters, and masterles people" (p. 283).

arrows" (p. 663). Cf. Minor W. Major, "William Bradford Versus Thomas Morton," *Early American Literature* 5:2 (1970): "The guns then in use were heavy, cumbersome weapons that could not be fired more often than once a minute. Early Indian attacks were generally stealthy and quick; bows and arrows were much better suited for this style of fighting. The Indians valued guns primarily for the longer range at which big game could be brought down" (p. 4).

27. As the text against which Bradford was writing, this passage corresponds directly with Bradford's account of the subscription for support in the campaign against Morton's traffic with the Indians that was circulated throughout the surrounding settlements (see Bradford, pp. 208–09). According to Major, there is little evidence that the initiative to move against Morton "came from anywhere but Plymouth." He adds: "Nor one of those who contributed has left on record any complaint against Morton, though it is quite probable that some were glad to be rid of a competitor. One who did not contribute, Samuel Maverick, spoke more highly of Morton than of the organized colonies" (pp. 5–6).

In recounting his version of these events, Morton mockingly applies to himself, but more soberly applies to his Puritan antagonists, the same terms conventionally applied in the period to disorderly vagrants, rebellious mobs, and to religious dissenters. This passage not only mines the same discourse cultivated by Bradford in his representation of the "debased crew" that would allegedly flock to a man who considered himself out of reach of the King's laws; it specifically confirms fears about the Puritans' drive for autonomy on both sides of the Atlantic. Morton is particularly effective here at exploiting the widely-circulated view that the Puritans' professed humility was little more than a hypocritical mask hiding their collective desire to reverse entirely the prevailing structure of power and authority. What arguably makes Morton's formulation more effective than Bradford's is its linkage of this view to the Puritans' apparently candid assessment of the self-serving nature of their master narrative. While it is in Bradford's interest to represent the Puritans as defenders of civil order, the alleged boast recorded by Morton renders them both makers and masters of the order they seek to protect.

III

Of course Morton and Bradford both claim to operate as defenders of law and order. They differ mainly regarding the version of civil order they seek to uphold. Portrayed by Bradford as "a demonic emissary of atheism, lechery, paganism, and democracy," Morton presents himself as a confirmed royalist and faithful advocate of the Church of England, the two universities, classical culture, old English folk customs and festivities, and free trade. Portrayed by Morton as ruthless opponents of all that might spiritually or materially undermine the consolidation of their control over New England, Bradford presents himself and his Separatist brethren as firm advocates of order, economy, industry, sobriety, and the new Puritan dispensation of godliness and self-restraint. It is in the broader context of this transplanted clash of cultures that Morton's description of "the revels of New Canaan" and the destruction of his plantation assumes its special significance.

28. As Samuel Rowlands writes in the voice of the Anabaptist leader, John of Leyden: "We are the men will make our Valours knowne./To teach this doting world new reformation:/New Lawes, and new Religion of our owne./To bring our selves in wondrous admiration:/Let's turne the world cleane vside downe, (mad slues)/So to be talk'd of when w're in our Graves" (p. 17).

29. Slotkin, p. 64.
Morton and Bradford are not entirely at odds regarding what actually transpired at the maypole celebration. But by mocking the hyperbolic language of Puritan outrage in his more prosaic rehearsal of the event, Morton preemptively discredits Bradford’s censorious reconstruction of its aims and intentions. According to Morton:

The Inhabitants of Pasonagissett, (having translated the name of their habitation from that ancient Salvage name to Ma-re Mount, and being resolved to have the new name confirmed for a memorial to after ages,) did devise amongst themselves to have it performed in a solemn manner, with Revels and merriment after the old English custome; [they] prepared to set up a Maypole upon the festival day of Philip and Jacob, and therefore brewed a barrell of excellent beare and provided a case of bottles, to be spent, with other good cheare, for all commers of that day. And because they would have it in a compleat forme, they had prepared a song fitting to the time and present occasion. And upon Mayday they brought the Maypole to the place appointed, with drums, gynes, pistols and other fitting instruments, for that purpose; and there erected it with the help of Salvages, that came thater of purpose to see the manner of our Revels. A goodly pine tree of 80. foote longe was reared up, with a peare of buckshorns nayed one somewhat nearer unto the top of it: where it stood, as a faire sea marke for directions how to finde out the way to mine Hoste of Ma-re Mount (pp. 276–77).

Simply on the level of narrative, Morton’s revels—undertaken “upon the festival day of Philip and Jacob”—seem conspicuously innocent of encouraging “practices” as “beastly” as those of “the mad Bacchanimans,” although from the Puritan point of view any “merriment after the old English custome” might well occasion such comparisons. What else might have made Morton’s revels so objectionable to Bradford? In the later account Bradford specifically prefers the formulation “inviting the Indian women for their consorts” to Morton’s depiction of the “Salvages” helping the celebrants to erect their maypole and otherwise acting more in the manner of interested observers. Since Morton’s alleged traffic in guns with the Indians plays so prominent a role in Bradford’s account, we may assume that Bradford would find any consorting with Indians objectionable, and could easily construct from it the “worse practices” of physical commerce to which he appears to allude.

Morton’s erection of an 80-foot-high maypole that had, in addition to its festive component, the collateral purpose of serving as “a faire sea marke for directions how to finde out the way to mine Hoste of Ma-re Mount” would appear to constitute an equally objectionable practice, one that could be read in one of two ways. In his account Morton attributes the predictable theological interpretation to the Puritans: “The setting up of this Maypole was a lamentable spectacle to the precise seperatists, that lived at new Plimouth. They termed it an Idoll; yea, they called it the Calfe of Horeb, and stood at defiance with the place, naming it Mount Dagon; threatening to make it a woefull mount and not a merry mount” (p. 278). From the Puritan point of view, such an estimate of the maypole would be perfectly apt. Having set out to establish themselves in the new promised land of New England, the Plymouth settlers may well have felt themselves beset by pagan worshippers of the golden calf who threatened to reinvoke the old dispensation on the very ground of the new. An alternative reading of the Puritan response to the maypole may be premised on the disingenuousness both of Morton’s account and of his purpose in staging his revels in the first place. As a “sea marke” of the direction to Morton’s plantation, the maypole fulfills a market function in excess of its purported festive intent. Not only does it offer a clearcut cultural alternative to the austere dispensation of Plymouth to traveler and trader alike; the maypole also serves as an ostentatious shop sign or bill of trade to advertise Morton’s business designs which, whether they involved guns or beaver, offered a competitive challenge to Puritan dominance of trade and settlement.

From this perspective, the theological objection advanced by the Puritans and the defense of innocent pastimes mounted by Morton would both appear to harbor more self-interested material designs. Upon concluding the account of his revels, Morton offers an often wildly satiric report of his subsequent persecution at the hands of a succession of Puritans he names Captain Shrimpe (Miles Standish), Captain Littleworth (John Endicott), and Josua Temperwell (John Winthrop). Morton stages his initial capture by, and escape from, Standish in mock Homeric terms, so that Standish and his men variously resemble the

30. According to Zuckerman, the maypole “afforded a beacon for coasting traders” and symbolized “the commercial rivalry that so threatened Pilgrim business interests” (p. 273).

31. Although no friend of Morton or of his account of the proceedings, Samuel Eliot Morrison remarks in Builders of the Bay Colony (Boston, 1930) that “Morton might have been left alone if he had not endangered the safety and threatened the trade of his neighbors by purchasing peltry with firearms and teaching the Indians how to use them” (p. 16). Since Morton denies trafficking in guns with the Indians, Morrison’s endorsement of this interpretation would appear to depend on his unquestioned reliance on Bradford’s narrative. Indeed, in preparing to discuss the events at Merrymount, Morrison writes that he will “let Governor Bradford tell the story” (p. 16).
Cyclops grieving at Odysseus' escape and the rams that enabled it (pp. 284–85). Morton deploys more contemporary allusions to the work of Spenser, Jonson, and Cervantes in his subsequent depiction of the attack on the "dene" of "this Monster of a man" led by Standish and eight associates, whom Morton collectively terms "the nine Worthies": "The nine worthies coming before the Dene of this supposed Monster, (this seven headed hydra, as they termed him,) and began, like Don Quixote against the Windmill, to beate a parly, and to offer quarter, if mine Host would yeald; for they resolved to send him for England; and bad him lay by his armes" (p. 286). The ridicule Mortonlavishes on his Puritan tormentors is underwritten by a very cultivated effort at self-deprecation. The less of a threat he makes himself out to be, the more ridiculous and dangerous "the nine worthies" become. What makes the Puritans particularly dangerous is that their delusory appraisal of Morton as "the very Hidra of the time" can be acted upon with the full force of civil authority. No longer needing to wear their cultivated masks of modesty and humility, the Separatists move against their opponents with lawless abandon. Disregarding Morton's professed attempt to surrender peacefully, "Captain Shrimpe and the rest of the worthies" allegedly "stept to him, layd hold of his armes, and had him downe: and so eagerly was every man bent against him, (not regarding any agreement made with such a carnall man,) that they fell upon him as if they would have eaten him" (p. 287). Having "made themselves, (by this outrageous riot,) Masters of mine Hoste of Ma-re Mount," and having "disposed of what hee had at his plantation," the worthies next bring Morton to the bar of their own rough justice.

Morton is adept at emphasizing the lawlessness of the Puritans' behavior in terms drawn from the same discourse they apply to him. Mistaking the well-meaning Morton for "the very Hidra of the time" and casting themselves as defenders of civic and religious virtue, the Puritans, having lately cast off "their shackles of servitude" (p. 283) and "having now the Law in their owne hands" (p. 288), assert their unchallenged mastery in an act of "outrageous riot" and theft. This is a tale that Morton repeats (as is his custom) twice more in the embellished form of a densely allusive poem and in its subsequent Illustrations. While the mystifying poem has moments that bear remarking, its prose illustrations provide a much clearer restatement of Morton's argument. According to Morton, the Puritans moved against him because they "feared in time, (if they hindred not mine Host)" that "hee would hinder the benefit of their Beaver trade, as hee had done... in Kynyback river finely, ere they were awares" (p. 295). He adds that "This action bred a kinde of hart burning in the Plimouth Planter, who after sought occasion against mine Host to overthrowe his undertakings and to destroy his Plantation: whome they accompted a maine enemy to theire Church and State" (p. 295). Morton concludes that "forasmuch as they thought themselves farre enough from any controul of Justice," they "resolved to be their owne carvers" (p. 295).

Morton elaborates on the Puritans' alleged effort to become a law unto themselves in describing his refusal to subscribe to "certaine Articles" drawn up by "Captain littleworth" (John Endicott), a man who, "thinking none so worthy as himselfe, ... made warrants in his owne name, (without relation to his Majesties authority in that place)." According to Morton, "To these Articles every Planter, old and new, must signe, or be expelled from any manner of abode within the Compa of the Land contained within that grant then shewed" (p. 306):

The tenor of the Articles were these: That in all causes, as well Ecclesiastical as Political, wee should follow the rule of Gods word.

This made a shew of a good intent, and all the assembly, (only mine Host replied) did subscribe: hee would not, unless they would ad this Caution: So as nothing be done contrary or repugnant to the Laws of the Kingdome of England. These words hee knew, by former experience, were necessary, and without these the same would prove a very mousetrapp to catch some body by his own consent, (which the rest nothing suspected,) for the construction of the worde would be made by them of the Separation to serve their own turnes: and if any man should, in such a case, be accused of a crime, (though in it selse it were petty,) they might set it on the tenter hookes of their imaginary gifts, and stretch it to make it seeme captivall; which was the reason why mine Host refused to subscribe (pp. 306–07).

As he does elsewhere, Morton self-servingly underwrites his dissent against the Puritan dispensation in the name of his "Majesties authority." But although his analysis of the Separatists' capacity to make a "mousetrapp" out of their interpretive monopoly over "the construction of [Gods] worde" may also be considered self-serving, it offers a persuasive

32. These illustrations seem specifically aimed at alerting Archbishop Laud of the Separatists' attempt to establish an economic monopoly and theocratic state in New England. Especially alarming would be Morton's insinuations regarding the growing confidence of the Puritans in their ability to "be their owne carvers" in a place so removed from the oversight of royal authority.
analysis of the methods employed by Endicott, Winthrop, and company to maintain both discursive and material control over those they considered "without." In a broader sense, Morton's stress on the role played by discursive constructions in the establishment of political authority, and the subsequent marginalization of his account of Puritan activities in New England by critics and historians who also have "nothing suspected," lend credibility to Wayne Franklin's contention that "American narrative art has been a deeply political endeavor from the beginning, and has used language to enforce a given settlement over others." 33

Of course, Morton also demonstrates in New English Canaan how language may be used to resist "a given settlement over others." Bradford, for example, treats Morton's first return from exile and subsequent rearrest and expulsion in a few choice words which assume the reader's good faith in a judgment that led to the demolition of Morton's house "that it might be no longer a roost for such unclean birds to nestle in" (pp. 216–17). But Morton employs the same incident to support his analysis of Puritan injustice and his sarcastic conclusion that "These are the men that come prepared to ridd the Land of all pollution" (p. 311, my emphasis). According to Morton, a court is summarily convened by John Winthrop "of purpose for mine host" and

There they all with one assent put him to silence, crying out, heare the Governour, heare the Govern: who gave this sentence against mine Host at first sight: that he shall be first put in the Billbowes, his goods should be all confiscated, his Plantation should be burned downe to the ground, because the habitation of the wicked should no more appeare in Israel, and his person banished from those territories; and this put in execution with all speede (p. 311).

In one of his more zealous efforts at self-dramatizing, Morton now brings his forgotten Indian friends on stage to witness and condemn his martyrdom at the hands of the unfeeling Separatists. "The harmeles Salvages, (his neibourines,) came the while, (greived, poore silly lambs, to see what they went about,) and did reproove these Eliphants of witt for their unhumane deede: the Lord above did open their mouthes like Balans Asse, and made them speake in his behalfe sentences of unexpected divinity, besides morrallity" (p. 312). This staging of an im-

promptu and apparently one-sided debate is embellished by Morton's placement of himself "a farre of about a ship" from whence he beheld "this wofull spectacle" and considered the "smoke that did afford" equivalent to "the very Sacrifice of Kain" (p. 312). In the mixed manner of biblical reference and classical allusion he favors, Morton makes his burnt house at once suggestive of the ruins of Troy, emblematic of the lost promise "of this fertile Canaan the new," and a "Monument" to the "cruelty" of "the Sect of cruel Schismaticks" (p. 312–13).

Morton intensifies his attack on the "cruell Schismaticks" and the practices they enforce against those they deem "without" in the closing sections of New English Canaan. Appropriating for his own purposes the alleged Puritan practice of demonizing their opponents, Morton treats in particular detail the notorious sentence accorded "Innocence Fairecloak" (who appears in Bradford as one Philip Ratcliff) for allegedly having the audacity to demand payment for debts owed him. According to Winthrop himself, Ratcliff "was censured to be whipped, lose his ears, and be banished the plantation" for his "most foul, scandalous invectives against our churches and government." 34 Morton offers a more elaborate appraisal of the sentence in his own account, "which was, to have his tongue bored through; his nose slit; his face branded; his eares cut; his body to be whip'd in every severall plantations of their jurisdiction; and a fine of forty pounds impos'd, with perpetuall banishment; and, (to execute this vengeance,) Shackles, (the Deacon of Charles Towne,) was as ready as Mephostophiles, when Doctor Faustus was bent upon mischiefe" (p. 319). 35 According to Morton, Winthrop was "content"—after "Shackles" had "made Fairecloaths Innocent back like the picture of Rawhead and bloody bones, and his shirte like a pudding wifes aperon"—"(with that whipping and the cutting of parte of his eares,) to send Innocence going, with the losse of all his goods, to pay the fine imposed, and perpetuall banishment out of their Lands of New Canaan" (p. 320). Morton concludes his account by observing "Loe this is the payment you shall get, if you be one of them they term, without" (p. 320), a statement that recuperates some of the moral and


34. Quoted in Adams, p. 316, n. 3.

35. "Shackles" is the expressive name Morton gives to a man whose real name was in all likelihood William Aspinwall. According to Adams, Aspinwall "was the deacon of the Charles-town church at the time Morton was arraigned and punished" (p. 319, n. 1). See Arner, "Pastoral Celebration and Satire," pp. 227–28, for another account of this episode.
theological force of the satirical reference to Marlowe's *Dr Faustus* at the same time as it reinforces Morton's association of the Puritans with the devil's party.\(^{36}\)

While Morton's likening of "Shackles" to Mephistophiles and the demonized "Fairecloath" to Faustus may seem merely to emphasize the cruelty of the Puritans, Morton's association of the Separatists' presumption as the only legitimate interpreters of God's word with behavior more fitting the devil casts critical light on other disturbing practices described by Bradford in *Of Plymouth Plantation*. Morton's contention regarding the consequences for "those without" of the Separatists' unquestioned conviction in their own righteousness applies most pointedly to Bradford's account of the peremptory manner with which the Separatists dealt with a servant "detected of buggery, and indicted for the same, with a mare, a cow, two goats, five sheep, two calves and a turkey" (p. 320). According to Bradford: "Being upon it examined and committed, in the end he not only confessed the fact with that beast at that time, but sundry times before and at several times with all the rest of the forenamed in his indictment. And this his free confession was not only in private to the magistrates (though at first he strived to deny it) but to sundry, both ministers and others; and afterwards, upon his indictment, to the whole Court and jury" (p. 320). Tutored by Morton to read between the lines of Puritan discursive constructions, we note that the parenthetical phrase, "though he strived at first to deny it," may well harbor within it an untold story of resistance and intimidation, possibly framed on the model of Shackles and Innocence Fairecloath, which would indicate that the servant's confession might not have been as "free" as Bradford asserts it was. Equally remarkable, Bradford's account shows more regret for the otherwise innocent (and valuable) livestock put to death according to biblical precedent and "no use made of any part of them" than for the servant himself, "a youth whose name was Thomas Granger," of "about 16 or 17 years of age" who, after identifying his animal consorts, was also executed (p. 320). Indeed, Bradford devotes even more space to answering his own question of "how it came . . . to pass that so many wicked persons and profane people should so quickly come over into this land and mix themselves amongst [us]?" than he does to the specific incident in question (pp. 321–22).\(^{37}\)

Bradford was of course not alone in complaining of the speed with which New World settlements became filled with the problems of the Old. As Nicholas Canny writes, "Almost every description of the work force in Virginia mentioned that they were 'full of mutiny and reasonable intenments.'"\(^{38}\) But when Bradford is read in the counter-discursive context of Morton's *New English Canaan*, his explanations—like those of Smith and Strachey in Virginia—indicate the collaborative role played by the authorities themselves in the construction of New World disorder.\(^{39}\) Since I am more concerned here with Morton's and Bradford's discursive constructions than I am with the factual basis of their presentments, I do not conclude that Morton's allegations regarding Puritan misrule are necessarily more valid than are Bradford's regarding the misdeeds of "those without." It does, however, seem to me that like the similarly marginalized writing of other New World dissenters, *New English Canaan* deserves a more privileged position in discussions of early New England than has been traditionally allotted, one that offers an alternative reading of the terms of settlement, a minority report, as it were, on New World promise and possibilities.\(^{40}\)

IV

At the same time it seems necessary to recall that Morton's counter-discursive energies were prominently enlisted in the Lauden cause, a project which in retrospect might well be classified as counter-revolutionary. New England was not the exclusive, much less the pri-

\(^{36}\) A reader conversant with Marlowe's play would probably note that from Mephistophiles' perspective, Faustus was only "bent upon mischief" when he attempted to repent and free himself from the devil's grasp. Although Morton makes no other direct reference to Marlowe, his satirical construction of Puritan hypocrisy is reminiscent of Marlowe's representation of the pious Christian posturing of the Machiavellian Ferrante in *The Jew of Malta*, who— as Winthrop does to Morton— "preaches" the Jew Barabas "out of [his] possessions." *The Jew* was first published in 1633.

\(^{37}\) As Jonathan Goldberg observes: "Bradford would, if he could, not tell anything. The case of Thomas Granger, and his unmentionable sin, is, Bradford writes, 'horrible to mention' but must be told since 'the truth of the history requires it'" (p. 68).

\(^{38}\) Nicholas Canny, "The permissive frontier: The problem of social control in English settlements in Ireland and Virginia," in *The Westward Enterprise*, ed. K. R. Andrews et al. (Liverpool, 1978), p. 27. Canny adds that "when we piece together the colonists' objections to the regime under which they were expected to serve, it falls short of the counter-ideology which William Strachey thought to have been widespread among England's poor" (p. 27).

\(^{39}\) She describes *New English Canaan* as "the counter-text [Morton] wrote against the Puritans" (p. 12).

\(^{40}\) As Wayne Franklin observes, "To the extent that [Roger] Williams and Morton also have imagined a New World, they subvert the exclusive claims of Winthrop and Bradford to the possession of American space, both actual and verbal" (p. 182).
mary, site on which the effect of Morton's words was to be realized or produced. Nor should Morton's self-presentation as an old Church Jonah, cast out of the belly of the Puritan beast to cry, "repent you cruel Separatists, repent!" (p. 345), be taken merely as an inspired variation on the Puritans' American jeremiad. According to John Seelye, "Morton transplanted in his own person the exiled Dukes and Robin Hoods of Elizabethan romance to the American woods, his lawlessness providing a blank warrant upon which the Puritans' worst fears could be written." (p. 166). In fact Morton also transplanted a carefully cultivated version of Jacobean satire in textual representations that had far more to do with the social and religious struggles of late Stuart England than they did with "exiled Dukes and Robin Hoods." While Morton may seem to others "an American version of Falstaff," presiding over "a wildwood version of the Boar's Head Tavern," his book at once a piece of "geopolitical pornography" and "a defiant, literary Maypole," the Puritans plainly considered them intractable avatars of the old dispensation, fighting an aggressive but losing battle on the ground of the new.

It is, in the end, too easy to romanticize Morton's libertarian exploits in the prison-house of New England, to portray him as a proto-democrat intent on "dismantling the master-servant dyad on which so much of Massachusetts' social structure was founded," or as a man persecuted and destroyed by demagogic Puritans who applied permanently disabling constraints to the American social and literary imagination. Although Morton "continues to speak eloquently to us of a remote time in our infancy when things seemed to have a chance to go the other way," the other way things might have gone had as good a chance of having a royal-absolutist persuasion as what Daniel Shea optimistically calls "an Ovidian nomination" (p. 66). Even revisionist critics of New English Canaan need to acknowledge the extent to which Morton and his despised Puritans—despised as much for being undereducated plebeians as for being pious hypocrites—exploit the same polemically-charged discourse of contempt and exclusion, and leave largely unspoken the competing ideologies that speak through them.

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42. Zucker, p. 274.
43. Amer, p. 231.

Recent Studies in the English Renaissance

ELR bibliographical articles are intended to combine a topical review of research with a reasonably complete bibliography. Scholarship is organized by authors or titles of anonymous works. Items included represent combined entries listed in the annual bibliographies published by PMLA, YWES, and MHRA from 1945 through, in the present instance, early 1996 with additional items. The format used here is a modified version of that used in Recent Studies in English Renaissance Drama, ed. Terence E. Logan and Densel S. Smith, 4 vols. (Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1973–78).

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RECENT STUDIES IN
RENAISSANCE ENGLISH MANUSCRIPTS

NOEL J. KINNAMON

The focus in this survey is on the significance of the material features of manuscripts (hereafter MSS), including topics relating to codicology and paleography, and the part played by MSS in the transmission of texts. Announcements of the recovery of MSS, studies of content, and discussions of editing, as well as most editions, are normally not included. Authors are covered separately only in the sections on autographs (V) and the process of composition and revision (VII). Preference has been given to items that are theoretical and comprehensive or thorough in discussing specific MSS, part of a critical debate on a particular issue, or unique in drawing attention, for example, to the significance of some material detail of a MS or of some element in MS transmission.

I. Catalogues and Indexes

A. General


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