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Pneumapolitics: The Politics of Spirit and Conversion in Antebellum Literature, 1831-1860

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Pneumapolitics:
The Politics of Spirit and Conversion in Antebellum Literature, 1831-1860

By

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the politics of spirit and processes of conversion during the antebellum period (1831-1860) and seeks to understand how such a politics came to shape ideas of race, gender, sexuality, family, citizenship, and nation in the U.S. By building upon Michel Foucault's concept of biopolitics, this study introduces and develops a corollary term, pneumapolitics, that foregrounds the influence of Puritanism and Protestantism, more broadly, along with their shared emphasis on processes of spiritual conversion in order to tell a story about the emergence of American secularity that accounts for its religious specificity. While the genre of the "conversion narrative" serves as an important textual resource for understanding the structural elements of Protestant spiritual conversions in the U.S., exclusively focusing attention there ultimately belies the ways that processes of conversion exceeded that narrow context to influence nearly every aspect of antebellum culture.

Within a Protestant frame, conversion, on one hand, acts as a spiritual technology for cultivating the subjective interior of an individual to align their beliefs with particular moral, theological, and legal systems and, on the other hand, serves as an ideological conduit through which these beliefs evolve in response to historical, political, and social pressures and pass from one generation to the next. While a primary aim of this dissertation is to uncover how hegemonic power structures operated to maintain patriarchal hierarchies of authority in social and political life from the colonial period to the antebellum era, its other central objective is to illuminate how pneumapolitics itself functioned as a discursive crucible in and through which the very idea of the "spiritual" was forged.

Each of the literary artifacts in this project engages with and challenges the hegemonic structures that attempted to define and dictate the contours of spiritual life during the antebellum

period and serves as an analytical cipher through which the operational patterns of those prevailing structures come more clearly into view. By highlighting an archive of spiritual resistance, this dissertation hopes to underscore how the dialectic relationship between competing concepts of "spirit" and conversion continue to profoundly influence social and political life in the U.S. by serving as discursive channels for both regimes of oppression and visions of liberation.

Acknowledgements

I can still remember the feeling of excitement and uncertainty I felt when I stepped onto the UC Davis campus for the first time to attend graduate student orientation in Fall 2016. Getting there had been a whirlwind: I had just previously spent two years living in Germany and had moved my life briefly to my hometown in Georgia in preparation to make a cross-country road trip to relocate to Davis. Much of my graduate school experience has felt like a continuation of that whirlwind: a long journey of learning to surmount what seemed like the insurmountable. After the conclusion of each degree phase and benchmark, however, I turned, always somewhat to my surprise, to find that I had met each challenge with tenacity, intelligence, and, when I could muster it, grace. When I began the English program, I wasn't exactly sure what I wanted to do and, while I have some more clarity on that front, the matter isn't yet totally settled. But for the nearly 8 years I spent taking classes, studying for exams, teaching, and writing and researching my dissertation, my program goals provided some much-needed structure and direction in my life. And I am really grateful for that. In addition, it afforded me the opportunity to pursue a very focused and fascinating research project on a topic that is deeply personal to me. I have come to recognize that as an incredible privilege and gift. But what has made this experience truly meaningful and worthwhile are the relationships I've forged along the way. I feel a deep sense of gratitude for the friends, family, and faculty who have supported me and my ideas throughout this long and winding path that is now coming to an end.

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Table of Contents

Introduction: Defining Pneumapolitics and Charting its Legacies

The recent documentary films *Pray Away* (2021) and *Conversion* (2024) expose the abuses and cruelty of the practice known as "conversion therapy," sometimes also referred to as "reparative therapy."[1] Both films detail the recruitment strategies, methods, profit stakes, and, most importantly and tragically, the devastating aftermath for survivors who have undergone conversion therapy practices, sometimes without their consent. Although conversion therapy's popularity has largely waned (probably reaching its greatest success in the 1990s and early 2000s), and its practices have been almost universally discredited as "junk science" by reputable psychological and psychiatric associations as well as outlawed for minors in 26 states, the idea that a person's sexuality and/or gender expression *can* and *ought* to be altered through "therapeutic" intervention still circulates in many conservative religious groups in the U.S., evangelical Christians being the most prominent. For evangelicals, in particular, and an array of theologically like-minded Protestant denominational subgroups in addition to some Catholics, the persistence of such harmful beliefs represents more than a resistance by religious conservatives to secular expertise (although that is partly true); they also reflect a worldview saturated with spiritual significance and biblical meaning, organized around processes of repentance, conversion, and redemption. Conversion therapy is just one iteration of those processes meant to prescribe "biblically" appropriate expressions of sexuality and gender and "convert" any behaviors or beliefs that conflict with or undermine those delineated expressions.

[1] Although these terms are widely recognizable, recent efforts by survivors of "conversion" practices and pro-LGBTQIA+ researchers and practitioners have begun to use the umbrella term "sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts" (SOGICE) in order to differentiate "conversion" practices from legitimate forms of therapeutic support and care (Haldeman 4). I use the term "conversion therapy" to underscore its conceptual connections to Protestant processes of spiritual conversion and to preserve its popular late-20th-century usage for the brief history I outline in this section.

Although the primary focus of the dissertation is the "politics of spirit" and conversion in literary artifacts of the antebellum U.S., 20th-century conversion therapy practices provide a helpful entry point for understanding the enduring legacy of Protestant modes of conversion on political and social life. They also offer a conceptual and contextual field for illustrating how processes of conversion and spirit formation have been instrumental in constructing categories of not only sexuality, but race and gender as well from the colonial era to our current moment.

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Most often connected to religious or para-religious organizations, "conversion therapy" typically refers to a spectrum of formal and informal practices exercised in range of modalities and settings, both secular and religious, designed to alter or suppress a person's sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender and sexual expression ("SOGICE" 1). Although practiced globally, in an American context conversion therapy has strong ties to conservative religious traditions, especially evangelical Christianity, that prohibit and condemn homosexuality and gender nonconformity, tending to understand them as "sexual brokeness" resulting from "spiritual influence," a belief that "formed the basis for early conversion ideology" that staunchly asserts heterosexism and cisgenderism as the only acceptable or permissible forms of sexual and gender expression, a restrictive view sanctioned by particular readings of sacred religious texts (the Bible being the mostly commonly touted in the U.S.) ("SOGICE" 1, 2). Today, the opposition of conservative religious groups to homosexual expression and gender nonconformity in the U.S. on the basis of negative "spiritual influence" should come as no surprise, but the historical roots of such a claim are grounded, somewhat ironically, in the late nineteenth-century emergence of the secular field of sexology in Germany, making their way to the U.S. in the early

20th century via psychotherapy and intensifying sometime after the conclusion of WWII as a conservative corrective mostly targeting gay men (*Conversion* 10:37-11:25).

In the mid-1860s, German lawyer Karl Heinrich Ulrichs began to publish his writings on Uranism, a precursor to "homosexuality" and a term he coined to describe what he understood as a "third sex" to explain the phenomenon of men who possessed the innate trait of being exclusively sexually attracted to other men (Hemka 218). Ulrichs, who himself identified as a Uranian, formulated his concept of a "third sex" as "same-sex attraction with gender inversion," describing the Uranian as "a female soul enclosed in a male body" (Hemka 219-220). Although Ulrichs intended for his formulation to normalize and humanize Uranians who increasingly faced threats of devastating social stigma and criminalization, his theory of the "third sex" was quickly and widely adopted in psychological and psychiatric circles as a means of pathologizing same-sex desire as deviant (Hemka 219-220, 222). The most notable of these adherents was Richard von Krafft-Ebing, whose groundbreaking study *Psychopathia sexualis* (1886) taxonomized types of sexual perversion and denounced homosexuality, dashing Ulrichs' hopes of respectably integrating Uraians into society (Hemka 226).

Since Ulrichs had conceptualized his "third sex" as "a female soul in a male body" in the 1860s, his formula was referenced by most subsequent writers and researchers responsible for forging the earliest discussions of homosexuality (Hemka 222, 224). Krafft-Ebing, who had also built his theories homosexuality as a "sexual psychopathy" from Urlichs' writings, more so than any other, has "distinctly influenced the discussion on homosexuality to this day" (Hemka 226). Christian conservative religious proponents of "conversion therapy" are one such group that has continued to draw on Krafft-Ebing's theory of homosexual pathology in order to justify largely debunked pseudoscience with a veneer of legitimacy (Haldeman 5). Whereas Ulrichs had seen

the "female soul in a male body" as a natural phenomenon, Krafft-Ebing framed homosexual desires and expressions as "psychopathology on the grounds that they [did] not lead to procreation and therefore [served] no legitimate purpose" (Haldeman 5). While Ulrichs' "soul" theory added a spiritual dimension to early conceptions of homosexuality (even if metaphorically), Krafft-Ebing's pathologization of same-sex desire and expression suggested that the homosexual's inverted "soul"– conceived as a neuropathological disorder of the sex drive–could be therapeutically treated (Hemka 225 and Haldeman 5). As psychoanalysts and psychiatrists expanded and drew upon Krafft-Ebing's work to develop methods for treating sexual inversion as "contrary sexual feeling," a term introduced by the German psychiatrist Karl Friedrich Otto Westphal in 1869, the pathologizing discourse on homosexuality took root and continued to grow (Hemka 224). Nearly a century later, conservative Christian organizations in the U.S. opposing homosexuality began to establish (mostly unregulated) treatment programs to "heal" those with "unwanted same-sex attraction" in the early 1970s–Love in Action and Exodus International (both now shuttered) being the most notable (*Conversion* 12:03-13:48 and Haldeman 8).

Drawing on Krafft-Ebbing and his successors, these organizations spiritualized the "problem" of homosexuality and endorsed the belief that "same-sex attraction (or 'homosexuality') or any gender identity or expression that diverged from cisgender was a perversion of the 'natural order' and ultimately a choice that could be altered by prayer, personal effort, and re-forming 'healthy habits,' such as celibacy or even marrying someone of the opposite sex" ("SOGICE" 1, 2). The driving motivation behind these organizations' goals (i.e. to reorient sexuality and gender expression) was predicated on a theological notion that God created the world and the universe with "specific order" ("SOGICE" 4). The adaptation of

generalized forms of spiritual conversion (e.g. those required to belong to a church community) to address the problem of "sexual brokeness" specify theologies of sin and redemption to target sexual and gender expression outside of the perceived bounds of God's order, implying spiritual conversion as a sexualizing and gendering process. Although the origins of conversion therapy can be traced to Ulrichs' formulation of the gendered or sexualized "soul" of the Uranian in 1860s Germany, the spiritual resonances of his theory, particularly for American Protestants, has a much older genealogy dating back to at least the Puritans and probably the Reformation. How is it that Ulrichs could conceive of a soul as gendered? And, furthermore, what made this idea so compelling to Christian practitioners of "conversion therapy" in the 20th century? For early Protestants and Puritans, spiritual conversion played a central role in envisioning a world redeemed into God's order–above all else, even the body, the soul or spirit of a person vibrated with the echoes of eternity, representing the most enduring aspects of the self. In a postlapsarian world, acts of repentance and spiritual conversion mediate states of sin and redemption in the ongoing process of perfecting a world that was lost after the fall of humankind in the Garden of Eden. From this vantage point, processes of spiritual conversion, including conversion therapy, function to restore a biblically derived and mandated divine order, which includes a theologically ordered view of human sexuality (i.e. heterosexism and cisgenderism).

Although the main focus of this dissertation is not "conversion therapy" per se, I introduce this brief history of the practice in order to begin to illuminate the internal logics of Protestant spiritual conversion–namely, the supremacy and malleability of the spirit–and to offer an entry point into a "politics of spirit" or *pneumapolitics*. The term *pneuma*, having roots etymologically in both the Latin and Greek for "breath," signifies spirit, soul, and vital life force that animates and motivates the body ("pneuma"). Although, in a dualistic frame, "spirit"

conventionally represents a neutral state of being that transcends the political and social differentiations that structure the material and the historical world (i.e. race, gender, and sexuality among others), the Protestant commitment to reforming spirits in the temporal, material realm through processes of conversion implies the differentiation of those same spirits in order to satisfy the social and political logics that reflect as they construct a perceived "divine order." By establishing and developing a theory of pneumapolitics, I name a disciplinary strategy that utilizes conversion as a spiritual technology for regulating belief and organizing people into hierarchies of power based primarily on theologies of race, gender, and sexuality–eventually expanding to incorporate theologies of the nation and republicanism to stabilize and perpetuate those same hierarchies. The strategy, in the first instance, naturalizes the spirit as an essentialized interiority and vital life force that can be molded and modeled in the image of a white Protestant patriarchal hegemony. The texts that I analyze in this dissertation fall within the antebellum, or "early national," period and trace the evolution of conversion practices from seventeenth-century Puritans to the mid-nineteenth century Protestants, more generally. Throughout this dissertation, I argue that pneumapolitics–and by extension spiritual conversion–functions as an ideological and disciplinary strategy meant to spiritualize national belonging and citizenship as well as shape the contours of hierarchies of power designed to maintain racial, gender, and sexual order according to the ideals of Protestant-republicanism. Furthermore, my analysis underscores that by bringing the spiritual into contact with the political world, pneumapolitics also opens up contested ground for determining the character of the "spiritual" itself as competing conversion trajectories generate counterpossibilies and an archive of spiritual resistance that challenge and often threaten the hegemonic continuity of a Protestant-republican pneumapolitical regime.

Defining Pneumapolitics: From Confession to Conversion

In order to conceptualize pneumapolitics as a regime of power, I build on Michel Foucault's biopolitics as both a point of comparison and departure. For Foucault, biopolitics is a mode of power that emerged as a means for administering life and managing populations. A key technology of biopolitical power that began to gain traction in the nineteenth century was the development of sexuality as scientific and medical discourses that promised to reveal the truth of the individual (Foucault 78). Consequently, sexuality became a means for taxonomizing apparently immutable and essential differences in individuals at the same time that it functioned as a guiding metric for determining the differences between health and pathology and which forms of life would and would not be promoted and sustained by the state (Foucault 25-26). Foucault traces the genealogy of sexuality as a technique of power to the ritual of Catholic confession in which parishioners disclosed to the pastorate "all the insinuations of the flesh" so that the confessional imperative to divulge not only sex acts, but "thoughts, desires, voluptuous imaginings, delectations" became a way "to trace the meeting line of the body and the soul" (Foucault 20).

In many ways, Foucault's theory of sexuality is itself a secularization narrative that describes the transformation of a religious discourse on sex to a secular scientific one (cohering most saliently in the fields of psychology, psychiatry, and medicine), both claiming the ability to apprehend the truth of the individual by way of the "confession of the flesh" (Foucault 19, 43). The imperative to confess the truth of one's self by talking about sex permeates western civilization to such an extent that "Western man," Foucault asserts, "has become a confessing animal" (Foucault 59). Foucault's theory of biopolitics (and sexuality as a facet of it), however, depends on the prominence of Catholicism and ritualized confession within the nation-states of

western Europe. Yet centuries before the late nineteenth-century emergence of sexuality, the Protestant Reformation had already begun to erode Catholic influence in some areas of the continent, producing forms of Christianity that rejected the practices and sovereignty of the Catholic church, including priestly hierarchy and ritualized confession.

While Foucault's theory of sexuality within a biopolitical framework corresponds with a Catholic hegemony in western Europe, it overlooks groups of Protestants who emigrated to colonize areas of North America, especially colonial New England, in the seventeenth century with the aim of establishing a Protestant theocracy in opposition to what they saw as the corruption of Catholic nation-states. By the nineteenth century, the time period in which Foucault locates the discursive emergence of sexuality, Protestantism dominated the religious landscape of the U.S. How might foregrounding Protestantism in an American context in the nineteenth century shift Foucault's notion of biopolitics and tell an alternative story about secularity and secularization? Molly McGarry's work on nineteenth-century spiritualism and the formation of nonsecular sexual subjectivities is especially helpful in beginning to answer this question. By challenging Foucault's "Continental secularization narrative in which the (French) Catholic confessional sits in genealogical relationship to the psychoanalytic couch," McGarry points to a counter-narrative about American secularity that underscores the importance of reckoning with its Protestant roots (157). "If the confessional is one culturally specific site for producing speech about the self," McGarry suggests, "the Protestant evangelical tent, the revival meeting, and the Spiritualist séance may be among its American corollaries" (157). By reexamining the assumptions of Foucault's secularization narrative, McGarry hopes to restore "a connection to histories of religion" in order to develop a more critical vantage point that foregrounds spirituality as central to formations of the secular rather than antecedent to them.

Following McGarry's assertions, I argue that Protestant theological ethics dating back to the birth of the Reformation resisted Catholic confessional practices, namely the selling and buying of indulgences, by emphasizing repentance, a process of conversion (or turning) that centers around inward spiritual transformation rather than solely the outward acknowledgment of sinful wrongdoing for the purposes of absolution. In the first five points of Martin Luther's *95 Theses*, alternatively named *Disputation of Doctor Luther on the Power and the Efficacy of Indulgences*, Luther distinguishes repentance from sacramental confession. In his iconoclastic first thesis, Luther claims, "Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, when He said *Poenitentiam agite*, willed that the whole life of believers should be repentance," which he clarifies in his second thesis by asserting, "This word [repentance] cannot be understood to mean sacramental penance, i.e., confession and satisfaction, which is administered by the priests" (Luther).[2] By contrasting repentance against Catholic confessional practices, Luther set in motion a burgeoning Protestant theological outlook that emphasized an ongoing conversion process of perpetual penance instead of punctuated forms of aural Catholic confession, particularly when they involved the buying and selling of indulgences, a practice, in Luther's estimation, which effectively bypassed the process of spiritual transformation and refinement meant to prepare Christians to enter the Kingdom of God. I do not mean to suggest that this shift erased the theological imperative of confession altogether, but rather that Luther sought to reform and reorient the practice of confession by subsuming it into the ongoing and active process of repentance (i.e. "the whole life of believers"). For Luther, indulgences foreclosed the process of repentance because they essentially authorized the superficial buying and selling of salvation by priestly authorities

[2] *Poenitentiam agite*, translates from Latin into English as "Repent" or "Do Penance." The phrase references Matthew 4:17 in which Jesus Christ says, "Repent: For the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (KJV).

without necessitating an inward spiritual transformation evidenced by outward changes in behavior (Luther). Furthermore, I argue that this theological shift from a particular mode of Catholic confession to repentance informs and undergirds the centrality of processes of spiritual conversion to Protestant conceptions of salvation. John Calvin, the preeminent Protestant reformer, draws together conversion and repentance etymologically in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, a master volume meant to systematize Protestant theology: "The term repentance is derived in the Hebrew from conversion, or turning again; and in the Greek from a change of mind and purpose; nor is the thing meant inappropriate to both derivations, for it is substantially this, that withdrawing from ourselves we turn to God, and laying aside the old, put on a new mind" (Calvin 512-513). He goes on to define repentance as "a real conversion of our life unto God, proceeding from sincere and serious fear of God; and consisting in the mortification of our flesh and the old man, and the quickening of the Spirit," a process that Christians must undertake "during the whole course of their lives" (Calvin 513). By historicizing Catholic and Protestant concepts of confession, we may begin to more precisely distinguish and clarify various modes of secularization and expand Foucault's theory of biopolitics into a Protestant frame. If Luther's *95 Theses* laid the groundwork for a Protestant confessional ethic that centered active and ongoing turning from sin to righteousness as opposed to the sacrament of Catholic aural confession, then the Protestant emphasis on conversion, a means of narrativizing confession and legitimizing a person's status as elect, becomes central to understanding the particular forms of secularism that characterized spiritual and political life from the Puritan colonial era to the antebellum period.

In this light, I conceive pneumapolitics as a corollary to Foucault's biopolitics. By centering Protestantism instead of Catholicism, I hope to not only bring a distinctly Protestant-

American view of secularism into focus but also to foreground how a Protestant emphasis on processes of conversion fundamentally reorients the function of confession within an American national context. Rather than revealing the truth of the self via sexuality, pneumapolitics' discursive investments by way of processes of conversion elevate the spirit, or the soul, as another primary means for apprehending and interpreting the truth of the self. With this in mind, the spectrum of self-conceptions that pneumapolitics invites through modes of conversion is far from determined, opening instead a range of possibilities that draw upon the spiritual as a justification for forging various political actions in the mundane world. Even within American Protestantism (of the 19th century and today) opposing ideological forces emerge vying for political dominance, revealing the volatility of processes of conversion even as they attempt to stabilize particular world views and beliefs.

Conversion, in contrast to punctuated forms of Catholic confession, attempts to generate spiritual evidence from within the self meant to provide a sustained proof of a person's status as damned or elect, a status which, while hypothetically settled in God's mind, must nonetheless undergo ongoing public scrutiny in order to find momentary validation. This practice dates back to the Puritans for whom narratives of conversion served a particular social function in helping to determine membership in the newly established churches of the New England colonies, which served as contexts for early applications of a pneumapolitcal disciplinary strategy and laid the groundwork for the modes of spiritual conversion that would inform and undergird antebellum culture and society. I do not imagine pneumapolitics as distinctly separate from biopolitics, but rather an extension and specification of it within a realm of secularity largely informed by American Protestantism. Nor do I mean to assert that "spirit" supersedes "sexuality" in such a way that sexuality ceases to be a relevant marker in an American national context. Instead, I

imagine pneumapolitics as a reconstellation of Foucault's secularism thesis that considers how American Protestantism seeks to manage, categorize, and organize life while preserving religiosity in its secular emergence rather than eschewing it.

The Legacy of Puritan Conversion and the Generic Limitations of the "Conversion Narrative"

Central to understanding 19th-century secular reform projects and spiritual discipline is the formal and informal legacy of the Puritan conversion relation, which underwent several iterations as Puritanism gave way to more evangelical strains of Protestantism throughout the eighteenth century. Patricia Caldwell explains that Puritan conversion narratives were "a testimony of personal religious experience that had to be spoken or read to the entire congregation of a gathered church before admission as evidence of the applicant's visible sainthood" (1). Caldwell's work historicizes Puritan conversion in a colonial context as a phenomenon that served a particular social function for the young Massachusetts Bay Colony. Not only did conversion relations allow church leaders to surveil and influence the beliefs of their congregants, it also functioned as a "proof" of the state of one's soul as either damned or elect. These public conversion recitations had both personal and public dimensions. On a personal level, they expressed an individualized religious experience, an encounter with grace, a recognition of sin, and an answered call to repentance; on a public level, they harmonized the affective experiences and professed beliefs of the convert with the larger congregation (Caldwell 46-47). Conversion, in this instance, performed a disciplinary operation for the New England Puritans as it normalized belief (even as it required the relation of a highly individualized experience) and set the terms under which a convert must visibly display their "sainthood" in

order to establish and retain good-standing membership within not only the church but also the fledgling Puritan theocracy that was founded by church leaders such as John Cotton and John Winthrop.

The personalized dimensions of Puritan conversion relations developed in part as an attempt to "replace what the reformers viewed as 'Popish' mumbling and babbling of set prayers and recitations" (Caldwell 51). The public confessional aspect of Puritan conversions was yet another feature that distinguished Puritan congregations from their Catholic counterparts. While the Catholic convert confessed their sins privately to priestly authority, the Puritan convert confessed publicly before their congregation and "subjected themselves to communal judgment and discipline" (Caldwell 51). As the practice of public conversion relations as a means of congregational membership in New England churches emerged, the confession of sin in addition to a proclamation of faith became significant aspects of the conversion narrative's form in colonial America (Caldwell 65). Although delivering a public conversion relation as a prerequisite for church membership was a practice upheld by some New England congregations, the requirement was far from ubiquitous, Francis J. Bremer argues: "All churches in Massachusetts appear to have restricted membership to those determined to be saints, but there is little proof to support the argument that 'conversion narratives' were universally or even generally required as a tool for assessing sainthood" ("'To Tell What God Hath Done'" 648). For Bremer, an overemphasis on conversion narratives as a requirement for church membership, on one hand, incorrectly implies that Puritans conceived the conversion experience as a singular, dateable event and, on the other hand, overlooks the ongoing process of Puritan spiritual development as frequently conveyed through personal testimony in formal as well as informal communal contexts ("'To Tell What God Hath Done'" 629, 654). In other words, the genre of

the formalized "conversion narrative" is one textual site that is helpful for illuminating the structural elements of spiritual conversion, but it is far from the only place where believers engaged in processes of repentance, or ongoing spiritual transformation. For the Puritans, conversion permeated every dimension of temporal and spiritual life and morally totalized the world as believers attempted to prove to themselves and others that they were God's chosen, the elect.

Because early Puritans in New England predominantly subscribed to a Calvinist theological outlook, they held the doctrine of predestination as one of their sacred tenets. This doctrine asserted that God had preordained those whom he would save, his elect, and those whom he would damn to eternal suffering in hell and further conveyed that "at any time, some living men and women were destined to go to hell and others to heaven, and *nothing a person did could change this decree*" (*Puritanism* 39). Because one's status as elect or damned was unknowable and always uncertain, Puritans relied heavily on the signs of salvation evidenced by a holy life (Morgan 67). Although good works could not ultimately change a person's salvific status according to Calvinist theology, they could offer proof of one's sainthood (Morgan 67). Conversion for Puritans was, in this light, not a singular event but rather a continual and refining proof of a person's elect status that continued throughout the life of a believer as they sounded the depths of their own hearts through self-examination and introspection, experienced the grace of God, and submitted the sanctity of their lives to the scrutiny of their communities. And it was the community of church members that ultimately confirmed or denied the potential convert's conviction that they were one of God's elect (Rogers-Stokes 116). While quantifiable metrics used to verify the veracity and soundness of a person's conversion relation varied among New England congregations, qualitative assessments of a potential member's spiritual experiences and

encounters with God's grace were crucial in establishing "assurance" of someone's elect status (Rogers-Stokes 115). Relying on what some Puritan thinkers called the "connaturality of spirit," or a congregational approval based in "common sense and intuition," a church body, in short, recognized the workings of God's grace in a would-be convert based on mutually held spiritual experiences between themselves and the speaker (Stearns and Brawner 24-25 and "'To Tell What God Hath Done'" 630-631). What is important to underscore is that the value of communal conversion relations, as ongoing processes of spiritual development and maturity, in both formal and informal settings, were "not in the speech nor even the in the speaker but in the joint action of speaker and audience—that is, in the words being spoken, heard, *and believed*" (Caldwell 107). This joint action constitutes the political nature of conversion processes and furthermore underscores their instability and flexibility, which, on one hand, make them particularly adept at evolving to accommodate a range of beliefs and spiritual practices but, on the other hand, particularly vulnerable to instigating conflict and violence should the beliefs and practices they espouse fall outside the parameters prescribed by hegemonic authorities. Shared belief, in this sense, coheres power relations wherein conversion serves an ordering or disordering purpose with the intrinsic function of legitimizing or challenging prevailing power structures.

Conversion, Typology, and Protestant Empire

A "connaturality of spirit" among New England congregants not only informed and affirmed conversion relations and confirmed one's sociopolitical participation in the church of the present, but also connected the individual to an ecclesiastical history and typology that infused believing New Englanders with a sense of spiritual purpose and a consecrated role in a grand scheme of biblical redemption and the Second Coming of Christ. This shared providential

history grounded Puritans in their present and became instrumental in shaping the future of a national imagination suffused with Protestant ethics and metaphysics. Driving Puritans' establishment of a New England theocracy, "a unique system of government in which God would rule directly and immediately over his saints in both church and state," was a conviction of the imminence of the return of Christ, the initiation of the end times, and a fierce battle with the Antichrist, which would signal the end of history as foretold in the Book of Revelation ("Puritan Millennialism" 309). Dissatisfied with the reformation efforts within the Church of England along with its "ecclesiastical disorder and corruption" and ministerial resonances with Catholicism, Puritans looked to the "wilderness" of the New World as a providential site to model a sanctified society, and, in so doing, identified themselves typologically not only with the Exodus story of the Israelites passage from the oppression of Egypt to the freedom of Canaan, the Promised Land, but also prophetically with the Woman in the Wilderness in the Book of Revelation (*Exile and Kingdom* 65). The "wilderness" backdrop of the New World constructed America "as a sacred space in providential history in which the total desacralization of the Old World led inevitably to the ultimate sacralization of the New World in the history of salvation" (*Exile and Kingdom* 10).

In the eyes of the Puritans, the New England wilderness functioned typographically and prophetically in at least two important ways: like in the Exodus narrative, the wilderness was a place for repentance and preparation, a liminal space between bondage and freedom, and like the Woman from the Book of Revelation, the wilderness served as a refuge and hiding place from the Antichrist and the forces of evil, symbolized by a Dragon, in the end times (*Exile and Kingdom* 65). This view of history at once fused a sense of sacred, providential time to secular time by interpreting historical events as signs and signals related to biblical prophecy, justified a

theocratic society to prepare for the return of Christ and the Kingdom of God on earth, and planted seeds for a nascent Protestant proto-nationalism that would later foster such ideas as American exceptionalism and Manifest Destiny (*American Jeremiad* 9, 13-14 and "Typology" 135, 151). The significance of such a historical outlook cannot be overstated in its influence and reach as colonial America gained independence and transitioned into nationhood. In the gradual shift from theocracy to secular republic, processes of spiritual conversion became central to the formation of citizens and the development of a national ethos; they also served to embed believers in historical narrative of providence, so that they not only understood themselves as part of a flourishing spiritual community, but also a consecrated nation-state for God's chosen people ("Typology" 143-144). What the Puritans had in mind was a world-making enterprise when they arrived in New England. The stakes of preserving and perpetuating the ecclesiastical history they saw unfolding was of the utmost importance because the Kingdom of God on earth was hanging in the balance. In this context, conversion operated discursively to cleave believers to not only a particular set of theological doctrines and typological signs, but also to a concept of communal belonging and, eventually, nationalism. Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, evangelical and mainline Protestant clergy would reanimate these millennialist perspectives to contextualize conflicts, galvanize national feelings of patriotism and duty, and kickstart revivalist movements. For Puritans, specifically, and Protestant leaders more broadly, their millennialist outlook oftentimes explicitly included anti-Catholicism as a driving force and cast the papacy as an enemy to be vanquished: "Indeed, most Puritans shared Luther's conviction that the Papacy was the Antichrist predicted in the Book of Revelation, though in the course of the seventeenth century the notion of the Antichrist acquired far wider applications. Antipopery was a staple of

post-Reformation Protestantism, and Puritan anti-popery was particularly intense" (Coffey and Lim 2).

The Glorious Revolution and ascension of William of Orange to the English throne in 1689, for example, marked a watershed moment in Puritan-Protestant providential history (Kidd 3). As French Catholic imperial forces in Canada threatened to encroach on New England territory, Puritans in the region feared the sacred society they had worked tirelessly to construct and preserve was in serious jeopardy should James II's Catholic sympathies persuade him to surrender the colony to France. The installation of William of Orange, a Protestant monarch, to the English throne bolstered providential speculations and millennial hopes that the Kingdom of God was close at hand and would come through English and New English Protestant posterity (Kidd 5). In the decades between the Glorious Revolution and the Great Awakenings of the 1730s and 40s, disparate and sometimes antagonistic Protestant denominations on both sides of the Atlantic began to unite through a common cause: the halting of Catholic imperialism and the dissemination of what Puritan-Protestants understood as false Christianity across the globe (Kidd 2). Aided by a burgeoning trans-Atlantic evangelical print network, Protestants propagated millennialist thinking and consolidated under the aegis of the "Protestant interest," an idea that reconciled denominational differences in order to forge an international coalition of Protestant evangelical conversion efforts (Kidd 2). Fueled by the urgency of a rapidly growing Catholic empire, Protestants began to develop an imperialist endeavor of their own in order to expand the "true" church globally through the conversion of millions from all the nations of the world (Gribben 38, Kidd 1-2).

While this dissertation project focuses primarily on the mechanics of conversion and the early strains of Christian nationalism that took shape in the U.S., I find it important to point out

that the larger backdrop that was unfurling behind the Winthropian "city on a hill" rhetoric was one of Christian dominion, not just of the North American continent, but the world. Winthrop hoped that his fledgling colony would serve as a godly example for the nations. The pneumapolitics that grew out of the Puritan "errand" and came to characterize antebellum culture was not only expressed and exercised domestically, but around the world as well-supported Protestant missionary organizations labored tirelessly to ensure that the dominant religious ethos of the U.S. began to make inroads into the "unchristianized" nations of the world (Conroy-Kutz xiv, 1-2). The racialized and gendered logics of "spirit" that would come to undergird pneumapolitics in the U.S. extended across the world under the banner of "civilization" as missionaries, in particular, globalized the Protestant empire in anxious expectation of the return of Christ, wielding conversion as a colonizing technology for spiritual as well as geopolitical conquest.

Pneumapolitical Secularism

Secularism *is* a narrative of conversion, one that posits itself as the gradual retreat of religious power and effect in public and private life, the "disenchantment" and "rationalization" of the Western world, as Max Weber famously theorized in the early 20th century (*Protestant* 71 and "Science" 12-13). What this long-standing and widely assumed claim obscures, however, is the ways in which religion and secularism function constitutively to construct a discursive network of "good" and "bad" beliefs, revealing that rather than the disenchantment of the world, secularism ushers in reenchantment under the pretense of the superior ethos of Enlightenment logics (Asad 183-184 and Coviello 28-29, 33). By disrupting the narrative that secularism is a rational horizon at which religion's enchantments dissipate, we begin to understand the

phenomenon of secularism as a powerful and complex atmosphere, or "disciplinary air," as John Modern calls it, that authorizes and legitimizes "true religion" while framing particular modes of belief and religious expression that challenge or complicate the premises of liberal modernity as fanatical, primitive, or evil (*Secularism* 6-9 and Coviello 29). Bad beliefs, and the conversions they inspire, in this view of secularism, become the enemy of "true religion," whose tolerated role within a secular regime is to cultivate beliefs and practices that align with liberal modernity, as Peter Coviello, by way of Talal Asad, explains,

> These dreams of emancipation from the fetters of self-imprisoning bad belief give shape to the "secular redemptive politics" that have come to define political liberalism in its global, self-universalizing aspirations. At their core is no refusal of "religion" as such, or spirit, or faith, or any of their proximate formations. There is rather a secular commitment to eradicating bad belief. For bad belief, in the scales of secular appraisal, disorders nothing less than its subjects' access to their full, true humanity. (29)

The recognition that secularity bears a resemblance to the forms of religion and "good beliefs" that it authorizes allows us to relativize and specify formations of the secular as not a unified and singular concept but, rather, a multivalent, multifaceted, and shapeshifting one that transforms, incorporates, and ultimately shapes religion rather than surpasses it. For the purposes of this project, I examine how antebellum Protestant-secularism, grown from a legacy of Puritan theocratic rule, endorses certain forms of spiritual conversion–forming the basis for a theory of pneumapolitics– while dismissing or condemning others in order to regulate citizens not only as biopolitical bodies but as bodies with spirits subject to state and social power.

In laying the groundwork for his astute study of Mormonism in relation to American secularity in the 19th century, Coviello develops a set of axioms about secularism by drawing together a range of scholarly voices who are responsible for theorizing the topic and defining the field of study.[3] In the list, he asserts that secularism has a body and is a biopolitics; building on these assertions, I argue throughout this dissertation project that secularism, particularly the form of Protestant-secularism that emerged during the antebellum period, has a *spirit* and is a *pneumapolitics*, a mode of power that utilizes conversion as a spiritual technology for discipling subjects, organizing them into hierarchies of power, and delineating ideal citizenship in the national imagination (33, 39). Consequently, for my project, scenes of antebellum conversion provide generative sites for exploring the mechanics of pneumapolitics and the conceptual significance of "spirit" to mid-19th-century Americans. Of particular relevance are scenes of spiritual rebellion and resistance through which the frame of antebellum Protestant-secularism comes more clearly into focus. As Protestant-secularism standardized ideals of gender, race, marriage, nation, and self, processes of conversion, both secular and religious, sought to align (and re-align) subjects with these ideals. In order to more fully understand what exactly this Protestant-secularity entailed by the mid-19th century, along with its disciplining directives, I analyze moments of disjuncture, resistance, and transgression that expose the logistical inner workings of an antebellum white Protestant-secular hegemony bent towards cultivating a nation of spiritual citizens and non-citizens alike.

[3] In "What We Talk About When We Talk About Secularism," the introduction to Coviello's *Make Yourselves Gods: The Unfinished Business of American Secularism* (2019), he offers 7 provisional axioms about secularism: 1. Secularism is not hostile to religion as such; 2. Secularism's negative, its enemy, is not religion; it's bad belief; 3. Secularism is a normative project: a discipline; 4. Secularism has a body; 5. Secularism is a biopolitics; 6. "Secularization" is not a fantasy – change in the conditions of belief is real – but the secularization thesis is a distorting, partisan way of telling the story of that change 7. Secularism is a theodicy: the racialized theodicy of hegemonic liberalism (25-47).

In my first chapter, I examine how racialized religious "fanaticism" emerged as an existential threat to not only white Protestant hegemony during the antebellum period, but also to the logics of white republicanism in *The Confessions of Nat Turner* (1831). In my analysis, I frame Nat Turner's rebellion and subsequent confession as a mode of "counterconversion" for how it challenged republican and theological norms by reorienting dominant eschatological thinking to center the liberation of enslaved people rather than white Protestants. Central to understanding the response of white Protestants to Turner's insurrection is the role that domesticity played in facilitating religious as well as republican conversions. By attacking the literal and symbolic locus of nation-state, the white domestic sphere, Turner's rebellion served as an apocalyptic harbinger, inspiring a crisis concerning the spiritual lives and conversion experiences of enslaved people. Tracking a similar connection between domesticity and spiritual conversion, I turn to Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) in chapter two to explore how Puritan theologies of gender became secularized through Enlightenment and republican ideologies and evolving genealogies of belief. Hawthorne's treatment of Anne Hutchinson, the primary figure in the watershed Antinomian Controversy, provides a model for fleshing out his heroine Hester Prynne in *The Scarlet Letter*. By linking these two figures, Hawthorne registers a masculinist fear about the threat of female spiritual power and the specter of a maternal genealogy of belief that engenders "monstrous births," of which Pearl, the offspring of Hester's adulterous affair with Arthur Dimmesdale, becomes the prototype. By attempting to contain both Hester and Pearl within the confines of the domestic in the novel's conclusion, Hawthorne inadvertently opens the possibility for sustaining a maternal genealogy of belief rather than suppressing it. In my final chapter, I trace the development of the biblical and republican figure Brother Jonathan from its Puritan origins as an exemplar of brotherly affection to its fixature as

an antebellum print media mainstay, representing the conflicting republican ideals of brotherly camaraderie and fierce individualism. Latent in this figure, I argue, is a denied homoeroticism that finds expression and articulation, perhaps for the first time, in the mythological figure of Calamos, whom Walt Whitman draws upon as a prototype for envisioning a democracy built upon the spiritual as well as erotic bonds of male friendship in the "Calamus" cluster of the 1860 edition of *Leaves of Grass*.

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In our contemporary political moment in which ideologies of Christian nationalism are moving further and further right at the same time that they are garnering mainstream attention and support, I find the research and writing that I have done on pneumapolitics for this dissertation to be both surprisingly distressing and hopeful. On one hand, I had not expected that a project about the culture and politics of spiritual conversion in the mid-19th century to offer such a salient picture of the conservative cultural currents we now see sweeping through and inundating the institutions of American democracy, plunging the nation headlong into a Christian theocratic nightmare. But, on the other hand, the texts I have selected to analyze for this dissertation remind me that conversions take many forms and that spirit, while it can and does serve the ends of repressive power, is also a deep well and resource for resistance, world-building, and radical egalitarianism. My wish is that in the chapters that follow, the reader will likewise glimpse a similar spark–and hold fast to a spirit of liberation and equality for all should we find ourselves stumbling through dark days ahead. *Dum spiro spero*. While I breathe, I hope.

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The Spirit of Fanaticism, "Counterconversion," and the Apocalypse of White Protestant-Secularism in *The Confessions of Nat Turner* (1831)

"*What do you mean by the Spirit*?" Thomas Gray, a provincial lawyer in Southampton, Virginia, asked Nat Turner in November 1831. The recently apprehended Turner sat across from Gray in the Southampton County jail to recount the events of the slave rebellion that left 55 white men, women, and children of slave-owning families dead. Among Gray's chief reasons for interviewing Turner, in addition to quelling public fears about more outbreaks of insurrectionary violence, was to uncover his motivation for carrying out the bloody rebellion. Emerging reports from the aftermath of the insurrection led by Nat Turner in August 1831 in Southampton County stunned the nineteenth-century U.S. reading public and terrified white southern slave owners. They saw their economic interests, as well as their lives, at stake should Turner's insurrectionist energies spread to other plantation communities across the region. No doubt, the consummation of Turner's insurrection in Virginia almost forty years to the day after the beginning of the Haitian Revolution in 1791 was the realization of white slave owners' greatest fears. Because Turner remained at large for many weeks following his rebellion, reports alleging a larger network of conspiracies by enslaved people circulated widely and stoked public anxiety that more insurrectionary activity might break out at any moment.

Speculative reporting had already connected Turner's motivation to a form of racialized Christian fanaticism. But the details of Turner's specific theology and how it diverged from white mainstream and evangelical Protestant views would not come to light until the publication of Gray's pamphlet *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, which sold over 50,000 copies in just a few months (Turner and Gray 27). The pamphlet's title page purported to provide "an authentic

account of the whole insurrection," the same account that was read before the Southampton court, in fact, and its contents promised to trace the "history of motives" that inspired the violent rebellion. What readers encounter first, however, in the pamphlet's "confession" section is a recounting of Turner's spiritual autobiography and a detailing of the apocalyptic theology that would ultimately inform and animate his insurrection. Turner's "confession," therefore, denoted not only an admittance of crime before a state court, but also a proclamation of faith and a narrative of Christian conversion. In fact, the subtextual scenes surrounding the text, Turner's interview with Gray and the court proceedings at which Turner's confessions were read aloud, very strongly resemble a tradition of formalized public conversion relations dating back to the Puritans that served as evidence of God's grace and election–or not. This similarity highlights the double valence "confession" carries in the pamphlet as both a religious practice related to Protestant conversion and repentance and as a secular practice related to the jurisprudential proceedings of Turner's case.

What is fascinating about Turner's confession (signaled clearly in the singular as a subheading for the reader in the text) is that it begins as a spiritual autobiography, framed by Turner through Gray's request as "a history of motives," which "induced [him] to undertake the late insurrection" but ends with a meticulously detailed account of the persons involved in the insurrection, their movements, and their actions, reading more like a tidily drawn up court document (Turner and Gray 7). *Confessions* fuses these two processes of confession into a singular one, in which the religious conversion results in a criminal confession suitable for a lawful conviction. In other words, Turner's double confession reveals that both his alleged criminal wrongdoings *and* his religious beliefs were submitted before the secular Southampton county court as well as the court of public opinion as evidence in determining his guilt or

innocence. Crucially, what Turner's *Confessions* helps to bring into focus is a secular state imbued with religious principles–a white Protestant ethos, in this instance. Gray's interest in uncovering Turner's motives directly correlates with the state's interest in safeguarding against outbreaks of violence fueled by "fanaticism," which in Turner's case was rooted in an apocalyptic theology hostile to white Protestant interpretations of the biblical book of Revelations. The response to Turner's insurrection (and the theology that inspired it) reveals a state interest in interest in not only validating and perpetuating hegemonic forms of theological orthodoxy (i.e. white mainline and evangelical Protestantism) to maintain social, cultural, and political order, but also the state's vested interest in directing and shaping the spiritual lives of citizens and non-citizens alike to maintain hierarchies of power essential to preserving the nation's posterity, namely in and through the domestic sphere. I call this system of management pneumapolitics, or the politics of spirit. As both aspect of and analog to a Foucauldian biopolitics, which links disciplinary power over individual bodies with a concept of population (i.e. "man-as-species") in order to facilitate and manage life, pneumapolitics emerged as a form of power meant to harmonize the spirit of the individual with religious and republican ideals of the nation by regulating and directing proper belief in a process of ongoing spiritual conversion, originating in domestic and religious institutions, but finding expression in legal and judicial proceedings, as was the case with Turner (Foucault 139-141).

Because Turner's narrative of conversion (what I later formulate as "counterconversion") and apocalyptic theology adamantly resist the orderings and orthodoxy of white Protestantism through violence committed against literal and abstract white families, his *Confessions* is uniquely positioned to expose the structures of pneumapolitical power that operated to (re)produce and sustain white Protestant-republicanism (i.e. antebellum secularity).

In fact, Eric Sundquist, in his groundbreaking study of *Confessions*, posits that "it was the very ascent of secularism itself that allowed Turner to be cast in the role of fanatic" (77). In framing Turner's rebellion in terms of fanaticism, Gray, along with a panoply of other critics and commentators of the insurrection, explicitly and implicitly affirmed a commitment to defending and promoting particular modes of religious belief that preserved and sustained a state-national form predicated on the subjugation and subordination of non-white people to white religious, political, and social authority while suppressing and dismissing other beliefs that challenged or threatened that authority.

Interrogating Turner's Spirit

"*What do you mean by the Spirit?*" is the first of three explicit instances in which Gray's voice interjects in the confession section of the pamphlet to qualify for his readers Turner's beliefs and more fully illuminate what motivated the insurrection (7). This question comes at a moment when Turner is recounting for Gray his first revelation, which most likely occurred in the spring of 1822 (Allmendinger 14). While Turner was praying at his plough, "the spirit spoke to [him]," telling him, "'Seek ye the kingdom of Heaven and all things shall be added unto you'" (9). The words spoken by the Spirit are a paraphrase of Jesus Christ's from the gospels of Mathew and Luke.[4] In the previous sentence, Turner references the same biblical verses, explaining to Gray that they had been passages of particular interest to him during the time he arrived on Samuel Turner's plantation sometime in 1821 (Allmendinger 14). Turner's successive references to the words spoken by "the Spirit" prompts Gray's interruption. Gray, likely

[4] "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33, KJV) and "But rather seek ye the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Luke 12:31, KJV).

recognizing Turner's biblical paraphrase, interjects in order to clarify Turner's allusion to spirit. Turner's reply, "The Spirit that spoke to the prophets in former days," left little doubt that the Spirit with whom Turner communed was the Holy Spirit, the active entity of the Christian Trinity responsible for delivering God's revelations and enacting his will on Earth (9). He then tells Gray that he experienced a similar revelation again two years later (9). This second visitation confirmed to him the "impression that [he] was ordained for some great purpose in the hands of the Almighty" (9). Though not explicitly named as such, these early encounters mark the origin of a sequence of revelations that would eventually culminate in full-fledged insurrection. And so, Gray's question, as it probes the identity of the Spirit that Turner references, underscores and, perhaps defines, this crucial revelatory moment (therefore, the subsequent insurrection) in spiritual terms. By asking the question, Gray not only attempts to orient his readers in Turner's spiritual world, but also implicitly asks Turner to elucidate something of his own spirit and motives, his interiority and beliefs. That is, Gray's question, in some sense, seeks to correlate the Spirit of Turner's revelations with Turner's own spirit, to trace the evolution of his motives, to reveal the secrets of his inner life through the injunctions of his divine inspiration.

More broadly, it is Gray's uncertainty regarding Turner's spirit allusion that animates a key semantic problem in the antebellum U.S.: like a flash, Gray's question captures the capaciousness, versatility, and fugitivity of the term and registers the possibility of spirit's competing conceptions. Gray's inquiry suggests that spirit could (and, in fact, did) signify differently according to a person's social, political, and religious location. And, indeed, the antebellum U.S. witnessed a veritable explosion of distinct (and oftentimes antagonistic) spiritual practices and cultures, what Charles Taylor calls the "nova effect" or that the emergence of an

exclusive secular humanism during the Enlightenment did not diminish the influence of religion but rather fractured and multiplied it.[5] By 1831, burgeoning movements had transformed, energized, and expanded the spiritual and religious landscape of the antebellum U.S., making Gray's question to Turner both a plausible and necessary one. If, as Taylor suggests, the emergence of an exclusive secular humanism enabled the proliferation of religious and spiritual cultures in the nineteenth century, then antebellum secularity also determined the extent to which this array of spiritual and religious cultures could participate in and contribute to the development of a national identity by evaluating and standardizing what did and did not count as "true religion." Those religious and spiritual cultures deemed too excessive or deviant threatened not only to destabilize hegemonic white Protestant orthodoxy but also the security of the nation-state itself and were figured discursively most often in terms of "fanaticism" and "enthusiasm" (Kilgore 14). Taking place in the atmosphere of the spiritual outpourings of the First and Second Great Awakenings, Turner's insurrection legitimatized white Protestant concerns about the risks of unchecked heterodoxy and demonstrated the violent possibilities of "fanaticism" at a moment when many antebellum theologians and clergy were embroiled in theologically complicated, and

[5] Taylor's conception of the nova effect follows from his articulation of Western secularity as a shift from a society in which the possibility of disbelief in the Christian God (because belief in this God encompassed all of reality) was inconceivable to a society in which belief in God was "no longer axiomatic" (3). The possibility of unbelief became conceivable, according to Taylor, in the 18th-century Enlightenment period with the emergence of "an exclusive humanist alternative to Christian faith" that created an opposing pole to a totalizing Christianity (299). What also emerged out of the development of an exclusive humanism was a "buffered self," which "closed the porous boundary between inside (thought) and outside (nature, the physical)" and became invulnerable to "a world of spirits and forces which cross the boundary of the mind" (300). Taylor goes on to explain that the buffered self, although embracing an ethic of freedom, nonetheless mourns, in some sense, the loss of meaning that faith in a transcendent God afforded (302). Torn between the two poles of belief (Christian faith) and unbelief (exclusive humanism), the buffered self experiences "a wide sense of malaise at the disenchanted world" and the "cross pressure" of the two poles resulting in the generation of "third ways," which began to proliferate during the 19th century, "a period in which the gamut of alternatives of this range [between Christian faith and exclusive humanism] becomes wider and richer" (302, 322). For Taylor, secularity is the condition that enabled the proliferation of alternative forms of belief and unbelief.

oftentimes tediously convoluted, debates determining the Holy Spirit's role in influencing and animating the charismatic expressions of emotional and physical excesses that often characterized the mass conversions of popular revivalist movements. While some like Charles Grandison Finney, the famed Presbyterian revivalist minister, ardently defended the legitimacy of revivalism, other more conservative Reformed theologians and ministers dismissed these religious spectacles as nothing more than charlatanism (Bratt 70, 102). What these debates attempted to clarify, perhaps most saliently, was a normative Protestant spiritual ethic that would, on one hand, serve to standardize and legitimize conversion experiences and, on the other hand, determine which beliefs and practices did and did not count as "true religion."

Gray's question concerning the "Spirit" and Turner's reply furthermore serve to support Gray's framing comments in his prefatory note in the pamphlet, "To the Public," in which he attributes Turner's motives to the "offspring of gloomy fanaticism" (5). Although Gray primes his contemporary readers, particularly those sympathetic to the institution of chattel slavery, to interpret Turner's motives as issuing from a distorted form of Christianity, it takes no stretch of the imagination to understand why Turner's reply would have shocked and startled nineteenth-century white readers. After all, not only does he imply early on in his narrative that the Christian God had been preparing him for nearly a decade to massacre slave-owning white citizens, but he also tacitly positions himself as a prophet and later a Christ figure, groomed from his youth, imbued with divine authority, to deliver the message that "the kingdom of Heaven" would emphatically *not* belong to those who felt themselves morally justified in maintaining and perpetuating slavery. Turner's scriptural references and his claims of direct access to the Spirit of God situate him within a Christian prophetic and apocalyptic tradition that would have seemed familiar to many of his Protestant readers; however, Turner's theological praxis, his

interpretation and extrapolation of scripture, emerge in his confession as threatening precedents with the power to disturb and overthrow the hegemonic structures of the antebellum U.S. As it traces his motives, *Confessions* narrates also his conversion experience, which serves to link his text to a long history of Protestant conversion relations dating back to the Puritans at the same time that it alienates him from that same tradition due to his theological heterodoxy derived from his individualized hermeneutical practice.

Turner's Theology and Counterconversion

It is clear from Turner's account that he was familiar with the King James Bible because a number of scriptural fragments and paraphrases from the New and Old Testaments appear scattered throughout his confession; however, as Christopher Tomlins notes, Turner draws special inspiration from Revelation and the gospels, particularly Luke (53). Long before the outbreak of insurrectionary violence in August 1831, the seeds of Turner's rebellion were planted quietly as he listened to scriptural commentary in small religious meetings and reflected on biblical passages he had heard and read (Turner and Gray 9). From Turner's account of his young adulthood, we learn that he "avoided mixing in society, and wrapped [himself] in mystery, devoting [his] time to fasting and prayer" so that he might not disappoint those who believed him to be a prophet (9). From his own description, Turner's life took on an almost ascetic quality. Although his religious identity emerged from the spiritual influences of his parents and grandmother, "who was very religious," Turner's conversion and its attendant theology seem to have developed for the most part in moments of private reflection and contemplation (Turner and Gray 7-9).

Joseph Drexler-Dreis and Karl Lampley both recognize the elements of Christian conversion in Turner's *Confessions*. Drexler-Dreis sees Turner's rebellion as "the culmination of a process of conversion" that was primarily the result of "Turner reading himself into scripture" (232, 236). Similarly, Lampley understands Turner's rebellion as a form of "counterviolence" necessitated by the pervasive violence of white superiority that inhabited "an entire social, political, and economic system" (9). He explains that "Turner viewed his violence as similar to the prophetic violence of Moses inflicting plagues against Egypt to free the Hebrew people from slavery" (Lampley 10). As Turner's conversion "challenged the assumptions and understandings of conservative Evangelical white slaveholding religion," it also disrupted and reoriented white Protestant typology that figured Puritans settlers as God's chosen people entering the Promised Land in the "wilderness" of colonial America in order to escape religious persecution (Lampley 3). As Turner's exegetical shifts generate a biblical typology that centers the experiences of black people enslaved in the U.S., it also formulates a new millennialist and apocalyptic outlook. Whereas white Protestants viewed Catholicism as the ultimate enemy of true Christianity, Turner recalibrates the apocalyptic struggle that precedes the advent of the Kingdom of God as a conflict between white, slave-owning Christians and black, enslaved Christians.

Turner first began to formulate this apocalyptic struggle sometime in late 1823 or early 1824 when he fled Samuel Turner's farm (which recently had passed to the latter's widow, Elizabeth) to the woods for a thirty-day period before the Spirit appeared to him, instructing him to return (Allmendinger 17). Shortly thereafter, he had a vision of "white spirits and black spirits engaged in battle, and the sun was darkened—the thunder rolled in the Heavens, and blood flowed in streams" (Turner and Gray 10). Scholars tend to read this passage as anticipating an explicitly racialized struggle, and it is likely that many readers in Turner's time would have

similarly interpreted the clash of black and white spirits as envisioning an imminent racial conflict. Tomlins, however, suggests that Turner's reference here is more likely an allusion to the battle between good and evil, Christ and Satan, as portrayed in Revelations (58). This double valence of warring racialized and moralized spirits makes Turner's vision a powerfully salient image of the apocalypse. On May 12th, 1828, the spirit appeared to Turner again, further affirming the apocalyptic nature of his calling by saying, "[T]he Serpent was loosened, and Christ had laid down the yoke he had borne for the sins of men, and that [he] should take it on and fight against the Serpent, for the time was fast approaching when the first should be last and the last should be first" (11). Lampley notes that Turner's reference to Matthew 20:16 reveals the theological grounds for his rebellion.[6] By making the first last and last first, Turner's insurrection sought to bring about an end to white superiority and the enslavement of black people through an apocalyptic struggle. Ultimately, Turner's rebellion, as Lampley notes, sought to hasten the Kingdom of God on earth through the liberation of the enslaved and the destruction of the Serpent, which in dominant Christian tradition refers most often to Satan or the anti-Christ, but here represents the evils of slavery and white superiority (4). Additionally, in his recollection of his 1828 vision above, Turner positions himself not only as a prophet figure, as he did previously in his confession, but also as a savior figure, as a Christ. As Tomlins notes, "Turner creates himself as the antitype of the Christ of the New Testament, as the materialization in human form of the Christ whose return in a postmillennial eschatology coincides with the Last Judgment" (76). By centering himself as both prophet and Christ, Turner reorients the eschatological schematic upon which the U.S. understood itself in both secular and religious terms, as a democratic ideal, champion of liberty, a "city on a hill." Turner's insurrection, a physical as

[6] "So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen" (Matthew 20:16, KJV).

much as a theological rebellion, reorganizes and reroutes the vectors of belief that underpin white Protestantism and sustain white superiority within Christianity in the U.S. into an alternative process of conversion that centers the experiences of enslaved people and insists on a liberatory theology. While Turner's insurrection proved to be an exceptional outcome of a heterodox theology, Albert J. Raboteau explains that many enslaved Christians who were distrustful of white interpretations of scriptures nonetheless adopted the "symbols, myths, and values of Judeo-Christian tradition," developed biblical interpretations in private religious gatherings based on their own experiences, and espoused "a doctrine of enthusiasm which stressed direct inspiration from God rather than the revelation contained in the pages of the Bible" (213, 239, 242). In that vein, for Turner and the Spirit with whom he communed, redemption and abolition of the enslaved formed the center of a theology that, on one hand, revealed the hypocritical nature of white Protestantism and, on the other hand, exposed the treasured ideal of American liberty as nothing more than a white supremacist fantasy constructed over against slavery.

Because Turner's beliefs modify and modulate the typological and prophetic structures of white Protestantism and promote "counterviolence" against the oppression of white supremacy, I argue that Turner's spiritual transformation in *Confessions* should be understood as a form of "counterconversion," since his conversion experience both challenges hegemonic Protestantism, namely its commitments to white superiority, and forges an alternative millennialist vision that recasts the apocalyptic drama preceding the advent of God's kingdom on earth as a struggle between the enslaved and their white oppressors, a conflict that threatened to undermine the theological and racial logics that formed the foundations of the American nation-state. In other words, Turner's counterconversion resists the ordering and disciplinary strategies of

pneumapolitics by fashioning heterodox beliefs *from* and *against* hegemonic Protestantism in order to transform that tradition for the purposes of liberation and spiritual autonomy. If conversion's primary function within a pneumapolitical regime is inculcating and normalizing "good belief" for the perpetuity of the republic, then counterconversion inherently involves the espousal of "bad beliefs" because its theological interventions reimagine not only the dominant religious tradition, but also the basis of virtuous citizenship (and who is included in that citizenry) and prosperous nationhood. Turner's theological departures from white mainline Protestant and evangelical understandings of the Bible are what enable Gray to frame Turner's narrative and motivations in terms of fanaticism, or a form of what Peter Coviello by way of Talal Asad calls "bad belief." Coviello explains that secularism's enemy is not religion *per se*, but rather forms of belief that oppose "the conventions of liberal polity" and "good religion," which "elevates us in virtue, teaches us compassion and forbearance, adheres us to senses of awe and wonder before the universe, organizes our charitable impulses, directs our ethical conflicts, nourishes our spirits" (29). In other words, "bad beliefs" are those that disrupt or disturb hegemonic systems of belief that are generally considered to be spiritually edifying and beneficial for the progress, improvement, and ordering of society. Conversely, "good religion" and its attendant "good belief" buttress and sustain formations of secularity rather than oppose them.

Turner's Rebellion and the Problem of "Bad Religion"

It was not until Gray's pamphlet stabilized the narrative of the Southampton rebellion in the "public mind" and countered "a thousand idle, exaggerated and mischievous reports," which had misrepresented Turner's motives, that the public readership gained any clarity on Tuner's

theological beliefs (7). One such report that Gray sought to correct was Samuel Warner's pamphlet "The Authentic and impartial narrative of the tragical scene which was witness in Southampton County (Virginia) on Monday the 22nd of August last," published on October 21, 1831, about a week after Turner's capture and about twenty days before Gray published *Confessions* on November 10th. Unlike Gray's account, Warner frames the insurrection as an "imitation of the example set by [Turner's] brethren at San Domingo," referring to the successful slave rebellion led by Toussaint L'Ouverture in Haiti a few decades earlier. The proximity of the Haitian Revolution to the U.S. South rattled proslavery proponents and increased their anxieties that wide scale rebellion might also break out across the region (Zuckerman 182). And indeed, between the overthrow of colonial power in Haiti and Turner's rebellion in 1831, at least three insurrectionary attempts had been uncovered and suppressed in U.S. South: Gabriel Prosser's conspiracy to capture Richmond, Virginia, in 1800; the largest in U.S. history, led by Charles Deslondes, involving between 300 to 500 enslaved people in Louisiana in 1811; and Denmark Vesey's attempt to attack and seize Charleston's arsenal in 1822. Although largest in scope, the 1811 rebellion in Louisiana did not achieve the same notoriety as Gabriel Prosser and Denmark Vesey's insurrection attempts, which "occurred in the oldest and most stable slaveholding regions" and "stunned the whole South" (Genovese 588). Like Turner's, both Prosser and Vesey's insurrection plots involved some religious dimensions, but neither assumed the same "messianic and apocalyptic stance" that Turner's did, nor did they ultimately precipitate violent bloodshed of the same magnitude (Genovese 589). In addition to exacerbating collective white fears about the possibility of widespread and concerted slave-rebellion plots, Gray's and Warner's accounts circulated and intensified iconographies of slave violence and connected

Turner's rebellion specifically to a racialized and fanatical form of Christianity that posed an imminent threat to the white family and by extension, the republic itself.

One of the most shocking aspects of Turner's rebellion for white readers was the indiscriminate nature of the killings of Southampton white citizens. Both Warner and Gray bear this out in their respective pamphlets. "No cry for mercy penetrated their flinty bosoms […] Men, women, and children from hoary age to helpless infancy were involved in the same cruel fate. Never did a band of savages do their work of death more unsparingly," wrote Gray in his prefatory note to the public, preceding Turner's confession (5). Similarly, Warner prefaces a list naming the white victims of the insurrection by writing, "Their mangled remains presented a spectacle of horror the like of which we hope our countrymen will never again be called upon to witness! a spectacle from which the mind must shrink with horror, when it contemplates whole families murdered without regard to age or sex, and weltering their gore!" ("Impartial and Authentic"). "They spared none," he reiterates later in the pamphlet, reminding readers that "the hoary head, the lovely virgin, [and] the sleeping infant in the cradle" all met the same end (Warner). In some ways, Warner's retelling, although less precise because it includes far fewer proper names and exaggerates the number of insurrectionists involved, paints a more graphic picture of the rebellion than Gray's. Mr. John Williams heard the "screeches of [his] unfortunate family," finding his son beheaded and one of his daughters crammed into a fireplace (Warner). Insurrectionists with "their hands and arms bathed to their elbows with the blood of the unfortunate victims" cut and mangled white bodies as they moved menacingly through quiet homes in the middle of the night (Warner). In one encounter described by Warner, a group of insurrectionists murdered Mrs. Waller, a visiting female companion, and ten children. An alleged eyewitness to the scene wrote in a letter to Warner, "[H]ere […] was a spectacle of horror to

behold, beyond the power of human conception! in one corner of the room lay the mangled corpse of the poor mother, and from whose wounds the blood had ceased to flow! and in another the lifeless bodies of lovely children, who but a few hours previous were in the full enjoyment of blooming health" (Warner). A woodcut with the title "Horrid Massacre in Virginia" (Figure 1) portraying scenes of black insurrectionists violently attacking white men, women, and children with axes and swords on the pamphlet's title page serves to amplify these harrowing encounters.

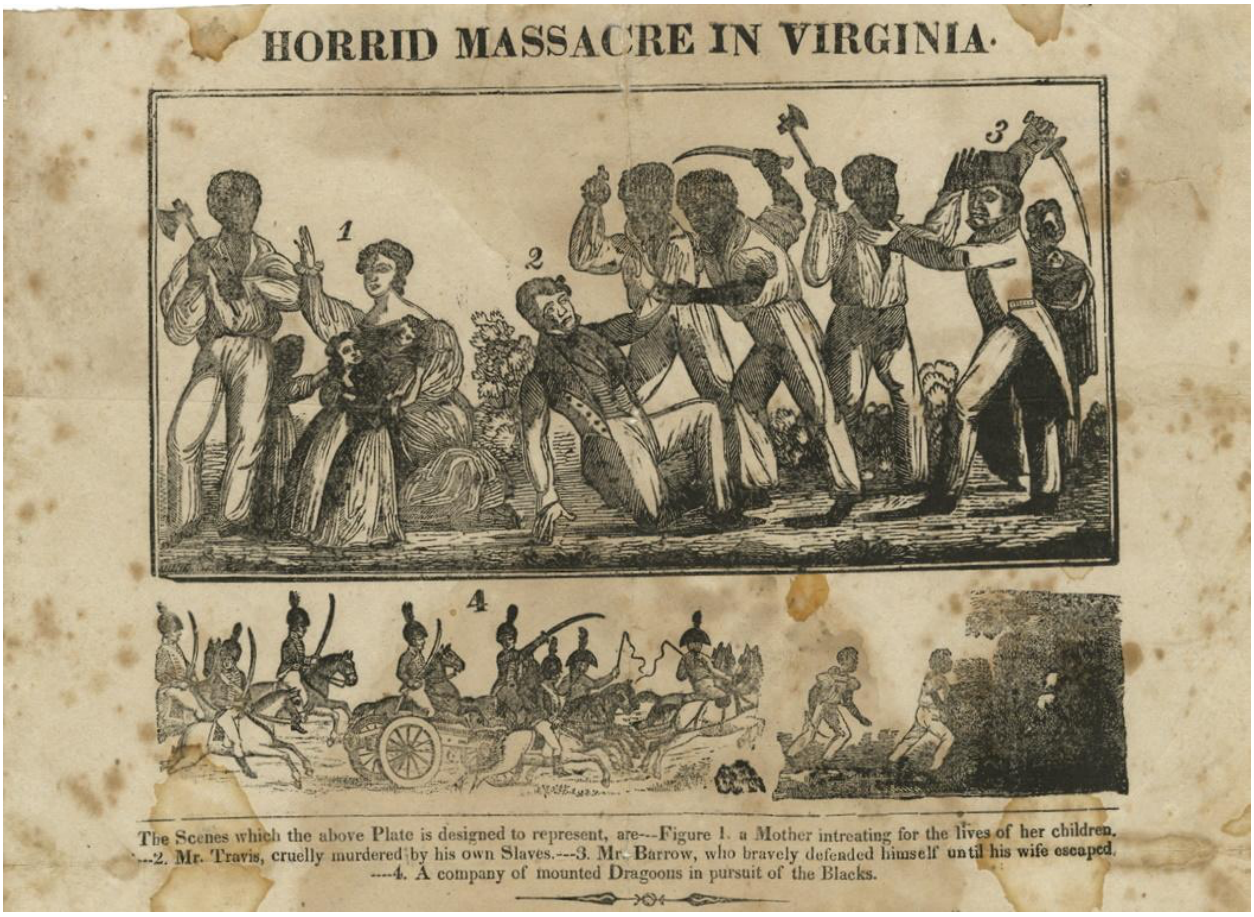

Figure 1: "Horrid Massacre in Virginia": The front piece to Samuel Warner's pamphlet, "Impartial and authentic narrative of the tragical scene," recounting Turner's insurrection. Captions: 1. "a Mother intreating for the lives of her children." 2. Mr. Travis, cruelly murdered by his own Slaves." 3. Mr. Barrow, who bravely defended himself until his wife escaped." 4. "A comp. of Dragoons in pursuit of the Blacks."

The horrific descriptions and images of slave violence did more than simply shock white readers; they also underscored the fact that insurrectionary plots by enslaved people could be successfully orchestrated and executed (to an extent) in the U.S. without the foreknowledge of white authorities. This fact, on one hand, called into question the effectiveness of surveillance and control methods used to manage enslaved populations on plantations and it exploded, on the other hand, myths of the benevolently reciprocal bond between the planter-patriarch and the docile slave (Raboteau 165). It was the shattered myth of the reciprocal bond between loyal slaves and benevolent masters that Gray evokes in his pamphlet: "No acts of remembered kindness made the least impression upon these remorseless murderers" (5). Turner himself in Gray's pamphlet remarks that Mr. Travis, who was Turner's master at the time of the insurrection, was a "kind master" who "placed the greatest confidence in [him]," further explaining that he "had no cause to complain of [Mr. Travis'] treatment of [him]" (11-12). The presiding judge in Turner's trial references this moment during his sentencing, chastising Turner for the murder of his master, who had been, he said, "too indulgent" (21). It was Turner's apparent dissimulation and duplicitousness towards his benevolent master, his "long deliberation, and a settled purpose of mind" to carry out violent insurrection that both Gray and the judge emphasize in order to underscore the cunning nature of Turner's fanaticism: his "calm, deliberate composure" while describing the murders of Southampton citizens causes Gray's "blood to curdle in [his] veins" (19).

Other reports too chastised Turner's apparent subterfuge: In an August 29th 1831 letter, the editor of Richmond's *Whig and Commercial Journal* characterizes Turner insidiously as a "ringleader, who calls himself General, pretends to be a Baptist Preacher—a great enthusiast—declares to his comrades, that he is commissioned by Jesus Christ, and proceeds under his

inspired directions," and the *Richmond Complier* published a letter on September 3rd 1831 that accused Turner of playing on the "superstitious hope and fears of others" to carry out the insurrection (Tragle 45, 60). Similarly, Warner's pamphlet suggests that Turner's preacher persona provided an artful smoke screen to conceal his insurrectionary machinations. In Warner's assessment,

> [Turner] assumed the character of a Preacher, and as such was sometimes permitted to visit and associate himself with many of the Plantation Negroes, for the purpose (as by him was artfully represented) of christianizing and to teach them the propriety of their remaining faithful and obedient to their masters; but in reality, to persuade and to prepare them in the most sly and artful manner to become the instruments of slaughter. ("Impartial and Authentic")

As Warner equates the proper Christian conversion of enslaved people with faithful obedience to masters, he also implicitly frames Turner's preaching as espousing "bad belief," which undermines what in Warner's mind constitutes the primary purpose of Christianity in the lives of enslaved people: to reinforce their servility. An anonymous contributor to *The Richmond Enquirer* shares a similar sentiment, prefiguring Warner's criticism of Turner's "sly and artful manner," in an article entitled "The Banditti": "The case of Nat Turner warns us. No black man ought to be permitted to turn a Preacher through the country. The law must be enforced or the tragedy of Southampton appeals to us in vain" (Tragle 45). While Warner's concerns focus more on the content of Turner's preaching, and not necessarily on the preaching itself, the anonymous contributor takes a more extreme stance by suggesting that preaching by not only enslaved black men, but also black men generally, should not be permitted because each could potentially spark another insurrection. In Warner's commentary as in Gray's, Turner's apparent duplicity emerges

as a grave concern, which made the prospect of insurrection all the more disturbing for white citizens because it meant that violence could break out anywhere and at any time without warning.

Turner's rebellion and the details of his spiritual life as outlined in his confession bring the threat of his counterconversion to the forefront of the national imagination and represent the limits of pneumapolitical power in successfully surveilling and disciplining spiritual subjects into hierarchies of authority. Furthermore, as Turner's critics attempted to stabilize pneumapolitical power by clarifying the contours of Turner's purported fanaticism, they also demonstrated the ways in which hegemonic religious forces of white Protestantism conspired to produce and differentiate racialized spirits whose respective "proper" conversions functioned to reinforce discursive structures of pneumapolitics, which inform not only particular theological outlooks but certain civic and domestic ideologies as well. In other words, Turner's counterconversion represented a direct affront to the idea of the dutiful and obedient Christian slave whose proper conversion was meant to subordinate him not only physically, but spiritually, to white authority, the arbiter of "good belief."

In the wake of Turner's rebellion, proslavery advocates doubled down on their defenses of slavery and state legislatures across the U.S South passed new laws that restricted the movement, literacy, and religious assembly of enslaved people (May 237). Growing concerns, however, about the viability of slavery and the looming threat of more insurrectionary violence in Virginia sparked fierce debate in the state's 1832 General Assembly. James McDowell argued before the House of Delegates that although the rebellion in Southampton may have ultimately proven to be an isolated event, it continued to reverberate with far-reaching and long-lasting consequences for the state, nation, and white families. Combating the notion of one report that

labeled Turner's insurrection as a "petty affair," McDowell describes the harrowing psychological and emotional confusion and panic the insurrection wrought in the lives of white Virginians, with especial attention to the disruption of domestic life: Women and children were driven from their homes without shelter so that they might avoid a "domestic assassin"; peaceful townships were converted to military encampments; a sense of security was banished from "everyman's dwelling"; "every bosom" was penetrated with "fear or suspicion"; "the husband would look to his weapon and the mother would shudder and weep upon the cradle" ("Speech by James McDowell"). McDowell, desperate to convince the House of Delegates to consider the implications of Turner's insurrection more seriously, ascribed the sustained anxiety of white families to the specter of another Nat Turner:

> Was it the fear of Nat Turner and his deluded and drunken handful of followers which produced or could produce such effects? Was it this that induced distant counties where the very name of Southampton was strange, to arm and equip for a struggle? No sir, it was the suspicion eternally attached to the slave himself, the suspicion that a Nat Turner might be in every family, that the same bloody deed could be acted over at any time and in any place, that the materials for it were spread through the land and always ready for a like explosion. Nothing but the force of this withering apprehension, nothing but the paralyzing and deadening weight with which it falls upon and prostrates the heart of every man who has helpless dependents to protect, nothing but this could have thrown a brave people into consternation, or could have made any portion of this powerful Commonwealth, for a single instant, to have quailed or trembled. ("Speech by James McDowell")

As many texts of the same period did, McDowell draws together in his speech the crucial connection he sees between the stability of the domestic sphere and the security of the state. His warning that "a Nat Turner might exist in every family" suggests that as long as slavery persists in Virginia, the potential for another horrific and unforeseen uprising remains. This possibility, McDowell explains, is "paralyzing and deadening" the hearts of "everyman who has helpless dependents to protect," which in turn weakens the integrity and vitality of "this powerful Commonwealth." What McDowell suggests is that while white citizens remain anxiously preoccupied with the potential outbreak of another bloody insurrection like Turner's, they will not be able to maintain stable domestic environments for their families, which will eventually affect the overall functioning of the state. However, what McDowell leaves unspoken, but nonetheless retains latent power in his comments, is a concern Warner shared about Turner converting enslaved people to a form of Christianity that theologically sanctioned the violent overthrow of a system that held them in bondage. McDowell makes it clear that it is not Nat Turner himself *per se* that white Virginians feared (for he had been sentenced and executed months prior), but instead *a* Nat Turner. The indefinite article McDowell employs transforms Turner into a type, an ideal, one that carried with it threatening ideological and theological energies he feared might "spread through the land," igniting "a like explosion." Because Turner had been overtly characterized by Gray and others as a religious zealot and "a complete fanatic" motivated by outlandish visions and an unorthodox Christian theology, anxieties about another Nat Turner carried with them concerns about the religious and spiritual lives of enslaved people, and particularly the trajectory of their conversions. What seems to emerge then from McDowell's address is that the crisis of suspicion and uncertainty that plagued white Virginian households and "distant counties" in the wake of Turner's insurrection was necessarily, albeit

implicitly, a crisis of the unchecked and unverifiable conversions of enslaved people. More than an attack on the institution of chattel slavery, the violence associated with Turner's counterconversion and rebellion represented an assault on the symbolic and literal locus of American national identity: the white family.

Domestic Republicanism, the Meaning of Turner's Rebellion, and the End of White Protestant-Secularism

Since the Revolutionary era, the domestic sphere increasingly played an integral role in maintaining a robust and thriving public, political sphere. Mediating the threshold between private-domestic and public-political life was the figure of the Republican Mother, who, as Linda Kerber explains, was a mother with a "political purpose," namely "to encourage in her sons civic interest and participation" and "to educate her children and guide them in the paths of morality and virtue" (238). As the "responsibility for maintaining public virtue was channeled into domestic life," an ever more reciprocal bond between the welfare of the family and the vitality of the nation emerged, to the extent that the United States constituted "much of its political identity through the language of heterosexual and patriarchal family relations" (Kerber 287, Samuels 19). In the antebellum familial scheme, the mother's role was to impart religious and republican instruction most often figured as *virtue* to her children. François Furstenberg notes that in the Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary eras virtue connoted more than political integrity, "resistance to corruption, landed independence, disinterestedness"; it also represented "the will to resist tyranny" and was at least one important conceptual field that allowed white Americans to define their freedom in relationship to the bondage of enslaved people (1299, 1302). In other words, the idea of American virtue assumed that enslaved people were unworthy of their

freedom because they were unwilling to resist oppression and die for their manumission, while white Americans, who had challenged and defeated a tyrant king, were deserving of their freedom because they had risked their lives to defeat their foe in the Revolutionary War.[7] Relatedly, the discourse of virtue also tended to resonate with Protestantism by signifying both a resistance to the "slavery" of popish tyranny and the relative agency within a Calvinist scheme of salvation to resist the corrupting influences of sin (Furstenberg 1299). Virtue, then, became at least one important concept that fused religious and secular, Protestant and republican, ideals into a singular racialized framework. This fusion can also be expressed in what Tracy Fessenden calls a "nonspecific Protestantism," which came to pervasively and invisibly dominant "nearly all aspects of American life" by "exceeding the domains we conventionally figure as religious" (61). John Modern, building on Fessenden's concept of nonspecific Protestantism, argues that it was through the consolidation of compatible Protestant ethics and beliefs from a range of disparate religious subcultures that generated a metaphysics of secularism in which "the religiosity of Protestantism and the secularity of the democratic nation state" imbricated to form an unmarked and unacknowledged set of republican ideals (20). Concepts of republican virtue were further entrenched and promulgated through the systematicity of evangelical media

[7] Furstenberg notes how the logic of virtuous resistance to tyranny begins to break down for white proponents of slavery that held the belief that enslaved people were incapable of securing their own freedom. Refusing to acknowledge the agency of enslaved people, white commentators attributed instances of rebellions and resistance to outside forces: "Of course, dramatic, revolutionary slave resistance did occur, often explicitly modeled on the American Revolution, and it forced whites to confront the problem for slave resistance more directly. But just as with more mundane forms of defiance, many white commentators denied that escape and even rebellion constituted *true* resistance to slavery. If the specific strategies varied, all united in denying that slaves were agents of resistance. John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger have noted as much in their study of slave runaways, who were often described as kidnapped, lured away, or otherwise manipulated by outside forces. Similar strategies inevitably attributed slave insurrection to outside influences: French revolutionaries, northern abolitionists, free blacks, providential retribution, anyone but slaves themselves. The denial of slaves' agency extended even to the most dramatic instance of slave resistance in the Atlantic world: the Haitian revolution of the 1790s" (1317).

circulation in the form of pamphlets and tracts, which, on one hand, standardized republican virtue, and, on the other hand, created, in Modern's estimation, an "atmosphere of secularism," which sustained "feelings, attitudes, and practices" of true religion and coordinated "attitudes and behaviors with principles essential to the maintenance of civil society" (113). It was within and through this atmospheric secularism that mothers distilled and imparted republican virtue to their children in preparation for domestic, spiritual, and civic life, and in doing so the domestic domain became the crucible of American republicanism in which co-constitutive religious and secular ideals melded into a comprehensive moral system. In essence, the concept of the Republican Mother served not only to imbue the domestic realm with political importance and purpose, but it also sought to privatize and administer children's conversion experiences in order to instill and ensure a Protestant ethos in *future* citizens, thereby securing the perpetuity of a white Christian republic.

The enshrinement of conversion within an ideology of proper domesticity, however, did not signal the retreat of conversion experiences from public view. For example, the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries witnessed mass conversions during the emotionally charged revivals of the First and Second Great Awakenings. Instead, conversion's domestic embeddedness reveals that the imperative to convert (or to appear as converted) to a particular set of Protestant-republican beliefs permeated both private and public life, thickening the atmosphere of secularism by entrenching the spiritual discipline of children in the domestic realm in order to coordinate a functional ideological and theological flow between home and nation. Because the white domestic sphere played such a vital role in (re)producing the spiritual mechanics and hierarchies of the nation through conversion and served as the locus of pneumapolitical power vested in the figure of the Republican Mother, Turner's rebellion not only

threatened to spark waves of insurrectionary violence that could overthrow the institution of chattel slavery itself, but it also struck symbolically and literally at the beating heart of the republic by wielding "bad religion" against the sacred bastions of "good religion."

More than a crisis of bad beliefs, Turner's apocalypticism attempted to supersede the nation itself by ushering in the Kingdom of God. Kevin Pelletier in his study of "apocalyptic sentimentalism" posits that the early decades of the nineteenth century were completely saturated with apocalyptic discourse and media, appearing even in popular forms such as poetry, paintings, novels, songs, and broadsides (Pelletier 12). Across the denominational spectrum of white Protestantism, the apocalypse represents "a religious master narrative that organizes the dramatic unfolding and ultimate fulfillment of providential history" (Pelletier 21). Pelletier goes on to assert that "the second coming of Christ was an ordained and highly climatic event for this privileged redeemer nation" and "faith in a coming apocalypse remained a vital force in shaping the way Americans lived their lives, for in one's daily existence, nothing less than the eternal salvation of souls and the longevity of America as a covenantal nation were at stake" (Pelletier 12). Turner's insurrection was not then, as some scholars have suggested, primarily a revolutionary movement geared towards transforming the social and political landscape of the U.S. (Tomlins 52, Pelletier 48). Rather, it represented an attempt to initiate the end of history, and consequently the nation, by ushering in the Kingdom of God, and as Turner's *Confessions* entered into an antebellum literary and media marketplace already overwhelmingly charged with apocalyptic expectation, it offered a palpable sign of the beginning of the end.

The rush by Gray and others to dismiss Turner's theology as fanatical and his rebellion as an isolated exception represents, in some sense, an attempt to regain control over the apocalyptic narrative by reasserting white spiritual and theological authority against the fanatical.

Furthermore, it was Turner's apocalyptic stance that ultimately threatened the whole pneumapolitical order in which narratives of conversion operated as evidence that promised to reveal and regulate the spiritual lives of citizens and non-citizens alike in service of maintaining the republic's hierarchies of power. In this light, narratives of conversion should be understood as embedded within a context of Protestant apocalyptic expectation because ultimately they functioned to standardize good beliefs and harmonize religious and republican ideals in order to determine who would and would not belong (and the conditions of their belonging) to the Kingdom of God on Earth. By operating as both a backdrop and lynchpin to American secularism, the figure of the apocalypse formed, on one hand, an ever-present imminence and, on the other hand, an ever-retreating horizon. But it is precisely these opposing possibilities that held (and continues to hold, I would argue) American secularity intact. As Turner's counterconversion and its attendant apocalyptic theology agitated the pneumapoltical mechanics of an American-Protestant secular order, they now render partially visible the atmosphere of white hegemonic Protestant belief that permeated and informed nearly every level of antebellum life and illuminate how models of spiritual conversion served not only as racialized and racializing processes, but also as technologies of discipline designed to prevent the collapse of white American Protestant-secularism itself.

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"We Fear Her Spirit": The "New Mother" and Genealogies of Belief from the Antinomian Controversy to *The Scarlet Letter*

In 1630, some 220 years before the publication of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, John Winthrop–patriarch and spiritual leader to the group of English Puritans who immigrated to New England in order to create a biblical society founded on their religious convictions–delivered a sermon to his fellow travelers while crossing the Atlantic aboard the *Arabella*. The sermon, "A Modell of Christian Charity," sought primarily to lay out a biblically based legal theory that would govern the colony's community members and underscore how it distinguished them from the tyranny of English rule and the impositions of the Anglican Church. Referencing Matthew 5, often referred to as Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, in which he lists the blessings of a godly life (the Beatitudes), Winthrop typologically situates the Puritans' colonial enterprise as "a citty upon a hill," anticipating that their colony would exemplify a society bestowed with God's favor (Winthrop 47). Little did he and the others aboard the *Arabella* suspect how this vision would be soon tested, however. In 1636, the Massachusetts Bay Colony, six years after its inception, was thrust into political crisis during a theological conflict that would become known as the Antinomian Controversy. Anne Hutchinson, who infamously challenged the authority of male ministers and magistrates upon grounds of her own theological convictions, stood defiantly at the center of the conflict, facing eventual banishment for her dissidence. In 1850, more than two centuries later, Hawthorne would revive the figure of Hutchinson in his heroine Hester Prynne, a woman convicted under Puritan law for the sin of adultery and forced to wear a scarlet A as punishment for her crime, in his historical romance *The Scarlet Letter*. In the construction of his narrative, Hawthorne explores questions of national

origins and belonging, and the role of law in the formation of citizens. And in many ways, though the details of Hutchinson's and Hester's stories differ, the novel is a retelling of some of the central themes of the Antinomian Controversy for a 19th-century readership.

Like Anne Hutchinson's forced removal from the Massachusetts Bay Colony, Hester Prynne's scarlet letter carries a civic and legal function. Rather than remove her from the community, however, Hester's punishment makes her an exile within the communal context of the colony, isolating her within a "magic circle of ignominy," as she serves as a "living sermon against sin" (*SL* 280, 60). Lauren Berlant, in her monumental study of *The Scarlet Letter* and Hawthorne's perspective on the nature of American citizenship, argues that the "letter's public operation [...] in theory, merges individuals into a public collectivity, a 'body' with an 'imagination'" at the same time that it creates a consciousness of the law which in turn "develops into collective and individual conscience," eventually yielding, in theory, the ideal citizen "complete with an affective psychological dependence on her identification with the state" (68-69). To better understand the functionality of conscience within the colonial Puritan context, Berlant turns to the legal theories of Winthrop, one of the colony's chief architects, who, as she explains, believed the power of the law issued from the infallibility of scripture and God's will and was intended, following Calvinist logic, to regulate and correct the utter depravity of humans in order to make civil life possible (88, 92). The regulatory function of law, as it modeled ideal citizenship, also served as a standard to which community members and leaders could turn in order to discern regeneration within individuals and themselves and, in turn, legitimize or disclaim their respective spiritual conversions.

For Winthrop, "law is enforced not only through formal codification but also through a juridical apparatus that operates 'inside' the individual" by a principle known as "synteresis"

(Berlant 88). Originating from a brief passage written by Saint Jerome in the year 415 CE, commenting on the prophet Ezekiel's vision of the parts of God's throne, "synteresis," rendered from Greek into Latin, and sometimes translated as "synderesis," most commonly refers to a theological and philosophical concept of "conscience or a part or an aspect of conscience," but more specifically, based on Jerome's commentary, signifies the divine spark that remained intact in postlapsarian humans, affording them the ability to discern good from evil, sin from righteousness (Greene 196-197). In his genealogy of the term, Robert A. Greene argues that the "history of synderesis forms part of the background for understanding late seventeenth-century speculation about innate ideas and man's moral sense" (196). Though the term had fallen out of use by the early seventeenth century, "the idea of synderesis was reborn in vernacular form as both 'the spark,' or 'sparkle,' and 'natural instinct,' and in the revival of the medieval meaning of the two biblical phrases [derived from Jerome's commentary]: 'the spirit of man' and 'the candle of the Lord'" (Greene 209). Greene's insightful study of synteresis conceptually links the ideas of "spirit" and "conscience" as moral agents and suggests that by the time Winthrop was writing and thinking about the relationship between conscience and law in the 1630s, notions of spirit and, consequently, processes of conversion served as subtexts for his legal theories. In the same sense, if we extend Berlant's analysis of how Hester's scarlet letter, as an icon and spectacle of the law, installs conscience in both the individual and collective, the concepts of spirit and conversion emerge also as important aspects of the juridical imperative to create ideal citizens. If law's purpose, as Berlant sees through Winthrop, is to cultivate a spiritual interior by installing conscience within the individual, then the space between the law and conscience should be understood as a process of spiritual conversion, in which the fallen human nature is redeemed through ongoing repentance, or a turning and returning back to the law.

The Antinomian Controversy, in part, posed one of the first great tests to this legal theory in practice as ruling ministers and magistrates attempted to quell political insurgency by determining what theological beliefs individuals or factions of colonists espoused, crucially linking together spirit (or conscience) with political ideology. In doing so, the conflict, which on its surface seemed to concern tedious theological particulars, actually centralized conversion as a process of shaping and directing the lives of citizens and the beliefs they harbored, internally, with the law serving as a measure of righteous character, a deployment of power I call pneumapolitics. The role of Anne Hutchinson in the controversy, however, revealed that the law functioned not as an equally applied standard of moral uprightness but rather as a regulatory apparatus to enforce hierarchies of power on the basis of gender, implicating spiritual conversion as a gendered and gendering process. While Hutchinson's theological errors, as they were called by her detractors, initially drew her under the scrutiny of the colonial court, its censure of her protests revolved primarily around her legal claims to defy male authority. By following representations of the figure of Anne Hutchinson from the Antinomian Controversy to Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, I trace how pneumapolitics instrumentalized conversion as spiritual technology to naturalize and transmit a biblically based patriarchal theology of gender across generations. Because Puritans relied heavily on a patriarchal family model that envisioned conversion as a process of coming to resemble a "new father," Anne Hutchinson's challenge to male headship during the Antinomian Controversy reconfigured the process of conversion beneath the rubric of a "new mother," who came to represent a genealogy of belief that threatened to undermine the authority of patriarchal law. By alluding to Hutchinson in his 1850 historical romance *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne reanimates and adapts the antinomian anxiety of the Puritans for the 19th-century readership in order to illuminate, but also prescribe, the

complex structural and legal relationship between gender and citizenship set in motion by the Antinomian Controversy and the forces that shaped its afterlife.

Anne Hutchinson and the Antinomian Controversy: Gender, Family, and Conversion in the Massachusetts Bay Colony

From October 1636 to March 1638 the Antinomian Controversy embroiled the young Massachusetts Bay Colony in a theological upheaval that threatened to topple the "city on a hill." Perhaps more than any other figure involved in the conflict, Anne Hutchinson, a fervent and pious Puritan theologian and teacher and trusted midwife, occupied the center of the controversy and received the most vehement pushback from the cadre of opposing male ministers and magistrates who rhetorically situated themselves as defending orthodoxy against the pernicious errors of Hutchinson's heretical theology. Before the height of the controversy, Hutchison caught the attention of colony ministers for holding meetings for women in her home to discuss the prior week's sermons. In these meetings, she often openly criticized prominent ministers for teaching a salvation of "works" rather than of "free grace." As these accusations reached the ears of the aforementioned ministers, Hutchinson's home meetings increased in popularity, and she gained a contingent of like-minded followers, both men and women, who shared her distrust of and distaste for what she understood as the works-based theologies of salvation issuing forth from the colony's pulpits (Hall 5-6). David D. Hall explains that the Antinomian Controversy emerged primarily in response to the "acute anxiety" in the minds of congregants regarding the assurance of their salvation and status as elect within a Calvinist theological framework. Ministers, seeking to assuage uncertainty in their congregations, began to preach that sanctification, or the ongoing process of becoming righteous, could provide "outward signs of inner holiness" and thereby

confer a person's justification and God's favor (Hall 13). In response to these assertions from prominent ministers in the young colony, Anne Hutchinson along with her trusted friend and teacher John Cotton warned against the theological error of relying on "works" to evidence a state of "grace" in a believer. But the tedious disputes over theological particulars, which appeared to form the basis of the controversy, would in fact force governing ministers and magistrates to articulate more complex linkages between monitoring individuals' conversion experiences for church membership and the enforcement of strict gender roles in order to maintain domestic, religious, and civic order in the colony.

In early November 1637, Governor Winthrop called a General Court session to bring civil charges against those antinomians who had persisted in disrupting order in the colony, particularly those who had defended Anne Hutchinson's brother-in-law John Wheelwright, who had preached a fast-day sermon the previous January openly criticizing other prominent church leaders as "legalists" and proponents of a works-based conception of salvation (Hall 10). Because Hutchinson had not participated directly in any political protests, her opponents had to contrive a legitimate basis for bringing her to trial. The presiding members of the General Court believed her home meetings to be the epicenter of antinomian discontent in the colony and therefore charged her with "countenancing" political dissidents (Hall 311). For the most part during her civil trial, Hutchinson succeeded in confounding the court with her quick-witted responses and evasions of their claims against her. However, in Winthrop's 1644 *A Short Story*, which served as a compendium of documents related to the controversy, he recalls how Hutchinson began to "speake her mind, and to tell of the manner of Gods dealing with her, and how he revealed himself to her, and made her know what she had to do" (Hall 271). In a mode of spiritual autobiography, Hutchinson then recounted her conversion experience wherein she

disclosed that after a period of "[b]eing much troubled to see the falseness of the constitution of the Church in England," God began to reveal to her "which was clear ministry and which was wrong" (Hall 336). According to Hutchinson, there were no ministers whom she trusted except for Cotton and Wheelwright and, and she claimed to the court that God revealed to her that she must follow Cotton to New England even though God would give her "the bread of adversity and the water of affliction" in the new colony (Hall 337). She then expounded on her revelations, explaining that God had shown her how he would deliver her in the same way as Daniel from the lion's den (Hall 338). Winthrop's summary of her remarks in *A Short Story* ends with a prophetic warning from Hutchinson to the Court: "I doe verily belieeve that he will deliver me out of our [*sic*] hands, therefore take heed how you proceed against me; for I know that for this you goe about to doe to me, God will ruine you and your posterity, and this whole State" (Hall 273). In the end, neither solely the finer points of Hutchinson's theological errors nor her offenses against ministers and magistrates formed the basis of the Court's decision to banish her from the colony; instead, the public recital of her conversion experience in which she disclosed her direct connection to God through divine revelations delivered "her into the power of the Court, as guilty of that which all suspected her for" (274). Her revelations, in Winthrop's estimation, were "above reason and Scripture [and] not subject to control" and, therefore, inevitably posed a risk to the "peace of any State" (Hall 274).

Clearly, Hutchinson had struck a nerve by openly and effectively challenging the authority and theological soundness of prominent male ministers and magistrates in Boston, and during her trial before the Church of Boston in March 1638, months after the verdict of banishment had been passed down at the conclusion of her civil trial the previous November, John Wilson, a prominent minister of the Boston congregation, asserted forcefully that the

"Cause and Root" of her errors was her "slightinge and Disrespect of the Magistrates" in addition to the deeper offense of the "slightinge of Gods faythfull Ministers" by "cryinge downe them as Nobodies" (Hall 380). Wilson goes on to admonish Hutchinson for seeking to become "a greate Prophites … and Undertake to expound Scriptures, and to interpret other Mens Sayings and sermons after [her] minde" (Hall 381). These sentiments, reiterations of those already expressed earlier during the civil trial, chiefly criticize Hutchinson for elevating herself above the authority of the ministers and magistrates, for relying upon her revelations and interpretive autonomy instead of those who had been divinely appointed as religious and civic leaders in the community, but Hugh Peters, another examiner alongside Wilson in the church trial, struck at the heart of the matter by further specifying Hutchinson's alleged crimes: "[Y]ou have stept out of your place, you have rather bine a Husband than a Wife and a preacher than a Hearer; a Magistrate than a Subject" (Hall 382-383). Not coincidentally, Hutchinson's male detractors, as Peters does here, tended to articulate Hutchinson's offenses in gendered terms, framing them as an inversion of the roles of husband and wife, therefore, focalizing the public controversy over theological differences as a domestic dispute resulting in spousal estrangement. In masculinizing Hutchinson's religious and civil disobedience as analogous to a wife superseding a husband's authority, Peters explicitly genders Hutchinson's defiance in order to distinguish her wrongdoing from other male antinomians, such as Wheelwright and Henry Vane, the ousted governor sympathetic to Hutchinson's cause. Because Puritans relied heavily on the family analogy to legitimize a gendered power structure that subordinated women to men in a social, civil, and religious contexts, Hutchinson's alleged offenses against the ministers and magistrates brought her into misalignment with the expectations and assumptions of patriarchal law and the conceptual hierarchies deployed to enforce and enshrine it (Norton 13 and Kaufmann 19). In the

view of her male detractors, Hutchinson's remonstrances represented more than a challenge to their religious authority; they also portended a grave threat to the colony's continuity should other women, in particular, follow Hutchinson's example and disrupt the colony's established hierarchy of gender relations.

Although the gendered boundaries between private and public, domestic and political, life had not yet calcified as they would in the 19th century, particularly with the emergence of a distinctive "cult of domesticity," the Puritans nonetheless relied upon essentialized notions of sex derived from masculinist and paternalist interpretations of both Old and New Testament texts to shape their understanding of gender relations (Norton 23-24 and Kaufmann 20). However, rather than defining gender roles by distinguishing between public and private spheres of influence, in which men and women related through complimentary, yet not overlapping roles, Puritans tended to imagine domestic and family life as a foundational microcosm of the hierarchical structures that organized their public-facing institutions such as the church and state, and in doing so replicated a form of private life, including its assumptions about gender, in public: "[A] family is a little Church, and a little Commonwealth," William Gouge wrote in his 1622 *Of Domesticall Duties*, which served as a manual outlining the biblical rationale behind the responsibilities of husbands and wives and provided a detailed portrait of the ideal Puritan family (16). Central to Gouge's vision of the Puritan family is the subordination of wives to their husbands' authority. Drawing on a wealth of biblical sources, Gouge reiterates the inferiority of women to men throughout his treatise, but perhaps most starkly when he cites Paul's letter to Ephesians that commands wives to submit to their husbands in the same way that they submit to God, imbuing husbands with divine authority over wives by making them God's proxies on

Earth (25).[8] The gender hierarchy inherent in the Puritan marriage covenant rationalized the origins of women's inferiority by referencing the Genesis account of Adam and Eve (Norton 59). Gouge, as in many Christian traditions, cites God's creation of Eve as a "help meet" for Adam from one of his rib bones in Genesis 2, followed directly by their union in marriage, as the basis for the divinely sanctioned hierarchical arrangement of husbands and wives within marriage and the family context (70, 94).[9] Furthermore, Eve's encounter with the serpent and the subsequent fall of humanity in Genesis 3 demonstrated for Puritan theologians not only women's inferiority in body and mind but also their innate spiritual vulnerability to evil influence (Daniels 128-130, Reis 5, and Demos 83-84). Marilyn J. Westerkamp explains that as male Puritan leaders, theologians, and writers "constructed a rigid system of gender relations, they also mapped out a model of female virtue determined, in part, by their own construction of women's weakness as well as their desire and need to sustain male authority from the household outward. Puritan leaders," she continues, "wrote and behaved as if women were potent forces that needed to be restrained and restricted lest they destroy themselves, their families, and the society" (23). By relegating women to "the little church of the household," Puritan civil and religious leaders sought to restrict and control the expression of women's social and spiritual lives in service of preserving a religious and political hegemony dominated by male authority (Westerkamp 24).

Because marriage and the family unit formed the foundations of Puritan society, they also functioned as metaphors that organized power structures outside the home (Norton 59). Turning

[8] Ephesians 5:22 (KJV): "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord."
[9] Genesis 2:20-25 (KJV): "And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

again to Paul, for example, Gouge references another passage in his treatise from Ephesians that equates the authority a husband has over his wife and family to the authority that Christ has over the church, creating a fluid continuity between domestic and public religious life (27-28).[10] The adaptability of the matrimonial and familial metaphor allowed male authorities to replicate a biblically based hierarchy of gendered power across a range of contexts. Following this method, for instance, Winthrop patronized Hutchinson in the opening of her civil trial by claiming that she had violated the Fifth Commandment, which prohibits the "dishonouring of parents," with the view in mind that her home meetings had promulgated offensive opinions about himself and other "fathers of the commonwealth" (Hall 312). Besides crucially structuring many Puritan institutions and power relations, the language of marriage and family also served as an important metaphor for modeling proper conversion by drawing on analogs related to sexual reproduction and family resemblances to conflate spiritual election with biblically derived conceptions of gender expression. In particular, New England Puritans' reliance on "visible" signs to verify God's election amplified an awareness of and adherence to biblical gender norms, treating the body, in a sense, as a cipher through which to discern the gendered dimensions of spirit. Michael W. Kaufmann explains, by way of Renaissance scholar Marie-Hélène Huet, that within a patriarchal family frame, before the advent of blood and DNA testing, paternal filiation relied on the testimony of the mother or the resemblance of the child to the father (24). For the New England Puritans especially, the concept of paternal resemblance as a test of filiation dovetailed seamlessly with the idea that "visible" signs could verify spiritual election:

> If filiation depends on resemblance, then theoretically it becomes possible to reinvent one's origins by fashioning a likeness to a new father. Since one's

[10] Ephesians 5:23 (KJV): "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body."

> paternal origins are always in question, one need not be (in fact, *cannot* be) pinned down to the biological father but can instead establish connections to other "fathers" simply by acting "like" them. By reimagining filiation, by representing oneself as the child of a father other than that of original birth, one gains a new identity, a new way to represent oneself in the world. The Puritans called this process of imitating a new father conversion. (Kaufmann 25)

While "conversion effectively replaced the blood of the ancestors with the blood of Christ," redeeming both men and women, it did not altogether abolish the biblical differences Puritans saw between the sexes reflected in their androcentric theology of gender (Kaufmann 27). Conceptualizing Christ as a "new father" to be imitated and resembled through conversion only enlarged the scale of the gendered hierarchy developed by Puritans to encompass the masculine divine, but it did not set women on an equal footing with men through filiation to Christ; instead, conversion, in a Puritan sense, and especially in a New England sense, implied that women's resemblance to Christ required a submission to male authority (Reis 2). Furthermore, the gendered and gendering process of Puritan conversion functioned to bolster masculinist and paternalist constructions of biblically based gender power by standardizing proper gender expressions and reinforcing essentialized differences between men and women in service of maintaining the family analogy as a basis for a naturalized hierarchy of male power (Kaufmann 77). Because Hutchinson's role in the Antinomian Controversy directly challenged this authority and exposed the vulnerability of androcentric body politic to the subversive "contagion" of female religious autonomy, her beliefs did more than disrupt the hierarchy within her own personal family context; they also threatened to holistically destabilize and transform the whole system of colonial power that depended on the interconnection of a series of nested and

overlapping family analogies to rationalize male headship in religious, political, social, and domestic contexts. Thus the beliefs she expressed during her trials inadvertently caused her male detractors to locate the problem of antinomian dissent at the intersection of conceptions of proper gender expression and sanctioned morphologies of conversion, a crosspoint most clearly articulated in the Puritan marriage covenant.

The conflict over the nature of conversion and salvation came to a head in Hutchinson's church trial when her examiners challenged her belief that the temporal bodies of God's elect are not resurrected and united with Christ at the Last Judgment, but instead are spiritually united with Christ at the moment of their salvation. Scripturally, for Hutchinson, there was no resurrection of the temporal body, but only the spirit (Hall 360-364). Troubled by Hutchinson's assertion that there was no bodily resurrection, Mr. Damphord interjected to note that "if Resurrection be past than Marriage is past: for it is waytie Reason; after the Resurrection is past, marriage is past. Than if thear be any Union betweene man and woman it is not by Marriage but in a Way of Communitie," referencing the Familists, an inclusive "free-love" group who allegedly promoted indiscriminate promiscuity between men and women outside of the covenant of marriage (Hall 362). Mr. Damphord's speculation alludes to an episode recorded in the Gospel of Matthew, in which the Sadducees, who, like Hutchinson, did not affirm a belief in bodily resurrection after death, confront Jesus on the existence of marriage in the afterlife; Jesus responds, "For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven."[11] By referencing this scriptural vignette, Mr. Damphord aligns Hutchinson with the wickedness of the Sadducees, who, along with the Pharisees, made continual attempts to discredit and suppress the teachings of Jesus and, in the end, were

[11] Matthew 22:30 (KJV)

instrumental in his crucifixion. Strikingly, Hutchinson's eschatological views on bodily resurrection occasion an opportunity for her examiners to extrapolate on how her beliefs, specifically, not only endangered the Puritan gender ideology implicit in the marriage covenant, but also the social and legal frameworks that governed the colony itself. In other words, Mr. Damphord's assertion indexes a concern that should the belief in the resurrection of the temporal body at the Second Coming of Christ fail to remain an integral linchpin in the operational logics of the larger Puritan theological system, then the need for marriage as both a sanctifying process and social organizing principle would become moot. Following Mr. Damphord's line of reasoning in his examination of Hutchinson, Mr. Simes deduces, "[I]f there is no Resurrection then our fayth is in vayne and preachinge is in vayne: and all in is vayne" (Hall 363). As Hutchinson's detractors further entrenched the notion that her theological "errors," figured eschatologically above as a denial of bodily resurrection at the Last Judgment, represented a threat to matrimonial integrity and, therefore, endangered the posterity of the whole colonial project, they portended a crisis of belief with the potential to push their floundering theocracy to the verge of a nihilistic collapse should antinomian thinking calcify in the community (i.e. "all is vayne"). This grim possibility shocked Hutchinson's examiners and prompted John Eliot, the famed missionary to the native peoples of New England, to pronounce, "[W]e fear her spirit," a declaration that refocused attention on the problem of gnostic conversion experiences without institutional or clerical oversight (Hall 363). For the ministers and magistrates, Hutchinson's theology, ultimately, pointed to a conversion experience gone awry, and the narrative of her personal conversion, in turn, revealed "a most dayngerous Spirit" whose "fluent Tounge" and "fowardness in Expressions" threatened to "seduce and draw away many, Espetially simple Weomen of her owne sex" (Hall 365).

The possibility that Hutchinson had spiritually influenced other women in the community and nearby congregations with her beliefs deeply troubled the male examiners during her trials (Hall 365). In his preface to Winthrop's 1644 *A Short Story*, Thomas Weld, who witnessed the events of the Antinomian Controversy first-hand, outlines his understanding of the pernicious strategies whereby proponents of antinomianism "conveyed the infection to others" and "thus that Plague first began amongst [them]," with especial attention to the particular influence antinomians exercised over the women of Boston and surrounding communities (Hall 202). Weld's report accuses antinomian evangelists of seducing recent arrivals to the colony and ensnaring already established congregants "into their Web" so that "they could easily poyson them by degrees" with an ultimate goal of undermining the authority of church authorities by suggesting that the ministers had misled congregants "under a Covenant of workes" (Hall 204). Further expounding on the antinomian's strategy, Weld explains, "They commonly laboured to worke first upon women, being (as they conceived) the weaker to resist," hoping "to catch their husbands also, which indeed often proved too true" (Hall 205-206). Concluding his enumeration of antinomian recruitment tactics, he writes, "But the last and worst of all, which most suddainly diffused the venome of these opinions into the very veins and vitalls of the People in this Country, was Mistris Hutchinsons double weekly-lecture, which she kept under the pretense of repeating Sermons," and eventually proved to be the "Canker of [their] Peace, and ruine of [their] comforts" as antinomian thinking spread through the Church of Boston and the surrounding congregations (Hall 207). Weld, as had other examiners in Hutchinson's civil and church trials, often characterized antinomian beliefs epidemiologically as poisonous contagions that, left unchecked, could spread rapidly, infecting every congregation in and around Boston. By locating the epicenter of the antinomian outbreak as Hutchinson's home meetings, Weld and

others also singled out women as the primary vectors responsible for spreading spiritual illness throughout the colony. Hutchinson's antinomianism (that is, her defiance of male authority) was viewed as especially pernicious for how it infected women, in particular, and spread throughout the colony by way of domestic conduits, corrupting families from within through the influence of wives and mothers.

Similarly concerned about Hutchinson's spiritual influence over women congregants and community members, John Cotton directly addressed the "Sisters" of the Boston congregation and those present from nearby churches in his public admonition of Hutchinson's radical antinomianism, whose logical end he perceived as the colony's descent into domestic and sexual chaos resulting from the "promiscuous and filthie cominge together of men and Woemen without Distinction of Relation of Marriage" (Hall 372). "Let not the good you have receved from her make you to reaceve all for good that comes from her," he cautioned, alluding to the meetings Hutchinson initially organized for women in her home, which served as the locale that popularized her views and enabled her to gain traction in the broader community. Continuing his warning to the women present at Hutchinson's church trial, Cotton exhorted, "[I]f you have drunke in with this good any Evell or Poyson, make speed to vomit it up agayne and to repent of it and take [care] that you doe not harden her in her Way by pittyinge of her or confirming her in her opinions" (Hall 370). In effect, by addressing the church trial audience directly, and particularly its women, Cotton's public admonition, which physicalized the spiritual problem of antinomian beliefs as drinking and vomiting poison, exhorted listeners to examine their own interiors for harmful traces of Hutchinson's dangerous beliefs so that they might purge them not only from their individual interiors, but also the collective conscience of the body politic. In the end, the panel of ministers and magistrates charged with scrutinizing Hutchinson's theological

errors judged her recalcitrance irreformable and her continued presence in the colony an incalculable liability, and, consequently, excommunicated her from the Boston church on March 22, 1638. Less than a week later, she and her family along with a small contingent of faithful followers relocated to present-day Rhode Island.

The Afterlife of the Antinomian Controversy: Monstrous Births and the Figure of the "New Mother"

Following Hutchinson's banishment and subsequent excommunication from the Boston church, her supporters who remained in the colony faced public scrutiny and punishment for their associations with her and John Wheelwright further conveying the gravity of the crimes committed by the antinomians to the broader community (Gura 264-267). As the antinomian fervor in the colony waned, the controversy and its near-cataclysmic effects remained present in the minds of many, especially those ministers and magistrates who capitalized on the moment to publicize the triumph of congregational church governance over the existential threat posed by the antinomian insurgence (Hall 20, 200). By casting the events of the controversy as a moment of providential history, Puritan leaders who opposed antinomian thinking restored order to the colony and set safeguards in place to detect and quell future threats to their religious and civil authority (Winship 237 and Gura 178). Besides demonstrating the efficacy of congregationalism, the aftermath of the controversy also provided an opportunity for Puritan leaders to justify their actions against Hutchinson and the antinomian faction by interpreting the success of the ministers and magistrates as proof of God's favor and protection over their theocratic enterprise. Further proof substantiating this claim emerged in the afterlife of the controversy and, for some, served as irrefutable evidence of the corrupting influence of Hutchinson's beliefs. First, details

surrounding the miscarriage of Mary Dyer, a close friend and follower of Hutchinson, came to light shortly after the conclusion of the controversy, followed months later by reports of Hutchinson's own miscarriage in her exile in Rhode Island. In both instances, the miscarried fetuses were born with severe deformities and were characterized as "monstrous births." By aligning the events of the Antinomian Controversy with a notion of providential history, some Puritan leaders leveraged the miscarriages of both Dyer and Hutchinson as evidence of their errors (Valerius 180-181). Although there are five primary accounts documenting the details of the "monstrous births," including from Winthrop and Cotton, Weld's account in his preface to *A Short Story* perhaps most pointedly reflects the providential view (Schutte 86). "Then God himself was pleased to step in with his casting voice" Weld writes,

> [A]nd bring in his owne vote and suffrage from heaven, by testifying his displeasure against [Dyer's and Hutchinson's] opinions and practises, as clearely as he had pointed with his finger, in causing the two fomenting women in the time of the height of the Opinions to produce out of their wombs, as before they had out of their braines, such monstrous births as no Chronicle (I thinke) hardly ever recorded the like. (Hall 214)

By directly connecting the miscarriages of Dyer and Hutchinson to divine punishment, Weld inversely employs the Puritan theological logic that "visible" signs could provide evidence of spiritual election; here, instead, the deformed bodies of the miscarried fetuses have a direct correlation to the theological errors harbored in the minds of both women. Weld describes Dyer's stillbirth as a chimeric amalgam comprised of "a fish, a beast, a fowle, all woven into one, and without an head" and Hutchinson's as "30 monstrous births or thereabout at once; some of them bigger, some lesser, and some one shape, some another; few any perfect shape, none at

all of them (as farre as [he] could ever learn) of humane shape" (Hall 214).[12] In the case of Hutchinson, Weld extends the parallel between "mishapen opinions" and "deformed monsters" by suggesting that each of the thirty undeveloped parts of Hutchinson's stillborn fetus corresponded to the number of theological errors Hutchinson espoused over the course of her church and civil trials.[13] Although Weld exaggerates the number of Hutchinson's alleged errors (officially, they were sixteen), he nonetheless further entrenches the providential view by numerically particularizing and projecting Hutchison's beliefs onto the body of her stillborn fetus, insisting that her miscarriage (and by extension, Dyer's) represented the purposeful intervention and righteous retribution of God, who "fitted this judgment to her sinne every way" (Hall xvi, 214).

Apart from their evidentiary function within a providential frame, these two incidents, popularized both through print and oral circulation, served as allegorical tableaux that, on one hand, illustrated and reiterated how Puritans connected conceptions of spiritual conversion to sexual reproduction and family resemblance and, on the other hand, reified the notion promulgated by the ministers and magistrates during Hutchinson's trials that pathologized antinomian beliefs as an infectious plague spread primarily by and between women in the colony. While the "monstrous births" of Hutchison and Dyer appear to relate minorly to the larger arc of events that make up the Antinomian Controversy, only coming to light after its conclusion, Weld relates that the miscarriage episodes came "to be knowne and famous over all these Churches, and a great part of the world" (Hall 215). Kaufmann argues that the miscarriages

[12] Drawing on the various accounts of the miscarriages, especially Winthrop's meticulous descriptions, has enabled modern investigators to medically diagnose both cases with a great amount of accuracy. Dyer's stillbirth was most likely the result of spina bifida and Hutchinson's hydatidiform mole (also known as a molar pregnancy) (Schutte 90).

[13] Hydatidiform mole is "a condition where a fertilized embryo does not develop, but instead becomes a mass of placental tissue, like a bunch of grapes in its form" (Field).

of Hutchinson and Dyer represent the “inverse of conversion” because they replace “the imaginative usurpation and replacement of the first father/husband with something else" that is “both illegitimate and not male, something perversely luxurious, multiformed, overwhelming, and boundless” (91). In one sense, Weld’s account seems to suggest that the miscarried fetuses are the asexual offspring of the beliefs themselves, physical manifestations of the theological errors of Hutchinson and Dyer. However, in another sense, the coincidence between the two women’s shared beliefs and their overlapping experiences of malformed miscarriages framed as providential judgment also disrupts and remodels the family analogy implicit in Puritan conversion–especially considered in conjunction with how ministers and magistrates articulated what they understood as the epidemiological dimensions and spiritual pathology of antinomian thinking among women throughout the controversy. In other words, the twin discourses of monstrosity and pathology brought to bear on women who held antinomian beliefs, and Hutchinson and Dyer in particular, suggest, on one hand, that heretical thinking could spread person-to-person, causing spiritual “sickness,” and, on the other hand, that imparting and adhering to heretical beliefs has an inseminating function as Weld’s account insinuates, drawing a direct comparison between “braines” and “wombs,” beliefs and monstrous births. If the patriarchal model of conversion, as Kaufmann explains, involves coming to resemble a “new father,” then Hutchinson’s antinomian beliefs represent a theological threat to male authority for how they reoriented the process of conversion under the rubric of a “new mother,” whose dangerous influence supposedly worked to recruit and deputize female converts to undermine patriarchal power by spreading their beliefs. Furthermore, Dyer’s case suggests that not only did Hutchinson's beliefs infect her with antinomian thinking, but that they also, following the familial and matrimonial logics of Puritan conversion, spiritually impregnated her, producing, in

effect, the physical sign of God's disfavor, her malformed baby. More than representing just an "inverted" model of Puritan conversion, the "monstrous births" of Hutchinson and Dyer reorient conversion into a mode of sapphic spirit pregnancy, a means of transferring unsanctioned beliefs between women and generating a matrilineal genealogy of spiritual resemblance.

Pneumapolitics and the Sentimentalization of the "New Mother"

In many ways, the Antinomian Controversy revealed clearly to the ruling ministers and magistrates the state's vital interest in discerning and deciphering the spirits of the colony's individual members. By doing so, civil and church leaders hoped to preempt threatening outbreaks of unrest and discontent in the future by effectively cultivating a unified collective conscience through the enforcement of law, a purpose that Anne Hutchinson's banishment and excommunication from the colony and church were meant to emblematically serve. What had begun as a principled, albeit somewhat abstract, theological disagreement about the nature of salvation, and the role "works" played in the process of redemption and election, soon developed into a more embittered conflict whose outcome would determine what forms religious, civic, and domestic life would take and furthermore delineate how the colonial community related to law and authority. By effectively containing and abolishing antinomian insurgence, orthodox ministers and magistrates, Winthrop and Cotton chief among them, began to stabilize and define what constituted proper conversion. First and foremost, conversion would serve as a process meant to align the beliefs of the individual with the larger collective conscience, in a form of proto-national citizenship, which was, in turn, informed by and through a biblically derived legal structure. I call this active and ongoing process of spiritual cultivation and alignment pneumapolitics. Because of the vital importance of conversion in the operations of

pneumapolitical power, the notion of spirit itself, the animating force (i.e. synteresis: "the spark") supposedly motivating moral or immoral behavior, emerges as a naturalized target for both religious and state control. The conflation of state and religious power documented in Hutchinson's civil and church trial transcripts offers insight into how law's intended function to serve as standard of conscience influenced the contours and trajectories of an individual's conversion experience, and in the case of Hutchinson, revealed how gnostic conversions, or those that occur without clerical oversight, especially when they involve mystical and direct connections to God, posed an imminent threat to pneumapolitcal order, which relies on upholding standards of ideal spiritual resemblance to maintain communal cohesion in step with legal edicts.

By insisting on a standardized morphology of conversion, ministers further consolidated and solidified their authority in ordering and directing the spiritual, and by extension civil and familial, lives of New England colonists. However, Hutchinson's role in the Antinomian Controversy, as I have previously detailed, revealed the centrality of gender concerns to the core of the conflict, primarily because Hutchinson understood her conversion experience as justification for challenging male religious and civil authority, who conceived conversion as a gendered and gendering process meant to reinforce a patriarchal hierarchy. By clearly linking her gender dissidence to an unruly and heretical spirit, Hutchinson's male detractors, furthermore, underscored biblically based gender norms as a fundamental aspect of pneumapolitcal power at its point of origin, the Antinomian Controversy itself. Because conversion also relied heavily on a patriarchal family model to envision spiritual resemblance, it became a particularly proficient mechanism for instilling and transmitting a patriarchal theology of gender across a range of contexts. In other words, the ubiquity of the family metaphor in Puritan religious and

institutional thought worked to naturalize gender difference as divinely ordained and ensure that the hierarchy of male headship remained intact *across* generations through the ongoing and perpetually unfinished process of conversion.

While congregationally-minded Puritans worked to homogenize the role of conversion in the lives of colonists in service of populating their "city on a hill" with like-minded believers committed to establishing and advancing God's kingdom on earth, the particular methods and modes of conversion endemic to New England Puritans would undergo a series of transformations as the religious and political landscape of colonial America transitioned into the revolutionary and early national periods, both eras marked by explosions of spiritual fervor during the First and Second Great Awakenings, whose charismatic and passionate mass revivals, particularly in the western territories and New York's "Burned-Over District," democratized conversion experiences as evangelical ministers began to abandon hardline Calvinist theology for more magnanimous versions or adopted theological outlooks informed by more Arminian-aligned thought (Sowder 29, 33-34). Although the function and form of conversion reflected a rapidly changing religious landscape in the 18th and early 19th centuries, giving rise to a variety of denominational and spiritual cultures, many of the core assumptions concerning gender and family–namely, the subordination of women to men–held by the Puritans remained in full operational force in both mainline and evangelical Protestant traditions, even as the institution of the white (mostly northern) American family began to evolve in response to the pressures of industrialization in the antebellum era.

As men began to work more and more in the public arena of commercial industry in the early 19th century, middle and upper-class women occupied and managed the private sphere of the home. Strikingly, as Ann Douglass shows, the development of distinct private and public

spheres of gendered activity coincided with the process of disestablishing Protestant churches from state sponsorship, upending the relative security and authority ministers had previously enjoyed by thrusting them headlong into the competitive marketplace of religious consumerism (30). Once the process of church disestablishment was complete in 1833, women and ministers found themselves both displaced from their traditional sources of power: women no longer engaged in a culture of essential home-spun production and male ministers could no longer rely on the state to subsidize the salaries and legitimize their authority (Douglas 24, 54). Both reeling from their disempowerment and dislocation within an ever-expanding industrial economy formed an unlikely alliance in order to assert religious and spiritual "influence" over a masculinized culture increasingly motivated by wealth, profit, and exploitation (Douglas 57, Tompkins 160-161). The disestablishment of churches did not signal the retreat of religion from public life, however; rather it began to transfer the religious monopoly held previously by the state into the center of family life, the home, affording women, wives and mothers in particular, stewardship over not only the spiritual development of those who resided in their homes but also power to determine the religious and spiritual character of the nation itself (Tompkins 174). The moment of "clerical and feminine" disestablishment also coincided with the rise in mass print culture, and both women and ministers took full advantage of this revolution of technology and industry to propagate religious tracts, sermons, theological treatises, and domestic manuals (Douglas 81). But perhaps the most influential of these print mediums was the sentimental novel, which distilled and enacted theological and religious concepts in emotionally charged scenes against fictional backdrops of domestic life, saturating the homes, women (and mothers in particular), as well as children they portrayed with spiritual significance (Tompkins 128-129). By channeling religious and spiritual affect into the domestic, sentimental writers, the majority of

whom were women, anchored their moral authority in the figure of the Christian mother, to whom the task implicitly fell to facilitate and oversee the conversion experiences of those who were under her care. Sentimental writers emphasized spiritual transformation in their novels, as Jane Tompkins points out in her discussion of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, in order to centralize "religious conversion as the necessary precondition for sweeping social change," and, by doing so, linked the individual conversion experience within the family context to a vision of Christian nationalism, and, in turn, connected a fully christianized U.S. to an unfolding spiritual empire that would eventually span the globe, redeeming every nation, "because it is the spirit alone that is finally real" (132-133).

The sentimental mode allowed women writers to both tap and energize cultural currents already exercising influence over the nation's readership. The incredible popularity of sentimental novels during the antebellum era speaks to the prevalence of the domestic, national, and gender ideologies that they reflected (Tompkins 126-127). While sentimental fiction, in many ways, imbued women with spiritual power and moral authority and transferred the terms and conditions of conversion from ministers to mothers, it still operated in a world structured by patriarchal control, evidenced by nothing so clearly as the legal system that precluded women from accessing particular forms of social, political, and economic power (Douglas 51). Conversion's sentimental function to transform and endear the spirit to the nation through a process of redemption worked in concert with its legal function to align and ally the spirit's conscience with the laws and edicts of the state. The evolving role of religious conversion in relationship to the state from the Puritan era to the mid-19th century details how pneumapolitical power adapted to a shifting economic and social terrain as it conscripted women in the (re)production of the nation's spiritual order even as it disallowed their full political and

economic participation in its development. As in the Puritan colonial era, biblically based masculinist gender theologies remained rationales for disenfranchisement and other gender inequities in a 19th-century legal structure, and conversion continued to serve as an ideological channel through which gendered spiritual resemblances passed from one generation to the next (Douglas 12-13). By making use of the spiritual technology of conversion to preserve and perpetuate this genealogy of belief, the forces of patriarchal hegemony adapted pneumapolitical strategies of discipline and control to coordinate the double movements of the expansion of capitalist industrialization in the public sphere and the migration of the spiritual into private domestic life. In consigning women to the domestic with the consolation of exercising spiritual authority over the home and nation, the patriarchal interests that pneumapolitcal power protected also implicitly carried with them the generational memory of the gender defiance that characterized a crucial aspect of the Antinomian Controversy and mythologized Hutchinson as a mother of "monstrous births." By figuring Hutchinson (and Dyer) as "new mothers" whose antinomian beliefs threatened to undermine the theological system that bolstered and authorized patriarchal power, the familial logics of Puritan conversion shifted over the course of the 19th-century in order to harness and contain the threat of female spiritual insurgency by rerouting those energies into the figure of the Christian mother, whose access to "divine power," "transmitted from mother to daughter," ultimately depended on an ethic of submission to the authority of husbands and fathers (Tompkins 163). By recasting and elevating the figure of the "new mother" as a spiritual authority who derived her power from submission to (rather than defiance of) male authority, patriarchal hegemony exercised pneumapolitical power as a kind of spiritual eugenics in an attempt to foreclose the possibility of "monstrous births" and ensure the (re)production of an androcentric Christian republicanism.

The Pneumapolitics of Gender from Hutchinson to Hester

Published accounts of Hutchinson's story and the events of the Antinomian Controversy appeared throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, speaking to an ongoing fascination with the controversy and the central role it played in shaping the nation's colonial past and the trajectory of its future.[14] However, perhaps the most noteworthy example to appear in the 19th century was Nathaniel Hawthorne's 1850 historical romance, *The Scarlet Letter*, which alludes to Hutchinson in its opening chapter, "The Prison Door." The novel animates an imagined Puritan past through the allegory of its heroine, Hester Prynne, in order to contemplate the nature of American citizenship at its conception point in 17th-century New England. But twenty years prior to the publication of *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne briefly portrays Hutchinson's story in one of his lesser-known historical sketches, "Mrs. Hutchinson." The bulk of the sketch provides an overview of the Antinomian Controversy by narrating Hutchinson's role in the events through a series of broodily embellished vignettes: Hawthorne imagines Hutchinson standing "loftily before her judges, with a determined brow" and "a flash of carnal pride half hidden in her eye, as she surveys the many learned and famous men whom her doctrines have put in fear" and seems to quietly endorse her banishment, where, he notes, she resides "[s]ecluded from all whose faith she could not govern, and surrounded by the dependents over whom she held an unlimited influence" ("Mrs. Hutchinson" 174, 176). But Hawthorne's true contempt for "the Woman," as he refers to Hutchinson in the sketch, appears in the opening paragraph of the piece where he launches into a sardonic diatribe to remark on the "living resemblance" between the antinomian protests of "Mrs. Hutchinson" and the "feminine ambition" of "ink-stained Amazons," whom he

[14]John Neal's *Rachel Dyer* (1828); Eliza Buckmister Lee's *Namoi, or Boston, Two Hundred Years Ago* (1845); George E. Ellis' *The Life of Anne Hutchinson* (1845)

would later infamously decry as a “damned mob of scribbling women” in an 1855 letter to his publisher William D. Ticknor (“Mrs. Hutchinson” 167, 168).

In one sense, Hawthorne’s disdain for the increasing number and popularity of women writers stems from a growing impression that they were encroaching on his market turf, but in another sense Hawthorne’s derisive commentary reflects his objection to women, in general, exceeding the confines of the domestic to publicize their “naked” minds “to the gaze of the world” (“Mrs. Hutchinson” 168). As Amy Schrager Lang explains, in Hawthorne’s sketch “antinomianism names a pattern of opposition shared by the ‘public woman’ of the nineteenth century and the heretic of the seventeenth” (13). While the “living resemblance” Hawthorne sees between Hutchinson and 19th-century women writers certainly brings into sharper relief the genealogy of belief that informed prevailing patriarchal gender ideologies from the colonial era into the antebellum period, it also belies the distinct differences in the cultural work and impact each imparted: whereas Hutchinson’s defiance threatened to upend the Puritan gender order by directly challenging patriarchal authority, the sentimental fiction of the most successful 19th-century women writers, such as Harriet Beecher Stowe and Susan Warner, rather underpinned and sustained it by affirming a domestic ideology of female spiritual authority that ultimately limited the extent to which women could meaningfully engage in political and economic realms. While the women writers of sentimental fiction themselves may have defied 19th-century gender norms by embarking on enterprising literary careers, the gender and domestic ideologies that they endorsed and circulated in and through their novels did anything but: the mother of “monstrous births" was a far cry from the Christian mother of sentimental fiction. Nonetheless in his recognition of the “resemblance” between Hutchison and the “public woman” of the 19th century, Hawthorne voices a concern shared by the early Puritan leaders about Hutchinson’s

antinomianism and the threat that a spiritual contagion of female defiance posed to a male hegemony: “But there are portentous indications, changes gradually taking place in the habits and feelings of the gentle sex, which seem to threaten our posterity with many of those public women, whereof one was a burthen too grievous for our fathers” (“Mrs. Hutchinson" 167). By characterizing Hutchinson as a “burthen too grievous,” Hawthorne implicitly aligns himself with “our fathers" in order to deploy the semiotics of the patriarchal family metaphor as a justification for repressing what he understands as the antinomian impulse of “public women” to violate 19th-century gender “laws.” For Hawthorne, the figure of Anne Hutchinson operates almost typologically to bring continuity to a legacy of female rebellion that constitutes an ongoing threat to patriarchal rule, and by alluding to Hutchinson in the opening of *The Scarlet Letter*, he invokes her mythos as a means of unfurling the Antinomian Controversy and its gender concerns as a tacit backdrop for the novel.

Because the Antinomian Controversy highlighted the ways that Puritan law (as a genealogical precursor to antebellum law) codified a masculinist theology of gender structured by the metaphor of the patriarchal family, what conscience a citizen was meant to derive from the law depended on how their sexed body fit into and related within that family model. Familial gendered categories such as son/daughter, husband/wife, father/mother correspond to and calibrate an individual’s relationship to the law and determine how each *ought* to conscientiously express their gender. Hester’s crime of adultery, for example, is predicated on her intentional violation of the legal expectations of a series of gendered categories constellated in and through their relation to the patriarchal family model: her status as wife to an absent husband, Chillingworth, forbids her from committing fornication under the law, and her status as mother to a fatherless child, Pearl, precludes her the dignity and social support of widowhood because

her secret paramour, Dimmesdale, remains at large and her legal husband presumably remains alive–although upon Chillingworth's surreptitious arrival in Boston, a townsperson tells him that Hester's husband is "most likely [...] at the bottom of the sea" (*SL* 130). Nonetheless, the legal categorization of Hester's crime as adultery depends on establishing her status as a wife, even though the whereabouts of her husband remain unclear. Thomas Demos explains that Puritan law categorized adultery as criminal based on stipulations taken directly from the Old Testament book of Leviticus and defined it as as fornication with a married or betrothed woman, implying that "the chief concern, the essential element of sin, was the woman's infidelity to her husband" (97). "The adultery of a wife," Demos continues, "was treated as both a violation of her marriage [...] *and* an offense against the community," whereas for "husbands only the former consideration applied" (97).[15] Therefore, Hester's relationship to the law and her status as an adulterer are predicated on the constellation of her gendered legal categories: woman, wife, and mother, a string of classifications that also illustrates a grammar of gendered conversion implicit in the law, and that, in turn, determines how and to what extent her crime is punishable. In Hester's case, the scarlet A's programmatic function intends to facilitate a conversion experience that would restore and redeem her status as godly women, wife, and mother, in order to interpolate her back into the gendered order of patriarchal law.

In the chapter "Another View of Hester," seven years have passed since Hester and Pearl first stood on the public scaffold as a "spectacle of guilt and shame" and both began the journey that would take them "out of ordinary relations with humanity" (*SL* 123, 125). During those intervening years, Hawthorne's narrator reports, Hester's saintly philanthropy and "the blameless purity of her life" had by a "gradual and quiet process" begun to transform the symbol of her

[15] See Leviticus 20 (KJV)

shame so "that many people refused to interpret the scarlet A by its original signification," but instead "[t]hey said that it meant Able; so strong was Hester Prynne with a woman's strength" (*SL* 209, 210). At least in the "public mind," the letter seemed to serve its function by transforming Hester from an adulterer into a "Sister of Mercy," whose maternal warmth and caretaking tended the sick when "pestilence stalked through the town" and sheltered the "outcast of society" when they had nowhere else to turn (*SL* 210). But the narrator goes on to explain that Hester's public acts of kindness and charity belie the effects years of social isolation have had on her inner life (the other "view" to which the chapter title alludes): "Much of the marble coldness of Hester's impression was to be attributed to the circumstance that her life had turned, in a great measure, from passion and feeling, to thought" (*SL* 213). In the previous paragraph, the narrator postulates that the "peculiar severity" of Hester's experience stripped her of "Love," "Passion," and "Affection," in essence, stripping her of her womanhood (*SL* 212). By trading "passion and feeling" for "thought," the supposed virtues of Hester's feminine innerworld had been overtaken by the masculine tenacity of a "human intellect, newly emancipated": "Hester," the narrator tells us, "imbibed this spirit" (*SL* 213). Almost immediately following these reflections, Anne Hutchinson reenters the narrative as a spectral prototype for the sort of masculinized femininity that the narrator seems to recognize (and criticize) in Hester. If Pearl had never been born to Hester from the "spiritual world," then she "might have come down to us in history, hand in hand, with Ann Hutchison, as the foundress of a religious sect" or "a prophetess," who no doubt would have "suffered death from the stern tribunals of the period, for attempting to undermine the foundations of the Puritan establishment" (*SL* 213). Hutchinson's reemergence in the text further solidifies the shared spiritual "resemblance" the narrator (and by extension, Hawthorne)

sees between the two women, a shared resemblance that stems primarily from a common genealogy of belief that refuses to submit to patriarchal law and the world it structures.

As the narrator (like Hawthorne in his sketch) suggests via Hutchinson that "female publicity is a symptom and the cause of the crisis in law that confronts the colony," he quietly inherits and endorses the pneumapolitical regime of power that instrumentalized religious conversion as a means of defining, directing, and reforming gender beneath the rubric of patriarchal law (Berlant 107-108). "Everything was against her. The world was hostile," the narrator goes on to explain, "The child's own nature had something wrong in it, which continually betokened that she had been born amiss" (*SL* 214). In the narrator's estimation, the specific tribulations that Hester and Pearl experience in their Puritan community are symptomatic of the pervasive adversity faced by "the whole race of womanhood" (*SL* 153). While the narrator evokes the discourse of "monstrous birth" to maintain the ideological link between Hester and Hutchinson by directly attributing whatever had been "born amiss" in Pearl to "the effluence of her mother's lawless [antinomian] passion," the existential musings that follow modulate the narrator's exposition into anachronism that reflects feminist thought consistent with Hawthorne's time, but wholly foreign to Hutchinson's, which the novel ostensibly portrays. But rather than faithfully portray that rhetoric, the narrator seems to parody and ventriloquize arguments of more contemporaneous feminist thinkers like Mary Wollstonecraft and Margaret Fuller in a mode of free indirect speech through the fictional avatar of Hester:

> As a first step, the whole system of society is to be torn down, and built up anew. Then, the very nature of the opposite sex, or its long hereditary habit, which has become like nature, is to be essentially modified before woman can be allowed to

> assume what seems a fair and suitable position. Finally, all other difficulties begin obviated, woman cannot take advantage of these preliminary reforms, until she herself shall have undergone a still mightier change; in which, perhaps the ethereal essence, wherein she has her truest life, will be found to have evaporated. (*SL* 214).

Through Hester, the narrator outlines how a radical feminist vision of futurity ultimately signifies apocalyptic annihilation, what Berlant calls the Feminine Symbolic, which "is a fantasy of how 'woman' would discipline social formations–states and bodies–in the absence of patriarchal law" (135). As the narrator locates Hester within a feminist genealogy of belief that stretches from Hutchinson to Fuller, he portrays his fictional heroine as subsumed into the Feminine Symbolic, where her "ethereal essence" and "truest life" have all but "evaporated," leaving behind an estranged wanderer in the "dark labyrinth of mind" whose despair leads her to contemplate, first, filicide, and then her own suicide. Furthermore, as the narrator casts Hester's (and Hutchinson's) antinomianism as the spiritual evisceration of patriarchal body politic ("the whole system of society is to be torn down" and "the very nature of the opposite sex […] is to be essentially modified"), he also appeals to and scandalizes the sentimental logics of the 19th-century domestic ideology that sacralized the bond between mother and child as essential to maintaining the spiritual well-being of the nation. The "fearful doubt that strove to possess her soul" reinforces the prevailing 19th-century gender ideology as it figures Hester's motherhood as distorted and distorting femininity, an unrestrained form of what I have called the "new mother," who draws on "her own ideas of right and wrong" rather than the edicts of patriarchal law to shape her conscience and construct her moral outlook (*SL* 209).

The novel's most famous line, "The scarlet letter had not done its office," accentuated and underscored as a single-sentence paragraph in the text, abruptly appears to punctuate the narrator's portrayal of the other "view" of Hester, a view which reveals for the reader her inner waywardness and existential despair as she contemplates the plight of women generally and reflects on her particular responsibilities to her daughter ("whether it were not better to send Pearl at once to Heaven") (*SL* 214). As Sacvan Bercovitch argues in his study of the novel, Hawthorne's statement implies the letter's purpose and process towards a "certain" end (xi-xii). Although the nature of the letter's office remains as ambiguous as the meaning of the scarlet A itself at this point in the novel, Hawthorne's choice to include the line directly following the narrator's description of the "fearful doubt" that caused Hester to consider ending Pearl's life along with her own suggests, at least in part, that Hester's distorted motherhood and gender form an immediate context for interpreting and clarifying a potential process that concerns the letter's unfulfilled office. In light of the inner "view" Hawthorne's narrator lays bare in order to contrast it with the outward displays of Hester's maternal philanthropy, the letter's indistinctly "certain" purpose and process furthermore point to spiritual conversion as the ongoing subtext of the letter's social and juridical function. As Bercovitch explains,

> The process of conversion follows the symbolic logic of the scarlet letter. It is the office of the A to demonstrate that naturally, organically, pluralism tends to absorb differences into polar opposites, and that bipolarity, properly interpreted, tends of its own accord toward integration. So conceived, the monologics of ambiguity in *The Scarlet Letter* extend to structures of gender, religion, history, psychology, aesthetics, morality and epistemology. (27)

In Bercovitch's analysis, the "symbolic logic" of the letter eventually fosters Hester's transformation and reintegration into Puritan society as a reformed woman whose outward and inward rebellion have been subsumed into the discipling structures of Puritan socio-juridical hegemony, evidenced by her return to the colony at in the novel's concluding chapter. It is also the ambiguous letter's "symbolic logic" that lifts the matter of Hester's gender nonconformity from an almost exclusively theological and religious context, as was the case with Hutchinson, into a secular frame that includes a range of non-religious "structures." Bercovitch's larger argument seeks to explain the formation of American culture and processes of socialization (a "cultural genealogy") through the "basic symbolic opposition [...] between self and society" that tracks "a major shift from 'civic' to individualistic norms" (xv, 29). In doing so, he suggests a close link between the ongoing dialectically driven processes of cultural and social formations and secular morphologies of conversion. In other words, Protestant religious conversion serves as a model for creating spiritual as well as secular subjects, whose individual oppositional stances dialectically shape society as society shapes them. The "natural" and "organic" absorption of differences and the integration of bipolarity into a consensus of belief mirrors the Protestant process of spiritual conversion that draws together and incorporates the wayward sinner with God's elect and into the church body. As the A "moves from the customshouse back to its Puritan origins" and in many ways *from* Hester as a construction of Hawthorne's 19th-century romantic imagination back to Hutchinson, Bercovitch's "cultural genealogy" becomes inextricably entangled with and dependent on the feminine/maternal genealogy of belief I have been discussing thus far because it serves as a prominent oppositional force in determining the shape of "American culture," perhaps most saliently captured in the "resemblance" between the gender ideologies expressed by Hawthorne and the Puritan ministers and magistrates responsible

for prosecuting Hutchinson for her gender defiance (Bercovitch vx). Notably, the allusion to Hutchinson offers a context for the narrator's "view" of Hester's heterodox beliefs in the chapter and, on one hand, encourages readers to draw parallels between the histories of the two women and, on the other hand, underscores the different gender regimes that inform the basis for patriarchal criticism and control of each. Whereas Hutchinson's male detractors deployed biblical and theological arguments (almost exclusively) to rationalize their opposition to Hutchinson's gender defiance, Hawthorne's narrator seems to rely on a post-Enlightenment discourse of essentialized gender ("the very nature of the opposite sex," "ethereal essence," and "hereditary habit") that, though it may have its roots in a Protestant theological tradition, ultimately eschews its biblical origins in favor of a 19th-century "scientific" gendered truth of the body. In other words, the absence of religious and theological language to denounce Hester's gender conversion (the masculine "spirit" she "imbibed") and announce the letter's unfulfilled office in the chapter illustrates the conceptual shifts gender underwent from the 17th to 19th century as Hawthorne blurs theological and "scientific" rationales (employing a sort of theological scientism) by overlying his predominantly secular worldview onto a historical context dominated by religious moral thinking. By converting the Puritan past into his 19th-century present, Hawthorne further legitimizes and entrenches patriarchal power into America's "cultural genealogy" by overwriting the nation's Puritan origin story with his anachronistic and secularized view of gender. Furthermore, the conceptual shift in gender that the narrator's view of Hester foregrounds represents the secularizing adaptations of pneumapolitics across time as the narrator brings historical continuity to the gender ideology of the present by conflating a 19th-century secular concept of gender essentialism with a theological precept of spiritual

malleability (to which the letter's unfilled office is meant to attend by realigning Hester's gender expression with the normalizing index of the law).

The Electric Chain and the Rose-Bush

While "Another View of Hester" implies that one of the letter's roles is to discipline and transform Hester's gender dissidence into a woman- and motherhood consonant with Puritan ideals, the narrator also duplicates the letter's reforming function (as well as its unfulfilled office) in the relational mother-daughter dynamic of Hester and Pearl: "But, in the education of her child, the mother's enthusiasm of thought had something to wreak itself upon. Providence, in the person of this little girl, had assigned to Hester's charge the germ and blossom of womanhood, to be cherished and developed amid a host of difficulties" (*SL* 214). Hester's providential charge (her yet unfulfilled office) to take care in fostering the development of Pearl's gender ("the germ and blossom of womanhood") suggests that Hester could secure redemption for herself by instilling "proper" gender within Pearl, that the office of the scarlet letter could be carried out by repairing the motherhood she corrupted through her affair with Dimmesdale. Like Hester's ultimate fate, Pearl's gender remains a suspended question in "Another View of Hester" even as it obliquely foreshadows and determines the novel's conventional resolution in the reconstitution of the family in the final scaffold scene just before Dimmesdale's death:

> Pearl kissed his lips. A spell was broken. The great scene of grief, in which the wild infant bore a part, had developed all her sympathies; and as her tears fell upon her father's cheek, they were the pledge that she would grow up amid human joy and sorrow, nor for ever do battle with the world, but be a woman in it.

> Towards her mother, too, Pearl's errand as a messenger of anguish was all fulfilled. (*SL* 287).

In the public restoration of familial order on the symbolic stage of discipline, Dimmesdale finally escapes the torment of his secret by momentarily inhabiting the role of father to Pearl and lover to Hester, whose solitary despair seems to briefly dissipate in the public acknowledgement of their shared responsibility in the affair that thrust both their lives into disarray. By publicly shifting Hester and Dimmesdale into their roles as lovers and mother/father, Hawthorne simultaneously resolves the uncertain fate of Pearl by sentimentalizing her gender: the "wild infant" had now "developed all her sympathies." Her tears not only establish her connection to Dimmesdale as his daughter but also prefigure a path toward "lawful" womanhood. The "Love," "Passion," and "Affection" that Hester forfeited for a life of thought and speculation in the fallout of her affair, seem to be redeemed and restored in the promise of Pearl's womanhood and her filiation to Dimmesdale.

Before Dimmesdale's public disclosure of his relationship to both Hester and Pearl in the penultimate chapter, Hawthorne foreshadows the novel's familial resolution midway through the novel in the second scaffold scene in "The Minister's Vigil," which portrays Dimmesdale's attempt to unburden himself of the torturous secret of his affair in the market square by shrieking desperately into the night from atop the scaffold (*SL* 200). After his attempt fails to rouse any of the sleeping inhabitants of the colony (besides Governor Bellingham and his sister, Mistress Hibbins, only briefly), Hester and Pearl, having just come from the deathbed of Governor Winthrop, happen to pass by the market square on their way homeward; Dimmesdale, discerning their presence after hearing Pearl's "light, airy, childish laughter," invites them to join him upon

the scaffold (*SL* 203). Once Pearl and Hester join Dimmesdale's solitary vigil, the three stand together alone for the first time:

> [Hester] silently ascended the steps, and stood on the platform, holding little Pearl by the hand. The minister felt for the child's other hand, and took it. The moment that he did so, there came what seemed a tumultuous rush of new life, other life than his own, pouring like a torrent into his heart, and hurrying through all his veins, as if the mother and child were communicating their warmth to his half-torpid system. The three formed an electric chain. (*SL* 203)

As the formation of the "electric chain" anticipates the reconstitution of the family and Dimmesdale's public confession, it serves as the basis for an alternate familial narrative in the following chapter, "Another View of Hester," which I have previously discussed at length. Whereas Dimmesdale's death scene confession reconstitutes the image of the family and establishes genealogical ties via paternal disclosure, "Another View of Hester" envisions Anne Hutchinson "hand in hand" with Hester, the would-be "foundress of a religious sect" had it not been for the birth of Pearl and the preoccupations of motherhood. By substituting Dimmesdale with Hutchinson in the "electric chain" that was formed in the previous chapter as a familial prototype through the joining of hands, the narrator relates Pearl biologically to Dimmesdale while simultaneously forming an ideological link to Hutchinson, despite the implication that a union between Hutchinson and Hester would have foreclosed the possibility of Pearl. As mentioned previously, the novel's opening chapter, "The Prison Door," encourages a resemblance between Hutchinson and Hester in the symbol of the rose bush, which had ostensibly sprung up from beneath the former's footstep at the prison's threshold as she entered into her incarceration (*SL* 118). The narrator extends this shared spiritual resemblance between

Hutchinson and Hester to the figure of Pearl, pointing to a maternal genealogy of belief binding them together:

> Hester could only account for the child's character–and even then, most vaguely and imperfectly–by recalling what she herself had been, during that momentous period while Pearl was imbibing her soul from the spiritual world, and her bodily material of earth. The mother's impassioned state had been the medium through which were transmitted to the unborn infant the rays of its moral life; and, however white and clear originally, they had taken the deep stains of crimson and gold, the fiery lustre, the black shadow, and the untempered light, of intervening substance. Above all, the warfare of Hester's spirit, at that epoch, was perpetuated in Pearl. (*SL* 152).

By blurring the lines between the biological and the spiritual, the narrator frames this mode of conversion, as the Puritans had done, as a threatening genealogy of belief transmitted through the mother's womb. As Hester's body becomes a "medium" through which Hutchinson's antinomian beliefs pass to Pearl, Hawthorne revives the discourse of Hutchinson's and Dyer's "monstrous births," and, indeed, throughout the novel, reiterates that Pearl was "born outcast of the infantile world" because of her "demon origin": "imp of evil"; "fiend"; "little elf"; "evil spirit"; "airy sprite"; "witch-baby" form a discursive web of epithets that serve to attach her to the gender concerns of the Antinomian Controversy and the "monstrous births" discovered and documented in its aftermath.

Hawthorne furthermore cultivates this connection in the chapter "The Elf-Child and the Minister," in which the narrator details Mr. Wilson's attempt to catechize Pearl in order to validate the soundness of her moral and religious instruction under Hester's tutelage in their

semi-exile. To the question, "Canst thou tell me, my child, who made thee?" the three-year-old Pearl insolently replies that "she had not been made at all, but had been plucked by her mother off the bush of wild roses, that grew by the prison-door" (*SL* 170). Had it not been for Hester's supplication and Dimmesdale's intervention, this scene of Pearl's failed conversion would have served as justification for her removal by Governor Bellingham from Hester's care into the wardship of the state, but the scene also serves to offer a glimpse of the novel's narrative undercurrent, in which the figure of the "new mother" forms genealogical links with her "lovers" and "offspring" through a process of conversion conceived as the asexual replication of spirits. In other words, Pearl's failure to perform her spiritual inculcation into Puritan theological and moral thinking, on one hand, affirms the narrator's frequent demonization of her as the product of an unsanctioned union and, on the other hand, draws her into the legacy of antinomian protests and gender defiance epitomized in the figure of Hutchinson and transmitted to Hester. The rosebush, then, becomes the symbol of their spiritual resemblance, the influence of the "new mother" figure, and an emblem that expresses a patent defiance to patriarchal law at the same time that it marks an uneasy proximity to state discipline and control, the prison threshold. In "The Prison-Door," the narrator plucks a rose from the bush and presents it to reader with the hope that "[i]t may serve [...] to symbolize some sweet moral blossom, that may be found along the track, or relieve the darkening close of a tale of human frailty and sorrow," prefiguring, of course, the "germ and blossom" of Pearl's womanhood providentially given into Hester's care (*SL* 118). The shadow of an "immoral" blossom and the specter of the "new mother," however, haunt the bulk of the novel, even as it rushes towards a semblance of conventional resolution in the concluding chapters. By displacing the biological and ideological function of the "new father," conversion oriented around emulating a "new mother" presented an ever-present threat

to the hegemony of patriarchal authority, a fear that Hawthorne shared with his Puritan forefathers, despite his objections to their religious and moral tyranny. [16]

Pearl's Absence and Hester's Return

After their hopes of escaping the juridical clutches of Puritan law to begin life together anew are dashed by Dimmesdale's dramatic confession and sudden death on the scaffold during the Election Day celebration, Hester and Pearl briefly remain in the colony for about a year, the narrator reports, until the death of Chillingworth, who, in an act of redemptive charity and paternal surrogacy, leaves his sizeable fortune to Pearl, making her the "richest heiress of her day, in the New World" (*SL* 290). After their departure, only "a vague report would now and then find its way across the sea," but none could be verified as "unquestionably authentic"; the "cottage by the sea-shore" in which Hester and Pearl had lived remained untouched until "one afternoon [...] a tall woman, in a gray robe" appeared to take up residence once again in the solitary dwelling (*SL* 291). Bercovitch's famous argument marks this moment, Hester's return, as finally fulfilling the office of the scarlet letter, which she continues to wear of her own volition upon her return to the colony:

> Hester's individuality emerges through her capacity to make the general symbol her own, an act of her appropriation through dissent whose office is fulfilled at the end, when she returns to New England accompanied both by rumors of Pearl in Europe and by hopes of better things in store for America. (152)

For Bercovitch, Hester's willing return enacts a typology emblematic of the formation and perpetuation of American liberal culture and ideology through the oppositional dialectics of

[16] See "The Custom-House," pp. 10-11.

dissent and consensus. By consenting to wear the scarlet letter and reinstall herself in the community of her former persecution, she both submits to and transforms the disciplinary power of the A and the legal structures that dispatched it. Ultimately, however, "[f]or Hawthorne, as for his narrator," Bercovitch argues, "the issue is not stasis or change but whether change shall overturn or conserve, and in the end both Hawthorne and his narrator require us to leave the system intact, as Hester does–radically *un*changed" (150). In this sense, Hester's return also represents her containment within the confines of the domestic. For Hawthorne and his narrator, the solution to the problem that Hester's antinomianism poses to patriarchal law is the reinforcement of separate gendered spheres of influence to bolster the supremacy and reach of male authority and create a veneer of historical continuity between the gender ideologies of 17th and 19th centuries. Upon Hester's return, as she resumes her philanthropic mothering to the larger community from her home also offers consolation and comfort for the "sorrow and perplexities" of those who sought her counsel. "Women more especially," the narrator continues, "came to Hester's cottage," to seek wisdom and solace for the "recurring trials of wounded, wasted, wronged, misplaced, or erring sinful passion" (*SL* 295). Sanctified by her own experience of persecution and suffering, Hester exercises spiritual authority within the community that once shunned and ridiculed her; within the confines of her former dwelling, she seems to adopt a role similar to the figure of the 19th-century Christian mother, redeeming her past sin through maternal surrogacy. Berlant explains that

> The disciplinary effect of Hester's domestic activity is nonetheless to preserve the idea of law, to repress the potential eruption of female antinomian energy, to encourage women/citizens to read the present tense as their reality, fundamentally invulnerable to historical time. On the other hand, these conversations within the

> home are, at the end of the novel, the only remaining places where historical narrative and social fantasy might be transmitted. (156)

Though the details of the private exchanges that pass between Hester and the colony's crestfallen women remain obscure, the narrator nonetheless assures the reader that her counsel encouraged her woebegone visitors to expect a "brighter period" when "a new truth would be revealed, in order to establish the whole relation between man and woman on surer ground" (*SL* 292). No longer does Hester envision the apocalyptic destruction of "the whole system of society" as she had in "Another View of Hester," but instead seems content to patiently await and look for the "angel and apostle of the coming revelation," a "lofty, pure, and beautiful" woman, and the promise of an incremental gender equity she will supposedly usher in (*SL* 292). What's striking at this juncture in the concluding chapter is the narrator's tidy resolution to Hester's years-long spiritual rebellion; as in Bercovitch's argument, the narrator frames Hester's return as her final consent to be governed by legal system she spent the majority of the novel evading through spiritual resistance.

The other "view" of Hester portrayed by the narrator midway through the novel seems to dissipate entirely in a few sentences of exposition. However, the specter of Anne Hutchinson, as though returned from her exile, lurks at the fringes of the scene of domestic conference the narrator offers up as evidence of Hester's reformation. Even as the scene attempts to contain "female antinomian energy," it re-members the Antinomian Controversy's epicenter of gender dissent, Anne Hutchinson's home meetings, in which she served as a spiritual advisor to the colony's female congregants. As Berlant shows in her analysis of the novel's opening chapters, the narrative begins twice, and so it seems that the ending also has a double valence. In fact, its ending resonates with its historical beginning, the Antinomian Controversy itself, just outside the

novel's frame. As Berlant explains, "We have shown that the novel opens twice, to establish both the variety and the noncoherence of the contexts in which we are to understand the relation of Hester Prynne and the law she configures: but the narrator of *The Scarlet Letter* depicts with great clarity the points of view he brings into the narrative gaze" (167). Despite attempts to resolve Hutchinson's gender dissidence through Hester's domesticity, therefore, restoring the normalizing process of conversion and establishing a androcentric genealogy of belief, the narrative slippages opened by the narrator's tidy, yet troubled, conclusion nonetheless invite the spirit and the threat of Hutchinson's gender defiance unwittingly back into the text. In other words, Hester's return to the Puritan colony is Hawthorne's return to Hutchinson's threat: By emblemizing Hester as a type of the Christian mother figure and absorbing her into the culture of domesticity central to maintaining the gender ideology of the antebellum U.S., what appears to escape the view of the narrator is what Berlant terms "everyday life," or the local experiences of citizens that challenge the symbolic order and "official material" of the national mythos (6, 63-64). More precisely, what evades representation in the end is the "everyday life" of the spirit, which, I contend, encompasses the fugitive and often unsupervised trafficking of unsanctioned beliefs between those who find themselves relating slantwise to Berlant's concept of the National Symbolic, "the order of discursive practices whose reign within a national space produces, and also refers to the 'law' in which the accident of birth within a geographic/political boundary transforms individuals into a collectively-held history" (Berlant 20). Following the doubling logics of the novel, shuttling between local and the national, popular and official representations, Hester stands as both a symbol of national conformity and national subversion, her gender simultaneously representing national continuity and dissolution, hinging on the authenticity of the visible expression *and* internal veracity of her spiritual conversion, a problem which

Protestants, and Puritans in particular, have grappled with for centuries: "visible signs" can't always be relied upon to reveal the "truth" of conversion.

As Hawthorne channels Hester's spiritual influence into a domestic conduit, her former cottage, siloing the threat of her rebellion within the confines of 19th-century gender ideology, Pearl–"the demon offspring"–likewise, undergoes an equivocating gloss that draws her under the normalizing gaze of the narrator (*SL* 290). Unlike Hester, however, Pearl's exact whereabouts and whether or not she is still alive remain uncertain, even to the narrator, who speculates that if she were still living at the era of Hester's return then she would have been "in the flush and bloom of womanhood" (*SL* 291). Although the question of whether or not the "wild and rich nature" of the "elf-child" had been "softened and subdued, and made capable of a woman's gentle happiness" remains open, the narrator joins "the gossips of that day" and "Mr. Surveyor Pue," whose records of Hester's life initially piqued his interest in "The Custom-House," in believing "that Pearl was not only alive, but married, happy, and mindful of her mother" (*SL* 244). As further evidence of Pearl's life circumstances and whereabouts, the narrator describes letters arriving to the colony with "armorial seals [...] unknown to English heraldry" and "articles of comfort and luxury" in Hester's humble cottage, implying that she has most likely married into European nobility. Furthermore, Hester's elaborate embroidery upon "a baby-garment, with such lavish richness of golden fancy" indicates to the narrator that Pearl has also become a mother in the intermediary period between her departure from the colony and Hester's return. In the same way that Hester's surrogate mothering of the young women of her community forms the basis for the "proof" of her reformation, so does Pearl's rumored marriage and motherhood serve as evidence of her gender redeemed. More so than Hester's return, however, Pearl's absence troubles the novel's concluding chapter. She, like Hutchinson, stands just outside the

novel's frame, someplace else, not exactly an exile, yet still a spectral force imposing her presence upon the mind of the narrator, who *hopes* the rose he offered the reader in "The Prison-Door" has come to symbolize a "sweet moral blossom." Although he cannot be certain, he "faithfully believes" it to be true (*SL* 291). Pearl's absence from the colony, on one hand, points to a global order of gender organized around the "new father" conversion paradigm (echoing visions of evangelical imperialism); however, on the other hand, it also represents an uncontained threat challenging that order from without. Pearl, as likely as she is not, plucks another rose from the bush: a "new mother," whose legacy, though banished from the text in the end, nonetheless sustains the legend of "monstrous births" and the spirits who refuse, along with those who came before them, conformity to patriarchal law and the gender ideologies of Protestant-secularism.

The concluding chapter of *The Scarlet Letter*, far from a tidy resolution to the gender concerns of the Antinomian Controversy and its 19th-century corollaries, is a narrative equivocation that captures (as it attempts to contain) a feminine/maternal genealogy of belief that constitutes patriarchal law and male authority *as* a threat to each. The fissures that emerge in the novel's final chapter reveal glimpses of what Berlant calls the Feminine Symbolic, flowing just beneath the surface of the text, lapping against the edges of the novel's historical frames. In the end, the historical Anne Hutchinson comes to us as a myth of national beginning, one built upon the responses Puritan ministers and magistrates launched against challenges to their theological and legal claims to enact and enforce a hierarchy of power organized beneath male headship. Central to the mythos of Hutchinson and the Antinomian Controversy, though less superficially apparent, is the emphasis Puritans placed on processes of religious conversion in the formation of church congregants as well as citizens. The complaints that Hutchinson's male detractors

lodged against her were made primarily in theologically and spiritually gendered terms, which, for the Puritans, also implicated her in legal and moral transgressions. After many attempts to entrap Hutchinson in cleverly devised scriptural arguments (all of which she managed to evade), her male judges finally convicted her on the revelation of her narrative of spiritual conversion, which illuminated to them an intransigent spirit beyond redemption and reform. Importantly, the Antinomian Controversy did more than quell theological insurgence in the politically fragile colony; it also linked together gender, morphologies of proper conversion, and proto-national belonging in coordination with and calibrated by patriarchal law, a structure of power and discipline, or pneumapolitics. As Hawthorne participates in a masculine/paternal genealogy of belief and casts the gender politics of the 19th-century as a Puritan romance, his novel engages in a pneumapolitical project that seeks to legitimize and perpetuate the gendered spheres of influence prevalent at mid-century by creating historical continuity between his moment and the nation's Puritan origins, a narrative of conversion for a secular age. By attaching gender to concepts of spirit, Hawthorne furthermore draws upon the discourse of sentimentalism, even as he attempts to distance himself from that very mode and the women writers who propagated it, in order to affirm the figure of the Christian mother and the socio-political threat of her antinomian "other," the "new mother" of "monstrous births." For Hawthorne, as for his Puritan predecessors, conversion functions as both a legal and spiritual technology meant to construct and fortify the ideal national family–against which Hester's narrative stands as a cautionary tale–and inculcate gender expressions consonant with the edicts patriarchal law. In a Puritan context, the very idea of spirit itself, a conscience that can be molded and influenced by law, centralizes conversion in processes of subject interpellation, implicating the secular state's interest in cultivating the beliefs of citizens in line with a generic Protestant ethos detrimental to ideals of democratic

republicanism rather than consonant with them, laying, in large part, the groundwork for the movements of Christian nationalism we see today.

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The Body and Spirit of (Brother) Jonathan: Converting the "City on a Hill" to a "City of Friends" in Whitman's "Calamus"

*****

For My Beloved Friend, Jorge

I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.

–2 Samuel 1:26 (KJV)

Homosexuality is a historic occasion to reopen affective and relational virtualities, not so much through the intrinsic qualities of the homosexual but because the "slantwise" position of the latter, as it were, the diagonal lines he can lay out in the social fabric allow these virtualities to come to light.

–Michel Foucault, "Friendship as a Way of Life"

In October 1872, John Addington Symonds wrote to Walt Whitman to express his adoration and gratitude for *Leaves of Grass*, which he first encountered sometime in 1866 while at Cambridge:

> As I have put pen to paper I cannot refrain from saying that since the time when I first took up *Leaves of Grass* in a friend's rooms at Trinity College Cambridge 6 years ago till now, your poems have been my constant companions. I have read them in Italy by the shores of the Mediterranean, under pine trees or caverns washed by the sea–and in Switzerland among the alpine glaciers [...] I say this in order that I may, as simply may be, tell you how much I owe you. He who makes the words of a man his spiritual food for years is greatly that man's debtor. (*Letters Volume II* 167)

This correspondence would initiate a years-long exchange of letters between the two men, in which Symonds would press Whitman to expound on and clarify what he meant by "adhesiveness" and "comradeship," particularly in the "Calamus" section of *Leaves of Grass*. A now famous 1890 letter from Whitman responding to Symonds' inquiries seems to have dashed the latter's hope that he might find in the former's poetry of love between men a portrayal of "new Chivalry," or "a second elevated form of human love" that would "engage a different type of individual in different spheres of energy" (qtd. in White 94). In the letter to Symonds, Whitman vehemently dismisses the suggestion that "Calamus" was "calculated to encourage ardent and *physical* intimacies" between men, writing that "the possibility of such construction as mention'd is terrible" (*Letters Volume III* 483 and *Correspondence Volume V* 72). Symonds, who had made it his life's work to illuminate the "passion" that "makes itself felt in every quarter of the globe where men are brought into communion with men," saw reflected in "Calamus" a love that lacked an affirming cultural language to accurately describe and define it: "surely it deserves a name," he wrote in his 1896 pamphlet *A Problem in Modern Ethics Being An Inquiry into the Phenomenon of Sexual Inversion* (2-3). The following year, Symonds would work together with Havelock Ellis to publish their 1897 study *Sexual Inversion*, which included an earlier pamphlet by Symonds called *A Problem in Greek Ethics*. The pamphlet, inspired by Symonds' reading of *Leaves of Grass*, was written in 1873 and 10 copies were published privately in 1883, later serving as a supplementary history of "homosexuality" in the Greek world in *Sexual Inversion* (*Memoirs* 190 and Ellis 163).

For Symonds, *Leaves of Grass* had become "a sort of Bible," an aesthetic, spiritual, and intellectual beacon in his quest to define erotic desire between men (*Memoirs* 189). Given his training in classical literature and history, it is no wonder that he saw echoes of pairs of male

same-sex lovers of antiquity reflected in Whitman's "Calamus." In his 1893 book of criticism *Walt Whitman: A Study*, for example, he links together "Over Carnage Rose Prophetic a Voice" from Whitman's *Drum Taps* with "Calamus 28" from *Leaves of Grass* by saying, "Its pathos and clinging intensity transpire through the last lines of the following piece, which may have been suggested by the legends of David and Jonathan, Achilles and Patroclus, Orestes and Pylades" (78). Symonds' reference to the biblical story of Jonathan and David, more so than its Greek corollaries, strikes a chord with the long tradition of male same-sex friendship in the U.S., which Whitman responded to and engaged with in writing "Calamus." Even before the earliest days of the republic, the story of Jonathan and David functioned as a narrative for modeling male same-sex attachment and envisioning ideal citizenship. Centuries before the publication of Whitman's "Calamus" poems in the 1860 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, John Winthrop, the Puritan pioneer who sought to establish a "City on a Hill" in the new world would invoke the story of Jonathan and David in developing a civic theory of communal cohesion and spiritual unity that would catalyze a set of social, cultural, and political forces, sustained by processes of spiritual conversion, and eventually provoke Whitman into envisioning a global community of comrades, "A City of Friends" in "Calamus," which Symonds would draw upon, despite Whitman's objection, for developing his conception of "sexual inversion," a term synonymous with and contemporaneous to our modern understanding of "homosexuality."

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In this chapter, I contend that Whitman's portrayal of a homo-social/erotic "City of Friends" in the "Calamus" cluster in his 1860 edition of *Leaves of Grass* bears a direct genealogical connection to Winthrop's conception of a "City upon a Hill" from his 1630 "A Modell of Christian Charity" sermon. Standing between the two cities, I argue, is the figure of

Brother Jonathan. This complicated figure of ambiguous historical origins, on one hand, embodies the character of American exceptionalism, rugged individualism, and republican ideals set against the loyalist sympathies of his British counterpart, John Bull and, on the other hand, conjures in the hands of Whitman the homoerotic friendship between Jonathan and David as recorded in the Old Testament books of Samuel. The biblical account of their relationship describes the two men's souls as being "knit" together, and upon learning of Jonathan's death, the grief-stricken David replied, "I am distressed of thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women."[17]

In his vision of a thriving democracy, Whitman draws on a long tradition of male same-sex friendship in the U.S. to depict his poems of "manly love" in the "Calamus" cluster, which first appeared in the 1860 edition of *Leaves of Grass*. Although references to Jonathan and David story are surprisingly absent in the "Calamus" poems as well as Whitman's wider oeuvre, the poems nonetheless capture the essence of male friendships that antebellum readers would have recognized and admired in the broader culture, but with one notable exception: in addition to portraying and celebrating spiritual bonds between men, Whitman's poetic vision also insists on erotic connections as well. Whitman, however, does not abandon the tradition of spiritual friendship between men so lauded during the antebellum era, but instead he extends and expands it to encapsulate the erotic and sexual as well as the spiritual–and, in fact, refuses to distinguish between those modes of relating. Writing within a culture of conversion and reform that elevated the importance of the spirit above the body, Whitman operated in an atmosphere saturated with millennialist expectation, heightened all the more by the imminent outbreak of civil war that threatened to destroy the nation through the carnage of apocalyptic conflict.

[17] 2 Samuel 1:26 (KJV)

In considering *Leaves of Grass* a "New Bible" for a "New Religion," Whitman's focus on the erotic body sweepingly dismisses notions of "total depravity" propagated by centuries of Calvinist-minded theologies and instead imagines an embodied "City of Friends" to replace Winthrop's Puritan "City on a Hill." Through and against the republican figure of Brother Jonathan, Whitman tacitly argues for the necessity of erotic male friendships in building a thriving democracy. In so doing, he challenged and disrupted the pneumapolitical power structures that cultivated national ideologies of gender, family, and friendship. Additionally, his "Calamus" poems offer a different story about the emergence of sexuality in a Protestant context. Spiritual friendship and conversion, rather than confession, as Foucault has argued, provided a discursive resource for imagining and shaping modern sexual identity in the American consciousness. Although Foucault's pioneering and oft-cited *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1* offers an incredibly useful model for understanding *how* a concept of sexuality emerged from a secularized form of Catholic confession, its scope and application are somewhat limited by the particular religious and national histories it so masterfully recounts. Whitman's "Calamus" provides, I believe, another avenue for recontextualizing Foucault's general thesis from *History*, while attending to the specific religious and historical contexts in the U.S., in particular the tradition of male same-sex friendship and the centrality of conversion and the concept of "spirit" in constructing a Protestant hegemony and national ethos. This pneumapolitics instrumentalized modes of spiritual conversion as a technology for transmitting and reproducing a form of Protestant republicanism that bolstered hierarchies of gender and race, and thereby regulated permissible forms of sexual behavior.

The Problem of Brother Jonathan's Origin

Between the Revolutionary and Civil War periods, the figure of Brother Jonathan would reach its fullest development and come to function as a symbolic avatar for animating discussions of national character as he grew into a representative of the American "everyman" in the early decades of the republic (Morgan 17). As historian Winifred Morgan notes in her study of the "American icon," Brother Jonathan evolved from earlier representations of Yankee Doodle and replaced other American national symbols such as the Indian Princess and Colombia and, in turn, was himself replaced by Uncle Sam, who gained popularity and prominence during the Civil War (20-21, 34). Brother Jonathan–shrewd, clever, and provincial–stood in direct contrast to the figure of John Bull–patronizing, affected, and bombastic–who emerged in print caricature as his English counterpart. Both frequently appeared together in political cartoons to portray various ongoing antagonisms between Britain and its former colony (Morgan 69). Over his career as a fixture of popular media, Brother Jonathan would undergo several evolutions until he virtually vanished from the national symbolic discourse almost entirely following the Civil War; however, in his various permutations, he retained several consistent features: a background from a generic rural New England community and upbringing; a naive simplicity and humorous defiance of pretense and affectation; and a fierce individualism and skepticism of authority (Morgan 21-23). Morgan's study argues that the "Janus-like appearance" of Brother Jonathan would eventually come to embody "basically conflicting values," an apparent contradiction between an "egalitarian spirit" and "American pride in achievement" (34). This tension coupled with Brother Jonathan's essential individualism and provincial outlook would ultimately limit how and in what contexts the figure could be deployed to represent an American national character, especially as citizens began to contemplate the value of government intervention

during a period when many workers grappled with the effects of "unbridled capitalism" and the country teetered on the brink of collapse with the threat of an impending civil war (Morgan 34, 36).

"A Boxing Match, or Another Bloody Nose for John Bull." [18]

[18] "This hand-colored cartoon, etched by William Charles, celebrates America's naval victories against Britain during the War of 1812 through the use of the symbolic figures 'John Bull,' a personification of Great Britain, and 'Brother Jonathan,' a personification of the United States (and precursor to 'Uncle Sam'). To the left is John Bull, drawn to look like British King George III; to the right is Brother Jonathan, drawn to look like United States President James Madison. Both men are in a fighter's stance and are holding their fists up. Behind them, two ships at sea are engaged in battle. Brother Jonathan is clearly winning the match, as John Bull has a black eye, his crown is askew, and blood is pouring from his nose. The cartoon's title, 'A Boxing Match,' is a reference to the defeat of the British ship *Boxer* in September 1813 by the American ship *Enterprise*. Brother Jonathan, taunting John Bull, references the American ship when he boasts 'I'll let you know we are an Enterprizeing Nation and ready to meet you with equal force any day'" ("A Boxing Match").

Despite the eventual decline of Brother Jonathan in the postbellum period, the figure led a rich and vibrant life on the stage as well as in political cartoons, novels, and almanacs of the early national period. Morgan pinpoints Brother Jonathan's first appearance in print in a 1776 political cartoon, followed by his successful stage debut in Royall Tyler's 1787 play *The Contrast*, which "shocked and delighted American audiences" who saw in the character "a distinctively American type" for the first time (Morgan 12, 37). Between 1786 and 1838, Brother Jonathan appeared in as many as sixteen comedies, including John Minshull's *Rural Felicity* (1801), Charles Matthew's *Trip to America* (1824), and Thomas Dibdin's *Banks of the Hudson* (1829) (Morgan 37). In 1812, the figure made its novelistic debut in James Kirke Paulding's *The Diverting History of John Bull and Brother Jonathan*, and in 1825 John Neal further developed the character in his eponymous novel *Brother Jonathan*. Although these early print and stage representations signaled the figure's emergence as a dynamic conduit for exploring, expanding, and circulating features of an American national character, the exact historical origins of Brother Jonathan as a distinct character type remain obscure. Some historical evidence suggests that the term "Brother Jonathan" was used as early as the 17th century primarily as a stereotypical insult by British Loyalists against their Puritan opponents during the English Civil War and was most likely drawn from the biblical account of Jonathan, son of Saul and friend and confidant of King David (Hart 91 and Hopper and Hopper 63). There is some speculation also that the title might

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Image Transcript:

Upper left: "Stop, Stop Stop Brother Jonathan, I shall fall with the loss of blood–I thought to have been too heavy for you__But I must acknowledge your superior skill__Two blows to my one!__And so well directed too! Mercy mercy on me, how does this happen!!!""A Boxing Match, or Another Bloody Nose for John Bull."

Upper right: "Ah Johnny! you thought yourself a Boxer did you!__I'll let you know that we are an Enterprizeing Nation, and ready to meet you with equal force any day."

have emerged in an English context to mimic a common Puritan name and mode of address (Morgan 19, 22 and "Scrooby"). Jonathan as an insulting stereotype may have also carried with it feminizing connotations, as historian James E. Harding explains, "[David and Jonathan's] relationship is sexualized in the narrative, not by portraying David and Jonathan as homosexual, but by constructing David as a man and Jonathan as a woman, and by having them perform the roles associated with masculinity and femininity, respectively" (96). The term was later revived in the 18th century as a disparaging epithet against colonists by British soldiers during the Revolutionary War, later to be reclaimed as a badge of colonial dissent and resistance to monarchical tyranny (Hopper and Hopper 63).

By the mid-19th century, a widely accepted and rehearsed anecdote had established itself and gained a firm footing in the public memory concerning the genesis of Brother Jonathan, and it too had its roots in the Revolutionary era. In part, Morgan builds and directs her history of Brother Jonathan from Albert Matthews' 1901 eponymous study of the figure, in which he debunks the popular antebellum anecdote concerning the Revolutionary origins of the Brother Jonathan and theorizes other possible sources that may have given rise to the caricature. Matthews begins his study by directly quoting a segment from a 1846 issue of Connecticut's *Norwich Evening Courier* (which would later be reprinted in John Russell Bartlett's 1848 *Dictionary of Americanisms*), that promised to "gratify a multitude of minds" with the "first and only account" of Brother Jonathan the newspapers' editors had ever heard by way of the Revolutionary recollections of "one of the most intelligent gentlemen and sterling Whigs in Connecticut," who was "upward of 80 years" when the story appeared in print (qtd. in Matthews 3 and Bartlett 50). "When General Washington, after being appointed commander of the Army of the Revolutionary war came to Massachusetts to organize it, and make preparations for the

defense of the Country," the story goes, "he found a great destitution of ammunition and other means, necessary to meet the powerful foe he had to contend with" (qtd. in Matthews 3 and Bartlett 50). Seeking counsel for his predicament, Washington supposedly remarked, "We must consult 'Brother Jonathan' on the subject," referring to his trusted friend and advisor, Jonathan Trumbull, Governor of Connecticut, who successfully arranged for the delivery of supplies to the army. The account continues, noting that after the incident, "*we must consult Brother Jonathan*" became a "by-word" synonymous with the spirit of a burgeoning national character: "The term Yankee is still applied to a portion, but 'Brother Jonathan' has now become a designation of the whole Country, as John Bull has for England" (qtd. in Matthews 4 and Bartlett 50).

Although Matthews clarifies in his study that there is no historical evidence to support the veracity of the Washington-Trumbull story in connection with the origin of the figure of Brother Jonathan, it nonetheless gained traction in the national collective memory in the decades preceding the Civil War and prompted at least one adherent, Horace Bushnell, who eulogized the late Trumbull in an 1851 address, to interpret the apocryphal anecdote typologically, linking together the Washington-Trumbull account with the biblical story of the friendship of Jonathan and David, in which the latter, mourning the death of his beloved friend, refers to him affectionately as "my brother Jonathan."[19] In his commemorative address, Bushnell explicitly connects the popular vignette with its biblical referent: "Our Connecticut Jonathan was to Washington what the scripture Jonathan was to David, a true friend, a counsellor and stay of confidence–Washington's brother" (34). Likewise, the English poet Martin F. Tupper drew a similar parallel to characterize the friendship between Britain and America in his 1859 poem "To Brother Jonathan": "O let our hearts be thus, / As *David's* love to Jonathan, / Be Jonathan to us!"

[19] 2 Samuel 1:26 (KJV)

(*Leisure Hour* 159). Although these two instances may seem incidental to the historical origins of the term Brother Jonathan, I contend that they nevertheless point to a Protestant impulse to characterize historical events and persons typologically and providentially, a tendency that predated and partially motivated the Puritan "errand" in New England and carried through to the 19th century in the secularized principle of manifest destiny, a doctrine that fused both nationalist and typological interests to justify mid-century westward expansion at the same time that it laid the groundwork for a moral mandate to "democratize" (and thereby "Christianize") not only the north American continent but also to subsume and subjugate large portions of the globe beneath an imperial purview (Bercovitch 148-149, 154 and Davis 39-41). By dismissing the biblical resonances Brother Jonathan invited for white Protestant Americans in particular, we may overlook an important story the figure has to tell about processes of secularization and the ongoing influence biblical narrative exercised over social and political life during the Revolutionary, early national, and antebellum periods in the United States. Rather than see Brother Jonathan, as Morgan does, as a figure that "clearly [represents] a secular viewpoint," I argue in what follows that the figure serves as an important nexus for mediating both religious and secular conceptions of the nation and forms of ideal citizenship and by expanding the historical frame of reference for Brother Jonathan into 17th century and beyond the Civil War, not to locate the figure's exact point of origin or precise extinction, but instead to understand how its evolution, afterlife, and para-associations served as an important discursive network for envisioning national cohesion and fraternal unity (and eventually for conceptualizing "homosexuality" as a distinct mode of erotic attachment in the latter part of the 19th century), we may discover that that figure has a longer and richer history than has yet been recognized.

The Spirit of Brother Jonathan and Winthrop's "City on a Hill"

Before disembarking to the shores that would become the Massachusetts Bay colony in 1630, John Winthrop delivered his famous "Modell of Christian Charity" sermon aboard the *Arabella* to the group of Puritans who had emigrated with him across the Atlantic with the aim of establishing "a citty on a hill," an example to the world of a godly society structured by biblical law. The sermon lays out principles of community engagement and cohesion, and, drawing on biblical exemplars to characterize his points, he turns, most notably, to the story of Jonathan and David. While Winthrop never specifically uses the exact phrase "Brother Jonathan" in reference to the biblical figure, he reminds his audience, particularly its male listeners, that one of the premises of their colonial enterprise is "that every man might have need of others, and from hence they might be all knit more nearly together in bonds of Brotherly affection" (1).

Winthrop intentionally uses the word "knit" in this passage (as he does elsewhere in his sermon) to allude to the opening verse of Samuel 18, which chronicles the first meeting of Jonathan and David: "And it came to pass, when [David] had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul."[20] The foundation of Winthrop's community "modell" is love, which he describes as "the bond of perfection," "a bond and ligament" that "knitts" together disparate parts into a functioning body, "the most perfect of all bodies" being "Christ and his Church" (5).[21] On one hand, Winthrop's body metaphor reinforces a Puritan hierarchy of "natural" order and authority, each part, or community member, having an integral role to play within a patriarchal theological framework that structured regimes of gender, marriage, and family norms; on the other hand, his

[20] Samuel 18:1 (KJV)

[21] Similarly, Connecticut's 1638 colonial assembly turned to the story of Jonathan and David as a model for citizenship and the foundation for a "treaty of friendship between colonies," which was "inspired by the biblical archetype of male love" (Godbeer 90).

reference to the soul-knitting between Jonathan and David also suggests that the brotherly affection that they shared, and that Winthrop hoped would be emulated in the colony, involves a deeper merging of spirits that causes Jonathan to love David's soul as his own. In fact, before his departure from England in February 1630, Winthrop wrote his close friend Sir William Springe a letter that indicates and qualifies the type of spiritual bonds that he envisioned holding the commonwealth together, as he draws a direct comparison between their friendship and that of Jonathan and David:

> I am so streigthned in tyme, and my thoughts so taken vp with business, as indeed I am vnfitt to write of these things: it is your exceeding love, hath drawne these from me, and that love must cover all infirmytyes: I loved you truely before I could think that you took any notice of me: but now I embrace you and rest in your love: and delight to solace my first thoughts in these sweet affections of so deare a friend. The apprehension of your love and worth togither hath overcome my heart, and remoued the veil of modestye, that I must needes tell you, my soule is knitt to you, as the soule of Jonathan to Dauid: were I now with you, I should bedewe that sweet bosom with the tears of affection. ("John Winthrop to Sir William Springe")

Linking together Winthrop's personal friendship with the theological civic theory he develops in "Modell," the story of Jonathan and David offered a conceptual framework for not only legitimizing and celebrating intimacy and affection between men–notably, Winthrop positions himself as Jonathan in the analogy–but it also formed the basis for civic engagement in the colony. If anything, for Winthrop, citizens would be first and foremost loving spiritual friends. The soul-knitting dimension of the Jonathan and David story authorizes Winthrop to centralize

spiritual connection as foundational to the Puritan colonial project and elevate the biblical pair as a prototypical unit that would constitute a part of the larger theocratic body politic through a network of spiritual synchronicity and unified belief. Particularly, Winthrop's emphasis on soul-knitting throughout the sermon infuses his vision of godly community with the narrative context of the Jonathan and David story, even before Winthrop explicitly references the pair in a section of the sermon devoted to "the exercise of this love" (6).

Love, in Winthrop's conceptual framework, not only facilitates communal cohesion but it also serves to authenticate membership and spiritual rebirth: "Loue cometh of God and every one that loueth is borne of God, soe that this loue is the fruite of the new birthe, and none can have it but the new creature" (6). For Winthrop, the metaphor of the communal body physicalizes the crucial animating influence of the spirit in the life of this "new creature," which here corresponds to not only individual community members who have undergone conversion experiences but also the larger colonial interest in establishing a "citty on a hill," a new type of political and social organization to reflect the righteousness and providential blessing of the "God of Israell" (9). To further illustrate how spiritual love functions within the construction of the communal body, Winthrop cites a vision of the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel, who lived during the period of Babylonian captivity and Jewish exile. In the vision, God commands Ezekiel to prophesy to a valley of dry bones, which begin to fuse together into bodies, take on flesh and breath as God fills them with his spirit: "And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and I shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land."[22] Drawing on both the spiritual and

[22] Ezekiel 37: 13-14 (KJV). Winthrop includes a scriptural reference to Ezekiel 39 in the sermon; however, the "valley of dry bones" episode to which he alludes is actually documented in Ezekiel 37.

political elements of the episode, Winthrop typologically positions himself as a prophet-like speaker and his Puritan audience as Jewish exiles, longing for a homeland: "Now when this quallity [referring to love] is thus formed in the soules of men, it workes upon the drie bones [...] bone came to bone. It gathers together the scattered bones, or perfect old man Adam, and knitts them into one body again in Christ whereby a man is become again a living soule" (6). This typological parallel between the Puritan sojourners and Ezekiel's vision immediately precedes the sermon section that lauds David and Jonathan's brotherly affection as a model for the type of love Winthrop hopes will "knitt" the "drie bones" of his community into a "living soule" and serves a contextual backdrop that enables Winthrop to foreground the importance of fostering a communal spirit while also particularizing the nature of the loving bond he envisions forming the basis for the colony's civic, political, and religious life.

Turning to expound on the "inward" nature of the constitutive love necessary to hold the communal body of the colony together, Winthrop offers spiritual resemblance as a proof of the bond between believers and the larger community:

> [F]or the ground of loue is an apprehension of some resemblance in the things loued to that which affects it. This is the cause why the Lord loues the creature, soe farre as it hath any of his Image in it; he louves his elect because they are like himself, he beholds them in his beloued sonne. So a mother loues her childe, because shee thoroughly conceives a resemblance of herself in it. Thus it is betweene the members of Christ; eache discernes, by the worke of the Spirit, his oune Image and resemblance in another, and therefore cannot but loue him as he loues himself. (6)

In this passage, Winthrop links together his concept of love (as a bonding agent) with a model of conversion built on the metaphor of family resemblance (Gura 95 and Kauffman 24-25, 91). That is, the form of love that Winthrop theorizes operates as an inherent and internal quality of election (being chosen by God) that is readily discernible in the outward actions of another as a spiritual expression of the same form of love. This mutual recognition, likewise, formed the basis for standardizing and verifying the authenticity of conversion experiences for the purposes of church membership in the colony, a method that would become an essential platform of a broader system of church governance and doctrinal standardization known as the New England Way, which conceptualized conversion, especially in the aftermath of the Antinomian Controversy, as means of surveilling and harmonizing the beliefs of the elect members of the broader church community in the region (Gura 168-169 and Cooper 55-56). Given the ubiquity of family and marriage metaphors in Puritan discourse, the connection Winthrop draws between a mother recognizing herself in her child and spiritual affinity among believers almost seems unremarkable, but, importantly, the comparison to family resemblance (based on outward, physical appearance) serves as an analog for mutual recognition among the elect based on "the worke of the Spirit," which inevitably causes the elect believer to love other believers "as he loues himself" (6). In other words, Winthrop's concept of love produces a spiritual image in the elect believer that in turn seeks to recognize itself and make itself recognizable in and to other like-minded believers thereby proliferating itself into a communal body (whose perfect image is Christ) through a permeating process of spiritual affinity.

Following from the family resemblance metaphor, Winthrop pivots, also somewhat unsurprisingly, to Adam and Eve, in order to illustrate the bond of spiritual love and mutual recognition inherent in the covenant of marriage:

> Now when the soule, which is of a sociable nature, findes anything like to itself, it is like Adam when Eve was brought to him. She must be one with himself. This is flesh of my flesh (saith he) and bone of my bone. Soe the soule coneives a greate delighte in it; therefore shee desires nearness and familiarity with it. (6)

By referencing the Genesis account of the creation and union of Adam and Eve, Winthrop traces the genealogy of binding spiritual love to the first biblical marriage and therefore situates the Puritan marriage covenant as one of the primary contexts in which this love of spiritual resemblance takes shape and propagates for the benefit of the larger community. Rhetorically, this allows Winthrop to reinforce Puritan gender norms that subjugated women to men primarily through a patriarchal theology of marriage while simultaneously reiterating the hierarchical nature of the communal body, in which each part plays an important role but not necessarily an equal one. Winthrop draws his theology of the communal body primarily from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we are Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many."[23] This passage in particular seems to endorse an egalitarian vision of the body of the church, but in a previous section in the chapter, Paul explains that each member is endowed with spiritual gifts that serve different functions for the overall benefit of the larger body: "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are many differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities in operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all."[24] In the preceding chapter, however, Paul puts a finer point on this distinction between members based on their

[23] 1 Cor. 12:12-14 (KJV)
[24] 1 Cor. 12:4-6 (KJV)

spiritual gifts by underscoring the subordinate role women play in the body of the church: "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and head of Christ is God."[25] Further distinguishing between the roles of men and women in the communal body, Paul addresses the issue of head coverings during church gatherings by alluding to Eve's creation *of* and *for* Adam: "For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and the glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman: but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels. Nevertheless neither man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God."[26]

Seeking a stronger exemplar of mutuality than that of the marriage covenant and the hierarchical relationship between Adam to Eve, however, Winthrop finally turns to the friendship of Jonathan and David to offer a more egalitarian prototype of spiritual friendship, which, interestingly, equates marriage with a biblical model of homosociality: "Wee may see this [the bond between Adam and Eve] acted to life in Jonathan and David" (6). "Jonathan," Winthrop continues, "a valiant man endued with the spirit of love, soe soone as he discovered the same spirit in David had presently his hearte knit to him by this ligament of loue; soe that it is said he loued him as his owne soule, he takes so great pleasure in him, that he stripps himself to adorne his beloved," referencing Jonathan's act of bestowing David with his clothes upon their first meeting (6). Although marriage for Winthrop depended on a form of spiritual recognition and mutuality and, indeed, organized many institutional facets of Puritan political and social life, it

[25] 1 Cor. 11:3 (KJV)
[26] 1 Cor. 11:7-12 (KJV)

nonetheless failed to exemplify the *ideal* form of spiritual resemblance in light of the patriarchal theology of gender Puritans employed to arrange men and women into a divine hierarchy headed by God. Ivy Schweitzer examines the rhetorical effects of equating the marriage of Adam and Eve with the friendship of David and Jonathan in her study of Winthrop's vision of affiliation in the "Modell" sermon:

> Although there is considerable rhetorical slippage between affective modes in his address, Winthrop's insistence on resemblance as the grounds of Christian love and his emphasis on an "equal" exchange between saints strongly suggests that his paradigm for *caritas* in the purified commonwealth is not marriage–even unfallen marriage–but a version of homosocial friendship. This suggests spiritual egalitarianism while it subtly reintroduces androcentrism and male dominance. (460)

Schweitzer's analysis highlights how the civic theory that Winthrop develops in his sermon elevates male homosociality above heterosexual union as a means transcending the gender inequality of the marriage covenant while simultaneously reinforcing patriarchal control. By positing spiritual friendships between men as a form of marriage, in fact, the ideal form, Winthrop preserves the ideological signification of the institution in the Puritan symbolic order while fundamentally transforming its gendered terms in order to modulate the "flesh" of the communal body into the transcendent realm of spirit. Although the uneasy overlap of marriage and male friendship may seem to invite the possibility of homoeroticism and the specter of same-sex transgression within a Puritan theological framework, Winthrop manages to quell this incipient threat with his emphatic insistence on the superiority of the spirit over the flesh, even as he deploys the metaphor of a communal body to illustrate spiritual cohesion. In other words, the

bond of marriage consists of a sexual bond of the flesh, temporal and fleeting, but male friendship, for Winthrop, tacitly excludes the possibility of sexual exchange and instead depends on a bond of spirit, eternal and everlasting, even after the death and decay of the body. This tendency to privilege male spiritual resemblance and affinity as superior to the uneven and fleshly bond shared by men and women in marriage is, ironically, reiterated in a passing reference Winthrop makes to the biblical figures of Ruth and Naomi, who also exemplified the virtues of homosocial friendship in the Old Testament. Schweitzer notes that Winthrop's inclusion of Ruth and Naomi, almost as an afterthought, "picks up unsettlingly the theme of gender difference" and implicitly registers the inferiority of female spiritual affinity (with both men and other women) due to "a specifically female ability to bear children": "Thus [Ruth and Naomi's] 'spiritual' affection brings them back to 'nature' and the flesh, precisely what spiritual friendship was thought to transcend" (462). In prioritizing the spirit above the flesh, soul-knitting over sexual union, Winthrop exercises an almost Pauline expectancy of the imminent return of Christ and the dissolution of earthly marriage bonds;[27] in his commitment to elevating spiritual bonds shared between men as the ideal form of love that will hold the commonwealth together, he constructs a "utopic vision" on the "evasion of the material and fleshy," which, in Schweitzer's assessment, "ensures its failure" (463).

[27] "Now concerning virgins I [Paul] have no commandment from the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. I suppose therefore that this good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for man so to be. Art thou bound unto a wife? Seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? Seek not a wife. But and if thou marry, thou has not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you. But I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be a s though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and that that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away" (1 Cor. 7:25-31 KJV).

Although Winthrop's insistence on the superiority of the spirit over the flesh ultimately forged a civic theory of messianic expectation that envisioned making history as a means of ending it by ushering in the millennium and the return of Christ, his typological thinking nonetheless generated a pneumapolitics that centered male spiritual homosociality as the means of building, securing, and sanctifying the commonwealth. The story of Jonathan and David not only exemplified a model of ideal spiritual love through mutual recognition and soul-knitting between men, but it also evoked a political context that imbued the Puritans' colonial enterprise with a dimension of biblical urgency and divine purport. When Jonathan, son of Saul, king of Israel, entered into a covenant with David that "[bound] them to each other like brothers (via flesh), but also like spouses (via affections)," he transferred his allegiance from his father along with his obligations as heir to David, whom God chose to replace Saul as ruler of Israel (Schweitzer 461). Going to great lengths to protect David from the wrath of Saul, who was naturally threatened by David's status as God's chosen, Jonathan privileged the covenant (bound by spiritual love) with his friend over the demands of his father and defied the traditional patrilineal transfer of political power from sovereign to son in order to honor his commitment to David. As Schweitzer explains,

> Their friendship produces an interchangeability that casts David as the adopted "son" of Saul and thus the heir to the kingship of Israel. Jonathan's "spirit" is mirrored in David, who we learn before they even meet, has been "chosen" by God, and on his commandment anointed by the prophet Samuel, thereby replacing Jonathan as Saul's political heir. Thus begins what Christians regard as the "messianic" line, culminating with the birth of Jesus. Jonathan's choice of an "other self" is God's choice of a king, just as Adam chooses the

> "helpmeet" God creates for and from him, and the regenerate soul recognizes other members of the elect. This emblematic friendship also reflects God's "choice" of the Puritans as the vanguard of a new Israel, and the Puritans' "choice," which Winthrop prays will be like Jonathan's, "to keep… the Articles of our Covenant with God" [...] and so establish in the new world a biblically based social, political, and economic structure purified of selfishness and immorality. (461)

Through typological maneuvering, Winthrop in the case of "Modell" rhetorically and metaphorically situates his Puritan audience as both God's chosen, David, and covenant keepers, Jonathan. Through the story of Jonathan and David, Winthrop captures the dual nature of ideal citizenship in the commonwealth he envisions: on one hand, the Puritans represent passive recipients of God's special providence and favor, his elect, and, on the other hand, their status as such obliges them to engage in the active work of keeping God's "Commandments and his Ordinances and his lawes" so, as Winthrop reminds his fellow Puritans, "[W]ee may liue and be multiplied, and that the Lord our God may blesse us in the land whither wee goe to possesse it" (9). In Winthrop's typological formulation, Jonathan represents the ongoing process of Protestant conversion, of repenting, turning and returning to law, to God's purpose and covenant, whereas David stands in as the sign of God's unwarranted beneficence and protection. Both aspects are necessary for the perpetuation and integrity of the commonwealth, as Winthrop forewarns his audience: "But if our hearts shall turne away, soe that we will not obey, but shall be seduced, and worshipp and serue other Gods, our pleasure and proffitts, and serue them; it is propounded unto us this day, wee shall surely perishe out of the good land wither wee passe over this vast sea to possesse it" (9). Although both Jonathan and David play active roles in maintaining their

covenant in the biblical story, Jonathan must, as Winthrop recognizes, actively sacrifice his claim to the throne and compromise his own safety in order to remain in relationship with David (6-7). It is the sacrificial love of Jonathan on David's behalf that Winthrop characterizes as the type of self-denial that will make the communal body of a theocratic commonwealth possible. For Winthrop, the model of Jonathan and David's friendship serves as a prototype for ideal citizenship in his godly society, an androcentric and homosocial conception of spirit recognition and bonding, for which Jonathan embodies the Puritans' typological imperative to submit to and actively participate in the ongoing work of conversion and cooperation in the divinely ordained communal body, the church-state.

The significance that Winthrop places on the biblical figure of Jonathan, in particular, in "Modell" demonstrates the crucial role typology played in conceptualizing (gendered) citizenship and (proto)national cohesion in the colonial era, but it also underscores how a pneumapolitical regime emerged, in part, out of a biblical discourse on spiritual friendship between men, one that employed marriage as a metaphor to describe the nature of spiritual love between men while also eschewing the corrupting influence of the flesh in order to foreclose, at least tacitly, the threat of homoerotic transgression, even as that threat remained a carnal specter within the very discourse that posited covenantal friendship between men as a mode of pure spiritual relation (Gura 216 and Warner 33). As Schweitzer notes, Jonathan and David's "covenant also extends to their progeny, binding them likewise to God as their third partner in the Christian conception of spiritual friendships, and to each other in metaphorical marriage/kinship, and thus materially shapes the political leadership of Israel" (461). For Winthrop, the typological analog between the friendship of Jonathan and David and Puritan colonists, particularly the men among them, linked together the political with the spiritual, at the

same time that it framed spiritual friendship between men as a more perfect form of the marriage covenant, positioning heterosexual unions as essential for maintaining a patriarchal gender hierarchy in the commonwealth, but not ideal for cultivating its spiritual vitality and longevity. Winthrop's framing of and preference for male spiritual friendship as a type of marriage, as Michael Warner argues, created a complicated tension "between the covenant and the traditional rhetoric of generational transmission," a tension in which the spirit of Jonathan would be preserved as the sacrificial love of covenant keeping, while leaving him without a body, marriage's fleshy obstacle to true equality (38). In a sense, for Winthrop, part of men's superiority to women, theologically speaking, was their ability to form purely spiritual bonds that transcended what Calvinism saw as the baggage of embodiment; consequently, by directing colonists to emulate Jonathan, in particular, Winthrop employs typology as a means of constructing a communal body through soul-knitting and providing a spiritual model against which members of the commonwealth may measure themselves and evaluate their relational bonds with others in the community. By standing in as a paragon of male spiritual friendship, the figure of Jonathan also served as a regulatory mechanism in the broader Puritan theocratic power structure, a figure whose spirit would go on to help sustain and centralize a culture of male friendship in the early republic and provided a basis for understanding covenantal friendship bonds as a mode of masculine spiritual reproduction through gendered processes of conversion.

Male Spiritual Friendship in the Early Republic and Antebellum Periods

In the late 18th century and into the early 19th, spiritual friendships between men, sometimes also described as romantic or sympathetic friendships, continued to play an instrumental role in fostering communal cohesion and conceptualizing the nation in the post-revolutionary period. As in Winthrop's time, these types of bonds between men sustained

patriarchal social and political power structures, but they also additionally served to recursively naturalize the Protestant notion, pioneered by the Puritans, of the spirit as a political category, one, when harnessed through the loving spiritual friendships of men, could transform and fortify the burgeoning nation (Godbeer 113). Although Winthrop's rhetorical emphasis on biblical soul-knitting receded with the growing influence of Enlightenment philosophy and the consequent emergence of a secularized republican ideology during the Revolutionary period, it nonetheless endured conceptually into the 19th century through the figures of Jonathan and David as their story continued to serve as a classic portrayal of the type of male spiritual friendship that would vitalize nation-building efforts by cohering a democratic citizenry of white male voters (Rotundo 83 and Harding 300). Some late 18th-century men explicitly characterized their relationships with their intimate male friends in letters by referencing the Jonathan and David story to describe the intensity of their attachment and fraternal love (Godbeer 7 and Crain 80). And the revival of classical mythology and literature during the Enlightenment period also offered alternative models of strong male friendships such as Damon and Pythias or Achilles and Patroclus (Godbeer 7-8, 176 and Rotundo 83). However, as historian Richard Godbeer explains in his study of "romantic friendships" in early republic, Puritan theologians and preachers, as well as pre-revolutionary revivalists and 18th-century evangelicals promoting "an ethos of brotherly love in service of Christ" modeled on "fraternal affection" had continuously invoked the story of Jonathan and David to conceptualize "spiritual community as a family," which would provide "an important context for late eighteenth-century republican ideology as Americans sought in the wake of Independence to create a new and democratic society" (84).

Republican ideology, inflected by the egalitarianism of Scottish Enlightenment philosophy, in conjunction with the jeremiadic musings of 18th- and 19th-century evangelical

revivalists actively promoting the “cultivation of brotherly love,” envisioned the nation through a familial metaphor built upon widespread fraternity and mutual affection, an ethos that, though framed in somewhat different terms, had its roots in Puritan civic theory, like Winthrop's (Godbeer 12, 113, 118). As the family metaphor endured as an effective rhetorical and conceptual device for characterizing an ideal portrait of intimate fraternal bonds, so did its matrimonial analogs. Anthony E. Rotundo’s study of American masculinity from the Revolution to the modern era gathers and examines letters between young men engaged in “romantic friendships" during the mid-19th century and concludes that “many young men thought of their intimate friendships as the functional equivalent of marriage,” some even including “romantic and physically affectionate relationships" that involved an “erotic tinge” of exchanged kisses and mutual embraces in shared beds, which sometimes provided a context for same-sex bedmates to furtively engage in “forbidden sexual experiments” (79-82, 88 and Katz 6). The tendency to equate intimate and spiritual friendships between men with marriage grew from the legacy of 18th-century revivalists, and the Puritans before them, who, as Godbeer notes, “celebrated love as an expansive constellation of gendered relationships,” which “depicted union with a male savior as the ultimate marriage, coupling men as well as women to Jesus Christ in eternal rapture” and “[j]ust as Winthrop had juxtaposed the marriage of Adam and Eve with the friendship of David and Jonathan, [...] so evangelical preachers sanctified brotherly love among the faithful as a preview of the marital love that male and female saints would enjoy in the arms of Jesus Christ" (99). With the emergence of republican ideology during the Revolutionary period, Winthrop’s theological rationale for the superiority of male spiritual friendships to heterosexual unions mingled with secularized notions of egalitarian fraternity and democracy in order to bolster the political power of certain classes of white men. The effect of this theological

and philosophical amalgamation sustained the superiority of romantic and spiritual friendships on the basis that they transcended the very familial and matrimonial metaphors they drew upon to conceptualize themselves, as historian Caleb Crain explains in his study of American sympathy between men:

> The colonies' bond to England had been imagined as that of a child to a parent, or a wife to a husband. But as a metaphor and model for citizenly love, romantic friendship was more congenial to republican ideology than either filial or marital relationships. Romantic friendship was egalitarian. It could bind men without curtailing their liberty. (It could bind women, too, but because women were not full citizens, the political implications of their friendships were different.) Like confederation into civil society, friendship bestowed benefits that were other than financial and sexual. (5)

In Crain's analysis, we see Winthrop's logic for the superiority of spiritual male friendships recapitulated and secularized; instead of the theological emphasis placed on the ability of men to form purely spiritual bonds that transcend the sinful fleshiness of the body, republican ideology elevated romantic friendships as a truly egalitarian form for how they evaded the material and sexual (inter)dependence of family and marriage relations. Even still, this formulation depended on an assumption, as it had for Winthrop, that precluded the possibility of same-sex erotic attachment. The familial and marital metaphors that undergirded the discourses of spiritual and romantic friendship between men from the colonial to antebellum era only functioned in as far as they worked to tacitly reinforce permissible and normative modes of gender expression and hierarchical family and political structures. However, the adaptability and malleability of those same metaphors to describe romantic and spiritual friendships between men at the close of the

18th century would render conceptions of masculinity somewhat unstable and pliable as national founders struggled to articulate and legislate ideal citizenship, a process that would reflect a spectrum of ideological shifts as it reconfigured and solidified gendered roles within the family in response to a rapidly expanding market economy and consolidated white "national manhood" as a unifying abstraction to combat democracy's threat of difference and to manage the political and economic forces that would determine the shape of national character, for which Brother Jonathan, for a time, stood in as a colloquial representative of the "everyman" (Nelson 12-14 and Rotundo 24).

As Enlightenment philosophy formed an ideological undercurrent that would profoundly influence the tumultuous transition between colonial and national periods, forms of masculinity that functioned to fortify family and social bonds between men to ensure communal cohesion and patriarchal order gave way to more self-interested forms of masculinity that emerged to manage gender, racial, and economic anxieties in the new republic. The struggle to define ideal citizenship in the wake of the Revolutionary War and determine the meaning of "manhood" in the national imaginary coincided with a burgeoning social ideology that centered the individual instead of the community, as Rotundo explains,

> The individual was now the measure of things and men were engrossed with themselves as *selves*. The dominant concerns were the concerns of self–self-improvement, self-control, self-interest, self-advancement. Passions like personal ambition and aggression–though not seen as virtues–were allowed free passage in society. And the important bonds between people were now fastened by *individual* preference more than birth or social duty. (20)

Catalyzed by the opportunities of a growing market economy, this shift from the communal to the individual dovetailed with Enlightenment philosophy's notion of the "objective," rational observer, to whom the task and authority fell to scientifically order and categorize society according to "nature" (Nelson 7-9). In her study of the development of American "national manhood" in the late 18th century, Dana D. Nelson argues that the "disembodied, objective, and universalized standpoint offered by Enlightenment science became useful in consolidating a perspective of 'white' manhood" by creating an "abstract space from which [the white male subject] conducts the global and historical survey of climate and human behavior" and "where men overlooked their own differences as they trained the focus on *other* 'bodies'" (10, 11). "This occulted space of subject/authority," she continues, "formed the precise ground for civic definition in the Constitution" (Nelson 10). The disembodied and unmarked "objective" subject position of white propertied males, to whom were granted all the privileges of citizenship in the early republic, enabled them to rationalize their assumptions about the inferiority of racialized and gendered "others" as a means of organizing "naturalized" social and class structures meant to unify white male political power and constitutionally delimit who could and could not participate in full citizenship. Although drawn from ostensibly objective "scientific" rationales, the influence of the humanist tenets of Enlightenment philosophy on American republicanism ironically worked to secularize and calcify gender and racial hierarchies that had been rooted in and constructed on Puritan biblical and theological grounds. Furthermore, Enlightenment's privileging of the phenomenological vantage of disembodied white "manhood" replicated as it secularized the Puritan tendency to conceptualize white men as primarily spiritual, or more spiritual, than women and racial "others." That is, both the racial and gender logics of Enlightenment philosophy as well as the Puritan-Protestant tradition of male spiritual friendships

left white men, conceptually, in the discursive realm of citizenship, without an eroticized body. While "others" became primarily defined in terms of their erotic fleshiness, white men, in civic contexts, defined themselves and each other through the mutual recognition of shared mind and spirit, projecting their displaced embodiment onto metaphors of collective citizenship and fraternity, such as the biblical and republican figures of (Brother) Jonathan. Consequently, the competitive market culture of capitalist enterprise served functionally as a space to route, contain, and expend the erotic energies, simultaneously invited and forbidden by romantic and spiritual friendships, that men might have otherwise directed toward each other, wedding national conceptions of "manhood" and citizenship to commerce rather than community (Nelson 45-46, 97). As the container for the unspoken threat of male same-sex erotic exchange shifted from marriage to market, the "promised relief from the anxieties of economic competition in the warm emotional space of civic fraternal sameness" pressurized conceptions of American "manhood" as white men attempted to reconcile their identities with the republican diametrics of personal and entrepreneurial ambition and fraternal unity, allowing them to "achieve the egalitarian reassurance of unmediated brotherhood only with dead or imagined men" (Nelson x).

The cross-pressure that characterized the contradictory nature of white American masculinity in the early and mid-19th century would likewise find displaced embodiment in the figure of Brother Jonathan, who, as noted earlier, Morgan describes as taking on a "Janus-faced" quality as its symbolic range attempted to accommodate both individualistic capitalist enterprise and fraternal and democratic solidarity (34). As white men, particularly in the industrialized north, began increasingly to engage in a quickly expanding market economy, the conception of masculinity that had been sustained by a culture of romantic and spiritual friendships between men began to fracture, not least of all because economic shifts beginning in the late 18th century

provided more opportunities to garner personal wealth and profits–newly minted markers of masculine success–and marriage began to alienate intimate friendships between men by drawing them into family structures that naturalized distinctly gendered spheres of influence by contrasting the masculine domains of politics and economics with the feminine realm of domestic, family life. While the arrangement reallocated moral and, somewhat ironically, spiritual authority to wives and mothers, to whom the responsibility fell to check the unbridled market ambitions of their husbands and sons by instilling religious and republican virtue, the alignment of commercial interests with national "manhood" within the pneumapolitical organization of antebellum culture–set in motion by the Puritan theocracy of the colonial era–continued to privilege and empower white male citizens while dissolving the available means and modes by which they could form (and sustain) socially acceptable intimate and affectionate attachments with each other (Rotundo 18). Although spiritual and romantic friendships between men persisted during the 19th century, their longevity and intensity (as seen in the 17th-century case of Winthrop and Sir William Springe, for example) became curtailed when intimate male friends transitioned to life as married men; marriage became for them a personal and moral commitment as well as an economic one that put them in direct competition for commercial success with their peers as each strove to accumulate familial wealth (Rotundo 88, 90). Furthermore, as gendered roles within marriage context continued to script social mores and taboos and to foster the naturalization of separate spheres of influence for men and women, legal discourses began to more clearly delineate and structure normative and socially permissible forms of sexual behavior. An increase in sodomy cases throughout the 19th century began to discursively differentiate between types of sexual perversion and deviance, using heterosexual marriage to calibrate "natural" (and legal) sexual relations, which, in turn, cast suspicion on and

created caution for some intimate male friendships. (Katz 61-66 and Godbeer 7). As republican and Protestant ideals, religious and secular virtue, fused in the formative crucible of an expanding capitalist market economy, the de-eroticized white male body became an essential element in defining citizenship: in all the ways white male citizens were permitted and encouraged to relate, politically and economically, by the mid-19th century, the erotic and affectionate *possibilities* of their spiritual and romantic friendships, along with the figure of (Brother) Jonathan, were beginning to fade rapidly on the horizon of the nation's colonial past, as Winthrop's vision of a communal body knit together by spiritual love gave way to body politic splintered by conflicting self-interests.

The convergence of these historical and market forces as well as the social contradictions latent in the discursive realm of white male citizenship/friendship generated what Raymond Williams defines as a "structure of feeling," which arises from "specific internal relations, at once interlocking and in tension" within already existing social structures; it emerges as "a social experience in *solution*, as distinct from other social semantic formations which have been *precipitated* and are more evidently and more immediately available" (132, 133-134). This "structure of feeling," I argue, registered and sought resolution for the problem of the de-eroticized body of white male citizens in a U.S. national context and, in many ways, served as a one discursive channel through which concepts of male homosexuality began to take shape, both as pathology and identity, until the "homosexual," as Foucault posits, became a distinct type, a *species*, in the late 19th century (43). Although the concept of "homosexuality" wasn't available to Walt Whitman as he wrote and published his "Calamus" cluster of poems for the first time in the 1860 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, his poems describing male same-sex intimacy and affection clearly respond to the "structure of feeling" I have hypothesized by expressing a desire "[t]o

celebrate the need of comrades," echoing the imperative of Winthrop's "Modell" sermon, and affirming the romantic and spiritual as well as erotic love shared between male friends. David S. Reynolds, in an attempt to rescue Whitman from a-historicity and "defiant homosexual outcries," argues for a "post-Foucauldian" reading of the "Calamus" poems, which he believes reveal that Whitman's concept of love between comrades harmonized with rather than challenged broader antebellum cultural beliefs that encouraged and lauded such male same-sex attachments and that the portrayal of "his physical relationships with men [...] were not out of keeping with then-current theories that underscored the healthiness of such passion" (635-636). He cites, for example, the fact that contemporary reviews of the 1860 edition "vented particular fury over 'Enfans d'Adam,'" Whitman's poems on "amative" attachment, or love between men and women, while the "Calamus" cluster escaped critical review relatively unscathed and was left mostly uncensored in subsequent editions of *Leaves of Grass* because, as Reynolds, argues, "Comradely love was considered close to mainstream conventions" (635). While it may be partially true that contemporaneous critics of Whitman's poetry did not register the radical nature of his portrayal of male same-sex intimacy because it did not, in fact, appear to them as radical at all, that tendency was certainly not universally the case. And as Michael Moon's analysis of the poems in the "Calamus" section argues, "it is characteristic of Whitman to represent subjectivity simultaneously *in the grip of* a deforming cultural formation [...] and *in the act of*, or perhaps more precisely, *in the act of imagining*, subverting that formation" (163). Moon's view that Whitman often constructed a double or multi-perspective subjectivity in his poetry illuminates the complex cultural position of "Calamus" in 1860. This view challenges Reynold's narrow assertion (along with other similar lines of argumentation) that "Calamus" emerged merely as a cultural consonance reflecting prevalent ideas concerning male same-sex intimacy and reveals

instead that the poems also worked to convey a "structure of feeling" in response to the dysfunction (and distortion) of male friendship/citizenship at midcentury. While Whitman could not draw upon the concept of "homosexuality" as we understand it to poetically explore his vision of love between comrades, he nonetheless, as Betsy Erkkila reminds us, "resolves to publish and give voice to the 'not yet published' standard of manly love as a form of resistance to the traditional 'pleasures, profits, and conformities' of public culture and the marketplace" in the opening poem of the "Calamus" cluster, "In Paths Untrodden" (*Songs of Male Intimacy* 117).

Whitman's "New Religion"

In 1857, between the second and third editions of *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman recorded two notebook entries indicating that he considered his evolving poetic project a "New Bible" to serve as the basis for a "New Religion." (*Notebooks* 1.353 and qtd. in Harris 1). Following these audacious claims, Whitman uses "Proto-Leaf," the first poem in the 1860 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, to preface the revised collection and introduce readers to his vision of American democracy based on "new religious" ideals: "I specifically announce that the real and permanent grandeur of These States must be their Religion" (*Leaves* 12). All too ready to inaugurate the new religion he heralds, Whitman offers "the following poems" as "the germs of a greater Religion," presumably a religious order to replace the reigning white Protestant hegemony and the national ethos it inspired (*Leaves* 13). Throughout "Proto-Leaf," Whitman lays the foundation for the new American religion he hopes to establish. Among its most pronounced features is the connection Whitman sees between loving comrades and a thriving democracy:

> I will sing a song of companionship,
>
> I will show what alone must compact These,

I believe These are to found their own ideal of manly love, indicating it in me;
I will therefore let flame from me the burning fires that were threatening to consume me,
I will lift what has too long kept down those smouldering fires,
I will give them complete abandonment,
I will write the evangel-poem of comrades and of love,
(For who but I should understand love, with all its sorrow and joy?
And who but I should be the poet of comrades?) (*Leaves* 11-12)

In this passage, the conclusion to a series of anaphoric lines proclaiming his intent ("I will") for *Leaves of Grass* and his "New Religion," Whitman foregrounds "companionship" as vital to ensuring the survival of "These," a nation on the brink of civil war. As the political and social fracturing that formed the backdrop of the 1860 edition of *Leaves of Grass* infused Whitman's poetic manifesto in "Proto-Leaf" with imminence and urgency, it also opened a discursive space that enabled Whitman to express some of his more shocking and radical views in and through the invocation of the nation's long tradition of male same-sex friendships (which by this time had accumulated language that strongly affiliated fraternal camaraderie with citizenship), even as that same tradition provided cover for the "burning fires that were threatening to consume him." Resisting the impulse, as tempting as it may be, to interpret Whitman's "smouldering fires" as a sign of his repressed homosexual desire allows us to understand Whitman not as a conscious forerunner of sexual identity politics but instead as a liminal figure in the developmental process of modern sexuality, someone whose secret desires (given now to "complete abandonment") do not so much reflect a legible and coherent sexual identity as they do a countercultural revelation about the power of "manly love," a "structure of feeling," emerging against the mounting

dissension of a beleaguered nation. The "evangel-poem of comrades and love," shorthand for the entire collection, furthermore, frames *Leaves of Grass* as a religious text, a "New Bible," by equating the poems themselves as new "gospels," in a sense, and Whitman as their primary prophet and evangelist. Importantly, Whitman constructs love between comrades as a conduit through which "These States" will establish a new American religion. And although a fuller expression of this idea does not appear until the "Calamus" section, implicit in this passage is the connection between same-sex erotic desire (euphemized as fire imagery in "Proto-Leaf") and religious faith and practice.

While Whitman's references to the soul throughout "Proto-Leaf" and *Leaves of Grass* would have provided 19th-century readers with a familiar reference point for understanding his poems as "religious" (or perhaps even Transcendentalist), his insistence that the body (more so, the erotic body) and soul both served as sacred mediums for accessing the "spiritual" might have confounded more conservative (and widespread) theological viewpoints that tended to elevate the spiritual soul above the sinful flesh of the body: while the sinful body would eventually succumb to death and decay, the soul would live on eternally as either saved or damned, and so, the logic went, was of greater purport. Mainline and evangelical Protestant theological traditions would have, like Whitman, recognized a reciprocal relation between body and soul, but whereas most dominant Christian theologies of Whitman's time espoused Pauline perspectives on the corrupt nature of the flesh, conceptualizing the body as in opposition to the spirit, Whitman insisted on the goodness and sanctity of both the body and soul.[28] For Whitman, body and soul

[28] "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; idolatry, witchcraft, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of

constituted each other, and the mortal, material world mingled inextricably with the immortal and spiritual:

> I will make the poems of materials, for I think they are to be the most spiritual poems,
> And I will make the poems of my body and of mortality,
> For I think I shall then supply myself with the poems of my Soul and of immortality.
> (*Leaves* 9-10)

By centering the body (more precisely in this passage, *his* body) as a source of spiritual knowledge, rather than a distortion of or distraction from it, Whitman launches a theology of self that he would continue to develop and clarify throughout the 1860 and subsequent editions of *Leaves of Grass*. This theology of self stood in direct contrast to the dominant Christian theologies of his time that framed the self, and particularly the body, as part and parcel of a fallen world that would ultimately pass away to be replaced by a redeemed and eternal spiritual one. Directly following "Proto-Leaf," the poem "Walt Whitman," which had opened the previous 1856 edition under the title "Poem of Walt Whitman, an American" and would eventually become "Song of Myself" by the collection's final form, opens with the now iconic line, "I celebrate myself," underscoring that the "New Religion" Whitman inaugurates with *Leaves of Grass*, which functions as his religion's "New Bible," will be one that emanates from his own body and soul rather than prescribed or received forms of spiritual knowledge. Crucially, however, Whitman's religion, far from restrictive doctrines and dogmas of institutionalized forms of Christianity, democratizes religious experience by returning spiritual autonomy and interpretative power to individuals:

God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against these there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another" (Galatians 16-26, KJV).

You shall no longer take things at second or third hand, nor look through the eyes of the dead, nor feed on the specters of books,

You shall not look through my eyes either, nor take things from me,

You shall listen to all sides, and filter them from yourself (*Leaves* 24-25).

Directly related to and informed by the burgeoning self culture of the mid-19th century, forged most notably by the writings of Transcendentalist thinkers like Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Margaret Fuller, Whitman's poems assume the supremacy of the self in the pursuit of apprehending spiritual knowledge. And of course, Whitman's turn to himself and his own body is meant to inspire a similar turn in his readers. Whereas dominant Christian traditions demanded adherence and conformity through processes of spiritual conversion to counteract the sinful nature of the flesh, Whitman's new religion returns the body to individuals as already unblemished and saturated with spiritual meaning: "Behold! the body includes and is the meaning, the main concern–and includes and is the Soul;/ Whoever you are! How superb and how divine is your body, or any part of it" (*Leaves* 17). Instead of relying on the Bible or clergy to mediate and impart spiritual truths, Whitman's "New Religion" replaces religious authority and interpretative gatekeeping with the "filter" of the individual body, thereby challenging the pneumapolitical regime that constructed a moral hegemony and white national ethos through wide-ranging forms of conversion, both religious and secular.

In overwriting the Bible, and the theologies it inspired, Whitman sought to rescue the body (and with it, the soul) from the normalizing and moralizing limitations of religious authority in order to expand the possibilities of experience in the material and spiritual realms. In many ways, Whitman's celebration of the body along with his vision of a democracy constituted by the loving bonds between comrades would form the ideological underpinning of the

"Calamus" section and lay the foundation for reconstructing the long tradition of spiritual friendships between men in the United States into a post-Christian "City on a Hill." In this vision, the eroticized soul-body would serve as the basis for cohering a democratic citizenry rather than the Winthropian legacy of Protestant theocracy and hierarchical heteronormativity, which the biblical figure of Jonathan came to represent as it disembodied citizenship and unevenly spiritualized friendships between men.

Whitman and (Brother) Jonathan

Despite the significance of the Jonathan and David story in conceptualizing and sustaining the tradition of male same-sex spiritual and romantic friendships within both religious and secular national contexts, dating back at least to Winthrop, allusions to the story remain surprisingly absent from Whitman's wider oeuvre in 1860, when the "Calamus" cluster first appeared in *Leaves of Grass*. One passing reference to the biblical story of Jonathan and David does appear (albeit somewhat obliquely) in a piece of Whitman's journalism, which was published in the daily newspaper *The New York Aurora* in March 1842. In the piece "A Peep at the Israelites," ostensibly part of a short series documenting a single visit to a local synagogue "a block or two above Grand," Whitman describes the interior of the building, the members of the "congregation," and the general atmosphere of the service ("The whole scene was entirely new"). Moved upon hearing a rabbi speaking Hebrew to the people gathered, Whitman begins to reflect pensively on the Jewish figures and stories recorded in the Bible in a prosaic litany very characteristic of the style he employs in sections of *Leaves of Grass*. The congregants were, as Whitman observes, speaking in "the same tones which Jonathan and Saul used in their beautiful friendship" ("A Peep"). Given Whitman's clear knowledge of biblical persons and events, it

seems unlikely that he would have been unfamiliar with the famed friendship of Jonathan and David, yet he seems to confuse Saul, Jonathan's father, with David (an error made all the more conspicuous by the fact that he mentions Saul earlier in the same section of the piece and alludes to David as "the holy Psalmist" towards the end of the passage). Whatever the case may be, this mistake only serves to underscore the peculiar absence of Jonathan and David, as an esteemed pair, from the wider body of Whitman's work, particularly in his poems and prose dealing with loving affection between comrades.[29] Because the Jonathan and David story merged a culture of fraternal attachment and male same-sex friendship with concepts of citizenship and national belonging, it seems an obvious place for Whitman to have turned to explore some of the themes he highlights in "Proto-Leaf" and later expounds upon in the "Calamus" section. While direct references to the biblical figures of Jonathan and David do not make their way into the "Calamus" poems (or anywhere else in *Leaves of Grass*, for that matter), they nonetheless seem to stand at the edges of Whitman's text as cultural prefigurations of the loving attachment he envisions revitalizing the potential of democracy in the U.S.

Although a thematic cornerstone of Whitman's ongoing poetic project had remained the optimistic possibilities and expansive horizons of a democratic citizenry in the U.S., the immediate socio-political backdrop of a splintering nation on the brink of civil war would bring his efforts into sharper relief, creating a palpable urgency as he attempted to envision an

[29] In Edward F. Grier's exhaustive edition of Whitman's collected notebooks and unpublished prose, several references to the biblical David are recorded on scraps of paper. One mentions David in a list of biblical poets (*Notebooks* 1564). Another is bizarrely jotted on a paper scrap that appears to be some kind of timeline note: "Finland–a large ancient country, an important part of Russia. / Palestine, David 1020 B.C. / Dido 800 B.C. / Æneas 800 B.C./ Mahommedanism rose 600 A.D Mahomet born 569, died 632" (*Notebooks* 1985). And the last, in a prose list praising famous writers, such as Shakespeare, Eschylus, Tennyson, Whitman writes, "There will never come a time when […] the Psalms of David shall not sing the rapt devotee his ecstasy" (*Notebooks* 1512). Notably, Jonathan and David never appear together in any of Whitman's writings as far as I have been able to discover.

alternative to schismatic national collapse in his 1860 edition. His clear investments in initiating a "New Religion" and a "New Bible" to reinvigorate the union of "These States" suggests that older religious forms, even dominant ones, had calcified and outlived their usefulness in Whitman's mind for ushering in the nation's democratic destiny. In this vein, the absence of allusions to Jonathan and David in *Leaves of Grass* may have been a conscious choice on Whitman's part: it would make sense that in fashioning a new religious order, he would have also wanted to develop new symbols and iconographies ("leaves of grass," for example) to represent his vision of democracy. Brother Jonathan, the national sobriquet, however, does appear as the only named bystander in Whitman's poem "A Boston Ballad." The poem, which directly precedes the "Calamus" section, was written as a response to the apprehension of Anthony Burns, an enslaved man who escaped from Virginia to the free state of Massachusetts in 1853. The following year, Burns was arrested under the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 and returned to Virginia with the assistance of federal troops. Whitman took the case as an opportunity to decry the overreach of the federal government into state affairs and criticize citizen bystanders (embodied in the figure of Jonathan) for allowing such an egregious violation to occur. The poem opens on the public scene of federal soldiers escorting Burns (notably, unnamed in the poem) from Boston and citizen bystanders observing indifferently from the periphery: "Clear the way there, Jonathan! / Way for the President's marshal! Way for the government cannon! / Way for the federal foot and dragoons–and the apparitions copiously tumbling" (*Leaves* 337). "Uncountable phantoms" with "[c]ocked hats of mothy mould" and "crutches made from mist" glide "bandaged and bloodless" through the poem to remind Jonathan and the citizens of Boston of the legacy of resistance to tyranny their ancestors forged just a few generations before (*Leaves* 337-38). Betsy Erkkila argues that Jonathan "represents the failure of republican traditions in the

present" and that his apparent inability or unwillingness to defy federal troops "dramatizes the conflict between individual and state, personal liberty and public law, revolutionary past and compromised present evident in the Burns case" (*Whitman the Political Poet* 64). Sarcastically, the speaker in the poem (apparently, Whitman) goes on to rhetorically address the dismayed Revolutionary-era ghosts who see "federal foot and dragoons" marching through Boston unimpeded: "What troubles you, Yankee phantoms? [...] If you blind your eyes with tears, you will not see the President's marshal, / If you groan such groans you might balk the government cannon" (338). "For shame, old maniacs!" Whitman continues, "Bring down those tossed arms, and let your white hair be, / Here gape your smart grand-sons–their wives gaze at them from the windows, / See how well-dressed–see how orderly they conduct themselves" (338). Whitman's ironic tone clearly criticizes the failure of Boston citizens to embody the revolutionary spirit of their forefathers in open and defiant resistance to oppressive tyranny. The spectral scene culminates with Whitman sardonically suggesting that a committee should be formed and sent to England to exhume the remains of King George III so that his bones might be displayed publicly for "all the orderly citizens" to behold (*Leaves* 339-40).

Strikingly, the focus of this poem, besides Jonathan's inaction, is the revolutionary "phantoms" who have returned to witness the horror of seeing Boston overrun by federal troops. Kevin McMullen, in his keen analysis of the poem, points out that Whitman's interest in "not just the body politic, but the body *in* politics" finds an uncharacteristic representation in "A Boston Ballad," which he sees as "a poem preoccupied with bodies, but mainly absent ones" (30). Jonathan, as McMullen notes, is the "only character who is capable of independent action" in the poem, but even he fails to mobilize his own body or galvanize others towards resistance and rebellion (31). Critics have tended to ignore Jonathan instead focusing on the theme of

federal intervention, but importantly Whitman deliberately bookends his poem with the figure of Jonathan, and not the federal troops or the reconstructed skeleton of King George III, drawing attention to not only the failure of Jonathan to intervene in the situation, but also the failure of the national body (for which he functioned as a stand-in) to shake off apathy in the face of unchecked federalism (McMullen 31).

After the public reconstruction of King George III's remains to taunt "orderly" Bostonians and horrify the procession of Revolutionary phantoms, disturbed from their graves, Whitman closes the poem as he opens it with the figure of Jonathan, this time with his hands tucked complacently into his pockets: "Stick your hands in your pockets, Jonathan–you are a made man from this day, / You are mighty cute–and here is one of your bargains" (*Leaves* 40). One of the "bargains" that apparently lines Jonathan's pockets at the end of the poem is his compromised republican virtue in the face of aggressive federal oversight, but another, as McMullen suggests, "may signify that Jonathan is concerned with money and economics, rather than with political or moral principles" (33). If "A Boston Ballad" is primarily a poem concerned with "absent bodies and bodily disconnection" and the "bodily impotence" of Jonathan's disappearing hands, Whitman strategically employs the figure of Jonathan to not only conjure the image of an imperiled national body but also to critique the masculine culture that undergirded its dysfunction by permitting commercial interests to supersede fraternal connection and brotherly affection, which, I contend, operates as a spectral tyrant at the heart of the poem's broader cultural conflict. Jonathan's hands tucked away out of view also suggest a solitary figure with an unwillingness to metaphorically, or literally, connect with his fellow citizens. For McMullen, this image represents the "antithesis of the adhesiveness Whitman envisions in the 'Calamus' poems," and Erkkila, echoing this sentiment, argues that "A Boston Ballad" prepares

readers for the "turn away from the law and institutions toward the bonds of manly love as a means of revitalizing democracy and 'These States' in the 'Calamus' cluster," which uncoincidentally follows directly after "A Boston Ballad" in the 1860 edition of *Leaves of Grass* ("Damned" 35 and *Songs of Male Intimacy* 117).

As a counterpoint to Jonathan concealing his hands from view at the end of "A Boston Ballad," McMullen cites "Calamus 37," which concludes with the line, "I wish to infuse myself among you till I see it common for you to walk hand in hand." The striking contrast between the two images, hands withdrawn in one, and hands joined in the other, again underscores Whitman's interest in envisioning citizenship as radically embodied. McMullen also points out in "A Boston Ballad" that "nobody [Whitman] describes seems to have the right body for the job," and Jonathan, who does have a body with the potential to intervene, does not seem to have the gumption or wherewithal, the spirit, to do what is required to carry on his forefathers' legacy of tyrannical resistance (30). Jonathan, passive and feckless, is emblematic of the latent contradictions of republican culture during the antebellum period, which, on one hand, created citizens without eroticized bodies, and, on the other hand, constructed political bodies without the right kind of spirit required to bond citizens into a thriving democracy–Jonathans without a David. Even though the pneumapolitical order of the antebellum period de-eroticized the body of the citizen through a tradition of male same-sex friendship to forge purely "spiritual" bonds of affinity, the emergence of capitalist enterprise and commercial competition would ultimately stress and erode those bonds as white males with citizenship status sought personal enrichment and profits to fortify heteronormative family structures. Winthrop's project of fraternal "soul-knitting" seems to have reached its limits, and so Whitman turns to "adhesiveness," a concept

developed in the burgeoning field of phrenology, in hopes of theorizing a renewed vision of citizenship, one that involved the fullness of both body and spirit.

Whitman, Phrenology, and "Adhesiveness"

Whitman's fascination with phrenology, which would come to profoundly influence his personal worldview and poetic ethos, likely began sometime in the mid-1840s (Hungerford 357). A newspaper clipping found among Whitman's papers titled "Phrenology: A Socratic Dialogue," which was printed in the January 1846 edition of *The American Review: A Whig Journal of Politics, Literature, Art and Science*, is the earliest evidence of Whitman's first brush with phrenology (Hungerford 357). That same year, Whitman would go on to favorably review two important phrenological works, J.G. Spurzheim's *Phrenology, of the Doctrine of the Mental Phenomena* and George Moore's *The Use of the Body in Relation to the Mind*, for *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*. The following year, he published a note in *The Eagle* endorsing the work of "the two Fowlers and Mr. Wells," prominent entrepreneurial phrenologists in New York who were largely responsible for popularizing the "science" in the United States, saying, "there can be no harm, but probably much good, in pursuing the study of phrenology" (qtd. in Hungerford 357-358). Clipped articles from 1854-1857 found among Whitman's papers indicate that he likely subscribed to *The American Phrenological Journal*, "a highly reputable magazine" and was extensively knowledgeable on the subject (Hungerford 360). Whitman would further immerse himself in the world of phrenology and some of its most esteemed practitioners in 1849 when he visited the Phrenological Cabinet, the business hub of the Fowler brothers, Orson and Lorenzo, and Samuel Wells, whom Whitman had promoted years earlier in the review note he published in *The Eagle*. His relationship with the Fowlers and Wells, who advertised and distributed the 1855

edition of *Leaves of Grass* and anonymously published the 1856 version, only strengthened after their initial encounter until the poor sales of the latter version of *Leaves of Grass* eventually strained and fractured their relationship (Wrobel 20 and Stern).

Although Whitman became disenchanted with his phrenologist partners in the fallout of the botched publication launch of the 1856 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, the basic premise of phrenology, which succinctly theorized a reciprocal and mutual relationship between body, spirit, and mind, a relationship that was made legible by the surface bumps on a person's head, would continue to inform his personal life and spirituality along with his poetic explorations of ideal citizenship and visions of a thriving democracy, for which he relied heavily on the phrenological concept of "adhesiveness." Whitman probably first learned about this concept from many of the phrenology guides and articles he consumed. The Fowler brothers 1850 *New Illustrated Self-Instructor in Phrenology and Physiology* describes "adhesiveness" as "Social feeling; love of society; desire to congregate, associate, visit, seek company, entertain friends, form and reciprocate attachments, and indulge in friendly feelings," going on to say, "When perverted it forms attachments for the unworthy, and leads to bad company. Adapted to man's requisition for concert of action, copartnership, combination, and community of feeling and interest, and is a leading element of his social relations" (83-84). However, Spurzheim was the first to coin the term "adhesiveness" from the German *Anhänglichkeit* as he worked to adapt and expand Franz Joseph Gall's system of mental faculties into English (Lynch 72). The neologism, speculative at first, "evoked an image not so much of hanging-on or dependence," as its German counterpart did, but instead, an image "of sticking together" and was eventually canonized as a phrenological faculty in Spurzheim's 1825 *Phrenology, or, The Doctrine of the Mind* (Lynch 72). This mental faculty, which was meant to indicate a person's propensity for positive social

attachment and friendship, quickly became central to Whitman's poetic philosophy, and we see it scattered all throughout *Leaves of Grass* and his other writings. Although Jonathan and David, as previously discussed, remain surprisingly absent from Whitman's poetry and writings about love between comrades, they do appear in at least two phrenological guides as exemplars of the concept of "adhesiveness" during the 1840s (*People's* 145 and Janson 321-332). The reference to the biblical pair in relationship to "adhesiveness," on one hand, aligned phrenology with the long republican tradition of male same-sex spiritual friendships in U.S. and, on the other hand, attached the system of phrenology to certain dominant forms of white Protestantism, which had long esteemed Jonathan and David's friendship as a model of love between fellow believers, and men, in particular. While we cannot know for certain whether Whitman encountered any of these guides in his reading and study of phrenological texts, it seems quite plausible that he may have, given his extensive knowledge and ongoing interest with the subject. In any case, that Jonathan and David, in the minds of some phrenologists, exemplified the faculty of "adhesiveness" implicitly infused Whitman's poetry concerning "manly love" with this important republican and religious subtext, whether he was aware of the association or not.

Whitman's own phrenological reading, which was conducted by Lorenzo Fowler in July 1849 upon Whitman's first visit to the Phrenological Cabinet, revealed that the part of his brain responsible for "adhesiveness" was exceptionally robust. The Fowlers used a 7-point scale to measure the size and proficiency levels of different mental faculties in the brain, and Whitman received a 6 for "adhesiveness," which would have been understood as "very desirable" (Hungerford 362-363). Whitman kept the chart of his reading for his entire life, and it was published five times: once in the *Brooklyn Daily Times* in September 1855; in the first three editions of *Leaves of Grass*; and lastly by his literary executors after his death (Mackey 233).

Adhesiveness, more importantly, provided Whitman with a concept to ground his desires for same-sex intimacy in the materiality of his own body and brain and furthermore helped him articulate a mode of "manly love" that the tradition of romantic and spiritual friendships between men in the U.S. only vaguely (and threateningly) gestured towards. In his 1856 "Poem of the Road," Whitman fleshes out and adapts the phrenological term to a situation that "urban gay men today call 'cruising'" (Lynch 90). "This is adhesiveness–it is not previously fashioned–it is apropos," Whitman asserts, then asks, "Do you know what it is, as you pass, to be loved by strangers? / Do you know the talk of those turning eye-balls?" (*Leaves* 320). In the following stanza, Whitman continues to ponder the energetic qualities of chance encounters with strangers: "Here is the efflux of the Soul, / the efflux of the Soul comes through beautiful gates of laws, provoking questions; / These yearnings, why are they? These thoughts in the darkness, why are they?" (*Leaves* 320). For Whitman, "adhesiveness" seems to capture and explain his attraction to certain bodies, certain strangers as he passes by them. In the context of the lines, the curious phrase "beautiful gates of laws" seem to reference the bodies of strangers themselves–the portals through which the "efflux" of the soul passes into the world–and Whitman's use of "laws" in the phrase works to universalize the experience of inexplicable or seemingly spontaneous attraction and yearning for another body, modulating the mysteries of human desire into the realm of phrenology: "Why are there men and women that while they are nigh me, the sunlight expands my blood?" (*Leaves* 320). Throughout the poem, Whitman employs an anaphoric refrain, "Here is," to introduce and reflect, as he often does, on a litany of ideas ("space", "test of wisdom," "realization," etc.). Unlike their sister stanzas, "Here is adhesiveness–" (25) and "Here is the efflux of the Soul" (26) are dominated by rhetorical questions, as though the questions themselves are the seedlings of ideas only vaguely grasped–those "not yet previously fashioned"

nor quite clear to Whitman either, whose thoughts as he says, are wrapped in "darkness." What's striking, however, is the connection Whitman achieves between "adhesiveness" and the "efflux of the Soul" through the immediate proximity of the two stanzas. The final question in stanza 25, "Do you know that talk of those turning eye-balls?" blends with the opening assertion of stanza 26, "Here is the efflux of the Soul." The turning of "eye-balls" physicalizes the inexplicable energetic exchange Whitman experiences with certain strangers as he passes by them–what their eyes say exactly when they talk, may be yet unintelligible, except to say, they express the "efflux of the Soul," which Whitman clarifies in stanza 27 is "happiness" (*Leaves* 321). Though Whitman's articulation of "adhesiveness" seems overwhelmed by unanswered questions, the happy congruity of spiritual exchange between the bodies of strangers may be the answer he cautiously circles in the poem. Adhesiveness, at the very least, offers Whitman in "Poem of the Road" a conceptual starting point for spiritualizing the flesh and its desires, and particularly his own desires. As Whitman conscripts and adapts "adhesiveness" from phrenology to express same-sex love between men, it quickly became the centerpiece of his new religious outlook that sought to portray the "ideal of manly love" and opened an avenue for naturalizing sexual intimacy between men through the system of phrenology.

More than just a scientific method for "reading" the surface of the skull to discover an individual's personal proclivities, phrenology was marketed by the Fowlers and others as a religious system, one that dovetailed with what Michael Sowder calls an "antebellum culture of conversion" as well as nationalist and millenarian discourses circulating in the decades preceding the Civil War (Sowder 27 and Mackey 27). In the wake of the First and Second Great Awakenings, many evangelical and revivalist leaders "sought not only individual conversions but national redemption and ultimately sought to bring on the millennium" (Sowder 28).

Alongside other social and political reformation programs, such as the temperance movement, women's suffrage, and abolitionism, phrenology offered a "scientific" approach to personal transformation and the betterment of society by appropriating the language of conversion and spiritual redemption. In 1849, the Fowlers proclaimed in their *American Phrenological Journal*,

> Its present desire is this–to PHRENOLOGIZE OUR NATION, for thereby it will REFORM THE WORLD. No evil exists in society but it sternly yet calmly rebukes, and points out more excellent way. No reform, no proposed good, but it strenuously enforces. It is the very 'Head and Front' of the new and happy order of things now so rapidly superseding the old misery-inflicting institutions of society. ("Its Prospects and Course" 10)

Echoing calls by missionary organizations of the time to Christianize the nation, and therefore the world, phrenology promised to usher in a "new and happy order of things" if adherents would submit to the tenets and methods it espoused. It also seems clear that Whitman would have found in phrenology a new framework for relating to the body and its desires: whereas dominant Protestant theologies tended to take an antagonistic stance against the corrupting influence of the "flesh," a doctrine of "total depravity," phrenology proposed that the body was not inherently evil, but instead could be reformed through the transformation of the mind and the faculties that governed individual affinity and propensity (maybe something more like a secularized Methodism). Whitman's "New Religion," like phrenology, would affirm the possibility of perfecting the body and spirit in the present. By this time, the hardline Calvinist thinking of Winthrop and his theological descendants had somewhat softened into more flexible and inclusive Arminian strains; however, phrenologists still retained and repurposed some Winthropian ideology in order to relate phrenological transformation to spiritual conversion,

particularly as it concerned mutual recognition and civic cohesion. In his study of Whitman's ongoing and complex relationship with phrenology, Nathaniel Mackey argues, "The presumed legibility of human beings was crucial to the promises of individual and social reform with which both Whitman and phrenology were involved [...] Democratic community, the argument went, depended on the ability of human beings to know one another; the democratic imperative was not only to know oneself but to know one's fellow citizens" (30). Following Mackey's assertion, the Puritan idea that conversion experiences could provide proof for ascertaining a person's spiritual state–and that a state of divine election, in particular, could be recognized in fellow believers–seems to have found new life in the "scientific" system of phrenology. The Fowlers themselves even reference the "city on a hill" passage, which was so central to Winthrop's civic theory, in an article they published in the *American Phrenological Journal*: "Nature has ordained that we do not hide the light of our souls under the bushels of impenetrability but that we should set them on the hill of conspicuosity, so that all that are with insight may observe them. She even *compels* such expression" (qtd. in Mackey 30).[30] Notably, the Fowlers secularize the reference by attributing the decree to Nature instead of Jesus, but the exceptionalist premise still holds: phrenology harbored the potential to perfect the nation and its citizens through a process of conversion by cultivating the faculties of the brain, which phrenologists understood as the "organ of the mind" (Lynch 69). Sowder, in his illuminating exploration of the antebellum culture of conversion, reads "*Leaves of Grass* as a conversion narrative and sermonic performance designed to induce conversions in others," and we can see that Whitman's creation of a "New Religion" with a "New Bible," in part, grew from a response

[30] "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16, KJV).

to oppressive regimes of institutionalized religious belief that operated by enforcing conformity through modes of spiritual conversion, the basis for pneumapolitical power. Instead of replacing an old authority with a new one, however, Whitman instead, as W. C. Harris argues, envisioned his "New Religion" as "an institution which is *not* an institution, meaning that it is not administered by an invested few, a class administering its own hierarchical distinction" (175). Phrenology might have unwittingly taken on the role of a new religious order in the mind of Whitman, but even it he adapted to align with his own experience and innate desire. "Adhesiveness," had been "previously fashioned" by prominent phrenologists to signify the attachment of friendship, but Whitman adapted it to "an exclusive reference to same-sex love" in his poems (Lynch 90 and *Songs of Male Intimacy* 116). Whitman himself defined "adhesive love," in *Democratic Vistas* as "[i]ntense and loving comradeship, the personal and passionate attachment of man to man" (94). Whereas dominant forms of white Protestantism from the Puritans to the antebellum period employed conversion as a pneumapolitical technology to ensure the stability of hierarchical authority, including regimes of race, gender, marriage, family, and friendship, Whitman's "New Religion" hoped to inspire conversion experiences that dismantled authoritarian control, equalized communities, and returned interpretive autonomy to individuals.[31] Furthermore, his "New Religion" centered his own body as a medium of spiritual wisdom, which, in turn, catalyzed a revision of America's tradition of same-sex male friendships into one that permitted the eroticized body of the citizen and celebrated spiritual and sexual connections between men as central to a thriving democracy.

[31] Although the poetic ethos Whitman cultivated in his poetry, in part by drawing on phrenological concepts, espoused a philosophy of radical egalitarianism, phrenology was nonetheless a racist pseudoscience, bordering on eugenics. See Nathaniel Mackey's "Phrenological Whitman," especially pp. 246-251, for a discussion of racism and phrenology as they pertain to Whitman.

Whitman's "Calamus" and "City of Friends"

As the "love of comrades" constituted the core of Whitman's "New Religion," so also did the "Calamus" cluster, Whitman's most concentrated exploration of "manly love," form the heart of the 1860 edition of *Leaves of Grass*. Although his new religious outlook fundamentally departed from dominant forms of white Protestantism, most notably in his insistence on the interpretative and spiritual autonomy of the self as opposed to received forms of institutionalized knowledge and hierarchical authority, he nonetheless engaged with and adapted the tradition of male same-sex friendship that had been central to both the ethos of white Protestantism and republican ideology in the U.S. from the Revolutionary era to the antebellum period. When Whitman dismissed the figure of Jonathan in his poem "A Boston Ballad" as an inadequate and ineffective embodiment of democratic citizenship and the republican spirit, he seems to have also abandoned (or, at the very least, ignored) the biblical story of Jonathan and David, which had emblematized a culture of fraternal cohesion and shared belief in the republican imagination and among prominent Protestant congregations for centuries, in developing his vision of love and affection between male comrades. However, the myth of Calamos, from which "Calamus" is derived, bears a surprising resemblance to the story of Jonathan and David. Recorded originally in Nonnos' *Dionysiaca*, a 48-book epic poem of Greco-Roman antiquity, the story recounts the friendship of two fantastically beautiful youths, Calamos, son of the river god Maiandros, and the "charming" Carpos, "both comrades of one age" and "playfellows on the bank of that river of many windings hard by" (Rose 387). One day, the two friends decided to undertake a swimming race in the river. Out of consideration for his friend, Calamos allowed Carpos to gain an advantage, but at that moment the jealous wind drove a wave over Carpos as he swam and drowned him. "So full of love," Calamos "called out in a lamentable voice," but his friend was

already gone (Rose 389). “Where Carpos wandered and died,” Calamos grieved, “I will fall headlong, I will quench my burning love with a draught of water from Acheron” (Rose 391). Cutting a lock of his hair to honor Carpos, Calamos committed his body to the river, Maiandros, his father:

> Accept this hair, and then my body; for I cannot see the light for later dawn without Carpos. Carpos and Calamos had one life, and both felt a like ardour of love on the earth: let there be one watery death for both together in the same stream. Build on the river bank, ye Naids, one empty barrow for both, and on the tombstone let this verse be engraved in letters mourning: “I am the grave of Capros and Calamos, a pair of lovers, whom the pitiless water slew in days of yore.” (Rose 391).

When Calamos sank in the river, and drowned himself, he “gave form to the reeds which took his name and like substance” (Rose 393). Although the circumstances of Jonathan’s death and David’s response differ from the Calamos-Carpos myth, the thread of profound grief over the death of a beloved friend runs through both, creating a strong parallel between the two stories. Calamos, much like David, expressed extreme distress over the loss of his beloved, and the “one life” that Calamos and Carpos shared echoes the knitting together of souls, which caused Jonathan to love David’s soul as his own. Departing, however, from the Jonathan-David story, which had been used to idealize fraternal bonds in terms of a purely spiritual connection, “soul-knitting,” the Calamos myth embodies the love of comrades by emphasizing youthful beauty, athleticism, and physical tokens of grief (the very body of Calamos himself). Maiandros, the river god, even seems to strengthen the similarities between the two stories as he evokes a Saul-like figure in relationship to the pair. Consequently, we might think of Whitman’s reference to

the Calamos myth as a conversion of sorts, an attempt to retain the love-grief of the Jonathan and David story by recasting it in a new (and less fraught) narrative context to explore the possibilities of "manly love" against a backdrop unburdened by the baggage of religious and republican dogma that characterized antebellum culture and for which the Jonathan and David story served as an ideological conduit. The rubric of "Calamus" provided Whitman with the opportunity to redeem the tradition of male same-sex friendship in the American republic by fashioning a new ideal citizen, a new "everyman," who embraced the radical potential of civic eroticism and democratic "adhesiveness."

In *Democratic Vistas*, published 11 years after the 1860 version of *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman announced that "adhesive love," which he saw as "rivaling amative love [...] if not going beyond it" would form a "counterbalance and offset of our materialistic and vulgar American democracy, and for the spiritualization thereof" (94). And so it appears, in the mind of Whitman, that despite elevating the spirit at the expense of the body, as white Protestant-republicanism had done within its tradition of male same-sex friendship and its theory of citizenship, the soul of the nation had nevertheless been compromised. As a contrast to the hollow figure of Jonathan in "A Boston Ballad," Whitman offers us "Calamus," both a figure and a story, through which he hoped to "resolve the political crisis of the Union–the paradox of liberty and union, the one and the many–on the level of the body, sex, and homoerotic love" (*Songs of Male Intimacy* 117). It was through the erotic body that Whitman would affect the "spiritualization" (which in some sense would be a "re-spiritualization," a conversion) of American democracy. The "Calamus" cluster, as Erkkila points out, "does not tell a single story," but instead "works paratactically, by juxtaposition and association, sprouting multiple, sometimes contradictory blossoms and leaves out of the breast of the poet's man-loving heart"

(*Songs of Male Intimacy* 118). What is clear in the poems, however, is an unabashed portrayal of erotic contact, loving affection, and passionate longing between men: the vignettes publicize intimate moments of kissing ("Here to put your lips upon mine I permit you, / With the comrade's long-dwelling kiss, or the new husband's kiss, / For I am the new husband, and I am the comrade"); tender embraces ("We two boys together clinging"); hand-holding ("Of a youth who loves me, and whom I love, silently approaching, and seating himself near, that he may hold me by the hand"); unrequited longing ("Sometimes with one I love, I fill myself with rage, for / fear I effuse unreturned love"); and even voyeuristic pleasure ("But I record of two simple men I saw to-day [...] parting the parting of dear friends, / The one to remain hung on the other's neck, and passionately kissed him, / While the one to depart, tightly prest the one to remain in his arms") (*Leaves* 345, 369, 371, 375, and 373). But these moments of physical and erotic intimacy are also laced with spiritual connectivity. In "Calamus 11," Whitman anticipates the arrival of "[his] dear friend, [his] lover," with whom he shares a bed:

> For the one I love most lay sleeping by me under the same cover in the cool night,
> In the stillness, in the autumn moonbeams, his face was inclined towards me,
> And his arm lay lightly around my breast–and that night I was happy. (*Leaves* 358)

In "Poem of the Road," Whitman equated "happiness" with the "efflux of the Soul," and in these lines we see the spiritual connection between lovers expressed and reiterated as the beloved's arm laying across Whitman's chest. In fact, in Whitman's previous reflections on the body-spirit in the preface poem "Proto-Leaf," he makes no distinction between body and soul ("Behold! the body includes and is the meaning, the main concern–and includes and is the Soul"), which casts moments of physical and erotic intimacy in "Calamus," even imagined ones, as always charged

with the potential of spiritual attachment. In "Calamus 22," Whitman fantasizes about a passerby, whom he feels a strong familiarity with, as though they had previously known each other: "I ate with you, and slept with you–your body has become not yours only, nor left my body mine" (Leaves 366). In the poetic lexicon of Whitman, the ontological overlap of shared bodies implicates the spiritual residue of "adhesive love" as well. For Whitman, to touch the beloved's body is to feel his spirit, and to feel the beloved's spirit is to share in his body.

As these moments of affectionate exchange between Whitman and his lovers portray an intimate tangle of bodies and spirits, they also challenge the foundation of dominant cultural and social formations of the antebellum period, bringing into sharp relief, before the emergence of a distinct discourse of sexuality, the ways in which pneumapolitical power rationalized and regulated modes of permissible sexual conduct inside and through religious and republican discourses of race, gender, family, marriage, and friendship. In "Calamus 24," Whitman recognizes the inherent threat his "man-loving" poems pose to broader power structures:

> I hear it is charged against me that I seek to destroy institutions;
> But really I am neither for nor against institutions,
> (What indeed have I in common with them?--Or what with the destruction of them?)
> Only I will establish in the Mannhatta, and in every city of These States, inland seaboard,
> And in the fields and woods, and above every keel little or large, that dents the water,
> Without edifices, or rules, or trustees, or any argument,
> The institution of the dear love of comrades. (*Leaves* 367-368)

Herein lies the radical threat and possibilities of Whitman's philosophy of "adhesiveness." The social, political, and religious institutions that had sustained the "putatively liberating but in fact heteronormatizing structures of the liberal state" could not incorporate an "institution of the dear love of comrades," as Whitman conceived it, without undermining the system of theological republicanism that determined the gendered ideals of family, friendship, and civic engagement (*Songs of Male Intimacy* 116). Whitman's vision of love between men must topple Winthrop's "City on a Hill" before it could truly take root as the foundation for renewed democratic order. In "Calamus 34," Whitman briefly glimpses this possibility:

> I dreamed in a dream, I saw a city invincible to the attacks of the whole of the rest of the earth,
> I dreamed that was the new City of Friends,
> Nothing was greater there than the quality of robust love– it led the rest,
> It was seen every hour in the actions of men of that city,
> And in all their looks and words. (*Leaves* 373)

Whitman's dream of a "new City of Friends," like Winthrop's "City on a Hill," expanded beyond a proximate political and social exceptionalism to metaphorize a national and global community adhered together by a common bond of love. "I believe the main purport of These States is to found a superb friendship, exalté, previously unknown, / Because I perceive it waits, and has been always waiting in all men," Whitman muses in "Calamus 35," preceded by his "yearning and thoughtful" conjecture in "Calamus 23," wherein he imagines "other men [...] in Germany, Italy, France, Spain–Or far, far away in China, or in Russia or India–talking in other dialects" (*Leaves* 374 and 367). Positively enamored by these imagined comrades, "wise, beautiful, and benevolent," from foreign lands, Whitman knows that if they could only meet,

they would become "attached" as "brethren and lovers" and would make him "happy" (*Leaves* 367).

Scattered throughout "Calamus" are echoes of Winthrop's original vision of a theocratic commonwealth knit together by the love that Jonathan had for David– a holy and sanctified social and political organization that would serve as an example for the nations of the world. That conception, on one hand, essentialized spiritual conversion as a mechanism for securing, building, and perpetuating the nation-state and its exceptionalist outlook, and on the other hand, set in motion moralizing hierarchies of power that would determine not only the prerequisites for civic participation but also shape the contours of marriage, friendship, and family life in antebellum America. More than a means of consolidating and testing religious belief, conversion became a process of cultural and social transmission and a pneumapolitical technology for sustaining white Protestant-republican ideology. It was in and through this culture of conversion that Whitman interceded to both capitalize on its momentum and challenge its assumptions. By publicizing and celebrating love between comrades throughout *Leaves of Grass*, his "New Bible" for a "New Religion," Whitman spiritualized the body and embodied the spirit of the citizen, and thereby exposed and decried the imposition of the antebellum pneumapolitical order that naturalized the spirit as a means of subjugating the body. By converting Jonathan to Calamus, soul-knitting to adhesiveness, and the "City on a Hill" to a "City of Friends," Whitman imagined a nation in which the heteronormative family did not serve as the undisputed nexus of democratic flourishing and a global community in which unimpeded desire infused the world with the potential for limitless connection and expansive spiritual holism. More so, and perhaps most profoundly, we see that Whitman's engagement with and challenge to the antebellum culture of conversion opened at least one discursive portal through which "homosexuality" could

emerge not only as a distinct identity (and pathology) in the American consciousness, but also as "a way of life."

"Calamus 45," the last of the cluster, hovers above a simple sketch of the sun suspended on the horizon, in both a state of rising and setting, as if to capture the transitional liminality of dusk and dawn: "When you read these, I that was visible, am become invisible; / Now it is you, compact, visible, realizing my poems, seeking me, / Fancying how happy you were, if I could be with you, and become your lover; / Be it as if I were with you. Be not too certain but I am now with you" (*Leaves* 378). In one sense, we can read the suspended sun that closes the "Calamus" section as emblematic of both the rising and setting of competing visions and possibilities of what loving friendships between men might entail or foreclose. The simultaneous presence and absence of Whitman in the closing lines of "Calamus 45" also seem to echo that image, creating a spiritual bond between the poet of the past and reader of the present. The powerful direct address vitalizes and revitalizes "Calamus" over and over again for future readers; the "now" becoming a perpetual conversion of the past into the present. While the image of the suspended sun implies a conversion of sorts, passing from day to night or night to day over an uncertain terrain, its exact trajectory and outcome remain unfinished and ongoing. As Whitman seems to implicitly understand, conversion is a process of spiritual transformation *and* temporal progress, a dynamism that resists stasis and finality. Even "now," the struggle to define the spirit of the nation unfolds on a shadowy landscape bathed in suspended sunlight.

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