

THE COLORS OF WITCHCRAFT: IDEAS OF RACE IN THE PURITAN
THEORY OF WITCHCRAFT

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Thesis Abstract

This thesis explores what role “ideas of race” played in how the Puritans saw the new land of America and how they imagined the witchcraft of these people in this New World would need to be exterminated. During this time of racial divide and hypersensitivity to witches, the primary authority on people of color, and sometimes inquisitor, was a man named Cotton Mather. Mather is remembered as a man who believed that rooting out the unholy arts and persecuting the sin of witchcraft was paramount to having a healthy, Godly society. Modern society tends to look at the Puritans, and men like Cotton Mather, as being superstitious and antiquated with their thinking. However, this thesis will also illustrate that irrational anxieties about the racial other are common and, indeed, that twenty-first century man still has a tendency to generalize societies and take drastic actions in a very similar way to the Puritans. Many would contend the eugenics programs of recent history tried to accomplish the same overall goals as those of Mather. The goals of this thesis will be accomplished by primarily focusing on the Puritans’ belief that Satan would use those who were not Puritan, the ‘others’, to get a toehold within a good Caucasian Puritan society, thereby allowing the Puritans to validate, in their minds, the abuse and dehumanizing of, the racially other, people groups around them. The data to support these claims was assimilated from archival sources, including actual court minutes that were penned by the magistrates and Clergymen of seventeenth-century New England. Western science of the

day assumed that the white race was the pinnacle of man and that the other 5/6 of humanity was degenerate. For this reason the Puritans justified the concept of Manifest Destiny, which caused many Native Americans to be driven from their lands or disposed of. Many believe this way of thinking to be an issue of antiquity; however this thesis will challenge that ideology by presenting the enduring legacy of not facing those racial fears, which led to some of the claims of scientists in the eugenics movements of the twentieth century that those deemed genetically unfit needed to be eradicated to have a healthy society.

Introduction

There have been many scholarly articles written about early American Puritans and their plights in New England. Many of these articles have listed the various trials and endeavors the Puritans endured while trying to survive and thrive in a new untamed land. I believe it would behoove us to stop to take a moment to explore, and try to understand, the basic mindset of the Puritans on race and witchcraft in the New World and what led them to some of the actions that we today would find appalling.

One of the pertinent issues that the Puritans had to grapple with early on upon moving west in New England, was race. Though the Puritans did not have a Darwinian or Lamarkian concept of the biological inferences' of race, the Puritans saw obvious differences between themselves and those with whom they shared the country with. Coming to the Americas, from a predominantly white Europe, interacting with the natives confused the light skinned Puritans. Cotton Mather while contemplating the natives remarked in his book, *The Wonders of the Invisible World*, "that the New World had been the undisturbed realm of Satan" (Mather, pg. 12). The Puritans soon discovered that if they were going to live in the New World they would have to somehow assimilate these people and their culture into a white Judeo Christian society. Richard Bailey sums up this problem well when he states, "that race was created by all New Englanders out of the spiritual (and at times physical and social) freedoms offered to Native Americans and Africans as whites wrestled with assimilating people of color into their lives and worldview" (Bailey, pg. 7). What exactly was Bailey speaking of when he mentions the Puritan's worldview? To mentally survive the hardships and difficulties of populating the New World, the Puritans put their full mental faculties into their work and their

theological convictions. This meant putting everything, including their social issues, into the hands of an almighty God as well. As the Puritans gained a better hold on the land, the western diseases they brought with them thinned out the Native Americans. This caused prominent white Puritans like Cotton Mather to decree that it was just the will of God in action to see the natives go, part of the “cosmic struggle of good and evil in the wilderness” (Bailey, pg. 32).

The Puritans had to tangle with this paradox of race on a daily basis. Paradox is the appropriate term because even though the Puritans looked down upon people of color, and some even reviled them; they at the same time pitied them displaying the compassion in their hearts that their faith cried out for. One can see, in the writings and court documents of the day, where they would call Native Americans names such as “tawny”, or “copper”. When we see the records of the Africans, the words “black” or “Negro” were given to them as their last name. According to Richard Baily even Bi-racial individuals had specific names and were called “mulatto” or “mustee” which also carried with them derogatory connotations. As appalling as this is the Puritans also had a patronizing concern for the people of color. It was described in many different writings and sermons of the day how many would pray for the blacks’ souls to be washed white so that when they get to heaven, after the resurrection, they might actually turn white. This statement may not make much sense in the twenty-first century; however, to a people that believed that God was white, this was praying for what they thought was the best for the peoples of color. We must remember it is still 150 years before Darwin and other thinkers that would debate the idea of race. To many Puritans these colored people were the

product of the curse Noah placed upon Canaan in Genesis 9:20-27 of the King James Bible.

Even though the Puritans exhibited some compassion toward the colored people they still believed that both Native Americans and Blacks were inferior in every way. It wasn't until the eighteenth century, that any of them truly argued that the Natives may even be fully human, at least in a public arena. There was a few in the late seventeenth-century such as Roger Williams who was an advocate for treating people of color fairly. However because of his abolitionist beliefs, and his calls to treat Native Americans fairly, Puritan leaders expelled Williams which lead him to establish the Providence Plantation colony for minorities. There was also Robert Boyle, a Puritan scientist, who could not accept that black skin was caused by Noah's curse, therefore he set out to prove that the skin color was caused by climatic reasons. Yet most Puritans considered them to be sub-human which is why they would describe Indians as "savages" or "barbarians". They would describe blacks as "creatures" or "brutes". In Salem, at the 1692 witch hunts, it was well documented that the townsfolk would know that Satan was present by sighting a "black man resembling an Indian". Puritans saw the devil as black because he was the personification of the absolute darkness of evil, and the Indians had annihilated so many settlements during King Philip's War that the Puritans believed them to be the children of Satan himself. When we couple these two mindsets together we can start to see the rationale that moved the people of Salem to immediately suspect Tituba. However, the Puritan's Christian tenacity appears in their belief that although the colored people had an unholy alliance of sorts with Satan, they could still be saved and their souls not go to hell. Bailey points out that the real Puritan dilemma was not "the problem of doing right in a

world that does wrong, as Edmund Morgan proposed, but in the case of race relations, it was the problem of making a world that does wrong appear to be doing right” (Bailey, pg. 25). Jonathan Edwards, a firebrand preacher, is a great example of this dilemma. Edwards preached that Indians were children of the devil, and that whites had a moral right to enslave blacks. It was noted that the slaves that spoke out against slavery were believed by the Puritans to have been possessed by the first rebel of a hierarchy, Satan himself (Poole). Yet Edwards would then go on to lead many of these people, of both races, to saying prayers of salvation committing themselves to Christ, and even go so far as to consider them his progenies. Without question, the early American Puritans saw race relations as a convoluted and confusing issue.

Now let us confront another worldview before we move into the body of this thesis. Most Puritans made a distinction between folk magic and witchcraft; one being useful and helpful though somewhat frowned upon, and the other being totally nefarious. Folk magic is generally of a practical nature, meant to address the common ills of the community: healing the sick, bringing love or luck, driving away evil forces, finding lost items, bringing good harvests, granting fertility, reading omens and so on. Rituals are generally relatively simple and often change over time as the workers are generally illiterate. Materials used are commonly available: plants, coins, nails, wood, eggshells, twine, stones, animals, feathers, etc. Many of these traditions and customs migrated from the Old World to the New with the Puritans, one of which was the folklore which had roots from long before the days of Roman occupation. It was not unusual for common folk to try to foretell their future using the astral predictions (astrology), or rolling dice or other simple tricks that had been passed down through the ages. These kinds of simple

operations were not only useful in the Puritan life they were steeped in cultural traditions. Along with their faith such folklore traditions gave them a sense of control and security over the things that they could not yet understand. (Godbeer) Many of the practices of the folk cultures of England's colonies that were brought to the New World would be transformed over time in New England by a slight mixing with the native practices. This may seem strange; however, many of the techniques that were practiced were not brought from England or exclusive to the Puritans. Such things as sieves and eggs were utilized in the local traditions as well and in very similar ways. The egg, for example, as a part of divining and curing ceremonies has an even more ancient history than England. (Weisman) Though one culture did not really trust the other, and over time, similarities of traditions and folk magic techniques would start to overlap the other. This is what caused the New World Puritans to evolve a set of new traditions of their own to help them deal with the new realities that were different than those of the Old World.

The important thing to note is that whether it was old traditions or new, folk magic rarely upset the authorities or the clergy. These kinds of practices were just part of everyday life for the average Puritan trying to figure out when to plant, or when the baby was due, or the best day to go fishing. What really made these practices tolerable was that they were never done for any kind of ill intent, or malicious revenge. Even if someone had the skill to mix the right herbs and become known as one who could heal the sick, or if someone was thought to be able to divine something that was lost, or provide some kind of idea about the future, like the Farmer's Almanac that Ben Franklin would later publish, they were not considered witches, but just folk healers and were tolerated by those in charge. That is as long as there was no maleficium, black magic occurring. It is

considered maleficium when something bad happened that had no reasonable explanation to the Puritans. Such as if one's crop suffers hail damage, yet the farm down the way does not, then maleficium could be suspected. If the village sees someone who seems healthy and spry one day, yet the next they suffer a stroke or some other debilitating calamity that cannot be easily explained, then maleficium was often suspected. Whereas folk magic was considered a help and a boon to the village or colony, maleficium was evil. The other thing that made these practices tolerable was that they never competed with or threatened religious services or messages. In the seventeenth century a folk healer, or someone who was superstitious and looked to the stars, might be frowned upon by the educated elite yet for the most part had no need to fear persecution.

However, with all the superstitions and cures came an anxious side of the folklore. For the Puritans, witchcraft was not only very real; it was something that produced tangible fear. It was the world of the demonic and pain. Puritans believed that the spirits were all around them all the time, an ethereal plane that was so close, and it was only by the grace of God and His powerful hand that they were protected and the spirits were kept away. Someone who was practicing witchcraft, the Puritans believed, would and could conjure up spirits like the Bible told them that they were never to do. To the seventeenth-century Puritan mind, magic and religion were cut from the same cloth. (Breslaw) Breslaw is pointing out that even though religion was dictated by rules and laws it was still empowered by the spirit realm. Therefore if one was claiming to work miracles through religion, or through magic, it did not matter to the average Puritan for they believed that both were tapping into power from one spirit realm. What mattered to them was whether one was being led by God to do so or were they conjuring spirits on

their own which would be considered blasphemous. The Puritans would have read in the scriptures where Jesus had said, “You are either for me, or against me” (Luke 11:23), or “...man cannot serve both mammon and God” (Matt. 6:24). Therefore, when it came to spirits, a person in the Puritan mind was either for God and left spirits alone, or conjured spirits thereby opposing God. If religious leaders had reason to suspect someone of conjuring spirits then they would remember Exodus 22:18, “Though shalt not suffer a witch to live!” It was for this reason that laws were passed to not tolerate witches and that so many Blacks and Native Americans were burned alive.

The Puritans spoke intimately and continually about divine providence, and it’s molding the lives of Gods people. The consequences of bad storms, or earthquakes or someone’s unfortunate demise, could all be chalked up to God’s will or divine providence. However, when there was an epidemic outbreak or the sudden death of a child from no apparent cause, people immediately started looking for the spirits and who had set them free. They truly believed that the prayers of the redeemed Puritans were the only way to do battle with spirits, for they were from God’s realm of the supernatural and if God did not send them, then someone summoned them, and it was only God who could put them back in their place. Therefore, for a mere mortal to be able to summon these spirits they had to have some supernatural help. The line of reasoning for the Puritans would go something like this; they knew that God was real, and He was righteous. However to have good then there must also be bad, which is the realm of the evil one, Satan. Therefore if someone summoned these specters, these spirits, and God did not help them do it, then they must be in league with Satan, who helped them conjure up the evil spirits. Yet one must also remember that God is always the ultimate authority in all

things. Therefore Satan is subservient to God which gives credence to Mather's belief that God allows witchcraft to punish Puritan's sins. This leads one to deduce that Mather must have believed that God was not just in control over both sides of this spiritual battle, but he was playing both sides as well.

Cotton Mather explained in his book, "Wonders of the Invisible World", that there was no clear demarcation between the spiritual world and the material world. Mather believed that such paranormal activity like strange apparitions, witchcraft, and possessions confirmed and justified the existence of a good and holy God. To admit that there was a heaven with God reigning within, was to admit that there was a hell with Satan at its head. To disavow one or the other was virtually claiming to be an atheist in the Puritan worldview. The Puritans believed that in the long run God will have His say and things will proceed along His plan, but to have someone conjure spirits thereby putting hurdles in front of God, was an incredibly frightening thing to do.

This brings us back to the Africans and the Native Americans and their culture of practices that the Puritans were still not sure of. In the Puritans ethnocentric view the invisible world of wonders was as real in the Native American world as it was in theirs, and spirits could also be manipulated through magical practices for both good and evil in their villages as much as they could be in the white villages (Hultkrantz). Although there were completely different creation ideas and eschatology within the colored villages, the concept of a spirit world where both good and evil exist was the same. Therefore the idea in their mind was that someone who was not created with the utmost morality, such as white people were, would unfortunately be susceptible to the deceitful temptations of Satan and align themselves to his side, thereby allowing Satan at this point to help them

conjure the spirits to send over to the creations of his arch nemesis, the Puritans. The Puritans believed that they could make the distinctions between protective healing powers, what we would call in our modern vernacular white magic, and powers of evil intent, black magic. They did not believe that those who were colored could distinguish between good and bad in such a way and therefore were not to be trusted. The obeahs and shamans of the other cultures were seen as working sorcery and evil amongst the people without realizing where their power originated, and could, if not careful, release evil spirits upon the land.

The Puritans's beliefs were such that they could never convey or explain their fears to the Africans and the Native Americans because they believed they would lie and say what the Puritans wanted to hear. Cotton Mather, being put off by the native Americans contempt for his theological beliefs condemned Indians as "most impudent lyars" who "invent reports and stories at a strange and monstrous rate" (Axtell, pg. 281). The Native Americans who did accept Christ and moved away from their tribe to the special segregated sections of towns were called "Praying Indians". And rather than trust them after their conversion, the Puritans forbade them to tell lies. With all the things the Native Americans could have been taught or told not to do, such as stealing or murder, lying was their primary concern. The Puritans believed that to the red man, telling lies was just as important as growing their hair long. (Salisbury) With this deep ideology that American Indians cannot be trusted and that they cavort with shamans, and they may be in alignment with Satan, it was natural to accuse them of being witches, causing all their woes and misunderstandings. Why would the Puritans have such a deep paranoia of these Native Americans once they had converted to Christianity? One can speculate that the

idea was that Satan could use these beings to now get inside information of the church and possibly attack from the inside. For this reason the Puritans wanted to know what was going on in the minds of the Natives, and because they could not be sure, their fear of an inside attack of the church fueled their distrust.

These points will be elaborated in much more detail later in this report; however, we do need to know, moving forward, that the Puritans, though religious people, were also a very skeptical, racist, and superstitious people. Although there were many Native Americans who tried to both help and work with the Puritans, they were always looked down upon with contempt. Even when the people of color accepted the faith of the Puritans and learned their language to try to assimilate into the Puritan society, they were never fully trusted. This sets the backdrop for the intentions of this thesis.

The witch trials of Salem Massachusetts was a huge tragedy in America and has already been written of extensively, yet it was but another instance in a broader pattern that in some ways can still be seen in modernity. Therefore it being the pinnacle of the Puritan witch trials era in New England it also needs to be mentioned. We will continue to see witch hunts in America over the next few centuries out west being conducted by Christianized Indians. However let us stay in New England and let us imagine for a moment that we are in Puritan shoes, seeing things as they saw them. If we were to travel back about 330 years to Puritan New England, we would find a people who believed that the wilderness was the natural habitat of the devil. Therefore with a little observation of practices and inductive reasoning, the common conclusion would be that American Indians belonged to the wilderness, and that their familiarity with the ways of the devil, seemed obvious. Indian conflicts and the atrocities of the Prince William War, which

destroyed all the peace that the pilgrims had established, coupled with disease and their primal fear of the devil proved to the Puritans that Satan was in their midst; therefore it was their duty to rid the wilderness of “savages” and “witches.” The Salem Witch Trials were seeded by this mentality. These trials proved that the Old World obsession with satanic pacts and supernatural evil survived and was robust in the New World (Poole). There have been many ideas as to what happened and what initiated this series of events in Salem; however, I would submit that the social environment of the times had become ripe for someone like Cotton Mather to fan the pietistic flames. In short, Salem became a series of hearings and prosecutions of family and neighbors being accused of witchcraft. These mock trials and the things that the witnesses were made to do mirrored the tragic events of Loudun in France, however, with a much higher casualty rate. This unfortunate moment in American history resulted in the executions of twenty people, most of them women. The first accused during these trials were local Christianized Indians. Court documents and eyewitness accounts, such as Mather himself, indicate that Tituba was the first person to be accused by Betty Parris and Abigail Williams of witchcraft. Tituba’s husband, John Indian, was brought in and was reported to have “fits” when present for the examination of accused witches (Breslaw). Interestingly, these Arawak Indians are not among the twenty executions, and were allowed to leave town upon their confessions. Ironically, this tragedy started with Indians being accused and ended with them being released. Their release is the only good thing one can say about these trials; Cotton Mather lost his prestige and is notably known for these trials rather than all his scientific accomplishments; husbands lost their wives; a wife lost her husband; several young girls’ innocence was lost, and a country’s judicial system was viewed with all its ugliness on a

world stage. Sir William Phips the governor of Massachusetts, who instituted the special witchcraft trials, left direct oversight to his Deputy Governor William Stoughton, however he still was a proponent of all that Mather and the other ministers had to say during the trials. Although Governor Phips quickly dissolved the trials and seriously tried to downplay their significance and his role in the ordeal it was too late. The Boston ministers, and the people, had turned against the trials and the world had already heard of the American debacle. Phips political opponents successfully petitioned the King of England to have Phips removed and called back to England where he died shortly thereafter. What led the Puritans to this climatic event, how could the race of those who lived around them cause so much fear and anxiety? Have we learned anything or are the same mistakes being made today? This is what this paper intends to illustrate.

Folk Magic vs. Witchcraft

The zealous cleric/scientist, Cotton Mather and his beliefs of magic and religion have a major role to play in the Puritan events of the seventeenth-century. Yet it would behoove the reader to first be able to grasp some of the beliefs that the average Puritan would have had about folk magic and witchcraft, before plunging into Mather's role. To

the average Puritan trying to farm a piece of land and raise a family while focusing on their pursuit of a godly lifestyle, folk magic and witchcraft were actually two different entities, during the early years in America. However, add the two together and mix in the right personalities and hard consequences evolve into history. The Puritans had been led by historical reports and charismatic leaders to become a very superstitious people living on the brink of fear on a daily basis.

The precedent to make a separate category in the minds of the Puritans for folk magic and witchcraft was set long before the Puritans traveled to America. Nicholas Eymeric was a Spanish inquisitor who wrote *Directorium Inquisitorium* in 1376. The primary purpose of this writing was for it to become a manual for other inquisitors so that they would be able to better delineate between the two different kinds of magic, one of which being regarded as blasphemous and heresy and the other as natural knowledge. This debate went back and forth for centuries in the religious community of whether folk magic was of evil origin or not. In 1602 William Perkins wrote a treatise titled, *The Damned Art of Witchcraft*, in which he made the point that the distinction was made between folk magic and witchcraft by whether or not a person made a pact with the devil or not to accomplish their intended goals. At one point Perkins states:

superstitious persons, men or women, as use charms and enchantment for the effecting of anything upon a superstitious and erroneous persuasions, that the charms have virtue in them to do such things, not knowing that it is the action of the Devil by those means; but thinking that God put virtue in them, as he hath done into herbs for physic. Of such persons we have no doubt abundance in this our land, who, though they dealt wickedly and sin

grievously in using charms, yet because they intend not to join league with the Devil, either secretly or formally, they **are not to be** counted witches (Levack, pg. 95-96).

Both Puritans in England and New England readily adhered to Perkins' covenant theology. In the Old Testament God made a covenant with Israel to be their God. Covenant theology in Christianity in its most basic of arguments is that God has made a new covenant through Christ's death with those who reciprocate that covenant by putting their faith in God. The Puritans would have quoted John 10:28 from the King James Bible, "I have given them eternal life, and they shall never perish, no one will snatch them out of my hand." Therefore the average man or woman that did not spend their day studying theological treatises took Perkins' primary points to heart and felt that since no pact with Satan was made that all was well. Scott Poole states it well when he writes, "The Puritan blending of the popular and the theological meant that much as in contemporary America, contradictory beliefs about Satan and his influence jostled with one another in the New England mind. Therefore many Puritans thought in terms of 'good magic' versus 'evil magic,' as opposed to the Puritan ministry's ideas that magic, or 'cunning' belonged by definition to the realm of Satan" (Poole, pg 15). Breslaw confirms this statement by pointing out that, "The subtle distinctions between magic and religion propagated by the learned clergy had little effect on the attitude of the larger population that relied on magical practices to resolve problems that could not be eased through natural or institutional means" (Breslaw, pg 92).

Not everyone was gifted with the art or knowledge of herbs and occult abilities. These who practiced this folk magic were often called cunning folk by the villagers. The

Puritans accepted what these cunning folk practiced, primarily because it had been steeped in tradition and lore for centuries and hailed from the old country. An observer can still see today in our own American political process a people's need to be given emotional assurances, whether based on realism or not does not seem to matter, by those whom they deem to be more intelligent or religious. For the Puritans, often times these practices would not only bring a mental peace to a loved one to know that someone was trying to heal their sick family member, but their herbal knowledge that many of these early botanists had mastered could actually cure the common ailments, thereby adding validity to their status in the village. Sometimes just the wise counsel of the cunning folk might heal relationships which would seem like a love potion worked, or by watching the signs in the sky they are able to foretell weather events, all of which seemingly magical occurrences to the average Puritan. However, the educated people on some levels did understand botany and meteorology and therefore looked down on those who believed in the cunning folk with some disdain, yet as Breslaw states in her book, "...the cult of the cunning folk and the theology of the leadership existed side by side, most of the time without conflict or conscious thought" (Breslaw, pg 91). This includes the fact that many of the cunning practices were just as common to the blacks from Africa and the Caribbean, and the Native Americans, as they were to the English. Breslaw gives an example of a common practice in her book *Tituba Reluctant Witch of Salem: Devilish Indians and Puritan Fantasies* and then follows it with this excerpt:

The taking of a substance from the body of a person --- such as hair, nail parings, or in this case, urine --- and applying ritualistic procedures were common magical practices in most folk and tribal cultures including the

English. These practices, including the use of clay models or puppets of rags stuck with pins, however, had become relatively rare in England. By the seventeenth century most magic there was worked through touch, or invisible emanations from the eyes, or curses rather than through the use of technical aids. On the other hand, sympathetic or associational magic had continued to be common practices of obeah people in the seventeenth century Caribbean and of Amerindian shamans in both the North and South American world (Breslaw, pg 96).

Unfortunately the compassionate, and most of the time helpful, works of the cunning folk will start to be questioned as a more legalistic yet charismatic group of clerics start to fan the fears amongst a people who were already living in fear on a daily basis. As the fear rhetoric intensifies the people look at all those who can be classified as “other” and then the accusations are leveled against them. Primarily out of fear and ignorance a mob mentality erupts leading people to destroy ones whom they respected in times past. It seems to be human nature to continually repeat this sad trend in our human history.

Where does this intense fear of witchcraft in the Puritans originate from, and what possibly defines the differences between witchcraft and folk magic? A simple definition of witchcraft could be stated by simply saying that it is the use of magic to bring about any nefarious outcomes. A little deeper description is given by Plato in Ancient Greece where he called it a poison, “...which works by art, magic, incantations, and spells...and breeds in the minds of the projectors the belief that they possess such powers of doing harm, in those victims the conviction that the authors of their suffering can verily bewitch them” (Plato, laws XI933a). In an early Puritan culture that had yet to have major

scientific explanations of common events such as disease, floods, or droughts, to an unexpected death all could be attributed to witchcraft. The Puritans believed that just as there were forces that could be used for good, that a pact could be made with Satan and thereby allow those same forces to be used for malevolent purposes. People could then release evil forces and spirits into the world to spread disaster, thereby making witchcraft an act of diabolism, the worship of the devil. As presented earlier this ideology harkens from Perkins covenant theology. People with an education had plenty of choices to read that would keep them always looking for the devil in all things around them, Levack writes this:

Ideas of maleficent magic performed through the power of the Devil, demonic temptation, the negotiation of a pact with the Devil, the collective worship of the Devil at the Sabbath, the performance of amoral and anti-Christian activities at the Sabbath, the nocturnal flight of witches, and their metamorphosis into beasts had all been integrated into a frightening depiction of the witch... This learned concept of witchcraft found expression in a number of demonological treatises written by educated theologians, inquisitors, and secular judges during the period during the period between 1570 and 1700, which formed the most intense period of witch hunting in Europe (and America). The publication of these treatises, which usually went into multiple editions, helped to spread the belief in witchcraft among the educated and ruling elites of Europe (Levack, pg 69).

With these two different mindsets of occult powers in the thinking of the Puritans it should be understandable now why Richard Godbeer said, “Neighbors who possessed occult powers were thus valuable allies, but also potentially deadly enemies” (Levack, pg 395). The beliefs that magic could be used for both good and evil intentions placed those who practiced folk magic or worked with herbs, in a very precarious position. Whether one was white, Native American, or black did not matter, you were looked at as having the ability of going either way, good or bad, if you had cunning abilities. The blacks and native Americans had more against them as will be shown later in this essay, however, when things were going well these cunning folks would have sought each other out to gain more knowledge. Many of these occult techniques were probably shared and incorporated cross cultural by cunning folks. Learning herbs and meteorology from one another would have been natural since the like mindset would have been to seek more information on what they deemed interesting and important. Godbeer writes that, “The records do contain hints of supernatural exchange across racial lines but they are little more than suggestive” (Levack, pg 395). Point being, one could be a healer and asset today and be accused tomorrow of being a witch with malevolent intentions regardless of color. One could be making love potions one day and be accused of witchcraft the next. There is a Danish proverb, “Every village has its witch, and every parish has its cunning man” (Levack, pg 53). There was always someone to blame. It all came down to just what title the villagers called the cunning folk after an event occurred that was beyond local understanding. The difference between one practicing folk magic and one practicing witchcraft could be extremely ambiguous when it came down to how the Puritans perceived them. Moreover not knowing who to trust would cause cunning folk to become

a little more secretive about their practices, thereby inadvertently adding fuel to accusations if they were ever made.

The Puritan's Spiritual Worldview

It was mentioned in the previous chapter that race did not matter once one was accused of witchcraft. However, the color of one's skin did increase the number of accusations that was made against them. This was because of the Puritans spiritual worldview. When the Puritans looked out on those around them they saw human like forms, yet not made in the image of God, they believed. The Puritans believed they were made in Gods literal image upon reading Genesis 1:27 which states, "So God created man in his image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." Therefore the color of the skin was a major defining characteristic even though the Puritans did not really have a concept of race. The Puritans were intellectually light years away from the Darwinian question of where did man come from. To the Puritan mindset all things were as they were by order of God. Therefore any biological and or genetic concept of difference in people could never have passed through their minds to be

entertained. It was completely up to God how all things were created. The Puritan predestinarian theology convinced them that God had already chosen whether they were destined for heaven or hell, yet he did leave them some signs that these others could probably never see, to guide their path here on Earth. This made Puritans intensely aware of the world around them, no natural event, no odd coincidence, no accident would transpire without some study of God's hand being involved (Games). To the Puritan the entire world was in the midst of a spiritual battle ground. Satan, confined on earth by God, was the chief adversary of God, therefore all things not considered a blessing was attributed to him. Edward Bever mentions also that, "...ghosts or other spirits of the dead; fairies or similar supernatural beings; other local spirits, often identified with specific places or situations... The church held all of these to be subordinate to the devil in a rigid hierarchy, but the people talked of them as relatively autonomous. Fairies in popular culture were essentially independent. They had no place in Christianity, and they were neither good nor evil, but instead sometimes helpful and sometimes destructive (Levack, 56-57). Even though the Puritans believed in both good and bad magic, when they looked beyond their village and into the wilderness there was only one kind, evil. When the Puritans looked westward they saw expansive forests that not only blocked out the sun but resembled chaos, and chaos was of Satan. Therefore a Puritan would have felt it his duty to clear the forests and plant orderly gardens in the name of God, however the Native Americans would do all within their power to impede this process of stealing their homeland. Jean Van Delinder, a sociologist at Oklahoma State University makes the observation, "Native American societies were undergoing tremendous change, usually in association with fundamentals in their sociotypes, due to European invasion and conquest

of their land they began to construct witchcraft as a deviant act”(Delinder). This reaffirmed the belief to the Puritans that the Natives were surely children of the one whom they believed resided in the forest, Satan. Allison Games writes in her book, “...as the distinction (between good and bad magic) eroded, and the European observers used the terms witch and sorcerer and wizard and demon interchangeably to describe those universally native Americans whom they saw as engaging in malevolent practices” (Games, pg 9). Europeans saw the devil everywhere in North America, when Alonso de Benavides wrote of indigenous religious practices he witnessed in 1625-1626 he describes the Native Americans thus: “All (native) spiritual leaders are wizards or sorcerers guided by demons...and in this manner the Demon has them deceived with a thousand superstitions...” (Ayer, Doc 1). Thomas Mayhew a Puritan minister fluent in Wampanoag said of the natives of Martha’s Vineyard in 1652, “Zealous and earnest in the worship of false gods and devils” (Games, pg 322). The Puritans did not just think that the devil was pervasive amongst the Natives; they truly believed that America was his home and that he would defend it against the Godly people, and do so with these natives. When the Puritans looked out on these people who called this land “their sacred lands” they immediately associated them as children of the devil. By examining how the Natives could not only live in the wilderness but thrive within in it illustrated to them that they must have had a strong familiarity with the ways of the devil. Include the conflicts and disease along with these intense fears of living in the Devil’s backyard and the Puritans were primed to hear the messages around them to work harder at Godliness to cleanse the land and rid the wilderness of “savages” and “witches”. An Englishman

George Percy summed up the Puritan thoughts of the time well when he said, “They worship the devil for their God, and have no other beliefs” (Levack, pg. 362).

The Puritans believed that America was the devil’s lair. There was a visible tangible world all about them, however, simultaneously there was an invisible world as well that those with occult leanings could tap into at any time. This is what Cotton Mather was speaking of with his book *Wonders Of the Invisible World*. Mather portrayed witchcraft, which was stated earlier as making a pact with the devil, regardless if one called it cunning or not. Mather went on to describe it as the breakdown in the delicate metaphorical balance between the visible and invisible world. It is because of a perceived spiritual war for the Spiritual fate of his people that Mather spoke loudly and often. Mather’s sermons tended to linger on scenes of horrors to come if the elect did not stand and fight for God’s providence. The elect meaning Puritans, other religious people were guilty of conspiracy with the natives and sometimes the devil himself, according to Mather. In Mather’s book *The Magnalia Christi Americana* he lists, “Quakers along with Savages and Imposters as enemies in the Wars of the Lord” (Mathers, pg 63). Michael Clark writes of Mather and his teachings this way:

That is why Mather is drawn to scenes of horror and despair rather than reassurance when portraying his remarkable providences; why witches, rather than saints, occupy so many of his pages; and it is why odors from the fires of hell, rather than the perfumes of heaven, linger after the wonders have passed. For the sudden eruptions of the spiritual world around us signaled not only the immanent transcendence of their

difference. They marked a judgment against the sin that had separated the spirit from the flesh (Levack, pg 410).

With the outbreak of the witchcraft trials in Salem Cotton Mather did not hold back. Mather believed it was God's will that those who conspired with any whom he believed to be of the devil be destroyed. Notice how he spoke of those accused of witchcraft in Salem, one would be hard pressed to hear any empathy or sympathy from Mather:

“If our Advocate in the Heavens do not now take off his Libels; the Devil, then with a concession of god comes down as destroyer upon us. Having first been an Attorney, to bespeak that the Judgments of Heaven may be ordered for us, he then also pleads, that he may be the Executioner of those Judgments; and the God of Heaven sometimes after a sort, signs a Warrant for this Destroying Angel, to do what has been desired to be done for the destroying of men” (Mather, pg 48-49).

The Puritans are living with a few known people amongst them that have cunning abilities in a land that they believe is the actual lair of Satan, surrounded by those whom they believe must be Satan's children since they are of this land. In this environment a Puritan would do just about anything to stave off God's wrath. Being as how Puritans did not have the concept of race as we do today they would have also included the blacks in the same category as the Natives. Believing that Satan would be angry about this godly intrusion on his land, the Puritans expected an attack from anyone who was not Puritan and white. George Burroughs, a fellow Puritan and cleric who was executed in Salem as a witch illustrates this point well. The accusations against him was that he had survived a

battle with natives, therefore they must be co-conspirators, and his skin being slightly darker than average which then called his lineage into question. It is at this emotional point of history that an orally gifted Cotton Mather inculcates his ideas of God's providence and destiny into the minds of the Puritan believers, which led to the climatic event in Salem.

Now that the reader has a sense of the Puritan views on magic and their worldview of the land in which they live, let us next look at those who stood outside their Puritan circle a little more closely.

Children of the Devil

As has been previously stated the greatest adversary in the Puritan minds was Satan. The existence of the devil was not questioned by most New Englanders, especially

the Puritans. The Puritans would do everything told to them to avoid the devil at all costs. The problem was they believed that they were on his land, surrounded by his wilderness, yet they needed to expand outward with their villages. Their duty as Puritan Christians was to take back the land from Satan and as a people move out and multiply. However to expand their settlements meant facing their two greatest fears: Native Americans and the devil. This essay has previously mentioned some of the beliefs the Puritans had about the American Natives. However, before analyzing the problems and wars caused by settlement expansion it would behoove the reader to see by what route the Puritans acquired this irrational fear of the Native Americans as children of the devil. Many historians attribute their fear and accusations of witchcraft and such to the hostilities that surrounded them. Yet this author has found much evidence of these accusations in reports and court cases long before the Indian/European relationship deteriorated to the level it was in the late seventeenth century of the Puritans.

Richard Hakluyt collected enough reports from sailors and explorers between 1598 and 1600 to fill three massive volumes. A vast many of these reports included references to Indian sorcery. To cite a few examples:

Sir Francis Drake claimed that Indians cavorting around a fire on a South American beach in 1577 were endeavoring to summon the Devil to sink his ship. He gave thanks to God for thwarting their satanic efforts. The chronicler of Martin Frobisher's third voyage in 1578 reported that the natives of Newfoundland 'made us to understand, lying groveling with their faces upon the ground, and making a noise downward, that they worship the devil under them.' The report of John Davis's second voyage

in search of the Northwest Passage in 1586 related an encounter with a race of 'witches' who employed 'many kinds of enchantments.' The narrator declared that their spells failed to do harm only because of God's special protection of Christians. A chronicler of Raleigh's ill fated Roanoke venture (1584-1587) claimed that after some of the Indians tried to use sorcery against the English, God punished 'their witches' by infesting the offending villages with the plague (Cave, 242).

Hearing these reports of Natives from all over the continent in which they now resided would make the Puritans afraid surely, however, one would think that once they actually saw these people for themselves that maybe the story would change: That maybe upon closer contact with some of the natives, myths might be dispelled. Yet we have the infamous Captain John Smith from Jamestown reporting, "The Powhatan Indians were devil worshippers who slaughtered their own children in satanic rituals...and had immolated a captive Englishman in a human sacrifice" (Breslaw, pg 197). A bevy of these kinds of reports and rumors of Indian Satanism shaped and formed the Puritan Ideology in its early growing years. The Puritans would have heard and known the story of Governor William Bradford who said in his history of Plymouth Colony, "After sighting the pilgrims, the Indians of Cape Cod got all the Powachs of the country, for three days together in a horrid and devilish manner, to curse and execrate them with their conjurations, which assembly they held in the dark dismal swamp" (Cave, 241). Bradford believed and shared that it was only after the natives magic had no effect of Godly people that they decided to come and be friendly. Bradford's fellow pilgrim Edward Winslow reported to London in 1624 of the Indians "many plots and treacheries" would have

destroyed the colony had God not “filled the hearts of the savages with astonishment of us” (Breslaw, 197). Many early colonists agreed that a satanic aura hung around Native American lifestyles and being. One New York court case speaks of a Governor Kieft from a Dutch providence expressing fear that Indian Medicine men were directing their incantations towards him (Burr, pg. 42).

These tales and many more like them is what would have been the foundational bedrock that the Puritans built their beliefs of the Native Americans upon. As the Native Americans came to realize how badly they were being treated and the European’s cultural imperative of taming the forest and acquiring that land, the realization dawned upon them that they would need to act to maintain control of their resources that had been enjoyed forever by their ancestors. This led to the King Phillip’s war where estimates say as many as 20,000 whites and Natives died (Poole, 15). This terminated the somewhat cooperative relationship that the pilgrims had tried so hard to maintain. Just thirteen years later the King William’s war cost colonist 600 lives and the natives approximately 3000. Many of the native captives were publically executed in heinous fashions to prove a point and hopefully deter any more insurrections. These atrocities caused the natives to engage in acts upon their prisoners that the Puritans believed only the evil of Satan could have inspired one to do. Reports of these brutalities would continue to flood into villages by those refugees that made it back to tell their tale. More detail will be given in a later chapter as we speak of the Puritan clerics ideas of Manifest Destiny and God’s Providence. However, for the present the reader should realize that these stories of fear and violence spread throughout the country side and into every home and village. The pressure of living in constant fear of the natives caused the Puritans to distrust those few

that lived amongst them or in close proximity even more. Cotton Mather mentions in his *Magnalia Christi Americana* that the greatest concern for Puritans was that exposure to Indian culture would make a friend or family member susceptible to the devil or to those agents of the devil, the French priests. Mather goes on to say, “That many more people died of contagious disease than in attacks by or on Indians, yet it was capture and to a lesser extent death, at the hands of Indians that inspired tremendous dread” (Mather, pg. 47). When one considers the Puritans witnessing the savagery of war and losing loved ones, coupled with a constant fear of Indian raids, mixed with a deeply rooted superstition it is not hard to extrapolate whom they believe is causing all the malfeasance. To the average Puritans even communicable diseases would have been attributed to the conjuring of Indian witches. However the educated Puritans knew that everything should not be attributed to the Indians. Yet often times they would allow these prejudiced ideas to continue to bolster their own ideas and positions. Mather would flame the fires of ‘othering’ yet he knew better in many cases, especially with disease. In 1721 during the smallpox outbreak in Boston said, “But let us beseech those that have call’d this method the work of the devil, or a going to the devil, no more to allow the cursed thought, or utter the horrid word, les they be found blasphemous of a most merciful and wonderful work of God” (Olasky). By calling on his fellow countrymen to accept inoculation as a divine mercy of God he is admitting that it is a way to escape a natural calamity to the body.

This chapter also needs to speak to those who were brought up from the Caribbean areas as slaves. These people were a group that was mixed from several different African tribes and Caribbean tribes. With this intermingling of people and beliefs and rituals, many new ideas of spirituality were taking hold amongst these people

who were be carried away as slaves. This spirituality would have been seen by the Puritans as being contrary to their God. In fact these dark skinned people would have worried them to a point that they would become part of their descriptions of the devil himself. The few records that exist of the Puritans describing what they felt was the devil sound a lot like a black man dressed like an Indian. Therefore black or red did not really matter to them, they were all the devil's children if they were not created in God's image of being white. However Bailey argues in his book *Race and Redemption* that, "...race was created by all New Englanders out of the spiritual freedoms offered to Native Americans and Africans as whites wrestled with assimilating people of color into their lives and worldview" (Bailey, pg. 7). This paper will illustrate later that there were some Native Americans and Black Slaves that were assimilated into Puritan life, which presented a quandary that had to be sorted through in the hearts of the Puritans.

Unfortunately even though there were some trying to learn how to assimilate these people of color into their life, there were others such as Mather and other clerics that would continue to build fear and distrust amongst the people, Poole writes:

"Puritan divine Cotton Mather created an elaborate demonological mythology to explain why the native peoples were the special servants of Satan. According to Mather, the natives had been a people seduced by Satan to come to the New World, a world where the gospel had not been revealed and Satan could rule. This made them 'the children of the devil' in a world where Satan ruled as 'prince and power of the air.' A few years before the beginning of the trials Mather had called the Indians Satan's 'most devoted and resembling children.' Later, Jonathan

Edwards would explain the Amerindian presence in the New World in a similar way, writing that ‘the devil did here quietly enjoy his dominion over the poor Indians for many generations’ (Poole, pg. 16).

Again one must remember that those who were brought up from the Caribbean were seen in exactly the same way. They were all considered Natives at this point. Therefore they would act out upon the people of color with impunity. The Puritans would consistently reiterate the writings of Mather and others to keep the satanic imagery at the forefront to legitimize the violence that was done to drive out Natives and take their land and to keep the black people enslaved. Many Puritans felt that it was almost impossible for Natives and Blacks to comprehend morality and goodness. When speaking of people of color’s behaviors, Mather said, “Lying, along with idleness and sorcery are the vices to be associated to them” (Breslaw, pg. 72).

At least for those brought up from the Caribbean the Puritans were not declaring war upon them, therefore as the Native American numbers were rapidly decreasing the number of blacks was increasing. Yet this does not mean that Blacks had a great lifestyle, as mentioned earlier their ritualistic practices and the color of their skin caused the Puritan to categorize them as ‘other’, thereby moving them to distrust and fear them. In fact during the Salem trials people regularly attested to Satan’s presence in the village based on sightings of a black man, a black animal, or a black man that resembled an Indian (Baily). Mercy Short was a young girl who saw her family murdered and then she was taken captive, and tortured by Native Americans. Once she was freed she understandably had nightmares and was brought to Mather to see if he could help. Mather asked her to describe who it was that tormented her in her dreams. One would expect her

to describe an Indian, however Mather records her answer this way: “There exhibited himself unto her a Devil having the figure of a short Black Man;...he was a wretch no taller than an ordinary walking staff; he was not of a Negro, but a Tawney, or an Indian color; he wore an high crowned hat, with straight hair; and had one Cloven foot” (Slotkin, pg. 278). A Puritan’s worst nightmare, a Black Indian dressed in a Christian’s hat with a beast’s foot. A kind of anthropomorphic man animal half breed creature. One must wonder about this image. This young girl’s image carried all the points of a good Mather sermon. The description having blacks collaborating with Christians being led along by a representation of the beast is what Mather had been warning people to avoid. It is possible that Mather coached Mercy along in her tender mental state, maybe not purposely, yet allowing his own bias to be shown in his interpretation of what she was telling him. There are many examples of Satan being portrayed even earlier as being black. Henry Boquet in 1590 wrote a demonological treatise titled *A Discourse on Witches*. In chapter twelve he describes how Satan copulates with a witch, Boquet says of Satan, “The ugliness and deformity lies in the fact that Satan couples with witches sometimes in the form of a black man, sometimes in that of some animal, as a dog or a cat or a ram. With Thievenne Paget and Antoine Tornier he lay in the form of a black man; and when he coupled with Jacquema Paget and Antoine Grandillon he took the shape of a black ram with horns” (Levack, pg. 81). One can see that the color black, and specifically a black man, is routinely attributed to the image of Satan.

Europeans looked to more than just the skin color however to hurl accusations against the blacks. Phillip Morgan writes, “Anglo Americans described slaves’ attempts to harm others by secretive means as either poisoning or by conjuring” (Breslaw, pg.

169). This paper shall briefly illustrate both of these accusations against the blacks separately.

So what is it that caused the Puritans to believe that the blacks were practicing witchcraft? One thing that was very obvious amongst many blacks was image magic. Both Native Americans and Blacks used image magic which involved materials like clay or wax molded into an image of someone or something. Then they would stick them with objects to cause pain or discomfort. This was a common thing in Barbados where most of the slaves in New England were shipped from at this time, however most blacks that practiced any form of magic New England practiced Hoodoo. Games describes Hoodoo in this way, “Hoodoo might be considered the African American variant of powwow; it contains a variety of ritual practices derived from African religious systems, but it was also divorced from those contexts and was generally not inconsistent with beliefs in Christianity” (Games, pg. 55). A powwow is primarily a social gathering held by many North American tribes. Now this might have been tolerated, however Voodoo was different. Voodoo was complete with deities and rituals all fused together from the many tribes of Africa and Caribbean that had been enslaved together. The Conjuror drew on knowledge of plants combined with sacred rituals to create medicines to resolve conflicts, to punish enemies or rivals or to appease spirits. One substance that was essential for amulets in Voodoo was “goofer dust,” or dirt gathered from a grave. The word derives from the Kongo word, kufwa, which means, “dead person” (Games, pg. 55). Without question the Puritans would have looked at this practice as a form of the black arts, malfeasance to its core. It was also known that there were trinkets and words that would be carried or spoken that carried what seemed to be spiritually driven. W. B. Hodgson a

Georgian who was knowledgeable about African slaves still living in his vicinity spoke of, "...practices and fetish worship of the Pagan Negroes early imported into this country" (Breslaw, pg. 171). Canes and wands used by magic men from Jamaica for ritual practices, intertwined with serpents and frogs have been found by archeologists and anthropologists, legitimizing the claims of the people that some kind of magic was trying to be enacted (Breslaw, pg. 172). Most of what was practiced at any other time would have been considered folk magic. William Pierson writes of a slave master stating in 1750, "slaves were very tenaciously addicted to the rites, ceremonies, and superstitions of their own countries, particularly in their plays, dances, music, marriages, and burials." Not even such as are born here, cannot be entirely weaned from these customs. Yankee slaves like other New World blacks fused their ancestral beliefs in the afterworld, in witchcraft, protective charms, divination, herbal medicine, evil spirits, devils and ghosts to surrounding European American traditions; in doing so, they created their own Yankee version of the Afro American folk religions found throughout the Americas..." (Pierson, pg. 181). However, as stated previously, this time in history all occult practice were suspect to the Puritans. Gullah Jack was a practitioner of Hoodoo and yet was referred to in court documents as a sorcerer and a necromancer. Even the most benign of superstitions would still be tainted when it came to black people because they would have been considered Satan's children if they have not been redeemed from that lifestyle.

Many African witchcraft beliefs were actually what we today would call just common poisonings. With close proximity to their master and knowledge of herbs, and no type of food storage procedures to rule out food poisoning, it was relatively easy to accomplish. Many slaves, who were found guilty of poisoning, often endured terrible

deaths, burned alive or hanged in cages to die slowly. One man was hung by chains in Massachusetts for being found guilty of poisoning his master. As a reminder to others his corpse remained there for twenty years (Games, pg. 53). One slave woman named Eve found guilty of poisoning her master was drawn on a hurdle to the place of execution and there burnt at the stake..." (Breslaw, pg. 170). In 1749 the "...horrid practice of poisoning white people" an editorial expostulated, led to several executions, "by burning, gibbeting, and hanging" (Breslaw, pg. 170). There are many court case records showing just how seriously this was taken and the harsh punishments that were handed down to those who were found guilty. One of the reasons it was looked at as witchcraft was because of a certain kind of poisoning done to other black people by black people under the auspices of a Voodoo rite. Piersin includes a 1748 description of a witchcraft poisoning in his writing.

Only a few of them know the secret, and they likewise know the remedy for it; therefore when a negro feels himself poisoned and can recollect the enemy who might possibly have given him to deliver him from its effects. But if the Negro is malicious, he not only denies that he ever poisoned him, but likewise that he knows an antidote for it. This poison does not kill immediately, as I have noted, for sometimes the sick person dies several years afterward. But from the moment he has the poison he falls into a sort of consumption state and enjoys but few days of good health. Such a poor wretch often knows that he is poisoned the moment he gets it. The negroes commonly employ it on such of their brethren as behave well toward

whites, are beloved by their masters, and separate as it were from their countrymen, or do not like to converse with them (Piersen, pg. 184).”

Many scientists believe the legends of zombies are based on such poisonings. Wade Davis an ethnobotanist from Harvard first argued this point the point that Haitian witchdoctors used tetrodotoxin to put people into zombie like states in a 1983 paper he published. In 1985 in his book *The Serpent and the Rainbow* Davis makes two primary claims to this: One being that the zombie powder he obtained in Haiti contains significant amounts of TTX and secondly that those levels of TTX would produce the traditional zombies known to Haitian mythology (Davis).

The Puritans lived daily with a fear almost as great as those blacks who believed in the aforementioned Voodoo practice. Whether black or Native American one was always suspected of collaborating with the devil, at least to the Puritans belief. Slaves who challenged the system did so at the instigation of Satan himself was the belief of these Puritans. If anything was causing stress in a Puritans life the superstition took over their mind and their eyes would move to the people of color. However, that did not change the fact that these people were going to be intermingling with them and some even expressed a desire to accept the God that the Puritans believed in. This put the Puritans in a paradoxical situation; to look down on these people because they were not created the same, yet God said to be good stewards of the world and do not shed innocent blood. When they are children of the devil their blood is not innocent, however, if they accept the Puritan's God and the Bible says that Christ died for "whomsoever" what are they supposed to do? The puritans believe that God has already preordained whom it is that will inherit heaven; they just do not know for sure who it is. However if these who

are colored are showing real signs of change once accepting the Puritan god how can they be sure that it is they and not them that God has ordained.

The Paradox of Race

Satan has always been somewhere in the story of American history. Whether it was Native Americans or Blacks or immigrants or “terrorist evil doers” they have all represented Satan for Americans at one time or another. Again and again the community rallied often by emerging or triumphant nation state, has cycled through the scapegoat mechanism, done violence to its victims, and found social unity again (Poole). This function of scapegoating was occurring in Puritan America (and still is today). With an increasing mood of worry and hostility sweeping over the land it was getting harder and harder for a peaceful co-existence between the Puritans and their neighbors. Yet even while there are those whose rhetoric was fanning the flames of fear and discord amongst

the Puritans there was still good hearted people who were truly searching their heart to do the right thing by these other people. Many Puritans felt empathy and compassion on these poor devils that are not worthy of true salvation in their mind. It was an ultimate paradox; they felt sorry while simultaneously looking down on the people of color. This paradox did lead to some social constructs that allowed some basic privileges to those who exhibited the humility and godliness that Puritans expected out of a godly person. This allowed some colored people to be involved, and to intermingle and exist amongst Puritan colonies.

As mentioned previously there were many new freedoms that was given to both Blacks and Native Americans that was brought into the Puritan lifestyle that they had not had before. Though the Blacks were still slaves, they now had many rights that they never had while in the Caribbean especially in Barbados. Though still classified as ‘other’ the slaves were given the right to a warm home, meals, fair access to utilize the legal system, even to be somewhat educated so as to be able to understand the bible and lead a good Puritan life. However along with these rights came a loss of other things. Breslaw in her book *Tituba Reluctant Witch of Salem* while speaking of Tituba, an Arawak Indian:

Massachusetts masters were forbidden to force their servants to work on Sunday. Servants were, however expected to accompany the family to church services, which left them with minimal free time. Slaves and servants had no liberty to indulge in enjoyable or personally productive leisure activities on meeting days. Like everybody else in Puritan New England they were forbidden to take part in any games or sports, to fish, plant, or hunt on the Sabbath. Whatever freedom she had

enjoyed in the slave compound in Barbados to sing, dance, worship the deities of her choice, or to take her daily swim disappeared once she arrived in Massachusetts. Tituba had also lost the advantage of leisure time during religious holidays celebrated by the Anglican Church. In Barbados slaves were granted free days for Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter Monday. Puritans frowned on the revelry of such holidays as innovations of the Roman Catholics carried over by the English church that they wanted to purify. They had outlawed public religious festivals early on in an attempt to eliminate such profane customs. As a result of these new restrictions and prohibitions, Tituba was subject to continuous scrutiny of her activities during both working and leisure hours (Breslaw, pg. 74).

As harsh as this may sound the good news one can see from this passage is that at least she was regarded as a human. Whether Native American, Black, or indentured White all slaves were treated under many of the same social constructs laid out for slaves. An acknowledgement of their humanity. What is actually taking place is the formulation of race, which unfortunately carries with it racism. Yet it is a good thing to be considered human to where some rights are more guaranteed. So what are some of these rights? From the above passage we see that they are to be fed and clothed, they were not to be made to work in the frigid conditions and was allowed to do smaller tasks and rest during the heat of the day (Breslaw). Slaves could also testify and sue in court and inquests would be held after the suspicious death of a slave. Slaves were even allowed to join the churches as full members sometimes, yet even within this spiritual equality they still were

not released from their physical bondage (Bailey). As we look a little more closely at just a few of these new privileges that were afforded the slaves and some free Indians, we need remember slaves could be of any color to the Puritan. The landscape consisted of white people, and children of the devil that had been pulled from the fire as a burning brand Mather would say, and if they had not yet been pulled, then they were the enemy.

Let us first consider the home life of a slave in the Puritan era. First off a slave would have had a clearer mind knowing that law and tradition would give them greater protections of their civil rights and be less vulnerable to their masters like they would have been on the islands. All bondsman as they were called were to be taken care of as per scripture and it did not matter as to what color their skin may be, therefore a slave was to be, “considered a part of a family and subject to a more general set of laws and obligations to the head of the household and the community” (Breslaw, pg. 70). Slaves by circumstance had become a dependant people, therefore slave owners were expected to provide sufficient food and clothing to make sure that the person was taken care of so as to not bring God’s wrath down on the rest of the community. In May of 1685 Benjamin Mills was ordered to explain why his Indian servant was so poorly clothed (Breslaw, pg. 73). The slaves did not have separate housing they would have either been under the same roof or sleep in an attached room and eating the same food as the rest of the family that owned them. This sounds almost like freedom; however this is one of those areas of paradox. Though slaves had new rights there were also special laws applied to slaves, regardless of color, establishing penalties for running away, drunkenness, theft, destruction of public property, and the assault on a white person (Breslaw).

The court system allotted many accommodations to the slave population. In fact in spite of the legal discriminations mentioned above the law provided the same procedural protection for slaves as for free people “although subtle distinctions in actual treatment reminded Blacks and Indians that they were not English” (Breslaw, pg. 71). Things such as Indians and Blacks were always identified by race while whites by social class. Clerks refer to Indians and Blacks as “it” or “which” or “that” rather than “who”, depersonalizing them. They could be witnesses in trials though rarely would their testimony supersede white testimony, Tituba’s case was an exception because she had such a working knowledge of the mind and ways of the Puritans she was able to lead them along in Salem. By using her knowledge of the Puritans own customs and teachings Tituba was able to manipulate the Puritans fears and ideas so that both she and her husband escaped persecution though they were accused Arawak Indians. Free Indians could even sit on the jury if the trial involved Native Americans. Breslaw relays one account in which half the jury was free Indian and the other half white. It illustrates well the idea of justice in the court. Joseph Indian of Martha’s Vineyard was accused of murdering his wife in February 1685 and the case was tried by this half and half jury:

Joseph did not speak or understand English well enough and an Indian interpreter stood by ready to translate for him. In spite of the evidence that Joseph had killed his wife by beating her on the head, dragging her through the streets, and then abandoning the badly battered woman, the jury found him guilty not of murder, but of ‘unnaturalness and barbarous Cruelty towards his wife.’ The court, believing that Indian custom condoned wife-beating, refused to condemn Joseph for a capital crime.

He was sentenced instead to thirty stripes and told to pay forty shillings or face being sold into servitude. (Breslaw, 70)

There were no legal restrictions on the testimony of Indians, slave or free. In one instance an enslaved woman named Candy argued that she was not a witch but that her white mistress was. She had a good enough understanding of the courts and the spiritual system around her and utilized these ideas into her testimony so as the court did not indict her. Again one can see that the justice system aspired to fairness in these instances and that the rights of being human were being confirmed upon the slaves, yet the Puritans still looked down on them as property.

Lastly let us look a little at the idea of allowing the slaves into the church. The term “Praying Indians” was applied to those who had said that they wanted to accept the god of the Puritans and had been segregated into special towns for the purpose of learning English ways and receiving instruction in Christianity (Breslaw). This again shows a propensity amongst some of the Puritans to accept these people of color into their midst, though they still did not understand the difference in skin. In fact many Puritans prayed for the African souls to be washed white after they died so that they could get into heaven, and wondered if those who accepted Christianity would turn white at the Resurrection (Bailey). Bailey speaks often about the unease that the Puritans felt when they had to look closely at their worldview. They looked down on people of color in every way, intellectually and spiritually. However they were torn by the idea of calling someone inferior yet that same person served the same God once they had converted. The paradox manifested itself in the church as well though. Special catechisms were created for Indians and Blacks. These catechisms would stress their state of bondage and

encouraged them not to be discontented with their lot in life. Jonathan Edwards a powerful preacher, displayed the confusion with his actions in life. In 1741 he preached that whites had a moral right to enslave Africans, but that the right did not justify the slave trade or its cruelties. (Bailey). This preacher's heart was confused because of tradition clashing with what he heard his conscience and Christian teachings saying about love and mercy. Edwards in his early writings portrays Africans and Native Americans as children of the devil, however, after hearing the confessions of faith and dying words of people of color as recorded by ministers he realized that Black and Native American Puritans truly had accepted his god. At the end of his life Edwards considered these converts his spiritual progeny, not the children of the devil. (Bailey).

Unfortunately the Puritans were living in a time of dire circumstances; diseases, war, hunger, political and cultural change. In the midst of these perilous times their hearts were saying one thing while there were those around them who were loudly decrying another. There were those learned men who were stoking the fires of fear and doubt to incite the Puritans to take a higher ground so that they could look down on those around them and thereby take their land and expand the colony, and do so under the guise of God's providence. No one cried out this message louder it seems than Cotton Mather.

Cotton Mather and God's Providence

“My hearers will not expect from me an accurate definition of the vile thing, since the grace of God has given me the happiness to speak without experience of it. But from accounts both by reading and hearing I have learned to describe it so.” (Kors & Peters, pg. 367) Cotton Mather spoke these words to kick off an incredibly passionate sermon about the effects and evils of witchcraft early in his ministry. By the late seventeenth century he regarded himself as an academic on the subject of witchcraft. This sermon, titled *The Nature and Reality of Witchcraft*, not only inspired many hundreds of Puritans, but this mindset became a predominant focus for Mather as well. Mather speaks powerfully later in his life as he inspires the Puritans to act upon their Godly duty and bring about God's Providence.

...for many years after the English did first settle in these American Desarts. But that of later years fatal and fearful slaughters have in that way been made amongst us, is most certain. And there are many who have in this respect been as Brands plucked out of the burning, when the Lord hath overthrown others as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. Such solemn works of Providence ought not to be forgotten! (Mather, pg. 72).

Mather is the loudest voice or at least the most published voice of the late seventeenth-century New England crying out to fulfill God's Providence by eradicating witchcraft and “children of the devil” from God's land. So who is this man that this essay has mentioned so much and what drove him?

By all accounts Mather was intellectually gifted. But yet these previously mentioned quotes truly encapsulates the worldview and driving passion that this man had until his grave. Sure, he delved into other subjects from time to time, seeing as how his mind was also attuned to science and the great revelations of his day. He was also a prolific writer and staunch supporter of academia, passing the entrance exam into Harvard at the ripe old age of twelve. However Mather was most notably known as the self proclaimed demonologist and spiritual protector of New England. He believed that the unchurched Native Americans and Blacks were witches that presented the Devil's special war against New England (Mather).

With many publications under his belt, Cotton Mather was asked to advise and direct the counsel during several different witch trials, the most notable of these being Salem. Though these trials took place in 1692, over three hundred year ago, they are still remembered today. If one was to mention "Salem Witch Trials," virtually every school child, much less adult, will know automatically to what you are referring. Everyone's mind would move to Massachusetts instantaneously. An individual may not have known the name Cotton Mather, but they would have known the incident. And let me assure you, the people of Salem in 1692 knew this man. Much ink has been spilt, both then and now, for and against, theory after theory, on that dreadful moment of our history

Cotton Mather's father was the minister of the second church in Boston and he was also the Dean of Harvard College. Cotton was an incredibly intelligent youngster entering into Harvard at the age of twelve and earning his MA degree by the age of eighteen. Cotton then accepted a position at his father's church. Cotton's father, Increase Mather, was also very politically minded, and was chosen to travel to Britain to

negotiate a new charter for Massachusetts. In his absence, Cotton Mather, at the tender age of twenty-five, became the pastor of the largest congregation in New England.

As Cotton studied the scriptures and presented his sermons on Sunday, he also exhibited an intense interest in the sins of the world. Putting forth sermons against them of course, but also writing countless books dissecting them. There are over four hundred works accredited to his pen. Writing on violent crimes to cursing, from natural disasters to hell, all the while investigating every alleged possession of young girls and witchcraft he could travel to reminding people that America was Satan's lair and that the Natives were his children. Mather's sermons often stoked fear and played on people's emotions to have them on edge expecting the coming spiritual battle at any moment. With all the incredible material that Cotton mentally consumed, he was influenced greatly by *The Damned Art of Witchcraft* written by William Perkins in 1608. Perkins as this paper mentioned earlier was considered the absolute pinnacle of authority on witchcraft and Cotton idolized him. Thinking him to be on the cutting edge of the issues that was the most culpable threat to the world. As much as Cotton loved science and its discoveries, he knew in his heart that it would be a Spiritual attack that would doom his beloved New England. In his heart Mather believed that Satan could not stand the people of God on what he thought of as his land.

After much research, books, and interviews, Cotton headed out into the New England countryside with a mission. Cotton entertained a unique thought pattern about the conscripts of Satan. Cotton believed that Puritan New England was such a goad in Satan's side that perhaps Satan himself was personally going to spiritually destroy it through his colored children. Cotton was not about to let that happen, and he was ready

to declare all out war on the devil. Brian Levack explains, “Revelation, the last book of the New Testament, prophesied the second Coming of Christ who would destroy the powers of evil. Revelation foretold that this event would be preceded by the appearance of the anti-Christ and the workings of the Devil on earth. Mather interpreted the signs of demonic possession visible in Massachusetts as evidence that the anti-Christ had appeared and that the Devil was loose. The proper Calvinist response to this apocalyptic challenge was to wage war against Satan by taking action against witchcraft” (Levack, pg. 110). He believed that where sin was, then there was an agent of Satan. And if he could get a confession from someone, even if unsupported by evidence, it was enough to convict, no matter the color of their skin (Mather). Cotton did not think one should look under every rock for the devil, but anyone guilty enough to be suspected; he would have little, if any, mercy upon them.

Mather attended the hanging of George Burroughs. A Puritan cleric whose sin that brought accusations was surviving an Indian war and having skin a shade too dark. It was recorded that when Mr. Burroughs was given the infallible test of reciting the Lord’s Prayer, he did so perfectly. This obviously told the crowd that he was innocent and should be freed. But at this point, Mather launched a savage attack. Seeing that the crowd doubted what they were doing and losing heart in the situation, he boisterously gave an impromptu speech, eviscerating Mr. Burroughs’ recital and convincing the crowd to proceed with the execution. (Cooke) One must wonder why Mather would go to such lengths to see a possibly innocent man die. It is possible that Mather would have perceived that if Burroughs was released that the people would start thinking about how many others were possibly wrongly persecuted, thereby upsetting the rationality of fear

that he so laboriously had implanted in the people's minds. Mather possibly would have seen this episode as a spiritual battle for the mind of the people, whereby if he lost this battle he might lose the spiritual war allowing Satan control over the land.

This was the mindset of Mather when Sir William Phips, new governor of Massachusetts, was calling together a special court on May 27, 1692 to determine the validity of the witchcraft cases in Salem. The trial produced its first execution on June 10 of the same year. The trial and its outcome troubled so many that the governor turned to leading ministers for advice. (Musick, 1906) Mather urged caution in relying totally on spectral evidence, the idea that one's spirit could visit someone in a dream while their physical body was somewhere else. Nonetheless he still urged "the speedy and vigorous prosecution of those guilty of witchcraft." (Mather, pg. 37) By July 19, five more women had been executed. Mather's preaching was scalding and fierce during this time. He believed the time was near, "there never was a poor plantation, more pursued by the wrath of the devil than our poor New England," he stated in a sermon. (Mather, pg. 363) On August 4, 1692, Mather delivered a sermon warning the people to repent. He had mathematically predicted that in the year of 1697, God would return and that all Godly people must fight to eradicate the evil that had held that land all about them. He deemed New England as leading the final charge against the devil and his spirits. (Fiske) Mather seemed to glory in the Indian Wars believing that God's Providence was being made manifest. Scott Poole grabs Mather's mindset well in his book, *Satan in America*:

Cotton Mather described how it was time 'for the devil to take alarm' when the Puritan settlements spread through new England since, in Mather's mind, the conquest of Indian territory was a victory over

Satan. In the Pequot War, Satan's supposed alliance with the Indians provided legitimacy for the worst atrocities. In 1637, Puritan forces set ablaze a native palisade on the Mystic River, burning to death many of the defenders. They then killed, drowned, or enslaved the survivors. Mather actually referred to 'the bodies of so many natives barbequed' as a 'sweet sacrifice to God.' Those who survived to be taken captive 'were the pictures of so many devils in desperation.' This background ensured that Mather, obsessed with the activity of the devil in the Puritan settlements and within the human heart quickly attributed the perceived outbreak of witchcraft to the devil's larger plan to destroy New England (Poole, pg. 16).

By 1692 it was no longer just the Natives and the Blacks, the witchcraft epidemic was out of control and pitted white against white, and the Public backlash to Salem had gone beyond just a spiritual unrest to causing political upheavals as well. And in October of 1692, Increase Mather, Cotton's father, had to step in. He challenged the court's procedures directly, arguing "that it was better for ten witches to be set free than one innocent person to be condemned" (Upham, pg. 60)

Thankfully the Governor heard Increase Mather's views and realized the tragedy that had transpired in his land under his watch. Nineteen executions and a host of people's lives devastated in Salem not to mention the many who because of the color of their skin, were never even given a trial in the courts. The Puritan lifestyle and his city of Salem would never be the same again. The Essex county court ordered new elections and a new committee that opposed the previous committee's ideas was voted in, yet the

damage was too deep. Faith was lost and hope was stolen. (Peterson) Cotton went on to fan the fires of hysteria throughout New England even though credibility had been lost. Robert Calef, a Boston merchant and author of a book, "Another Brand Plucked Out of the Burning or More Wonder of the Invisible World" presented Cotton as a perverted old man that used the guise of religion to be able to fondle and examine young girls and to commit sadist atrocities (Calef). This coupled with his father's sermon denouncing the trials, destroyed most if not all of the credibility that Cotton had once attained. Though this author may not agree with Calef, Mather did believe the devil was real and coming. Mather believed that by trying to prove that Satan was real, and causing the Puritans to continue fighting against him would cause many to see that God was real and coming as well

The opposing viewpoints put forth by Cotton Mather and his father show just how enigmatic the spirit world can be. Both were passionate about serving God, but one allowed himself to be consumed with fear. Cotton Mather was a brilliant man and a fiery orator, and though publishing many more books and articles, he was never taken seriously again. Three times he was passed over as becoming dean of his beloved Harvard, eventually, feeling dejected he helped to found Yale University. And although Cotton Mather repeated his original views on the Salem trials in his *Magnalia Christi Americana*, when one reads his later diaries, they reveal regret for his role in the trials and executions. (Upham)

Puritans were often known for their religious zeal and passion. A people living with a heartfelt conviction, that they could turn the country into the pure body of believers that it should be. Thus the Puritans were considered the most Godly, the most

zealous Protestants with the most powerful ministers by many. They truly felt that it was they and they alone who were the elect spoken of in scripture, and this fueled their intensity. Cotton Mather was one who embodied it all, but unfortunately put his eyes on his own ideas, rather than the one whom he was proclaiming, which cost the lives of so many and decimated the Native Americans.

Eugenics & Reprogenetics:

Who gets to choose the people of tomorrow?

With the arrogance of superiority the Puritans looked down through a self righteous ethnocentric lens at these people of color which caused them to misunderstand the cultures of these people. Thereby allowing them to be able to purpose in their heart, because of fear and a lack of knowledge, the justification to eradicate these people and do so believing they were bettering the world. As a nation one must ask if we have changed over these last several hundred years. Did we learn the lesson of Puritan America? Looking back on this moment in American history people are aghast at how these Puritans had the gall to try and purposely extinguish a people group, and then think to themselves, "I am glad that would not happen in the 21st century." However, this author would submit that the idea of pushing one's ideologies, while simultaneously

rationalizing and justifying the eradication of other people groups still exists today.

Rather than people using religion to stamp out sins such as the Puritans tried to do, it now is science and business that leads the charge, under the name of eugenics or reprogenetics, both seeking genetic purity.

The idea of eugenics has been tossed around and contemplated by societies at least since Plato, and quite possibly even prior to his writings. Thomas Malthus, as far back as 1797 in his “Essay on the Principle of Population” stated that if something wasn’t done to curb the “passion between the sexes” (Malthus, 1797) the world’s resources would not keep up with population growth. Many scientists today have focused their study towards alleviating population growth and perfecting the species of man. Lee M. Silver a molecular biologist at Princeton commented in his 1997 book *Remaking Eden* that parents who can afford reprogenetics will be able to pick out genetic characteristics of their children. Possibly causing a tier system of people based on their income level. While eugenics means the breeding of the fit and the filtering out of the unfit by some governments carries negative connotations, reprogenetics is gaining more traction amongst wealthy individuals. Bio ethicist James Hughes raises the concern that this could lead to a society of “Genrich” and “Genpoor”. At that point one could extrapolate that the next step is another round of ‘othering’ process taking place in America. However this technology still needs to be perfected, therefore let us look a little deeper into this fear of ‘othering’ on a government level which could be termed eugenics. This is something that so many people groups have already unfortunately already had to experience.

The actual term “eugenics” was coined by Charles Darwin’s cousin, Francis Galton. As a proponent of eugenics, Galton claims, “...the aim of eugenics is to bring as

many influences as can be reasonably employed, to cause the useful classes in the community to contribute more than their proportion to the next generation” (Galton, 1904: 3). The key phrase in this quote is “useful classes.” If one was to look at the puritan example, their definition of “useful classes” would have included white Puritans only, hence the attempted eradication of the Natives. This very ambiguous term was interpreted by Galton and many other scientists around the industrialized nations to often mean Caucasians of European heritage who were needed to out-reproduce the other nationalities if they were going to raise the level of humanity and not abase it with dark skinned illiterate brutes (Galton, 1904). This ideology led to a social philosophy that is now known as positive and negative eugenics. This social plan instituted by some countries, and advocated by scientists, would encourage and incentivize people with desirable traits to have higher rates of sexual reproduction, thereby bettering the gene pool by adding more desirable traits per capita; hence the term positive eugenics. Negative eugenics refers to reducing the reproduction rates of humans that presented less desirable traits, whether through sterilization or genocide, these genes filtering out of the gene pool. One of the major problems with this endeavor is that someone, or some group of people, has to decide just what a positive or negative trait is. Will it be determined by skin color, nationality, muscle size, religious preference? Will that decision be driven by fear such as it was for the Puritans or will it be done on an intellectually based bias. One would think that the monumental task of deciding who had, or did not have, traits worthy of reproduction would be shunned, at least in public, by those in the limelight of governmental politics. Yet there are many notable names that have supported eugenics in

our modern era, from Winston Churchill to Teddy Roosevelt to Hitler. Eugenics was central to the theory and practice of Nazism.

Proponents of eugenics, such as Galton, would point out that the so called undesirable races could be controlled with the implementation of a eugenics program. Galton was flabbergasted by how most barbarous races disappear on their own, yet the Negro does not (Galton, 1904). Galton was confounded by this and believed that man had the moral obligation to intervene so as to strengthen the species as a whole. Madison Grant was also an early twentieth century eugenicist who wrote prolifically on scientific racism and he also helped to craft draconian immigration policies. Grant agreed with Galton and went so far as to suggest that interracial marriages should be made unlawful because of the offspring that would be produced by such a union. Grant also criticized, and condemned, the church for trying to “preserve a defective strain” by its trying to protect these people of color (Grant, 1916: 45). One should again notice that the terms have changed; however, they are still just as heinous as what Mather was saying in his sermons. It is not the terminology that is bad as much as it all leads to the same outcome: an individual or group deciding who is worthy and who is not. It is not just race, however that both Grant and Galton write of, they included those who are in jails, hospitals, and insane asylums as being undesirables who should not be allowed to procreate. These men, and many others, advocated for man to judge whether one was smart enough or artistic enough, or disciplined enough to reproduce, arbitrarily brandishing their ideas of desirable traits upon a vast population of the world.

However, though there were many political elites and scientists supporting the idea of eugenics there were many critics willing to point out the faults with eugenics as

well. Frank Boas cleverly makes the argument that environment plays a significant role as to how and what a person becomes in their life (Boas, 1916). Boas pointed out that different types of man, with initiative, can climb to the same social pinnacles as others if given the same opportunities and upbringing. Boas then made the argument that many of the traits that eugenicists sought out to be selectively bred for may not even be hereditary (Boas, 1916). That would mean many of those euthanized, would have been done so in vain as the trait that was sought to be disposed of continued to exist in others. The idea of making a pure race makes no sense genetically unless you use asexual organisms (Dobzhansky, 1951). The science of deciding the genes that are acceptable or unacceptable in future generations seems to be more based on opinion rather than actual data. Boas goes so far as to say that the theory of eugenics is based on unsatisfactory data and therefore should be further researched before any kind of implementation (Boas, 1916). However even with all these great arguments, in the end Boas states that there is a place for eugenics; we just need think it through a little more.

Eugenics has been practiced in one way or another for a very long time. Maybe under different names and auspices, however man has tried to impose his will on others throughout history. Many tragedies still resonate in the memories of those who were part of the Nazi eugenics program, or the eugenics practiced in the early twentieth century here in America. Native Americans have never recovered from the taking of their lands and the decimation of their people. History should teach people not to repeat the same mistakes against one another. Yet even now in the twenty-first century eugenics is still a viable topic in many scientific circles. The massive extermination of human life by the Third Reich of Germany cast a dark shadow over eugenics, therefore today people try to

distance themselves from the word eugenics. However, the movement did not die with the death of Adolf Hitler and the Third Reich. Neither did the eugenics movement die when the word “eugenics” became unfashionable. *Time Life* ran an article “Eugenics Are Alive and Well in the United States” on July 10, 2013. In the article the author described 148 female inmates in California having to undergo forced sterilization in the twenty-century. (Time, 2013). Helix Science Magazine published by Northwestern University published an article entitled “Modern Eugenics: Building a Better Person”. It described a lot of great things that could come to pass if we would just get past the ethics and carry out a eugenics program. These suggestions sound great if we don’t stop and look at history and think a little and question the paper. Notice this excerpt from the article:

With the advent of revolutionary reproductive and genetic technologies, humans have begun to acquire the ability to directly, and perhaps permanently, shape our evolutionary destiny. There are many arguments that can be made in favor of the ability to permanently cure genetic disease in future progeny. Fewer arguments can be made in favor of permanently “improving” the genetic traits of future progeny, but a small yet influential group of scientists does advocate for them. In 1994, Sir Walter Bodmer, former president of the Europe-based Human Genome Organization famously proclaimed, “Would it really be so bad, if we added genes for height to small people, or for hair to the bald, or good eyesight to the myopic? Probably not.” But in response to whether we should add genes for intelligence or athleticism? “Just where we get off

the slippery slope is therefore a matter for society to choose...we have plenty of time to debate the issues and resolve them (Time, 2016).

The question that begs to be asked is; when will those who can afford these modifications into super beings look down on those who cannot, and then thereby use the exact same technology in reverse to get rid of those lower classes that are impeding their will?

In conclusion, the question is simple, have we learned anything since the days of the puritans when we assess the way that we treat other people? Do we as individuals, and then as a country, try to educate others to the lack of difference amongst people? Or do we try to demonize and put fear in the hearts of people fostering an atmosphere of 'othering'? Whether it is the color of one's skin, their gender, sexual orientation, physical prowess, there is always something different about everyone and unfortunately until we learn the lessons that history has shown us we are destined to continue along making the same mistake. All one needs do is look at this 2016 political process to see an modern example. As a society we have a choice to make: We can either accept one another, and learn from one another, or we can put forth accusations towards what we don't understand to legitimize in our minds our need to get rid of these people. As long as there is inequality and racism in our world, as long as there is religious fanaticism in our world, as long as politicians try to build themselves at the expense of others, there will be those who will call for the extermination of others. As a society we need learn from the example of the Puritans and not call every one Witches or Satanists or any other scapegoating label of the day, and learn to speak with a rational mindset, not to make decisions based on fear or ignorance. Unfortunately there are those Cotton Mather's still today who are trying to play upon the fears of the people in all walks of life. It is each

individual's responsibility to see beyond the rhetoric of charismatic speakers and adhere to the lessons of history. Whether it is witchcraft and religion, or science and eugenics, or the newer rerogenetics, there is not a solid reason for any one people group to decide the fate of another people group. No one group should have the authority to decide the existence of another people group based on what they believe to be worthy or unworthy traits.

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