



The Trial of Anne Hutchinson, 1637

# Sex and Sin: The Historiography of Women, Gender, and Sexuality in Colonial Massachusetts

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**Abstract:** *Historians have long examined the powerful events that shaped the Massachusetts Bay in the colonial period, in part because the vast array of source material available for study, but more importantly, due to the enigmatic personalities who wrote those materials. Scholars of economics, politics, and theology all present differing explanations and descriptions of colonial Massachusetts, but it has only been in the last forty years that scholars have begun to think of the colonists as individuals. The advent of various civil rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s as well as the social turn in history, an increased focus on the histories of ordinary people and their experiences, questioned traditionally masculine and white-privileged histories by asking about everyone else. Women's and gender studies and the even more recent studies of sexualities and queer history offer a valuable window through which to view and understand daily life. This article surveys gender histories of colonial Massachusetts, revolutionary works that uncover and discuss the lives of colonial people as gendered beings. Sandra Slater, an assistant professor of history at the College of Charleston, co-edited the collection Gender and Sexuality in*

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For decades, historians of colonial America focused their attention on the writings of John Cotton, Increase Mather, Cotton Mather, John Winthrop, and other leading male colonial figures, constructing a narrative of colonial Massachusetts that ignored the influences and contributions of women and racial minorities. But just as the foundations of American culture shifted powerfully in the 1960s, so too did scholars' approaches to the colonial period. A new generation of historians turned their gaze to previously overlooked subjects, including religious renegades, sexually deviant women, and men who struggled with their masculinity. The movement away from traditional inquiry, though, was just beginning. By the 1970s, with America in the throes of civil rights, women's liberation, red power, and gay liberation



**John Winthrop (1587/8 – 1649)**

movements, historians cast new eyes upon colonial sources, hoping not only to complicate the once male-dominated and hetero-centric scholarship, but also to find histories of forgotten individuals.

Today, given the plethora of scholarship pointing to the extremely diverse sexual character of colonial Massachusetts, the once stark portrait of Massachusetts Bay as an austere religious community devoid of women's authority and sexual diversity—or even of sexually active married individuals—now seems like a distant and all too simplistic

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memory. This essay offers a historiographical analysis of the major shifts in historians' approaches to studying colonial Massachusetts over the last fifty years. It seeks to illuminate the multifaceted histories of women, gender, and sexuality and to underscore the wide range of scholarship now available, paying particular attention to recent work that explores intersections of race, economics, politics, and religion.

Scholars of early America flocked to the Massachusetts Bay region to study colonial American values and behaviors, in part due to the number of sources available. However, the uniquely religious character of Massachusetts impeded historians who sought to point to Massachusetts as representative of the larger colonial experience. Unlike those in Massachusetts Bay, most English colonists embraced Anglicanism and were motivated by more secular reasons for emigration, usually economic ones. However, Massachusetts Bay's unique character and ample source material not only provides a distinct narrative, but also affords unique opportunities for explorations of gender, women, and sexualities in colonial America.

### EARLY WOMEN'S HISTORY: "HER STORY"

The majority of early studies addressing women's issues in colonial Massachusetts fell within the "her story" model of history, so named because of its focus on "her" instead of "his." For the first time, women's lives appeared in history, albeit often in works written by men and focused on "exceptional" women, ones who embodied atypical or masculine characteristics. This extraordinarily pivotal moment of inclusion laid the foundations for future scholars who wanted to understand women's history for its own sake, rather than for its similarity to histories of masculine figures. For the first time, academics considered the possibility that women actively participated in creating history.

Lacking a secondary source base, this innovative scholarship *insisted* that a few women in colonial America embodied unusual characteristics and accomplishments for their gender. Jesse Clement's *Noble Deeds of American Women: Women in America from Colonial Times to the Twentieth Century* (1974) and John Foster's *Pioneer Mothers of the West; Or, Daring and Heroic Deeds of American Women* (1974) are indicative of this larger trend to recover women's experiences in American history.<sup>1</sup> Written by men, the titles alone evoke exceptionalism, hinting at masculine qualities such as "nobility" and "heroism." They further distance women from playing a central role in larger events and compartmentalize their achievements as aberrant.

Colonial Massachusetts suited the objectives of academics who wanted to study individual women only insofar as they proved unique or defied the constraints of the gender roles or expectations of their times. As examples of “herstory,” studies of Puritan dissident Anne Hutchinson (1591-1643) and Indian captive Mary Rowlandson (1637-1711) reflect the larger historiographical trends and reveal two constructions of New England womanhood. Historians gravitated to these two figures, emphasizing not only their extraordinary stories, but also how they did or did not exemplify models of colonial womanhood. In Mary Rowlandson’s traditional captivity narrative, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God . . . ; Being a Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (1682), Rowlandson portrayed herself as a virtuous Puritan woman who resisted the evil advances of the “savage” Native, preserving both her dignity and purity. She was at all times true to God, faithful in her expectation of deliverance and survival, and modest in her conduct. She was the model “goodwife,” a feminine ideal of the period characterized by obedience to her husband, loving attention to her children and neighbors, and religious piety.<sup>2</sup> Rowlandson’s narrative, filtered through the Puritan clergy and published only with their permission and editorship, stood as an example to other women.<sup>3</sup> However, early histories that incorporated Rowlandson’s narrative failed to contextualize it as a product filtered through a masculine lens. Instead, they replicated this construction, praising her singular accomplishments as heroic.

Conversely, famed New England Antinomian minister Anne Hutchinson defied Puritan religious officials and gender expectations by holding regular Bible study meetings and claiming to communicate directly with God, both male prerogatives. Hutchinson quickly acquired the label of a deviant woman. Her public trial and condemnation attracted scholars such as Ben Barker-Benfield (“Anne Hutchinson and the Puritan Attitude toward Women,” 1972), who see Hutchinson as reflective of Puritan theology. In practice, Puritanism excluded women from the “priesthood of all believers” and was not as egalitarian as once thought.<sup>4</sup> Over recent decades, historians have cast Hutchinson in a wide range of roles: an aberrant example of women in colonial New England, a destructive and anti-authoritarian renegade, an unholy woman in league with anti-Puritan elements, a psychologically disturbed individual, and a misunderstood heroine. However, these depictions isolate Anne Hutchinson from her larger colonial context.<sup>5</sup>

Gerda Lerner describes these depictions as “contribution history,” arguing that they relied upon a history of oppressive male domination and cast women as either victimized by or replicating masculine attributes.<sup>6</sup> Many of these histories isolated Hutchinson from the larger dissident movements and

A  
 NARRATIVE  
 OF THE  
 CAPTIVITY, SUFFERINGS AND REMOVES  
 OF  
 Mrs. *Mary Rowlandson,*



Who was taken Prisoner by the INDIANS with several others, and treated in the most barbarous and cruel Manner by those vile Savages : With many other remarkable Events during her TRAVELS.

Written by her own Hand, for her private Use, and now made public at the earnest Desire of some Friends, and for the Benefit of the afflicted.

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B O S T O N :

Printed and Sold at JOHN BOYLE'S Printing-Office, next Door to the *Three Doves* in Marlborough-Street. 1773.



Mary (White) Rowlandson (c. 1637–January 1711) was a colonial American woman who was captured by Native Americans during King Philip's War. Years after her release, she wrote a book about her experience, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God: Being a Narrative of the Captivity, Sufferings and Removes of Mrs Mary Rowlandson*. Considered a seminal American work in the literary genre of captivity narratives, it went through four printings in a short amount of time and garnered widespread readership, making it in effect the first American "bestseller."

can serve as a warning to reductionists. Hutchinson was a woman, of course, but more importantly, she was a religious threat. More likely to receive condemnation and criticism because of her gender, she nonetheless faced persecution for her professed Antinomianism and theological assertions. Historians have long relied on individual stories and biographies, but this approach to women's history in colonial America, though certainly valuable to the field of early American scholarship, must be understood within its appropriate historical contexts.<sup>7</sup>



### Anne Hutchison (1591 – 1643)

Illustration of Anne Hutchinson by Edwin Austin Abbey reproduced from *Scribner's Popular History of the United States, from the earliest discoveries of the western hemisphere by the Northmen to the present time*, by William Cullen Bryant, Sidney Howard Gay, and Noah Brooks. New York, C. Scribner's Sons, 1898 [c1896].



## EARLY HISTORIES OF SEXUALITY

The long-standing image of Puritan New England was one of sexual austerity. Edmund Morgan was among the first to challenge this grim portrait of Puritans, humanizing them through studies of the Puritan family. In 1942, long before the 1960s sexual revolution or emergence of women's history, Morgan challenged the notion of Puritan asexuality and suggested that Puritans viewed sex and sexual expressions of love not only as biblically mandated, but as the perfect expression of God's love within marriage.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, sex between husband and wife was a natural process, a desire, according to John Cotton, "founded in mans Nature."<sup>9</sup>

Morgan was also the first to acknowledge that the Puritan's strict punishment of illegitimate or "unnatural" sex suggested that widespread variance could be found within the sexual lives of Massachusetts Bay colonists. However, Morgan's interpretation of the reasons behind these criminal prosecutions reminds us that no matter how forward thinking he was, he was also a man of his time. For example, Morgan suggested that, "One reason for the abundance of sexual offenses was the number of men in the colonies who were unable to gratify their sexual desires in marriage."<sup>10</sup> This interpretation marginalizes the possibility that transvestitism and/or homosexuality among men might have reflected their sexual preference. Despite these shortcomings, Morgan's work was instrumental in alerting historians that sexuality could be studied, even among the most conservative colonists.

By mid-century, historians began to acknowledge that Puritans not only had sex, but also articulated its necessity to a healthy marriage. In his 1944 full-length monograph, *The Puritan Family*, Morgan asserts that Puritan theology and family life were symbiotic in their mutual enforcement and influences.<sup>11</sup> The idea of the Puritan family as a smaller representation of Puritan Christianity naturally affected women's roles in society, placing her at a lesser position of authority both in the home and the church.

## NEW SOCIAL HISTORY AND SOCIAL HISTORIES OF WOMEN

Among the first academics to object to the marginalization of women in American history, Gerda Lerner credited the popularity of social history with the renewed attention women received in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Social history focused on the family and ordinary people, rejecting the idea that only powerful individuals created history. While the inclusion of women into larger narratives was largely a result of what came to be known

as the New Social History, it also stemmed from the burgeoning presence of women in academia as well as demands by second wave feminists for civil and political equality.

The focus on social history and feminism in the 1970s and 1980s led historians to revisit Edmund Morgan's work and began to ask questions not only of exceptional women, but of those who lived "ordinary" lives. Indicative of the influence of social history, which insisted upon the relevance of bottom-up histories, historians began studying home, childbirth, and the life cycle of women in colonial America.

Four works, all published in 1970, hearkened the arrival of New Social History and the increased focus on women's lives, explained largely through their roles as wives and mothers.<sup>12</sup> John Demos's *A Little Commonwealth* addressed Massachusetts colonial family life in the most detail through the lens of the New Social History.<sup>13</sup> Continually in print since 1970, Demos's work questions historical understandings of Puritan values and theology from within the community and family. For Demos, as was the case with Morgan, the family was reflective of the larger community. The husband was dominant over the wife and children in the same way that the colonial leadership, embodied in religious leaders, held dominion over the colony. This hierarchy extended to God as the absolute leader who exerted spiritual power over all. The family served as a microcosm of this larger construction. Helena M. Wall perceptively notes in her assessment of Demos's work that historians "now divide the study of family and gender into two periods, Before Demos and After Demos."<sup>14</sup> Demos's work continues to be an invaluable source, both for its content and its historiographical impact.

Building on Demos's *A Little Commonwealth*, T.H. Breen's demographic study, "Persistent Localism: English Social Change and the Shaping of New England Institutions" (1975), emphasizes the uniqueness of Massachusetts Bay and the Puritan family as stable community transplants from Europe.<sup>15</sup> Unlike settlers to the Chesapeake Bay and elsewhere, Puritan settlers emigrated from Europe in family groups and sometimes even large communities that replicated their European villages, allowing for a balanced sex ratio and a reproductive population. This, in turn allowed for the stability of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

In the years after *A Little Commonwealth*, several scholars devoted attention to Puritan women, but none quite as successfully as Laurel Thatcher Ulrich in her 1980 monograph, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England*.<sup>16</sup> Ulrich articulates Puritan expectations of womanhood, particularly that of the "good wife," a woman "obedient to her husband, loving to her children, kind to her neighbors, dutiful to her

servants and religious in all her words and ways.”<sup>17</sup> Puritans expected women to embody this ideal and offered harsh reprisals to those who failed.

Ulrich also explores the realities that existed beyond the “goodwife” model, including consorts, mothers, mistresses, heroines, religious women, and even “deputy husbands,” women who shouldered male duties either as part of their general labor or in times of crisis.<sup>18</sup> Ulrich’s illumination of women’s personal agency, often hidden from public perception and historical narratives, complicated historical understanding of what women’s lives were like in the early colonial period. Ulrich’s work significantly altered the ways



**Idealized View of Puritan Family Life**

in which historians approached Puritan women and the Puritan family. No longer in marble or isolation, Ulrich brought to life colonial women's struggles, accomplishments, and legacies.

In the period after Demos and Ulrich, women's histories sparked a debate over the "golden age" theory. This theory held that women in colonial America experienced a higher status than their English counterparts and enjoyed freedoms that would become much more restricted by the nineteenth century. However, these debates centered almost exclusively on the experiences of white women and/or women of middle to high economic standing.

According to the "golden age" interpretation, Puritan women performed many activities and took on roles that would later be defined as "unladylike" by middle-class Victorians. In a rugged frontier environment, the sheer demands of survival dictated that seventeenth-century New England women could perform the butchering, dairying, gardening, and daily operations of an entire farm when their husbands were unavailable or away. Only later would industrialization and technological development free women from the need to toil in the fields, allowing them to assume what we now assume to be a "traditional" role indoors as the passive, domesticated mistresses of their households.

In colonial New England, the household was the center of production, and since women played such integral roles in that sphere, they were associated with a substantial economic responsibility. As a result, although subordinate to their husbands in the religious sphere, Puritan "goodwives" played an important role in the economies of their households, and husbands entrusted them with a wide range of practical responsibilities. Puritan matrons frequently acted as "deputy husbands" who were empowered to act for their spouses on a variety of financial and legal matters. Despite this, a deep mistrust of women permeated the culture of Puritan New England.

In order to weigh women's status in colonial America, historians often survey and explore the organizations that dominated society and authority, usually the church and political institutions. Kathleen M. Brown contends that the central disagreement among these two camps was the "evaluation of the New England wife's role as 'helpmeet.'"<sup>19</sup> According to Puritan doctrine, women were deemed the spiritual equals of men and could gain full church membership. Relying heavily upon historical studies that presented the Puritan woman as equal to her husband in spirituality and women who freely transgressed the male realm as "deputy husbands," proponents of a golden age insisted that Puritan women enjoyed a large degree of freedom through Protestant theology and the social construction of the "goodwife."

Critics of this interpretation, however, pointed to the Salem Witch Trials, persecutions of deviant women such as Anne Hutchinson, and the constrictions of Puritan theology. Mary Beth Norton led the charge against the “golden age” interpretation, arguing that this perspective negated the experiences of women of color and less prosperous families.<sup>20</sup> Other historians agreed and acknowledged that narrowness and racial exclusivity limited its explanatory power. The debate over a golden age for women in early America soon subsided.

## GENDER HISTORY

Concurrent with the golden age debate, was recognition among historians of women of the shortcomings inherent in studying women exclusively. Just as men did not function in a historical context absent from women, so too did women negotiate power and identity with men. In 1986, Joan Wallach Scott turned to gender theory to address these complications, relying heavily upon Michel Foucault’s examinations of power relations and dynamics between the sexes. Foucault argues that the negotiation of power informed



A Puritan Family in England, 1563

all human relationships, but especially those related to systems of oppression like colonialism, imperialism, and totalitarianism.<sup>21</sup> Scott's article, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," demands that historians of women expand their perspectives in order to incorporate the discourse surrounding the boundaries of female authority and expression to include exchanges with men.<sup>22</sup> Early American women's historians slowly embraced this theory and applied it to colonial sources and events. The result was an historical dialogue between men and women that illuminated undiscovered processes of power and aspects of agency that opened up new ways of thinking about women's experiences.<sup>23</sup>

With the advent of gender theory, historians revisited traditional sources with a fresh perspective. Mary Beth Norton's *Founding Mothers and Fathers* (1996) relies upon the political theories of Robert Filmer and John Locke to study the relationship between men and women in early America.<sup>24</sup> Norton expressed her desire to "combine an earlier interest in political theory and intellectual history with . . . fascination with social history and especially women and gender."<sup>25</sup> *Founding Mothers and Fathers* insists that gendered dynamics of power operated within the home as well as in the public sphere. The family and state operated in conjunction with one another to define gender and power.

The use of gender theory largely dominates modern scholarship. Although many historians still produce valuable narratives of women's experiences and lives, largely relying upon categories of marriage, motherhood, and domesticity, gender history has expanded the possibilities. Scholars of gender theory now attempt to understand how negotiations and exchanges of power relate to social constructions of gendered identities. This, in turn, has informed new generations of scholars who have applied this methodology to religion, race, and economics. Still newer approaches pair gender theory with other subject matter to create sexuality, masculinity and queer studies, all increasingly prominent fields in early American history.

## RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL THEMES IN GENDER HISTORY

Puritan theology so dominated early Massachusetts colonial history that historians of gender and sexuality immediately looked to the plethora of published sermons, journals, and diaries of the more prominent ministers in New England.<sup>26</sup> Among the expected admonitions to obey traditional Christian theology, historians found surprisingly sexualized notions of Christ and his relationships to congregants in Puritan literature and sermons, which often employed sexual imagery to describe the emotional rapture of

conversion for both men and women. Ministers often likened conversion to Christianity to a marriage between the individual and Christ, regardless of the human's biological sex.<sup>27</sup> Passion and love dominated these sermons, likening the spiritual marriage to earthly marriage between husband and wife.

According to Richard Godbeer, a historian of colonial sexuality, this imagery and public discourse of sexuality and marriage between faithful Puritans and Christ increased over the life of Massachusetts Bay into the eighteenth century. Popular figures such as Increase and Cotton Mather often published sermons that directly addressed this relationship.<sup>28</sup> Employing sexual imagery in their writings and sermons was not out of the ordinary. Puritan men and women often wrote of their passionate love for Christ and



**Anne Bradstreet (1612-1672)**

Bradstreet often wrote poetry celebrating Puritan theology and the love she bore for her family and husband. (Artist unknown.)

the raptures that accompanied the presence of the holy spirit. This practice by Puritan men would seemingly eroticize a spiritual connection between two men, the believer and Christ, opening it to a homoerotic interpretation. Interestingly, theologians offer no objection to the erotic language used and fail to consider any homo-erotic implication. According to Richard Godbeer, this lack of concerns attests to the fluidity of gender and sexuality in New England.

The overt emotional and sensual nature of Puritan literature attracted not only historians, but academics interested in literature, psychology, religion, and sociology. In *The Language of Puritan Feeling* (1980), David Leverenz combines methodologies of literary analysis, social history, and psychology in his exploration of Puritan rhetoric.<sup>29</sup> Employing a nontraditional psychological approach, Leverenz concludes that Puritan literature emphasized the “heavenly father” in order to compensate for the failings and inherent weaknesses of earthly fathers. Puritan literature reflected this gendered construction by describing converts and congregants as “brides of Christ.” Less psychoanalytical in nature, Robert Daly’s *God’s Altar* (1978) argues that Puritans embraced poetry and sensuality because religious conversion and Christianity inspired rapturous responses from the congregations.<sup>30</sup> God always embodied the masculine role in relation to the devout, both men and women.

Beyond theological literature, court cases also provide an opportunity to assess gender roles and the psychology of Massachusetts colonists.<sup>31</sup> Heavily documented, the courts offered a social and legal perspective to counter the more prevalent theological interpretations offered. Historians of the colonial courts found that “moral transgressions were prosecuted as crimes and included any sexual activity outside of marriage.”<sup>32</sup> This included premarital sex as well as cases of adultery or inappropriate sexual conduct such as public masturbation. Merrill D. Smith’s important collection of essays on colonial sex, *Sex and Sexuality in Early America* (1998), includes two pieces that reflect this perspective. In “The Regulation of Sex in Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts” (1998), Else L. Hambleton focused on the fornication trial of Samuel Appleton and Priscilla Willson, asserting that accusations against Appleton, a Massachusetts gentleman, were unique, with the majority of legal and public scorn reserved for women like Willson.<sup>33</sup>

As many historians have concluded, Puritan theology accepted and encouraged sexuality within marriage to facilitate marital harmony and promote progeny. Likewise, when women chose to abstain from “sexual congress” with their husbands, the courts intervened. Historian Erik R. Seeman’s “Sarah Prentice and the Immortalists” (1998) explores the embrace



of celibacy by Sarah Prentice and other Great Awakening “Immortals” who sought ultimate purity and rejected dominant gender paradigms of authority and sexuality.<sup>34</sup> Celibacy flew in the face of long-understood mandates from God that demanded sexuality within marriage.

In “Deficient Husbands” (1999), Thomas A. Foster argues that men received equal condemnation for failure to perform sexual obligations within the marriage. A key component of Protestant “companionate marriage,” as articulated by early Protestant reformers, was the ability to engage in mutually pleasurable sexual relations. For Puritan men, the ability to perform sexually became linked to a construction of masculinity.<sup>35</sup> Impotence, infertility, or any number of impediments to sexual performance disrupted the “little commonwealth” of the colonial home. Foster underscores the importance of sexual performance by citing the legal codes that allowed women to divorce their husbands based on sexual deficiency, thus simultaneously undermining the husband’s position as the patriarch of the Puritan home and opening him up to public condemnation and ridicule.

## MASCULINITY STUDIES

The field of Masculinity Studies incorporates history, sociology, and gender theory in an effort to understand both cultural constructions and personal performances of masculine identities. Although fairly recent in its application to colonial America, it has spawned some extraordinary works.

Lisa Wilson’s influential *Ye Heart of a Man: The Domestic Life of Men in Colonial New England* (1999) explores domestic masculinity within the Puritan home. She notes the deep importance of “usefulness” to male identity.<sup>36</sup> Instead of placing authority and power within a singular realm of “manhood,” Wilson argues that male power waxed and waned over the course of a lifetime and was linked to household responsibilities, including being a successful husband and father.

Warfare provides another site for the study of masculinities in colonial Massachusetts. Ann M. Little’s *Abraham in Arms: War and Gender in Colonial New England* (2007) examines warfare between Indian, English, and French soldiers in the mid seventeenth-century.<sup>37</sup> She concludes that gender and family informed the ways in which these groups “understood and explained their experience of cross-cultural warfare.” Rather than highlight their differences, Little argues that similarities in cultures appeared in warfare and her book underscores the commonalities. R. Todd Romero’s *Making War and Minting Christians: Masculinity, Religion, and Colonialism in Early New England* (2011) also explores intersections of race and gender in early New

England.<sup>38</sup> Unlike Little, Romero focuses on the disparity between Native and English interpretations of warfare. Using religion as a lens, Romero underscores how both groups attached deeply spiritual understandings to their performances of manhood and warfare. In fact, according to Romero, these differing constructions helped place them on the path to conflict.

Questions of manhood demand that historians study not only adults, but also children. Anne S. Lombard's *Making Manhood: Growing Up Male in Colonial New England* (2003) does much to fill this gap.<sup>39</sup> Lombard studied the construction of masculinity from infancy through adulthood. She concludes that Protestantism and virtues such as "maturity, rationality, responsibility, self-control, and courage" characterized ideal manhood in the colonial period.<sup>40</sup> These learned skills often passed from father to son as colonial Massachusetts relied upon male self-mastery and a stable patriarchy to function properly.

Thomas A. Foster synthesizes many of these arguments in one of the few book-length studies of colonial masculinity, *Sex and the Eighteenth-Century Man: Massachusetts and the History of Sexuality in America* (2006). Building on the work of Edmund Morgan and John Demos, Foster argues that there was no line between public and private in colonial Massachusetts.<sup>41</sup> Beyond the marital expectations of sexual performance, inadequacy could affect public perceptions of a man's trustworthiness and reliability, and it generally impacted his civic and economic role in the community as well. Foster's work builds on assertions by Anne S. Lombard that self-control and personal mastery were crucial aspects of appropriate male performance. Though Foster focuses on images of the ideal man in colonial Massachusetts—married, responsible, religious, and sexually controlled—he also explores "deviant" sexualities such as sodomites, cuckolds, fops, and bachelors. He also uncovers the existence of "molly houses," an early correlate to the gay bar.

Mastery—particularly self-mastery—also extended to expressions of sexuality. Brian D. Carroll, using the personal diary of Joseph Moody, examines the inner turmoil men faced between self-control and sexuality.<sup>42</sup> Moody lamented his inability to refrain from masturbation and the spiritual anxiety that accompanied his sin, but he also became concerned about its physiological repercussions. Carroll makes the point that Moody's inability to control his passions reflected poorly on his masculinity. Puritan men also anxiously assessed the dangers of "loving his helpmeet too much."<sup>43</sup> Excess emotion and sexuality led to a lack of self-mastery and was to be avoided, both as individuals and within the more pious institution of marriage. This pervasive fear of excess, both in personal pleasure and marital felicity, inspired concern and suspicion within the community.

John Gilbert McCurdy's *Citizen Bachelors: Manhood and the Creation of the United States* (2006) argues that men throughout the colonies struggled to embody an ideal of masculinity that involved self-control and personal responsibility, but within the realm of matrimony.<sup>44</sup> The "bachelor" was an object of scorn and ridicule, particularly those who remained unmarried well beyond publicly sanctioned propriety. Community members considered themselves responsible for monitoring demonstrations of sexuality. Internal community regulation of Puritan sexuality allowed for intensive observation. According to Kathleen Verduin, "control was to be enforced from within, against the nature that struggled for expression."<sup>45</sup>

Anne Marie Plane's recent article, "Indian and English Dreams: Colonial Hierarchy and Manly Restraint in Seventeenth-Century New England," explores the ways in which anxiety over self-control and authority was expressed in the dreams of New England men.<sup>46</sup> Dreams and their interpretation were an important element in Algonquin culture, which the Puritans took as "strong evidence of the unrestrained and wildly feminized nature of Indian men."<sup>47</sup> For colonial men, even the notion of articulating their dreams was considered unmanly. Recorded in diaries and journals, the narratives of Puritan men's dreams reflect their deep-seated concern over perceived threats to their authority and potential disruption of the ideal social order. Plane argues that the realm of sleep and dreams became an invisible, but highly contested battleground for masculine domination.

## RACE AND GENDER

Studies that incorporate elements of race, gender, and sexuality within the larger colonial context often provide the most illuminating histories. Often overlooked, particularly in New England, studies of African and African American women illuminate the deeply complicated interplays of slavery, race, and gender in Puritan New England. Catherine Adams' recent *Love of Freedom: Black Women in Colonial and Revolutionary New England* (2010) demonstrates that the rhetoric of freedom and liberty meant different things for black men and black women.<sup>49</sup> While men sought liberation and the right to create patriarchal households, black women's more complicated demands included autonomy and educational opportunities for black children.

Operating under the "double-bind" of gender and racial ostracism, women of color faced increased challenges in the colonial period. Daniel R. Mandell's work on Sarah Muckamugg offers a fascinating micro-history of the complex racial dynamics in early New England.<sup>50</sup> Muckamugg, a Nipmuc from Massachusetts, married Aaron, an African slave in 1728.

The two stayed married for twelve years and had one son. Mandell asserts that shared marginalization in eighteenth-century New England allowed for mixed marriages, but also placed increased strain upon such unions. Difficulties began prior to marriage. Thomas A. Foster's chapter on "Cross-Cultural Sex" in *Sex and the Eighteenth Century Man* notes that interracial marriages faced stiff fines and even public punishments such as whippings. Punishments for sexual crimes also increased significantly if conducted between racial groups.<sup>51</sup>

Resisting integration, many white colonists wanted to impose their own understandings of race, religion, and gender onto those considered outside "others." Ann Marie Plane's *Colonial Intimacies: Indian Marriage in Early New England* (2000) suggests that early New England settlers sought to reshape Indian marriage in order to assert legal and social dominance, as well as Protestant values.<sup>52</sup> However, previous historians who studied Native American women and their relationship to the missions often fell into the trap of assuming that the patriarchal objectives of missionaries curtailed Native women's authority and sexual choices.<sup>53</sup> In contrast, Kathleen Bragdon argues that Native American women's complicated relationship with the missions in New England defy a commonality of experience.<sup>54</sup> Looking at Massachusetts Indians, Bragdon asserts that, rather than supplanting Native gender systems, European religious gender systems reinforced traditional roles for Native women.

## QUEER STUDIES AND COLONIAL HOMOEROTICISM

Historians of sexualities and sexual identities often face linguistic challenges. Modern constructions of "homosexual" or "heterosexual" identities originated only in the late nineteenth century. Scholars continue to create labels that reflect modern political identities not found in colonial America. Same-sex eroticism and intimacy existed in colonial America, but without necessitating a separate identity based on sexuality. Rather, early modern intellectual and religious figures created a binary based on procreative and non-reproductive sex and often categorized the plethora of possible sexual activities of the latter as sodomy.

In colonial America, sodomy served as an umbrella term to describe any "unnatural" sexual activity and included—at various historical moments and places—such practices as masturbation, anal penetration, lesbian sexual stimulation, rape of minors, bestiality, or other behaviors not likely to lead to reproduction.<sup>55</sup> However, this use of "sodomy" as an umbrella term not only obscures the reality of sexual practices in this period, but also frequently

contradicts modern understandings sexual behavior. For example, sex between women fell completely outside the bounds of this already inadequate binary between sodomy and heterosexual, potentially procreative sex. Because women lacked a penis and therefore an instrument of penetration, most colonists failed to consider the possibility of sex between women, much less the appropriate terminology by which to classify it. (Although, as we shall see, legal sanctions against lesbian relations were debated in the 1640s.)

Early historical works that addressed homosexual conduct in colonial Massachusetts often assumed that Puritan theologians and subsequent generations of conservative New Englanders rejected individuals who engaged in same-sex relations and expelled from the community any person who deviated from accepted sexual mores.<sup>56</sup> In “Homosexuals and the Death Penalty in Colonial America” (1976), Louis Crompton used English law as his guide to trace the legislative history and prosecutions of sodomy in the seventeenth century.<sup>57</sup> While this early work failed to analyze these instances of homoerotic conduct and their social implications, it did reveal multiple examples of homoerotic contact between same-sex persons in colonial America, providing ample evidence that alternate sexualities existed throughout the colonies. Legislative responses differed, but Crompton found that most employed Biblical and religious language in condemning these “unnatural practices.” It was not until after the American Revolution that the American colonies, following the lead of Pennsylvania, began classifying these sexual practices as non-capital offenses.<sup>58</sup>

In “Changed . . . into the Fashion of a Man” (1995), Kathleen M. Brown demonstrates that colonial Americans lacked social categories for sexualities and often struggled to apply correct terminology.<sup>59</sup> It is clear from records that courts and citizens of colonial Massachusetts viewed sexuality as an act rather than an identity. Robert Oaks finds in “Things Fearful to Name” (1978) that non-marital sexual practices in which pregnancy could result received harsher punishments from Massachusetts courts than non-reproductive sex.<sup>60</sup> Using quantitative methodology to study instances of persecution of two sexual offenses, sodomy and buggery, Oaks found that “buggery,” conceived by New England courts as sex between a man and an animal, constituted a greater offense than sodomy because colonials believed that procreation between two species was possible. Buggery stood as an abomination to God and mankind and therefore demanded harsh reprisal.

Still, some New England communities, including, most surprisingly, Massachusetts Bay, took a more benign view of variant sexual practices. In some cases, individuals known for their unconventional sexual behaviors were not only tolerated, but even integrated into the community. The case

of Nicholas Sension stands as a perfect example of New England's social fluidity with regard to colonial sexuality, and it is eloquently detailed in Richard Godbeer's "The Cry of Sodom" (1995). That Sension was able to live mostly undisturbed in Windsor, Connecticut, for decades as a practicing homosexual offers an amendment to conventional portraits of Puritan New England.<sup>61</sup> Sources indicate that Sension's sexual preferences were well known among his neighbors and community. He solicited sex from a variety of men in Windsor, not appearing in court on charges of sodomy until 1677, nearly forty years after settling in the Connecticut village. Although Sension had been reprimanded by town elders twice in previous years, he continued his solicitations. It was only after Sension's proclivities began disrupting the social order and he deviated from his practice of soliciting sex from younger,

The testimony of John Moses aged 22 do testify  
 that on the generall trayning day last at night  
 having occasion to be at Nicholas Sensions and went  
 to bed with dance in his room. When I came without  
 and saw Sension and lay in the same bed with  
 and towards morning in the morning came to us  
 into the Chamber and to the bed and showed  
 lay and yet his hands to my secret parts  
 & Grooving as a brought these parts so  
 we ought of lost them of Sensions and then  
 he stood back and I saw him in his shirt  
 I thought he had bin gon but he stood back  
 again in the other side of the bed where  
 I am lay and cald softly to the said without  
 and without Sensions ought his arms and  
 what do's you what do you know

Witnessed by me John Moses  
 June 23 1677 aged 22 years

#### Testimony of John Moses in the Trial of Nicholas Sension, 1677

Sension, a wealthy, respected, married citizen of Windsor, Connecticut, was brought to trial under the colony's sodomy law of 1672. The testimony against Sension is the most detailed known to exist in any colonial sodomy case. Courtesy of Connecticut State Library, Hartford.

more subordinate males, that the courts felt compelled to act. Convicted of attempted sodomy, Sension received a minimal punishment, having his estate placed in bond.<sup>62</sup> Sension's story illustrates how current conceptions of sexual labels and identities fail to apply in colonial America. Perhaps even more interestingly, it suggests that the inability of colonials to linguistically and culturally impose distinctions inadvertently created opportunities for sexual fluidity and diversity.

Kathleen M. Brown and Sharon Block speculate that the community afforded Sension "almost . . . an identity" of a homosexual man, a "seemingly modern sexual self."<sup>63</sup> Colin Talley offers another perspective in "Gender and Male Same-Sex Erotic Behavior in British North America in the Seventeenth Century" (1996), asserting that same-sex erotic behavior in British North America "was much more common than has previously been assumed." He concludes that even though the statutes prescribed harsh punishments, "sodomy and buggery statutes seem to have been largely unenforced."<sup>64</sup> Talley's explanation for why men like Sension evaded persecution for so long is that "same-sex erotic behavior was a cultural and psychological threat to the dominant patriarchal ideology but not a social structural threat."<sup>65</sup> Unless the social order was directly threatened, homosexual intimacy could be tolerated.

Sex between women receives less attention simply because of the paucity of colonial sources. Few public colonial records explicitly address the possibility of two women engaging in sexual activity, and legal repercussions varied in the colonies. John Cotton, a prominent minister and early settler of Massachusetts Bay, proposed to include sex between women as a capital offense, evoking the Christian Bible and Roman law as inclusive and a just precedent. Cotton proposed:

Unnatural filthiness to be punished with death, whether sodomy, which is a carnal fellowship of man with man, or woman with woman, or buggery, which is a carnal fellowship of man or woman with beasts or fowls.<sup>66</sup>

However, the Massachusetts colonial legislature rejected this inclusion and published the 1641 laws that prohibited only male/male sodomy, and bestiality. Debates such as these highlight a tension regarding female sexual conduct in Massachusetts Bay. Clearly, John Cotton felt that sexual intimacy between women was not only possible, but a legitimate threat.

The year after John Cotton's efforts to include sex between women as a crime punishable by death, the colony of New Haven in Connecticut successfully



**John Cotton (1585-1652)**

Cotton was a leading figure among the New England Puritan ministers.

made several forms of nonprocreative sex a capital offense, using Cotton's suggested language to include sex between women. Relying heavily on the Massachusetts Bay Code enacted in 1641, the Connecticut Code of Laws (1642) included a sodomy statute that broke with other colonial constructions. While most colonial statutes required the presence of and penetration by a penis to constitute sodomy, Connecticut included anal intercourse between heterosexuals, as well as sex among women and masturbation.<sup>67</sup> Though New Haven indicted a few men for masturbation and sexual encounters with other men, no women were ever accused of violating the statute. Perhaps in response to its inefficacy, New Haven repealed the law in 1652 when it

officially came under Connecticut Law.<sup>68</sup>

In New England, only two court cases survive that denote sex between women. Two women from Plymouth Colony received indictments for practicing "leude behavior [with] each other upon a bed."<sup>69</sup> The court cleared the younger woman but publicly whipped and fined Elizabeth Johnson.<sup>70</sup> Godbeer notes that within the court record, there is no use of the term "sodomy," only vague assertions of "lewd" and "unseemly" conduct.<sup>71</sup> The second case (1642) involved a maid who accused her mistress of "unseemly practice" with another maid.<sup>72</sup> The Court of Essex, lacking proof of the indiscretion, punished the accusing maid by having her whipped and declaring her a liar.

The ambiguous accusations and lack of formal proof accounts for the leniency in these cases, but it also reflects the Puritan view that sexual conduct between women did not necessarily constitute sexual intercourse. It therefore was not as threatening as male acts of sodomy or buggery, which Puritans persecuted with vigor.<sup>73</sup> The paucity of source material related to female sexual encounters has prevented historians from examining them in-depth, choosing rather to briefly refer to them within larger paradigms focused



on male sodomy. This marginalization has effectively excluded women and female same-sex desire from the historiographical landscape.

Perceptions of Native Americans, however, were an entirely different matter. As John D’Emilio and Estelle Freedman point out in *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (1998), colonists were aware that there were differences between their own and Native American sexual customs. For example, among some Native American tribes, “premarital intercourse, polygamy, or institutionalized homosexuality, all practices condemned by European church and state,” were practiced. In fact, some tribes allowed for less restrictive gender prescriptions so that “women, like men, could exercise considerable choice in their selection of sexual partners,” and less policing of children’s sexual exploration so that “children grew up with few restrictions on sexual experimentation, which might range from masturbation to sexual play between same-sex or opposite-sex partners.”<sup>74</sup>

However, what most astounded and horrified Europeans was the:

existence of a category of men who dressed and lived as women (called berdaches), and more rarely of women who dressed and lived as men . . . Even more alarming was the realization that these berdache (from the French term for a sodomite or homosexual) could be ‘as much esteem’d as the bravest and hailest men in the country.’ To the Europeans, the acceptance of men who practiced ‘the execrable, unnatural abuse of their bodies [homosexuality]’ and who performed women’s tasks, led to ‘a corruption of morals past all expression.’<sup>75</sup>

Many explorers and early settlers throughout colonial America, lacking an appropriate vocabulary or cultural understanding, mistakenly portrayed Indians as “sodomites” or “hermaphrodites.”

When anthropologists reexamined these depictions in the 1970s and 1980s, they came to a different conclusion, one rooted in an understanding of the Native concept of “berdache,” or “two-spirits.”<sup>76</sup> Some cultures viewed these individuals as having two spirits (male and female) occupying one body while others viewed these individuals as representing third or fourth genders. Over 150 North American cultures recognized the existence of a male berdache role.

The existence of the two-spirits (“berdache”) indicated a great deal of sexual fluidity and gender identity in many indigenous societies. Often thought to possess spiritual power because of the duality of their gendered identities (male/female) by contemporary Natives, two-spirits threatened

European understandings of appropriate gender roles and reinforced their assertion that Natives were sexually deviant. These histories largely focus on colonial settlements outside of New England, but Gunlog Fur's article, "Delawares Living in a Woman's Town (Weibe-Town)" suggests that female two-spirits may have been visible in New England as well.<sup>77</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

The prolific and vibrant source material found from Massachusetts Bay, though unique in both quantity and character, hints that there existed a larger discourse of gender and sexuality throughout the colonies. However, there is still much work to be done. Scholarship on this period continues to focus almost exclusively on a white perspective. More than ten years ago, in "Beyond the Great Debates" (1998), Kathleen M. Brown bemoaned the lack of studies addressing race and racial categories such as "whiteness" in New England's historiography.<sup>78</sup> Although studies of Algonquian and Iroquois tribes are numerous, scholars have so far been unable to connect them to colonial gender and sexuality, or to race. Lack of primary sources from indigenous and African populations compounds the problem; yet some historians, such as Ann Marie Plane and Thomas A. Foster, have been able to move beyond these limitations.

Incorporating racial diversity into histories of gender and sexualities is only one of many avenues to creating a more complex and thorough history of colonial Massachusetts. Histories of women, gender, and sexuality command interest and respect, but must be understood within the context of colonial society. Just as women did not exist in isolation from men, women's history cannot thrive in seclusion. These narratives must be studied in conjunction with other, more traditional narratives to be fully appreciated. Economic, political, racial, religious, and social history, combined with histories of women, gender, and sexuality, offer the best possibility for a fuller and more accurate understanding of colonial society.

HJM

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Jesse Clement, *Noble Deeds of American Women: Women in America from Colonial Times to the 20th century* (New York: Ayer Co. Pub, 1974); John Foster, *Pioneer Mothers of the West; Or, Daring and Heroic Deeds of American Women* (New York: Arno Press, 1974).

<sup>2</sup> Margaret H. Davis, "Mary White Rowlandson's Self-Fashioning as Puritan Goodwife," *Early American Literature* 27 (1992): 49-60.

<sup>3</sup> Steven Neuwirth, "Her Master's Voice: Gender, Speech and Gendered Speech in the Narrative of the Captivity of Mary White Rowlandson," in *Sex and Sexuality in Early America*, Merrill D. Smith, ed (New York: New York University, 1998): 55-86. Rebecca Blevins Faery challenged the simplicity of the captivity narrative and Mary Rowlandson. See Rebecca Blevins Faery, *Cartographies of Desire: Captivity, Race & Sex in the Shaping of an American Nation* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999). See also, Teresa A. Toulouse, *The Captive's Position: Female Narrative, Male Identity, and Royal Authority in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

<sup>4</sup> Ben Barker-Benfield, "Anne Hutchinson and the Puritan Attitude toward Women," *Feminist Studies* 1 (Autumn, 1972): 65-96

<sup>5</sup> Eve LaPlante, *American Jezebel: The Uncommon Life of Anne Hutchinson, the Woman Who Defied the Puritans* (San Francisco: Harper, 2004); John Emery Battis, *Saints and Sectaries: Anne Hutchinson and the Antinomian Controversy in the Massachusetts Bay Colony* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962); Amy Schrager Lang, *Prophetic Woman: Anne Hutchinson and the Problem of Dissent in the Literature of New England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); Selma R. Williams, *Divine Rebel: The Life of Anne Marbury Hutchinson* (New York: Holt, 1981); Michael Winship, *The Times and Trials of Anne Hutchinson: Puritans Divided* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2005).

<sup>6</sup> Gerda Lerner, "Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges," *Feminist Studies* 3 (Autumn 1975): 5-14.

<sup>7</sup> For examples, see Patricia Cleary, *Elizabeth Murray: A Woman's Pursuit of Independence in Eighteenth-Century America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000); Edith Belle Gelles, *Abigail & John: Portrait of a Marriage* (New York: William Morrow, 2009); Melissa Lukeman Bohrer, *Glory, Passion and Principle: the Story of Eight Remarkable Women at the Core of the American Revolution* (New York: Atria Books, 2003); Eve LaPlante, *American Jezebel: The Uncommon Life of Anne Hutchinson, the Woman who Defied the Puritans* (San Francisco: Harper, 2004).

<sup>8</sup> Although Morgan was not the first to write "social" history of Puritan New England, his work was the most influential and most relevant to women's and gender history. For earlier works see Arthur W. Calhoun, *A Social History of the American Family from Colonial Times to the Present*, 3 Vols. (Cleveland, 1917-1919); Alice Morse Earle, *Child Life in Colonial Days* (New York: Macmillan, 1899); Alice Morse Earle, *Home Life in Colonial Days* (New York, 1898); and Sanford Fleming, *Children and Puritanism: The Place of Children in the Life and Thought of the New England Churches, 1620-847* (New Haven, CT, 1922).

<sup>9</sup> John Cotton, *A Help Meet* (Boston, 1699) 14-15. Reprinted in Edmund S. Morgan, "The Puritans and Sex," *The New England Quarterly* 15 (December, 1942): 592.

<sup>10</sup> Morgan, "The Puritans and Sex," 596.

<sup>11</sup> Edmund Morgan, *The Puritan Family: Religion and Domestic Relations in Seventeenth-Century New England*, rev. ed (New York: Harper and Row, 1966).

<sup>12</sup> John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (New York, 1970); Philip J. Greven, Jr., *Four Generations: Population, Land and Family in Colonial Andover, Massachusetts* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970); Kenneth Lockridge, *A New England Town: The First Hundred Years: Dedham, Massachusetts, 1636-1736* (New York, Norton: 1970); Michael Zuckerman, *Peaceable Kingdoms: New England Towns in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970).

<sup>13</sup> Gerald F. Moran and Maris A. Vinovskis, "The Puritan Family and Religion: A Critical Reappraisal," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 39 (January, 1982): 61.

<sup>14</sup> Helena M. Wall, "Notes on Life Since A Little Commonwealth: Family and Gender History Since 1970," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 57 (October 2000): 810. For more information on the Puritan family, see Alden T. Vaughan and Francis J. Bremer, eds., *Puritan New England: Essays on Religion, Society, and Culture* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977).

<sup>15</sup> T.H. Breen, "Persistent Localism: English Social Change and the Shaping of New England Institutions," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 32 (January, 1975): 3-28.

<sup>16</sup> Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750* (New York: Knopf, 1980).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>19</sup> Kathleen M. Brown, "Beyond the Great Debates: Gender and Race in Early America," *Reviews in American History* 25 (March 1998): 101.

<sup>20</sup> Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800* (Boston: Little Brown, 1980).

<sup>21</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Volume I: An Introduction*. trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

<sup>22</sup> Joan Wallach Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* XCI (1986): 1053-1075.

<sup>23</sup> Kathleen M. Brown, "Brave New Worlds: Women's and Gender History," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 50 (April, 1993): 311-328.

<sup>24</sup> Mary Beth Norton, *Founding Mothers & Fathers Gender Power and the Forming of American Society* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996). Norton argues that the Filmer model characterized New England while the Chesapeake one reflected Locke.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, ix.

<sup>26</sup> John D. Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997) offers an excellent survey of American sexuality. See also, Renée Bergland, "Looking Back: Scholarship in Early American Sex," *American Literary History* 17 (2005): 148-159.

<sup>27</sup> Richard Godbeer, "Love Raptures': Marital, Romantic, and Erotic Images of Jesus Christ in Puritan New England, 1670-1730," *The New England Quarterly* 68 (September 1995): 355-384.

<sup>28</sup> See Increase Mather's *Practical Truths Plainly Delivered* (1718) and Cotton Mather's *A Glorious Espousal* (1719).

<sup>29</sup> David Leverenz, *The Language of Puritan Feeling: An Exploration in Literature, Psychology, and Social History* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1980).

<sup>30</sup> Robert Daly, *God's Altar: The World and the Flesh in Puritan Poetry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

<sup>31</sup> See also, Charles Lloyd Cohen, *God's Caress: The Psychology of Puritan Religious Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

<sup>32</sup> Smith, *Sex and Sexuality*, 87.

<sup>33</sup> Else L. Hambleton, "The Regulation of Sex in Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts: The Quarterly Court of Essex County vs. Priscilla Willson and Mr. Samuel Appleton." *Sex and Sexuality in Early America*, ed. Merrill D. Smith (New York: New York University Press, 1998): 89-115.

<sup>34</sup> Erik R. Seeman, "Sarah Prentice and the Immortalists: Sexual, Piety, and the Body in Eighteenth-Century New England," in Smith, *Sex and Sexuality*, 116-131.

<sup>35</sup> Thomas A. Foster, "Deficient Husbands: Manhood, Sexual Incapacity, and Male Marital Sexuality in Seventeenth-Century New England," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 56 (October 1999): 724.

<sup>36</sup> Lisa Wilson, *Ye Heart of a Man: The Domestic Life of Men in Colonial New England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

<sup>37</sup> Ann M. Little, *Abraham in Arms: War and Gender in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

<sup>38</sup> R. Todd Romero, *Making War and Minting Christians: Masculinity, Religion, and Colonialism in Early New England* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2011). Although not a history of women or gender, Richard A. Bailey's *Race and Redemption in Puritan New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011) offers insightful commentary on the intersections of race and religion in New England.

<sup>39</sup> Anne Lombard, *Making Manhood: Growing Up Male in Colonial New England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>41</sup> Thomas A. Foster, *Sex and the Eighteenth-Century Man: Massachusetts and the History of Sexuality in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006).

<sup>42</sup> Brian D. Carroll, "I Indulged My Desire Too Freely': Sexuality, Spirituality, and the Sin of Self-Pollution in the Diary of Joseph Moody, 1720-1724," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 60 (January 2003): 155-170.

<sup>43</sup> Kathleen Verduin, "'Our Cursed Natures': Sexuality and the Puritan Conscience," *The New England Quarterly* 56, no. 2 (June 1983): 225.

<sup>44</sup> John Gilbert McCurdy, *Citizen Bachelors: Manhood and the Creation of the United States* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009).

<sup>45</sup> Verduin, "Our Cursed," 232

<sup>46</sup> Anne Marie Plane, "Indian and English Dreams: Colonial Hierarchy and Manly Restraint in Seventeenth-Century New England," in *New Men: Manliness in Early America* ed. Thomas A. Foster (New York: New York University Press, 2011): 31-51.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>49</sup> Catherine Adams, *Love of Freedom: Black Women in Colonial and Revolutionary New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). For histories on New England slavery in the colonial period see C.S. Manegold, *Ten Hills Farm: The Forgotten History of Slavery in the North* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); Denis R. Caron, *A Century in Captivity: The Life and Trials of Prince Mortimer, a Connecticut Slave* (Durham: University of New Hampshire Press, 2006); Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina, *Mr. and Mrs. Prince: How an Extraordinary Eighteenth-Century Family Moved Out of Slavery and into Legend* (New York: Amistad Press, 2008); Joanne Pope Melish, *Disowning Slavery: Race and Gradual Emancipation in New England, 1780-1860* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000); John Wood Sweet, *Bodies Politic: Negotiating Race in the American North, 1730-1830* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

<sup>50</sup> Daniel R. Mandell, "The Saga of Sarah Muckamugg: Indian and African American Intermarriage in Colonial New England," in *Sex, Love, Race: Crossing Boundaries in North America History*, ed. Martha Hodes (New York: New York University Press, 1999): 72-91.

<sup>51</sup> Thomas Foster, *Sex and the Eighteenth-Century Man* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006): 129-155.

<sup>52</sup> Ann Marie Plane, *Colonial Intimacies: Indian Marriage in Early New England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000).

<sup>53</sup> Though not specifically about New England, two seminal works set the tone for understanding native women's relationship to missionary activities in the colonial period: Karen Anderson, *Chain Her by One Food: The Subjugation of Women in Seventeenth Century New France* (London: Routledge, 1990); Carol Devens, *Countering Colonization: Native American Women and the Great Lakes Missions, 1630-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

<sup>54</sup> Kathleen Bragdon, "Gender as a Social Category in Native Southern New England," *Ethnohistory*, 43 (Autumn 1996): 573-592.

<sup>55</sup> Roger Thompson, "Attitudes toward Homosexuality in the Seventeenth-Century New England Colonies," *Journal of American Studies* 23 (April, 1989): 27-40.

<sup>56</sup> Richard Godbeer's *Sexual Revolution in Early America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002) is an excellent overview of sexuality in the American colonies and offers extensive commentary on Puritan beliefs and practices. See also, the History Project's *Improper Bostonians: Lesbian and Gay History from the Puritans to Playland* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998).

<sup>57</sup> Louis Crompton, "Homosexuals and the Death Penalty in Colonial America," *Journal of Homosexuality* 1 (1976): 277-293.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 278.

<sup>59</sup> Kathleen M. Brown, "'Changed . . . into the Fashion of a Man': The Politics of Sexual Difference in Seventeenth-Century Anglo-American Settlement," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 6 (October 1995): 171-193.

<sup>60</sup> Robert F. Oaks, "'Things Fearful to Name': Sodomy and Buggery in Seventeenth-Century New England," *Journal of Social History* 12 (Winter 1978): 268-281.

<sup>61</sup> Richard Godbeer, "'The Cry of Sodom': Discourse, Intercourse, and Desire in Colonial New England," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 52 (April 1995): 259-286

<sup>62</sup> Godbeer, "The Cry of Sodom," 260.

<sup>63</sup> Sharon Block and Kathleen M. Brown, "Clio in Search of Eros: Redefining Sexualities in Early America," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 60 (January 2003): 5-12.

<sup>64</sup> Colin L. Talley, "Gender and Male Same-Sex Erotic Behavior in British North America in the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 6 (1996): 386, 385.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 387.

<sup>66</sup> John Cotton, *An Abstract of the Laws of New England* (1641). Staples, W. R., ed. *Proceedings of the first [general assembly of the incorporation of Providence Plantation and the code of laws adopted in 1647]* (Providence: Charles Burnett, 1847), 35

<sup>67</sup> *The Blue Laws of Connecticut: A Collection of the Earliest Statutes and Judicial Proceedings of That Colony; Being an Exhibition of the Rigorous Morals and Legislation of the Puritans*, (Philadelphia: Duane Rulison, 1861), page 68, enacted Dec. 1, 1642. Crompton, 280.

<sup>68</sup> See Elizabeth Reis, "Hermaphrodites and 'Same-Sex' Sex in Early America," in *Long Before Stonewall: Histories of Same-Sex Sexuality in Early America*, ed. Thomas A. Foster (New York: New York University Press, 2007).

<sup>69</sup> Reproduced in Roger Thompson, "Attitudes towards Homosexuality in the Seventeenth-Century New England Colonies," *Journal of American Studies* 23 (April 1989): 28.

<sup>70</sup> Godbeer, "The Cry of Sodom," 268.

<sup>71</sup> Louis Crompton, "The Myth of Lesbian Impunity: Capital Laws from 1270 to 1791," in Licata and Peterson, Eds., *Historical Perspectives on Homosexuality*. Special Issue of *The Journal of Homosexuality* 6 (Fall/Winter 1980): 11-25. Judith C. Butler, "Lesbian Sexuality in Medieval and Early Modern Europe," in Duberman, et. al., eds. *Hidden from History* (New York: Penguin, 1980): 67-75.

<sup>72</sup> Thompson, 29.

<sup>73</sup> Godbeer, "The Cry of Sodom," 259-286.

<sup>74</sup> D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998)

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Will Roscoe, *Changing Ones: Third and Fourth Genders in Native North America* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998); Sabine Lang, *Men as Women, Women as Men: Changing Genders in Native American Cultures* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998); Walter L. Williams, *The Spirit and the Flesh: Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986); Sue-Ellen Jacobs, Wesley Thomas and Sabine Lang, eds. *Two Spirit People: Native American Gender Identity, Sexuality, and Spirituality* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007); Roger M. Carpenter, "Womanish Men and Manlike Women: The Native American Two-Spirit as Warrior," in *Gender and Sexuality in Indigenous North America, 1400-1850* eds. Sandra Slater and Fay A. Yarbrough (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2011): 146-165.

<sup>77</sup> Gunlog Fur, "Weibe-Town and the Delawares-as-Women: Gender-Crossing and Same-Sex Relations in Eighteen-Century Northeastern Indian Culture," in *Long Before Stonewall: Histories of Same-Sex Sexuality in Early America*, ed. Thomas A. Foster (New York: New York University Press, 2007): 32-51.

<sup>78</sup> Brown, "Beyond the Great Debates," 116.