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Puritans and Indians – Cultural Conflict in the 17th century New England

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„Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto diplomovou práci vypracoval samostatně a výhradně s použitím citovaných pramenů, literatury a dalších odborných zdrojů.“

“I declare that the following MA thesis is my own work for which I used only the sources and literature mentioned.”

V Praze dne.....

podpis.....

I would like to thank Prof. David L. Robbins for his feedback on my work and guidance for my research.



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1. Introduction

In Herman Melville's famous novel Moby Dick, there is a passage in which the whaling ship "Pequod" is pursued by pirates. Earlier in the book, Melville draws a parallel between the whaling ship's name and the Indian tribe nearly exterminated by the Puritans in the 1637 Mystic Massacre, the Pequots. Ahab's ship is named after them and the battle imagery in the passage elaborates on the allegorical elements in the book representing the fanatical desire to master, control and dominate nature and other cultures. From this perspective, Melville's pirates may be regarded as a certain critical reflection on the introduction of Puritan authoritative and severe doctrine onto the soil of the New World. The residual traces of such elements may be found nowadays in various aspects of American culture, which heavily draws on its' Puritan heritage. Contradictory to this notion of a Puritan as a Christian Imperialist and cultural annihilator is my vivid recollection of a Thanksgiving sermon delivered by one chaplain unto his congregation in the town of New Canaan in Connecticut, where he praised "the Pilgrims for bringing God to the U.S. shores." Sadly enough, the Puritan expansion claimed the nearly complete extermination of the Pequots, eventually achieving their detribalization. Based on these contradictory notions, I decided to examine their weight by looking into this particular cultural conflict, hoping to place, if at all possible, the context of the encounter between the two cultures together with its far-reaching consequences into a more comprehensive perspective, giving both sides credit rather than condemning them outright, thus drawing premature conclusions.

The Pequot War of 1636-37, in its final effect, provided a breeding ground for the establishment of English hegemony in New England, and for this reason, it has been generally agreed that this skirmish should be considered one of the cornerstones of early American

history, given the implications it held for future patterns and approaches to Anglo-Indian policies for almost another three hundred years. The aim of this thesis is to examine the background of the Pequot War at Mystic, together with its wide-ranging consequences leading up to another military conflict, King Philip's War, as I believe this single day conflict provides an insight into the dramatic relations, cultural renegotiations and dynamic power struggles between the Puritans and the Natives, in particular the Pequot tribe. Needless to say, this conflict has proven to be the very subject of extensive scholarly discussion and controversy. Till this day, there is no single modern work, be it apologist or revisionist, which would provide an accurate and full-scale account of the Puritan policy towards the Indians and vice versa, especially due to the lack of detailed, unbiased narrative history covering the formative years of their encounters. This is not to say that there are no existing written reports whatsoever, quite on the contrary, they are documented in abundance, however, according to my interpretation all the documents leave the studies of the cultural conflict more polemical rather than substantive.

2. Revisionist versus Apologist Historical Approaches

In his The Puritans, Perry Miller examines two distinct characteristics of Puritan historiography. On the one hand, he discusses the inherent theological necessity of the recorded material to be “bound to be specific and concrete”¹, whereas on the other hand, he further introduces the “didactic character of the material”², thus charging it with a considerable amount of interpretation on the author’s part. As a result of this “interpretation” aspect of the material, the heavily ideological structure of the Puritan community suggests that the nature of the material may have a strong tendency towards ambiguities, perhaps embellished by half-truths, based on its’ potentially selective character.

Apart from the fact that only one party involved in the cultural conflict leading up to the Mystic massacre left recorded material, the greatest controversy particularly surrounds the causes of the war and the reasons for the Puritans’ brutal treatment of noncombatants, as well as warriors. The Puritan apologists have portrayed a great deal of tendency to provide grounds justifying the Puritan savagery by demonizing their Indian victims, thus perpetuating a long-standing stereotype of the New World “savage” as an unpredictable, malicious, treacherous and inhumane being plotting against the English colonists, and thwarting their Christian mission. The apologist version thus states that the Puritans had no other choice but to strike first, with the notion that, given the circumstances, the image of the heathen adversary they had received prior to their arrival to the New World gave the Puritans no obligation to respect the rules of civilized warfare. Some historians, for instance like John Fiske, took this line of

¹ The Puritans, Perry Miller and Thomas H. Johnson, (American Book Company, 1938) 84.

² Miller and Johnson 85.

argumentation even further when they “invoked the notion of Social Darwinism”³ in their analysis of the conflict, urging his reading audience not to put blame on the Puritans for their fierceness against the Pequots.

Recently, in the past couple of decades, the claims that the responsibility for the conflict rested without a doubt with the Pequots have been challenged by the revisionist historians, who have placed the Anglo-Pequot war in a new perspective, attributing the war’s origins to the Puritan ethnocentrism, misperceptions and preconceptions, greed and bigotry. Some have explained the conflict purely in terms of expression of self-interest and monetary considerations. Some have warned, however, against seeking to explain the Mystic Massacre purely in terms of land annexation, control of Connecticut trade or the driving-out of other competitive English claimants, to the sources of wealth. Others have introduced the idea that the Puritans were striving to reestablish unity within their vulnerable community by smiting the Canaanites and driving them from the Promised Land. Of this Neil Salisbury writes this much, maintaining that “the rediscovery that God had a purpose in mind for the settlers and that that purpose could be happily reconciled with their desire to spread out and expropriate Indians lands.”⁴ This would be suggestive of the Puritan self-doubt and guilt that could be reconciled only by the extermination of so many of “Satan’s agents.” Further explanations define the Pequot War as an outgrowth and expression of Puritan fears of the “power of darkness in the wilderness”, reflected, for instance, also in the works of Nathaniel Hawthorne who dealt in his works with his Puritan heritage.

³ *Social Darwinism And Racial Motives*, Mar.20th 2010, <<https://wikis.nyu.edu/ek6/modernamerica/index.php/Imperialism/SocialDarwinismAndRacialMotives>>.

⁴ Alfred A. Cave, *The Pequot War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996) 16.

Furthermore, the expectations Puritans held in advance about the behavior of the New World savages as well as the prospects shaped out for them by Providence must be taken into consideration. The approach of revisionist historians critical of Puritan Indian policy, combined with a growing sensitivity to past injustices committed against Native Americans, has led to a partial transformation of the Pequot image - they are now more or less celebrated for their resistance to English expansionism. Even Alden Vaughan, the severest modern critic of the Pequots, who provided the most comprehensive restatement of the traditional interpretation of the Pequot war, confesses in the introduction to his third edition of his *New England Frontier* (1995) that he is now “less certain than he was fifteen years ago that the Pequots deserve the burden of blame.”⁵

Whatever changes the revisionist approach may have introduced, it still seems to have often placed too much emphasis on economic motivations and to have accordingly ignored the ideological assumptions that determined Indian affairs as well as reactions to immediate events. In theory, as well in practice, the ideas, prejudices, images, symbols with which the Puritans were equipped may have been activated without any economic interest whatsoever. Nonetheless, from my point of view, ideology cannot be fully separated from its specific context of interests and, most importantly, power relations – of which the Puritans’ actions were proof enough. Even within a longer span of time spent in the New World, the Puritans continually kept turning blind eyes to the lack of tangible evidence of Indian malevolence and continued to see the areas of potential settlement as a spiritual battleground between the Elect and the Forces of Darkness. Sacvan Bercovitch noted that Puritan documents dealing with Indians still:

⁵ Alden T. Vaughan, *New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians 1620-1675* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1995) 93.

show the astonishing capacity of myth not only to obscure but to invert reality. What they tell us, in effect, is that there are two parties in the new world, God's and the Devil's; and that God's party is white, Puritan and entrusted with a world-redeeming errand, while Satan's party is dark-skinned, heathen and doomed.⁶

This shows that Puritans' prejudices proved highly resistant to adjustment through empirical evidence and that misconceptions rather than reality drove the course and discourse of their history. In its' final effect, it was basically rumors and news of dubious origin (often delivered to them by Indians seeking to empower themselves by ingratiating with the English) that compelled Puritans to see Pequots as conspirators against their cause, and more importantly, these were the occasions which provided a certain pretext which the Puritans more than happily embraced as it allowed them to fulfill their ideological expectations. The English then, from the very beginning, took armed confrontations with the Natives, whom they believed to be in league with Satan, for inevitable events. This habit of readily embracing stereotypical images of Indians along with their alleged motives resulted in misreading the Indian actions and a priori imputing the role of an aggressor to them. The above offers a tempting explanation of something resembling wartime propaganda, but there is a considerable amount of evidence suggesting that the root of such Puritan preconceptions of the Indian goes much deeper than that and such beliefs were not entirely formed on the spot but rather the prevailing convictions that gave rise to the preconceptions actually haunted the founding of Puritan colonies long before the settlement. This will be further dealt with in the section on Puritan misconceptions and preconceptions. Also, since there are two sides to

⁶ Bercovitch, foreword to Charles M. Segal, David C. Stineback, *Puritans, Indians, and Manifest destiny* (G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York:1977) 17.

every coin, the Pequots' perspective must not go unnoted, though it seems more difficult to reconstruct their side of the story due to a complete lack of written records on their part.

3. New England Indians

3.1 The Nature of Historical Accounts of Native Americans

Native American history spans tens of thousands of years, covering a multifarious story of their various dynamic cultures and accordingly intricate economic relationships as well as complex political alliances. In the broadest sense, Indians were without a shadow of doubt victims in all landscapes of European settlement on the American continent – at their hands they suffered discrimination, exploitation and eventually, mass annihilation – either by disease or sword. What is important is that they lived in hunter/farmer subsistence societies with significantly different value systems than those of the European settlers. In the long run, the relationship of the Indigenous nations to the land they occupied has been one of the crucial themes. Despite the fact that Native Americans of the region today called New England share familiar languages and cultures, described as Eastern Algonquian; it is firmly believed they should by no means be regarded as a group of the same political and social systems. To be more accurate, the New England Indians contain many sub-groups. As the above suggests, generalizations of any sort are uncalled-for. Quite surprisingly, this notion is reflected fairly early in the following text by a Jesuit missionary Paul Le Jeune at Quebec who in 1633 observed that

After seeing two or three Savages do the same thing, it is once reported to be a custom of the whole Tribe. There are many tribes in these countries who agree in a number of things and differ in many others; so that, when it is said

that certain practices are common to the Savages, it may be true of one tribe and not true of another.¹

Naturally, encounters between the early travelers and the Natives of North America were formative of the first impressions about the customs and habits of the Indians. The descriptions of the Natives, often misconstrued, were generally poor and sketchy in nature. Thus for a more detailed portrayal of Indian life it is necessary to turn our attention to missionaries, permanent colonization and their chroniclers. With hindsight, it is worthy of notice that the descriptions, nevertheless, greatly differed, due to the differences of degree in treatment and differences of emphasis in attitude among the colonizing groups. On the one hand, a prevailing image of the Indian as the Noble Savage runs through some of the texts, while on the other, there are numerous images of the Native as a violent and mischievous heathen. Such accounts, understandably, must have differed in accordance with the respective imported national attitudes and religious beliefs. Given the circumstances, the Puritan chroniclers of the 17th century had obviously little leaning towards let alone a notion of anthropology. Despite the abundance of the reports on the way the Puritans saw and understood the “red men” of New England, today’s readers’ interest is not quenched by the descriptions and cannot be fully relied on. A more sophisticated account may only be achieved through combination of the preserved records and modern scientist findings. However, having said that, it must be borne in mind that even the Puritan contemporary descriptions should be relevant for putting our fingers on the potential causes of the intercultural conflict, since the attitudes and actions of the colonists towards the Indigenous nations, as found in the reports, were strong determinants in shaping of the Puritan conception of Indian character and society.

¹ Vaughan 27.

3.2 New England Indians

As far as the figures of the Native Americans in New England before the arrival of European traders are concerned, the size of their population can only be estimated, due to lack of hard evidence, even despite the numerous 17th century reports. The Algonquians followed suit of other Native peoples in terms of maintaining oral tradition, meaning that the stories, the group's history and information on tribal origins were handed down from the elders onto the younger generations. This oral tradition functioned as the crucial forming power which introduced the younger generations to the community's rituals, organizational information, political beliefs, but most importantly it helped to maintain unity, knowledge and sense of tribal identity through "creation stories." Not only did these creation stories help to acquaint the young generations with their origins, the sense of how to relate to the world around them, but they also precipitated the process of "establishing their relationship to their homelands."² As homelands are defined as "stable and permanent cultural and physical landscapes,"³ this allowed the Natives to identify with their environment they had inhabited, and in some cases, inhabit till the present.

Except for local variations, the New England tribes were culturally related. Algonquians were one of the most populous and widespread North American Native language groups, with tribes in hundreds. Although divided into several distinct tribes, the Algonquian tribes in New England shared a certain common heritage and all had at some earlier time migrated into the area, most probably from northwest. They spoke "eastern Algonquian"⁴, a fairly homogenous language which distinguished them from other Indian stocks, while at the same time it

² Hannes Palang and Gary Fry, *Landscape interfaces: Cultural Heritage in Changing Landscapes*, Mar. 12th 2008. <<http://www.jstor.org/pss/663814>>.

³ Palang and Fry, *Landscape interfaces: Cultural Heritage in Changing Landscape*

⁴ *Algonquin Culture and History*, 20 Jan. 2009. <http://www.native-languages.org/algonquin_culture.htm>.

allowed them to sustain a certain extent of communication between the New England tribes, at times, however, extremely “limited between its subdivisions.”⁵

3.2 Farming

Essentially all of “the New England tribes were stationary, inhabiting generally recognized tribal lands”⁶ which they occupied at different times. This migratory “calendar” was regulated by a whole range of environmental rhythms, kinship networks and ceremonial requirements. The Natives “shifted their dwelling sites several times each year in relation to the demands of the weather and sources of food.”⁷ A theory comes forward when one realizes that these periodic migrations must have been misread by inexperienced European observers upon seeing the Indians move out of their villages, and gathering from these observations that the Natives had no permanent abode. The reality, however, was quite the opposite, as the tribes, or family units, migrated within several of their abodes, each of which was fairly permanent.

Generally, Algonquian communities resided both in Southern as well as Northern New England. The Southern part, however, was more hospitable in terms of agriculture, owing to its “milder climate and thus larger concentration of Native people inhabited this area. The shorter growing season of Northern New England led its tribes to trade with groups down south to supplement their food supply.”⁸ They mostly subsisted on fish and game, supplemented by corn and other vegetables, which were in surplus, and which had been dried and stored in underground caches the previous autumn. In the summer, Indians moved to the seashore to enjoy the abundant seafood. Corn, however, seems to have been the fundamental element in the Natives’ diet. Like in other Native nations, it was “predominantly women who

⁵ *Algonquin Culture and History*, 20 Jan. 2009. <http://www.native-languages.org/algonquin_culture.htm>.

⁶ Vaughan 30.

⁷ Vaughan 30.

⁸ Vaughan 31.

slaved to cultivate the fields, as well as do the harvesting, preserving and preparing food.”⁹ Cultivation of land and fields in Southern New England was thus regarded as the major source of food, since “fish was commonly used to fertilize the fields in order to have little need for new farmland.”¹⁰ Traditionally, Algonquian community worked and divided responsibilities along age and gender lines. The women also helped to construct their homes and made many household accessories. The men hunted, made tools, fished and protected their communities. Even the children were involved, as a good deal of their work, such as “collecting nuts and berries and keeping the crows out of corn fields, and play revolved around activities that helped to develop their communal and physical skills they were going to need in their adult lives.”¹¹

3.3 Native American Political Organization

The Indian settlements were connected with each other by numerous trails and waterways, facilitating intricate and extensive trade networks. The New England fertile soil and plentiful game fostered a “prosperous Algonquian society that enjoyed a healthy economy and a fairly stable political structure.”¹² As for their political structure, the Algonquian communities were basically similar but “varied widely in particulars.”¹³ It is needless to say that the seventeenth century English observer was rather puzzled by their intricate political system. They were soon forced to recognize that their “earlier views of Indian neighbors and future trading partners were mistaken.”¹⁴ The sachemship was ordinarily divided into bands – groups of related families which owned a “particular portion of the tribal land by tradition and usage, and which lived in one or more villages in fairly close proximity.”¹⁵ Some dominant sachemships such as the Pequots naturally collected tribute from their weaker neighbors.

⁹ Vaughan 31.

¹⁰ Vaughan 31.

¹¹ Palang and Fry, *Landscape interfaces: Cultural Heritage in Changing Landscapes*

¹² Vaughan 32.

¹³ Vaughan 32.

¹⁴ Cave 37.

¹⁵ Vaughan 32.

However, Indian understanding of communal and intertribal bonds rested heavily on the concept of reciprocity.

The consequent receipt of tribute placed the dominant sachem under “obligation to protect tributaries from external enemies but, given the nonauthoritarian nature of Indian polity, did not seriously affect life in the subordinate villages.”¹⁶ Today’s evidence is suggestive of the fact that the office of sachem was “semi-hereditary and generally patrilineal.”¹⁷ Based on this, the Puritans perceived the Native communities as “essentially monarchical”¹⁹, usually having single ruler, whose authority rested “in part on family descent and in part of satisfying the leadership needs of his people.”²⁰ This was a certain aspect both Indian and English polities had in common. Such observations, however, were made by more perceptive observers, like Roger Williams, who noticed that: “the tribal leaders actually did not have the power to undertake anything unto which the people are adverse.”²¹ It is now recognized that the inhabitants were organized into a “large number of village-based kinship bands, each under the leadership of a sachem or sagamore.”²²

Chiefs were usually men, though on occasion, women succeeded to sachemships. Sachems were never really omnipotent; however, mostly the native chiefs enjoyed enough power to rule without democratic “pitfalls.” On occasion, the rights of hereditary succession were not observed, thus deeply confusing the English observers. It seems that personal qualities together with hereditary rights were combining factors in the selection, most probably with “less able direct heirs being displaced in favor of more capable relatives.”²³ It is believed that such revolts did in fact happen quite often and, due to this fact, the tribal affiliations and boundaries are thus impossible to reconstruct with accuracy. Below the chiefs

¹⁶ Cave 37.

¹⁷ Cave 38.

¹⁹ Vaughan 32.

²⁰ Vaughan 32.

²¹ Cave 37.

²² Cave 37.

²³ Cave 38.

were a variety of “subordinate officials: sub-sachems who ruled over subdivisions of the tribe, war captains, powwows (medicine men), and many others. The remaining members of the tribe were simply subjects, though below them were often servant-slaves who had been captured in war. Vaughan, pp.32”²⁴

Needless to say, seventeenth century English reports of Indian groups in New England contained a bewildering variety of tribal names. Most were not in fact tribal names or even sachemships. This may be accounted for by the Puritans’ tendency to designate tribes by names of “each river, village, or fish camp. Cave, pp. 38” The resulting multitude of imaginary Indian tribes was “most pronounced in the Connecticut River valley, Cave,pp.38,” a region crucial to the analysis of the origins of the Pequot War. Lately, ethnologists discarded most of the so-called tribes but generally listed some eight entities, which groups have been referred to as the “River Indians. Pp.38” Recent studies conclude that they can be better understood as “bands loosely related to one another through intermarriage and allied politically in loose and transitory alliances among village sachems. Cave, pp.38” Furthermore, it should be noted that some scholars have warned that New England Indian lore contains an “inseparable mixture of fact and romantic fiction. Cave 38” The romantic fiction elements are very often to be seen in popular characterizations of tribes as valiant freedom fighters opposing the “brutal and rapacious” Pequots. The best surmise of New England Indian population is somewhere around 25,000 in 1600. Those figures, however, represent populations before the “great plague” epidemic in 1616-17, when “at least a third of the natives succumbed to disease, leaving perhaps from 15,000 to 18,000 in all New England. Vaughan,pp.28” In comparison to other North American tribes to the south and west of New England, the native population of New England turns out to be relatively small and dispersed.

²⁴ Vaughan 32.

The largest tribes of the area were Abanaki, Massachusetts, Narragansetts, Wampanoag, Eastern and Western Niantics, Mohegans and, of course, the dominating Pequots.

4. The Pequots

4.1 Pequot Origins and Vilification

In order to get a good grasp of the underlying sources of the conflict, background information on the Pequot in Connecticut shall be provided, giving some figures pertaining to the tribe and its position within the Connecticut power politics. As for their presence in Connecticut, it is important to notice that “Native peoples have continuously occupied Southeastern Connecticut for over 10,000 years.”¹ The traditional apologist etymology of the tribal name, Pequot, holds that it comes from the Algonquin word “pekawatawog or pequottoog”², meaning “destroyers.” Initially, the English assessment of the Pequot character described them as courteous, affable and trustworthy, however, this description changed drastically in time prior to the conflict when the Pequots were vilified so as to provide pretext for making war on them. This vilification reached its peak some forty years after the Pequot War, when “Reverend William Hubbard declared that they exceeded all other New England Indians in ferocity.”³ This is partially understandable, even today if the Pequot origin and background, as well as the famous “invasion story” are taken into consideration. Little is known about the Pequot before their contact with Europeans. As a matter of fact, they have been described as the “most numerous, the most warlike, the fiercest and the bravest of all aboriginal clan of Connecticut.”⁴ Regarding their origin, most authorities have held that they were:

an offshoot of the Mohicans, an Algonquian group located
in the upper Hudson valley of New York. Pressure from

¹ *The Pequot War Aftermath*, 22nd Feb. 2007. <<http://www.pequotmuseum.org/SocietyCulture/AftermathofthePequotWar/>>.

² *Native Tribal Names*, 16 Oct. 2008. <<http://www.native-languages.org/wrongnames.htm>>.

³ Cave 40.

⁴ *Connecticut Native American Tribes*, Connecticut State Library, Feb.25th 2009.
<<http://www.cslib.org/tribes.htm/connecticutnativeamericantribes>>.

the Iroquois (the so called Iroquois confederation) in the late sixteenth century had presumably forced a number of Mohicans to abandon their homeland and migrate to the southeast, where they displaced some of the indigenous inhabitants of coastal Connecticut.⁵

Today, most of the archeological, linguistic and documentary evidence now available demonstrates that the Pequots did not invade New England on the eve of English settlement but instead were indigenous to the region. Obviously, the invasion story proves that such myth of Pequot invasion on the eve of founding Plymouth was a “fabrication intended to give added force to the demonic characterization of the Pequots.”⁶ Such claims have been made by virtue of scientific comparison of the surviving remnants of the Mohegan dialect in New York and Mohegan-Pequot in Connecticut, revealing that “beyond any reasonable doubt the two dialects were not closely related.”⁷ Linguistic evidence thus indicates that the Pequots were indigenous to the region. Additionally, not to base my claims entirely on linguistic evidence, even the available archeological data also suggests the Pequots were not newcomers to southern New England. Comparison of “potsherds disclosed that Mahican pottery cannot be ancestral to Pequot ware.”⁸ Furthermore, ethnohistorical evidence suggests that the invasion story fails to carry much weight. Most importantly, various cultural trait surveys of New England tribes have concluded that Pequots “did not differ from their neighbors in any significant way.”⁹

⁵ Cave 40.

⁶ Cave 41.

⁷ Cave 42.

⁸ Cave 42.

⁹ Cave 42.

4.2 The Pequots within the Local Power politics

Reports from Indian informants indicate that there were some “twenty-six Pequot sachems but that their power and influence varied.”¹⁰ At the time of their first contact with the Europeans, the Pequots occupied the coastal area between the Niantic River in Connecticut and the Wecapaug River in western Rhode Island. Like other native tribes in southern New England, they were an “agricultural tribe that depended on farming - raising corns, beans, squash and tobacco. In hunting they focused on fish and seafood for survival.”¹¹ However, in terms of power politics, the most conspicuous difference between the Pequots and other nearby tribes, such as the Narragansett, Nipmuc, and Mattabesic, rests in the fact that “the Pequot built heavily fortified villages. They were not essentially much larger than the tribes in their vicinity, but they were a highly organized tribe with a powerful grand sachem and tribal council.”¹² Their territory was most densely inhabited in all New England. What seems to be crucial regarding the Pequot tribe in particular is that:

by the 1630's, these qualities helped them establish a political and military dominance over other tribes in New England. By 1637 they had constructed two large fortified hilltop villages - at Weinshauks (seat of the great Sachem Sassacus) and Mystic (residence of two of their principle sachems). In addition to these strongholds, they built smaller villages nearby containing as many as thirty wigwams, occupying some few hundred acres of a quality

¹⁰ Cave 45.

¹¹ Cave 48.

¹² *Algonquin Culture and History*, 20 Jan. 2009, <http://www.native-languages.org/algonquin_culture.htm>.

fertile and cultivated land. As a result of constant intertribal warfare over an extended period, the central political power of the Pequot was an exception among the eastern Algonquin tribes.¹³

Algonquin tribes usually lived in peace with each other, and, as a result had little need of tribal organization beyond a few villages under a common sachem. The Pequot thus managed to dominate Connecticut before 1637, a pattern that was later continued by their recently seceded offshoot, the closely related Mohegan tribe. By the early 17th century, just prior to European contact, the Pequot had “approximately 16,000 members and inhabited 250 square miles, but disease had brought their numbers down to some 2,500 by 1637.”¹⁴ The first of the two major reasons behind such mortality was the ubiquitous great epidemic of 1616-19 which wiped out most of the tribe, approximately 90% of all the Native American inhabitants of the eastern coast of New England. The second came later, in 1633, when the small-pox epidemic devastated the remaining Pequots, sparing no one. Pequots thus suffered a “mortality rate estimated at around 80 %”¹⁵ just as the English were planning to expand into the Pequot territory. During the Pequot War, the first major conflict between colonists and an indigenous New England people, basically but a handful of remaining members of the tribe were eliminated.

As whole Indian tribes were decimated across the country, the newly-arrived Puritans believed that the epidemics were a gift sent from God, serving their purpose. Jonathan Winthrop wondered:

¹³ *Algonquin Culture and History*, 20 Jan. 2009, <http://www.native-languages.org/algonquin_culture.htm>.

¹⁴ *Algonquin Culture and History*, 20 Jan. 2009, <http://www.native-languages.org/algonquin_culture.htm>.

¹⁵ Cave 43.

If God were not pleased with our inheriting these parts, why did he drive out the natives before us? But for the natives in these parts, God hath so pursued them, as for 300 miles space the greatest part of them are swept away by smallpox which still continues among them. So as God hath thereby cleared our title to this place, those who remain in these parts, being in all not 50, have put themselves under our protection. And why doth he still make room for us, by diminishing them as we increase?”¹⁶

This caused a lot of distress with the once powerful Pequot; they found themselves threatened from all directions. Not only were they hit by disease, they were also facing new economic competition in the lucrative fur trade represented by Puritans streaming in in still greater numbers. Unlike the Mohegan and Mattabesic, the “Pequot were not welcoming the newcomers, and this alone was leading to an onset of various confrontations between the English and Pequot. For the Pequot, the land with its lucrative fur trade being taken away from them was as equally important as the ongoing loss of their control over subject tribes.”¹⁷ Over the last centuries, all Native Americans have struggled to retain and sustain their relationship with the land, which target turned out particularly difficult to achieve in the face of changing economic relations introduced by the Europeans. This resulted in rapidly changing political alliances, demographic catastrophe and ultimately, warfare. The shifting alliances among different nations, let alone cultures, led to a great deal of misunderstandings and long-lasting cultural conflicts of unforeseeable consequences.

¹⁶ Francis Jennings, *Goals and Functions of Puritan Missions to the Indians*, *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 18, No. 3. (Summer, 1971), pp. 197-212., Jan. 15th 2010. <<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0014-1801%28197122%2918%3A3%3C197%3AGAFOPM%3E2.0.CO%3B2-1>>.

¹⁷ *Pequot Indian History*, April 10th 2009. <<http://www.accessgenealogy.com/native/tribes/algonquian/pequothist.htm>>.

4. The Puritan Settlement

Although the first Puritan settlers did not arrive in New England until 1620, encounters between early explorers and natives were certain to affect the eventual relationships of the English colonists and their American Indian neighbors. Some background data on the arrival of Puritans is in order, so as to be able to further develop on the nature of the conflict through examining their initial encounters. Needless to say, the arrival of European settlers, in Southern New England in particular, had a tremendous impact on Native American communities. In general, the settlement of New England could be attributed to the push-and-pull migratory factors, both of which should be considered significant. Unlike the mostly male crews of fortune seekers and laborers that landed in Virginia, the Puritans who founded Plymouth Colony came as whole families seeking to settle permanently in communities. They came to America determined to create a "City upon the Hill," a utopian concept where individuals would work in common struggle to serve God's will. There were "roughly thirteen thousand Pequot occupying the territory between the Niantic River in Connecticut and the Wecapaug River in Rhode Island."¹ Up until "1629 there were no more than 300 Puritans in New England,"² more or less scattered in small and isolated settlements.

Practically speaking, the better part of the early Puritan colonists who arrived in the Connecticut River Valley in the early 17th century lacked basic survival skills in the wilderness and they therefore quickly learned the benefits and necessities of trade and a certain state of "co-existence" with the Pequots and other native groups. What is more, they also had to learn how to plant corn and survive in their new environment, since the planting techniques used in England didn't adapt well to the American ecosystem. Such patterns of

¹ *Massacre at Mystic*, Oct. 11th 2008.

<[http://www.randomhouse.com/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780739333358&view=excerpt/massacre at mystic](http://www.randomhouse.com/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780739333358&view=excerpt/massacre+at+mystic)>.

² Terye Gonzales, *Learn About Thanksgiving*, April 15th 2007. <<http://www.meyna.com/thanksg.html>>.

interaction, almost of co-existent nature, may also be seen on the infamous case of the Pilgrims in Plymouth Colony, where a devastating harsh winter reduced the number of settlers by half. With the invaluable help from "Squanto, also known as Tisquantum,"³ the Pilgrims managed to plant corn, wheat, and barley in the spring of 1621. By fall, realizing that their first harvest of corn and barley would be plentiful, "Governor William Bradford declared a day of thanksgiving."⁴ These were the Pilgrim Fathers that the Indians "saved", and who are these days celebrated in the Thanksgiving holiday.

The Pilgrim's survival triggered a whole new wave of Puritan invasion, and as more and more Puritans disembarked in America, their settlements expanded farther west and south, inevitably bringing the white man into an ever more intimate contact with their indigenous neighbors. The second major group of Puritans to seek haven in New England arrived in 1630. With this influx of settlers a new phase of Indian affairs started. By this time, some of the colony's points of Indian policy must have already taken on some distinct form. The great migration of 1630 led to reshaping of old Indian policies. "This time, the conduct in Indian affairs shared less with the original planning and developed on the pragmatic experience."⁵ As more settlers moved to the colonies and built up houses and towns, they even shipped in their cattle and set up fences for pasture lands. Setting up fences was a physical expression of claiming land and that is exactly where one of the crucial Puritan cultural incompatibilities manifested itself. Gradually, the Indians came to resent the colonists who were claiming their land, driving away their wild game, and bringing in cattle that trampled their corn crops.

³ *Sail1620*, April 13th 2007.

<http://www.sail1620.org/discover_feature_thanksgiving_on_the_net_roast_bull_with_cranberry_sauce_part_2.shtml>.

⁴ *Sail1620*

⁵ Vaughan 45.

5.1 Ownership of Land

The seventeenth century Anglo-Indian community took on a very dynamic course as both Indians and English sought to enter a more or less stable and understandable system for coexistence. The process of assimilation on both parts was complex and its extent varied greatly. However, it was left mainly to the Indian to grope his way through the English concept of landownership which was unconditionally imposed on him. In this respect, land ownership has proved to be a very peculiar issue, as it has often been described by Puritan apologists as one of the most persistent myths of Puritan settlement. The first concept states that the colonists were robbing the Native of his land, either by seizing it outright or by purchasing it in return for a handful of worthless trinkets. It should be noted here, however, that even revisionist scholars have to a certain degree reviewed this notion. The second concept holds that while the Indian willingly sold his land to the white man, he had no clear understanding of the implications such transaction had, especially because of his peculiar concept of land tenure – they simply claimed that “he had meant only to sell a share in the use of land, not to part with it forever.”⁶ Furthermore, it cannot be denied that Puritans refused to recognize the legitimacy of Indian claims to hunting grounds or to uncultivated land and yet, upon their arrival, one of their major concerns was the issue of “who legally owned all the fertile land.”⁷

As for settlement of Southern New England itself, and Connecticut in particular, it was “within four years of the establishment of Massachusetts Bay that the Puritans had already settled in what would become the colony of Connecticut.”⁸ By a stroke of luck similar to which the Pilgrims settled at Plymouth, the colonists of New England Company established their Puritan communities in an area almost void of Natives, since, in the meantime, the

⁶ Cave 105.

⁷ Vaughan 100.

⁸ *Sail1620*, April 13th 2007.

<http://www.sail1620.org/discover_feature_thanksgiving_on_the_net_roast_bull_with_cranberry_sauce_part_2.shtml>.

epidemic of smallpox had killed off literally thousands of Indians so that they had shrunk in number as rapidly as the white man multiplied. Besides revealing divine will to the Puritans, the epidemic also helped to solve the practical problems of their expansionism – which, however, is not to say that when they came to New England they were coming to a territory uninhabited by indigenous peoples.

In his third edition of New England Frontier, Alden T. Vaughan argues that despite the fact that the Puritans had a particular way of farming, based on individual and not communal or tribal ownership and that frequent land ownership disputes had to be clarified, the disparity between English and Indian concepts of land tenure seems rather slight. Contemporary anthropological studies reveal that most, perhaps all, of the New England tribes practiced a certain form of “definite land ownership in the allotment of territory for residence and planting,”⁹ and that ownership rested on the “individual, the family, or some larger unit.”¹⁰ Furthermore, the studies also hold that there has been no instance of a “New England tribe that considered all land common property, or of several tribes sharing the ownership of any land.”¹¹ Much like a European monarch, the Indian sachem had general authority over all the lands of his subjects, yet the individual tribesmen held property under ancient rights of custom and possession.

Roger Williams wrote that “the Natives are very exact and punctuall in the bounds of their Lands, belonging to this or that Prince or People. And I have knowne them make bargaine and sale amongst themselves for a small piece, or quantity of Ground.”¹² Undoubtedly, the rights of ownership were based on oral agreements which apparently left open door for potential conflicts. There were “frequent cases of multiple claim during which

⁹ Vaughan 106.

¹⁰ Vaughan 106.

¹¹ Vaughan 107.

¹² Cave 105.

the Puritan purchaser had to make satisfaction to several Indian claimants – either they may have been taking advantage of the white man or the dispute resulted simply from the Indians’ lack of written record of land holdings.”¹³ It is thus reasonable to assume that such situations must have arisen particularly in areas where the great plague epidemic swept the owner off the face of the Earth.

For the Native, a certain element held a specific appeal in the sale of land to the colonist – this was the knowledge that he could retain almost full use of the property he sold. In general, the transfer of land was an important part of land ownership. Practically speaking, for instance Massachusetts government made it “its priority to impose rather strict requirements to protect Indian land ownership, in order to avoid conflict, as the legal transaction would help promote peaceful relations.”¹⁴ between Indians and Englishmen. The General Court worked consistently to ensure that both parties’ interests were protected. The sale had to be reviewed by a committee appointed by the court and one or two important Indian chiefs had to be present.

Last but not least, all sales had to be approved and recorded by the General Court. Those who failed to gain the Court's approval before buying Indian lands were “liable to imprisonment.”¹⁵ The Natives also showed a good deal of ingenuity, clearly motivated by not longing to be taken advantage of. Over the course of the seventeenth century, they “adopted some English legal language and methods, which allowed them to secure their own title to lands within New England. They used the Massachusetts courts to protect, transfer and at times even regain their land.”¹⁶

¹³ Vaughan 106.

¹⁴ Christopher W. Hannan, *Indian Land in Seventeenth Century Massachusetts*, Historical Journal of Massachusetts, Summer 2001, 11 Jan. 2008 <[http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3837/is_200107/ai_n8959860/Indian land in seventeenth century Massachusetts](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3837/is_200107/ai_n8959860/Indian%20land%20in%20seventeenth%20century%20Massachusetts)>.

¹⁵ Vaughan 110.

¹⁶ Hannan, *Indian Land in Seventeenth Century Massachusetts*

The legal implications of such land transactions, of course, were that the land no longer belonged to the Indian, but the vast amount of “land deeds that have survived the ravages of three centuries show unmistakably that the vender usually retained full rights of hunting, fishing, and sometimes even planting.”¹⁷ There seems to be a touch of a mutually beneficial back-scratching arrangement in this, as the colonist was not much of a hunter himself - he raised cattle, sheep, swine and fowl and when he felt like having venison or wild turkey, or venison, he would often go to the Indian and buy it off him. More importantly, the colonists would frequently acquire the “precious beaver skins that were a very important item in New England’s early economy.”¹⁸ Even if the deed did not include the right to hunt, common law did. This is yet another aspect of the far-reaching Puritan heritage that can be found in today’s U.S. – the principle of public’s right to hunt on unfenced land.

5.2 Puritan Justification for Occupying the Soil of New England

The Puritan justification for occupying the land of New England has often been identified with several key themes permeating through the 19th century concept of Manifest Destiny. Over the years, of course, the concept has been charged with a variety of meanings, with its dominant power eventually resting in its ambiguity. However, its most significant theme, the one of American Exceptionalism, was frequently traced to America’s Puritan heritage, with particular link to John Winthrop’s concept of the “City Upon a Hill.” It could be stated that this concept, somewhat adapted though, is best represented in the famous painting by John Gast, called “American Progress,” which is widely-considered to be an apt allegorical depiction of Manifest Destiny. In the painting, wild animals as well as Native Americans are portrayed fleeing from the expanding white man, in whose lead is the figure

¹⁷ Vaughan 108.

¹⁸ Vaughan 108.

of Columbia, the feminine personification of the U.S. itself, together with its efforts to spread its virtuous and civilized institutions.

In retrospect, Manifest Destiny draws on its Puritan heritage of establishing a community that would become a shining example to the world they were fleeing from. Later, of course, it was emphasized by the notion of Divine destiny to accomplish this task. The original Puritan mission to spread the only true religion among the savages was later metamorphosed by Manifest Destiny into a broader concept of spreading the to-be-desired virtuous institutions of the U.S. Furthermore, the concept of Manifest Destiny is mostly believed to have originated in the Puritan zealous ardor to seek their territorial destiny. In this respect, I find it necessary that another frequently discussed topic - the one of Puritan land lust - be addressed. The famous Puritan contemporary, Roger Williams, founder of a freethinking community of New Rhode Island and one of the most respectable Indian chroniclers banished from Massachusetts for his “radically enlightened” notion of Christianity, provided a critical statement that pins a tag of absurdity for the infamous land lust onto Puritans in the following passage:

A depraved appetite after the great vanities, dreams and shadows of this vanishing life, great portions of land, land in this wilderness, as if men were in as great necessity and danger for want of great portions of land, as poor, hungry, thirsty seamen have, after a sick and stormy, a long and starving passage. This is one of the gods of New England,

which the living and most high Eternal will destroy and famish.¹⁹

In order to justify this “depraved appetite” for land, it was crucial that the Puritans, despite the fact that they may have been observing the niceties of purchase - even legally speaking - still should have three separate theoretical justifications for occupying the land of New England at their disposal. For colonists who questioned the righteousness of establishing colonies in the New World, “Patent and Possession were of equal importance and stature with Purchase.”²⁰ To put it bluntly, the right of patent was simply the right that derived from discovery – which was essentially a concept based on one attitude prevalent in the 17th century, following a line of thought that “any people of the Christian faith had the Divine Right to land which was occupied by savages who worship false gods.”²¹ Needless to say, this was not entirely Puritan concept, but rather a prevailing European one. From this perspective, the most significant difference in understanding the concept of ownership of land is represented by a conflict between the Puritan idea of an individual right to own the land and the Indian idea of a right to use the land. The Pequots did not believe in ownership of land; what they did was they utilized the land, lived on and off it. The Puritans, however, had both religious as well as secular justifications at hand for taking possession of the Indian land. Winthrop showed great skill in calling upon the authority of the Old Testament, as may be demonstrated in the following passage:

Why may not Christians have liberty to go and dwell among them in their wastelands and woods (leaving them

¹⁹ Judith Barbour, *Alibis of Vineland: English Mobility in the Textual Zone*, 2nd Mar. 2008, <http://www.anu.edu.au/hrc/conferences/conference_archive/1998/romabs.php>.

²⁰ Vaughan 109.

²¹ Joseph A. Montagna, *History of Connecticut Through 1690*, Jan. 20th 2009. <<http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1978/4/78.04.02.x.html>>.

such places as they have manured for their corn) as lawfully as Abraham did among Sodomites?²²

Furthermore, Winthrop's secular justification ran along the following lines which charged it with a secular, legalistic argumentation in support of the land claim the Puritans wished to make when he stated that the:

natural right of hunter-gatherers to use of the land was immediately superseded whenever more advanced peoples asserted their civil right to improve the land for the raising of crops and the domestication of livestock.²³

The above quote established that "all good Puritans" knew that in the book of Genesis God wanted His people to be "fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it."²⁴ Bearing this notion in his mind, Massachusetts Governor Winthrop thus created a legal concept called "vacuum domicilium"²⁵ and declared that the Indians had not "subdued" the land, as they have not, according to "the Principle in Nature, taketh possession of a vacant soyle, and bestoweth culture and husbandry upon it."²⁶ This alone sufficed to draw a simple conclusion that all uncultivated lands should, according to English Common Law, be considered a certain "public domain." Winthrop further argued as follows:

As for the Natives in New England, they inclose noe Land, neither have any settled habytation, nor any tame Cattle to

²² Cave 35.

²³ Cave 35.

²⁴ David Grayson Allen, *Vacuum Domicilium: The Social and Cultural Landscape of Seventeenth Century New England*, Nov. 10th 2009. <http://www.americancenturies.mass.edu/classroom/curriculum_12th/unit1/lesson2/allen.html>.

²⁵ Allen, *Vacuum Domicilium: The Social and Cultural Landscape of Seventeenth Century New England*

²⁶ Allen, *Vacuum Domicilium: The Social and Cultural Landscape of Seventeenth Century New England*

improve the Land by, and soe have noe other but a Naturall Right to those Countries, soe as if we leave them sufficient for their use, we may lawfully take the rest, there being more than enough for them and us.²⁷

This notion alone would suggest an open invitation to drive the Indian away from any land they might desire. Some Puritans though, for instance Roger Williams to whom neither vacuum domicilium nor King's patent had any value but for whom only purchase justified occupation, argued that the land belonged to the Indians and strongly disagreed with the Puritan way of making claim to foreign lands. In his Key into the Language of America he rejected the "sinfull opinion amongst many that Christians have a right to Heathen Lands."²⁸ and he sneered at the "sinne of Pattents wherein Christian Kings are invested with the Right by virtue of their Christianitie, to take and give away the Lands and Countries of other men."²⁹ To top his disagreements with Puritan authorities off, he did not hesitate to argue that:

since the Indians hunted all the country over, and for the expedition of their hunting voyages...burnt up all the underwoods in the country, they had lawful title to all of New England. Finally, the forests of New England could best be compared to the great Parkes of Noble men and to the King's great Forrests in England. No man thus might lawfully invade their propriety.³⁰

²⁷ Steven M. Gillon, *10 Days That Unexpectedly Changed America*, May 11th 2007.

<<http://www.randomhouse.com/crown/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780307339348&view=excerpt>>.

²⁸ Jack L. Davis, *Roger Williams Among the Narragansett Indians*, May 13th 2007. <<http://www.jstor.org/pss/363134>>.

²⁹ Blake A. Watson, *John Marshall and Indian Land Rights: A Historical Rejoinder to the Claim of "Universal Recognition" of the Doctrine of Discovery*, Mar. 3rd 2009. <<https://litigation-essentials.lexisnexis.com/webcd/app?action=DocumentDisplay&crawlid=1&doctype=cite&docid=36+Seton+Hall+L.+Rev.+481&srctype=smi&srcid=3B15&key=324618d99f8f5ecaaccdfabd4333a6d>>.

³⁰ Cave 36.

Undoubtedly, such unorthodox attitude toward Indian land earned Williams wrath of the Puritan authorities, which later turned out to be a significant factor in his banishment from the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Though scarce, other voices of dissent followed suit and voiced their complaints.

If considered from broader perspective, however, on the one hand, the concept itself may reveal the Puritans as hypocrites. On the other, if the *vacuum domicilium* as a concept was stripped of its religious rhetoric, it would come very close to the justifications spread across most of all the other European imperial nations. Thus, if narrowed down, the practice of Puritan authorities was intended to meet the Biblical justifications for the acquisition of the first foothold in order to fulfill their beliefs. While the Algonquian tribal holdings were mostly permanent, certain areas remained abandoned by their owners – these were the regions which could be claimed by the colonists. In practice then, *vacuum domicilium* allowed the occupation of deserted land, for which “payment might be made should any native subsequently claim ownership.”³¹ It may have happened that a sudden appearance of a claimant had to be settled, however, it must have been a pleasant experience for the Natives of New England to get paid for land they had not intended to use. It was Plymouth Colony which set a certain settlement pattern that was later followed by Massachusetts Bay and its offshoots. As a result, with the colony’s continual growth, the Puritans aimed to lay claim to more land owned by the Indians.

Besides bringing their families along, the Puritans also brought their intolerant values, almost ethnocentric views, and orthodox religious doctrine, marked by strong missionary impulse. "The principall ende of this plantacion," their charter stated, was to "wynn and incite the natives of [the] country, to the knowledge and obedience of the onlie true God and Savior

³¹ Vaughan 112.

of mankind, and the Christian faith.”³² The Bay Colony’s official seal reflected this notion, as it depicted an Indian saying “Come over and help us.” Puritans, in their “enthusiasm” to keep their religion “pure,” were extremely severe in punishment of anyone who would oppose them, even among their own followers. Needless to say, Massachusetts Bay, for instance, developed a centralized system of land distribution within five years of its founding, whose restrictions imposed by the Puritan authorities on individual land purchase without the Court’s permission promised a minimum of friction and potential disputes with their Indian neighbors. However, this turned out to be greatly different in territories where the colonists found Natives eager to make friends with the white man as their aid against traditional enemies. In Connecticut, the tribes perceived the expanding English settlements as a potential counterforce to the Pequot hegemony. The English settlement thus saw encouragement on part of some of the tribes in the Connecticut valley. Without realizing it, however, the very presence of the colonists introduced territorial power struggles among the natives.

Additionally, the new land was understood as an untamed wilderness and the Puritans felt that their “assigned” job was to “subdue the wilderness for the glory of their God” and transform this dismal wilderness into an earthly paradise. And naturally, as the God's "Chosen People" they felt themselves more than entitled to the land occupied by Native tribes. Needless to say, landholding concepts differed and changed dramatically in the course of time – with progressively increasing land speculation eventually leading to King Philip’s War, for example.

5.3 Puritan Misperceptions and Preconceptions about the New World

In order to get a certain grasp of the underlying aspects of the cultural conflict which was inevitable to spring from the Puritan and Indian encounters, the Puritan state of mind

³² *The 1629 Charter Of Massachusetts Bay*, 26 Mar. 2007. <<http://www.law.ou.edu/ushistory/massbay.shtml>>.

should be examined, since the assessments and preconceptions the colonists might have formed about the New World drove to great extent their future policy towards the Natives. It deserves notice that the figures of settlers coming to the New World to spread Gospel among the Natives were insignificant. The Puritans were coming to the New World equipped with all sorts of anticipations - mostly, however, they were personal fears and anxieties, religious prejudices, romantic visions and determination, all driven by push-and-pull migratory factors. Having arrived in their new environment, they must have found themselves in competition with the Indians for local natural resources. Most Puritans viewed Indians as dangerous, temporary obstacles to their permanent settlement in New England - and not in the least potential partners in the development of a new society - because they borrowed a rhetoric and imagery of the Old Testament, drawing parallels between the Scripture and their everyday acts, consciously modeling themselves on the "Chosen People" concept as they followed God's divine call to "smite the Canaanites and drive them from the Promised Land."³³ Reflecting these beliefs, for instance, today there are towns of Canaan and of New Canaan in Connecticut, standing as reminders of this Puritan conviction. They regarded America as the Promised Land, the land of Canaan. They referred to it as a "City upon the Hill." They were obsessed by total conviction of their right to this new land. What I think was setting spark to partially justifying the Puritan "land lust", were the values and conviction along with their obsessive emphasis on the struggle between good and evil in the wilderness.

5.4 Puritan Concept of Wilderness

There are two sides to every coin, and thus this English "retaliation" for Pequot hostilities offers both an exploration of consequences of a cultural clash as well as a conflict of interests. Not only should the formative years of their contact be considered important to

³³ Peter Toon, *The Pilgrim's Faith*, 3 May 2009.
<http://www.anglicanbooksrevitalized.us/Peter_Toons_Books_Online/History/pilgrimsfaith.htm>.

understanding the disparities in their cultural value systems, but, what is more, they also must be placed in the context of Puritan assumptions about intercultural encounters in the wilderness. The theme of wilderness in the Puritan society was open to various interpretations, one of which would often employ the concept of a dark forest as a symbol of evil, which may be seen reflected in Nathaniel Hawthorne's work, his short story *Young Good Man Brown* or his novel *The Scarlet Letter*, for instance. Quite interestingly, this notion underwent a certain inversion in the 19th century, when the wilderness was perceived as something to be desired rather than avoided. Most importantly, the preconceptions and images of wilderness brought to the New World by the early colonists were deeply influenced by the religious dogma that had been a dominant force in the European society for generations. George H. Stankey states that:

Because wilderness holds a variety of culturally imbued meanings, it is necessary to understand its cultural origins. The Judeo-Christian origins of western society generally are credited with portraying wilderness as a synonym for desolate, wild, and uninhabited lands manifesting God's displeasure. But wilderness also served an important function in Christianity as a place where one could prepare for contact with God. Such contrasting perspectives created an ambivalence that still prevails. Yet despite the ambivalence, early European and North American societies perceived wilderness as a threat.³⁴

³⁴ George H. Stankey, *Beyond the Campfire's Light: Historical Roots of the Wilderness Concept*, 19.8.2006. <<http://leopold.wilderness.net/pubs/212.pdf>>.

In many ways, their worst fears materialized when these early colonists came in physical contact with the wilderness itself. Its vastness must have been beyond anything they had ever imagined. The tiny remnants of wilderness in Europe were basically but a few patches, limited to valleys, for example. In the New World, however, it stretched on endlessly. The vastness of space in America must have easily evoked in the Puritan the idea that there was more to it than met the eye. The American wilderness as a place harboring anti-Christian forces thus necessarily corresponded with mental constructs fabricated over generations in Europe.

The second dimension of wilderness as an environment representing a certain “barrier was its capacity to lead man to succumb to the wilderness of his surroundings.”³⁵ Quite ironically, although the Puritans, as well as many European immigrants, had arrived in America to escape their homelands, the immense wilderness of the New World could be perceived as yet another extreme. Additionally, another anxiety that entered and lingered in their hearts should be taken into consideration – unless they were constantly cautious, the thin boundary between the “savage and the civilized” could be trespassed and the “trespassers” would be reduced to a savage condition, thus embracing Indian vices, such as “sloth, self-indulgence, deceit, blasphemy, devil worship, and concupiscence.”³⁶

Such shift would represent a threat to their religious and cultural values; however, on the other hand it also provided the settlers with a defined role as the preservers of the “true and only civilization.” They took it as their duty and responsibility, while employing clearly ethnocentric views, that the “principall ende of this plantacion,”³⁷ as their charter stated, was to “wynn and incite the natives of [the] country, to the knowledge and obedience of the onlie

³⁵ Stankey, *Beyond the Campfire's Light: Historical Roots of the Wilderness Concept*

³⁶ Cave 20.

³⁷ *The 1629 Charter Of Massachusetts Bay*, Mar. 26th 2007. <<http://www.law.ou.edu/ushistory/massbay.shtml>>

true God and Savior of mankinde, and the Christian fayth.”³⁸ This was a difficult task, since the New World literature available to Puritans often depicted Indians as “cruel savages given to diabolical practices.”³⁹ Many writings of the early settlers therefore reveal that their authors were troubled by premonitions of violent death at the hands of these savage people, these devil worshippers, occupying this wilderness, this place of darkness and peril to the soul. There were even voices who called for “extermination of Indians who would prove resistant to English efforts to civilize and Christianize them.”⁴⁰ This willingness to assume the role of instrument of God’s wrath suggests that heathenism alone would suffice to justify extermination.

On the other hand, the presence of wilderness was for Puritans to a certain extent essential to a successful accomplishment of their mission. It was basically an ideal place of testing their faith, since the evil inherent in the wilderness was a crucible they had to overcome in order to prove worthy of being the “Chosen People.” As successors to the Israelites in God’s special favor - apart from being frequently tested - they could “also expect to be frequently chastised.”⁴¹ Alfred Cave further states that the “inner logic Puritan ideology required that the Saint be besieged in this world, and Indians could play the role of foes of God’s own people quite admirably.”⁴² If taken further, or even fetched a little too far, some scholars believe that the Puritans were seeking “to create new enemies, in the absence of the opposition and persecution they had faced in England.”⁴³ Psychologically speaking though, this notion does not necessarily have to be flawed if victimizing the Indians would mean taking out ones frustration on somebody else, as a way to avoid being the Other like back in Europe.

³⁸ *The 1629 Charter Of Massachusetts Bay*

³⁹ Cave 16.

⁴⁰ Cave 21.

⁴¹ Cave 19.

⁴² Cave 19.

⁴³ Cave 19.

Sadly enough, even upon their first encounters and within the initial contact, as well as after it, the Indian still remained savage in the eyes of the Puritan, therefore it is suggestive that the concept of savagery was essential in the Puritan definition of their errand into the wilderness. Although upon receiving aid from Powhatan and his people, the hapless Jamestown settlers “explained away the Indians’ generosity by claiming that the Almighty had intervened to soften their hearts, as charity was alien to savage nature.”⁴⁴ Captain John Smith further voiced his concerns that the security of the English colonies in North America “cannot be based on goodwill but must instead be maintained by force.”⁴⁵ The sense of danger thus persisted long after the founding of the colonies, as it was rooted deep down in their religious anxieties whose fertile breeding ground rested in subjective fear rather than objective observation or actual experience.

Another interpretation could be that the Puritan initial experience of the indigenous inhabitant of New England had little impact on reevaluation of their concept of savagery. This could be rooted in the notion that they basically had no other choice but to stay insensitive to ambiguities and contradictions in the unexpected patterns in intercultural interaction which did not fit their preconceptions. This behavior helped them to save their face, while seeing the Indian in other terms would have threatened the foundations of an intricate but potentially vulnerable ideological structure. Puritan mind was thus either easily manipulated or highly selective and accordingly the recorded history has been proved to be embellished by half-truths.

⁴⁴ Cave 15.

⁴⁵ Cave 15.

6. Puritan Misperceptions and Misreceptions of the Indian

6.1 Puritan Missionary Efforts

It is reasonable to conclude that on the whole Puritan-Indian relations were largely determined by the theological structure of the two conflicting cultures. Indigenous cultures, seemingly uncivilized, presented a major obstacle to the Puritan idea of conversion and salvation. Due to the Puritan view of the Indian culture as something entirely separated and devoid of God and his grace, the Puritan saw no way of possibly negotiating religious middle ground. This can be inferred from the fact that Puritan missionary activities were definitely a means of testing the cohesion of the Puritan social and theological rhetoric, given the fundamental need to identify themselves as a body distinct from the Other. Not surprisingly then, the Puritan mission to the Indian eventually proved a failure. Despite pre-settlement missionary visions of living in peace and harmony with the Indians, Puritan ethnocentrism turned out to have very little respect and tolerance for cultural diversity. They were simply hoping to impose their cultural values on the Natives. Additionally, a more careful examination of the recorded data suggests “that, apart from religious aims, political and economic motives clearly underlay Puritan missionary activities.”¹ This aspect of Puritanism should be regarded as one of the significant causes of the hostilities which led up to the Pequot War, due to the “resultant disaffection with the Puritans on the part of many New England Indians which jeopardized English expansion in some areas for more than a century.”²

Upon their arrival, the Puritans, for many practical reasons though, failed to pursue the mission stated in the royal patent, which was to “wynn and incite the Natives of the Country,

¹ Jennings, *Goals and Functions of Puritan Missions to the Indians*

² Jennings, *Goals and Functions of Puritan Missions to the Indians*

to the Knowledge and Obedience of the onlie true God and Savior of Mankinde, and the Christian Fayth.”³ Obviously, there were other factors which slowed down missionary efforts, since the Puritans were preoccupied with other matters. Practically speaking, there was not much missionary work until fairly late after their settlement, also due to the great plague which reduced Native population and therefore the conversion - or cultural assimilation to be more accurate - of the Indian could be easily ignored, at least for some time. Indians would become one of the glories of the new Zion, that is to say, their conversion would. This can be demonstrated on the following passage, stating that “most seventeenth century Englishmen, whether Puritan or not, ranked conversion of the natives among the major justifications for establishing American colonies.”⁴ However, the truth is, that the process of conversion through missionary activities turned out to be far from the most important concerns as they arrived, since survival in the New World environment proved the biggest, as well as long-run, distraction to spreading the Gospel among the Natives.

Apart from language barrier and financial distress rooted in the lack of funding from England to allow the missionary activities, the obstacles the settlers had to face were partly inherent in the native cultural values and, of course, partly inherent in the Puritan theology itself. Turning a blind eye on their environment together with its Indian cultural identity was the one significant factor which heavily jeopardized the Puritan efforts to spread the Gospel, earning them more and more enemies, due to the power struggles their presence introduced into the Indian communities in New England. On the other hand, their missionary efforts must have been aided by such circumstances as having superior weapons, tools etc., of which not only the Europeans themselves must have been aware. This fact is suggestive enough (which fact can even be supported by recorded material) that there is no doubt that the English

³ *Indian Settlements in eastern North America: Indians and Puritans*, 20 Feb. 2006. <<http://iweb.tntech.edu/kosburn/History-201/Puritans%20&%20Indians.htm>>.

⁴ Vaughan 235.

colonists looked down on the Indian as culturally inferior, which “imperfection”, however, could be overcome only by exposing the Natives to the indisputable benefits of European civilization. The concept of melting pot, however, did not include full cultural assimilation of the indigenous people, as the Puritans still would not give them equal treatment, although they even attempted to provide the Indian with education from the very start of colonization. The education project, meant to introduce the Indian to the ability to read in order to convert as many as possible, however, later on metamorphosed into the infamous Native American boarding school program, thus reflecting the very nature of the settlers’ cultural imperialism. To further support this notion, the fact that on the eve of the settlement the contemporary Native American “could by no means enjoy the same privileges in law suits/transl.”⁵ is supportive of this.

Puritans, to be sure, shared most of the contemporary prejudices and ignorances concerning the New World. Such poor cultural competence, when confronted with cultural differences, enhanced their misperceptions of the Indian. Thus it can be said that the Puritan attempt to bring the Indians of New England to Christianity proved to be one of the biggest contradictions in their mission. And even if the Puritans had to face many practical difficulties, they simply could not reevaluate their opinion of the indigenous peoples and avoid living in fear of Satan standing in their doorways and trying to wrench their souls from God’s grace. This did not stop them from wanting to impose their theocratic rule firmly over the inhabitants in their area, as they felt justified in all their deeds, even the evil ones, because the notion of being the “Chosen people” provided them with pretext to fight the supposed “red savage devils” and “agents of Satan.” Needless to say, the Puritans did not follow a clear-cut Indian policy during the colonization, largely because they did not think of the Indian as a race apart, that is, in the modern sense of the term “race.” Records reveal that it is

⁵ Svatava Raková, *Dobrodruzi, puritáni a Indiáni. Angličané v Novém světě*. (Praha: Nakladatelství Libri, 1998) 259.

more than likely that the early settlers were convinced that the Indian was a white man, darkened by the weather and skin dyes, on top of which the Puritans “strongly suspected that the Natives were descended from the ten lost tribes of Israel.”⁶ Thus the Puritans attributed the Indians’ debasement primarily to the environment or the presence of Devil in the wilderness. William Bradford wrote in 1642:

But one reason may be that the Devil may carry a greater spite against the churches of Christ and the gospel here,....I would rather think thus, than that Satan hath more power in these heathen lands, as some have thought, than in Christian nations, especially over God’s servants in them.⁷

In order to be admitted as a communicant, the Puritans would ask of the Indian, besides regular church attendance, “full church membership, the heart of which was the conversion experience.”⁸ Conversion experience actually required “deep knowledge of the Bible and a full awareness of the Puritan creed.”⁹ No Indian was likely to meet these requirements without first being able to read English, which would mean a prolonged pains to be put into the effort. It was not until “1663 that John Eliot published first Algonquian edition”¹⁰ of the Bible; this represented a bigger guarantee of exposing the Natives to the Gospel, as it charged the Puritan missionary activities with much more seriousness and, more importantly, it also allowed to expand the target audience. Apart from conversion, social assimilation on part of the Indian would obviously be demanded for good measure. In accordance with Puritan regulations, “polygamy, fornication, blasphemy, idolatry and other unacceptable aspects of

⁶ Vaughan 10.

⁷ Noam Rudnick, *The Pilgrims: Children of the Devil*, The Yale Herald, 3 Apr. 2009, <<http://www.angelfire.com/co/COMMONSENSE/lenape.html>>.

⁸ Vaughan 237.

⁹ Vaughan 237.

¹⁰ Vaughan 237.

Indian culture (some misconceptions, preconceptions) would have to be repudiated.”¹¹ If considered from broader perspective, such enormous demands on the Indian should be perceived equal to an imposed cultural assimilation. The way of melting pot must have proved a great challenge to the potential converts, as they were basically asked to abandon their cultural patterns, acquired over many generations. In between the lines it implied acceptance of cultural patterns essentially alien to their experience.

Last but not least, the strong conviction that Indian religious practitioners were in league with the devil and that the New England Indians were the devil’s slaves “persisted throughout the seventeenth century.”¹² Such views were one of the many inevitable aspects of perpetuation of Puritan preconceptions, often achieved through “erroneous interpretations of Indian initiation rites,”¹³ for instance. Even Roger Williams, whose sympathy and undying affection for his Indian neighbors and trade partners was extraordinary, and whose *Key into the Language of America* undeniably contained some very important insights, declared that the “Indian priests were no other than our English witches.”¹⁴ The passage is clearly suggestive either of “Puritan misapplication of Judeo-Christian concepts to the understanding of Native American spirituality”¹⁵ or of the Puritan inherent inclinations towards misjudgments and misreading of Indian customs, since attaining full and flawless comprehension of the customs would threaten their religious authority over the culturally inferior “red savage devil worshippers”, whose religion was in the eye of the white man inconceivably amorphous.

¹¹ Vaughan 238.

¹² Cave 23.

¹³ Cave 22.

¹⁴ Cave 24.

¹⁵ Cave 24.

Since both Puritans and Indians saw the hand of God (or one of their many deity, since Indian spirituality was “not grounded in belief in the divine Providence”¹⁶ of an omnipotent creator) in everyday occurrences, the Puritans’ strong conviction of their religious superiority obviously made them conclude that the Indian’s survival “relied” on adoption of their God and His ways. In the final effect, should the “Natives break one of the rigid Puritan religious laws, the fine was, for obvious reasons, usually paid by giving up their land to Puritans.”¹⁷ The issue then rested in the authoritarian and inflexible attitude of the Puritan missionaries whose majority condemned cultural ways they could and would not understand, or let alone embrace. The Puritans, intolerant as they were, were making efforts to impose their religious principles on all Indians in an attempt to make them observe their laws and customs and turn them into the so-called “praying Indians.” As far as conversion of the indigenous peoples of New England is concerned, John Eliot was considered the most successful and relentless supplier of Gospel to the Natives.

The truth is that the numbers of clergymen with good command of the Algonquian tongue and enough time on their hands to draw the Indian’s attention to Puritan theology were insignificant. In the course of time, several praying towns were established, thus marking the potential increase in the converts’ progress towards Christianity. However, the most practical problem turned out to be that the several congregations claimed by the “missionaries were more or less dispersed.”¹⁸ This ran contrary to one of the primary ambitions of the English missionaries, which was to get the Natives to live in a more sedentary way of life - that is, from the Puritan point of view, a “more civilized” way. This was a proof of failure, since the praying towns did not “reach the Puritan ideal of a City Upon a Hill comprised of tightly

¹⁶ Cave 26.

¹⁷ Roy H. May Jr., *Promised Land and Land Theft*, excerpt from *Joshua and the Promised Land*, July 22nd 2009. <<http://gbgm-umc.org/UMW/Joshua/may7180.stm>>.

¹⁸ Vaughan 245.

clustered permanent buildings.”¹⁹ Furthermore, the biggest issue lay in the fact that although some of the New England Indians were now on the path of good Christians, “far too few of them were making corresponding improvements in their living habits.”²⁰

This would be suggestive of the fact that the English and Indians saw the effects of conversion campaigns in very distinct ways. This diverse understanding of missionary efforts, however, is further applicable to the various groups of Indians submitting to the English, as they proved to have used a variety of strategies in competition with one another. The willingness of some of the Natives to become the “praying Indians” can be traced to particular fragmentary “precontact groups, whose position within the power politics had been considerably weakened by the process of English colonization.”²¹ Such groups resorted to submission to the English colonies’ missionary efforts, perceiving the “praying towns” as a certain kind of protectorate, while others, like the Wampanoags or Narragansetts, proved to be much less affected by the religious appeal, since they hoped that “political and legal submission alone would be adequate to protect their own culture.”²² Apparently, those individuals who decided to enter the “praying towns” most probably sought to empower themselves in their relations to the English – and therefore other Indian groups as well. Many of these Natives displayed “eagerness to become literate, as literacy provided access to English and written word, and thus represented a way of understanding the English.”²³

In the course of time, these Indians accumulated enough experience of English community which, in some anthropological views, was to “gain a source of community strength which helped to preserve their distinctiveness as Indians.”²⁴ From this perspective, literacy in particular, should be perceived as an asset in the competition with other Indians

¹⁹ James D. Drake, *King Philip's War*, (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999) 61.

²⁰ Vaughan 252.

²¹ Drake 65.

²² Drake 65.

²³ Drake 60.

²⁴ Drake 63.

situated within the framework of English colonization. The “praying Indians” have been described as not entirely unwilling but they requested “schooling, English-style government, clothes and tools.”²⁵ In the final effect, however, all of this required vast amounts of money the colonists could not afford to give away.

Apart from first sermons delivered unto their Indian congregations, Eliot and his followers started publishing pamphlets (e.g. *John Wilson’s The Day-Breaking, if not The Sun-Rising of the Gospell With the Indians in New England*) overseas in order to raise finances necessary for spreading Gospel among greater numbers of Natives. These treatises mostly portrayed the continued achievements at the first praying town, built in 1650-1651 in “Natick and elsewhere, stressing the need for financial support.”²⁶ Monetary support started streaming in as a response to Eliot and Mayhew’s work, which is suggestive that they managed to convince the investors that they had turned the “incidental Puritan missionary effort into a major Puritan project.”²⁷ Permanent fund-raising organizations were set up in the mother country, entirely for the support of the New England enterprise. By 1674, Eliot managed to establish fourteen Praying Indian towns. However, these men should not be given all the credit, since the contemporary situation simply held enough attraction present in the shifting Indian sentiment. In 1650, despite the increasing numbers of favorably impressed Indians, on the whole, the “five colonies remained primarily untouched by the missionary effort.”²⁸ As a consequence then, the missionaries’ biggest concern was that the major tribes such as the Wampanoags, Narragansetts, Niantics and Mohegans made almost no progress towards accepting Christianity.

The reasons behind this, besides the tribes’ interest in retaining certain amount of autonomy through actually submitting themselves to the English, were obvious – the Puritan

²⁵ Vaughan 252.

²⁶ Vaughan 253.

²⁷ Vaughan 254.

²⁸ Vaughan 256.

missionaries' greatest competition rested with the tribal powwows and chiefs, who indulged themselves in the battle of loyalties and often were victorious over their Puritan adversaries. Even those who had "formally adopted Christianity could not stand facing the wrath of their traditional medicine men or chiefs."²⁹ In general, once the tribal leader himself succumbed to the new faith, the whole tribe would follow suit. The failure of these missionaries could thus be partly attributed to the "obstinacy of the major tribal chiefs, of Massasoit, Miantonomo, Ninigret, Uncas and their successors."³⁰ Eventually, it was King Philip's War, waged between the English and an alliance of Wampanoag, Nipmuk and Narragansett Indians, that wedged suspicion of split loyalties between the praying Indians and the English, which resulted in devastation of Eliot's missions.

Apart from believing that the New World Indian was in league with Satan, the Puritan overall assessment of the Indian remained predominantly harsh. There were, however, some scarce texts, like Roger Williams', which attributed the Natives with a quickness of wit and an innate shrewdness and certain kindness. Williams wrote that:

it is a strange truth that a man shall generally finde more
free entertainment and refreshing amongst these
Barbarians, than amongst thousands that call themselves
Christians.³¹

Williams, though he could not fully appreciate the true nature of Indian religiosity, still showed a good deal of understanding in terms of being able to realize that the Indian did not fully fit descriptions of devil worshippers. On the other hand, the predominant views stated that the Indian was "basically cruel and irrational, easily angered and extremely vengeful,

²⁹ Vaughan 256.

³⁰ Vaughan 258.

³¹ Cave 27.

treacherous, malicious and therefore should never be trusted.”³² William Bradford, when recording his history of the Pilgrims a decade later recalled how the decision to move to the New World has been made in the face of what they had expected; the emigrants believed they could receive no mercy from the Indian, who:

Delights to torment men in the most bloodie manner that may be; fleaing some alive with the shells of fishes, cutting of[f] the members, and joints of others by peese-meale and broiling on the coles, eate the collops of their flesh in their sights whilst they live, with other cruelties horrible to be related.³³

Despite their initial perceptions of the Indian as someone who should be helped, rather than destroyed (at least in the beginnings), the Puritans seem not to have questioned the righteousness of what seemed to them to be God’s judgment against the heathen. Alfred Cave maintains that even more alien was for the Indian the “Puritan division of the community into the Elect and the damned and their insistence that divine grace was accessible only to the few.”³⁴ In its essence then, Christianity was basically threatening to destroy the strong sense of community and reciprocity, so peculiar to the Native American religiosity, which was clearly community-oriented. It is thus no surprise that the number of converted Indians, the so called “Praying Indians”, was very low, since the “Native receptivity to Christian influence was unfounded.”³⁵ In spite of such attempts at conversion of the indigenous, there were frequent instances in which heathenism alone was considered a just pretext for extermination – and needless to say, the willingness on the Puritan part to become the instrument of God’s

³² Cave 14.

³³ Vaughan 65.

³⁴ Cave 29.

³⁵ Cave 30.

wrath, to be His Elect, was quite strong as they often used Scripture to justify the violent seizure of territory. This may be demonstrated on the following passage: “Whosoever therefore resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.”³⁶

Additionally, the great plague of 1616-17 which struck down literally thousands of New England Indians was “interpreted as a sure sign of God’s favor to His elect.”³⁷ The Lord was clearly making room for His people. In the face of their “Old Testament outlook the Puritans could hardly have avoided such interpretation of the epidemic”³⁸ that swept through the New England tribes. This was the deadliest epidemic in the recorded history of that particular part of the continent, its path was strewn with near extermination of the once proud tribes, now left vulnerable, unprotected and obviously frightened, and as a result anxious to make allies with the English in order to regain balance or perhaps even get the upper hand within the intertribal power politics. The cause of the plague, as the epidemic is generally called, is unknown. Ironically, the illness was most probably introduced by the European colonists – at least they seemed to be “immune to it and it was most prevalent in the regions frequented by English explorers and traders.”³⁹ Modern scientists are somewhat reluctant to diagnose the disease, due to the scraps-like and contradictory nature of historical evidence that has survived. Whatever the disease, though the traditional interpretation has it that it was smallpox, its consequences on Southern New England were devastating. The ensuing sudden depopulation made way for Puritan settlement.

It also triggered a severe imbalance in the intertribal power politics, with the Indians seeking to employ the English in these conflicts – an opportunity to use the situation to his own advantage was something the white man would not hesitate to turn down. Of course,

³⁶ *Native Blood: The Myth of Thanksgiving*, Nov. 8th 2009. <<http://www.rwor.org/a/firstvol/883/thank.htm>>.

³⁷ Vaughan 21.

³⁸ Vaughan 21.

³⁹ Vaughan 21.

theoretically, from another point of view, the colonial missionary attempts at conversion of the New England Natives, though at times they might have been genuine, in general seems to be mere justification of the English self-proclaimed presence in the colonies together with attempts to maintain the financial support streaming in from the Old World. New England gave the impression of a promised land, though the price of milk and honey was going to be soaked in blood.

6.2 Indian Economics

Owing to their religious ideology which held them committed to earning their bread by the sweat of their brow, diligently exploiting the land, the English could not have been able to appreciate the Native economic system or the social values which that system represented and held for granted. From Puritan point of view then, the inconceivable abundance of wildlife and timber (taking the heavy deforestation of British Isles into consideration) stood in stark contrast to the modest way of Indian life. The indigenous people built “modest wigwams in small villages utterly devoid of the trappings of wealth and power.”⁴⁰ The conclusion the colonists drew was that the Indians were unindustrious, unenterprising, and with great lack of concern for material wealth. This is not to say that the English were supposed, let alone obliged, by their religion to pursue individual wealth. However, in general, they considered this unostentatious existence a result of a serious character flaw, almost an inherent evil.

Indians, wrote William Wood in 1634, were “by nature highly intelligent, having quick wits, understanding apprehensions, strong memories, Indian women were very industrious,

⁴⁰ Cave 30.

but Indian men would rather starve than work.”⁴¹ This stereotype of the Indian man as a lazy sloth was a largely persistent one - even Roger Williams observed that “it is almost incredible what burthens the poore women carry of Corne, of Fish, of Beanes,...of Mats, and childe besides.”⁴² The Indian women were seen as the men’s slaves, doing all the chores - as well as what in Europe was considered traditionally men’s work.

Gender role stereotypes, as were recorded by the English in contact with Indian societies, should not be entirely dismissed as inapplicable, though they were to a certain extent incomplete since they were partially based on misleading information. Women did indeed do most of the work required to tend, harvest and store the crops, though Alfred Cave, as well as Alden Vaughan, agree with the statement that “the characterization of the Indian male as an economic drone will not stand close scrutiny.”⁴³ There were only two observations that brought the Native down in the eyes of New Englanders. The Indian male “working ethic and drunkenness”⁴⁴ were common vices that the Puritans attributed to the Indian males. The former was presumed to be “handed down to them by the Devil.”⁴⁵ However, upon closer examination, it must be admitted that the indolence of men was only intermittent. Against the Puritan better judgment, farming was not the only way of Indian subsistence – in this respect, fishing and hunting in Southern New England cannot be considered recreational activities, as it was often viewed by the English colonists, but “endeavors crucial to social well-being of Algonquians.”⁴⁶ The most important difference thus rests between the Indian way of farming and the European one. Firstly, it is the lack, or so to speak nearly complete absence, of use of domesticated animals on the Indian part. As a result, hunting and fishing therefore remained the only means of providing for the family or tribe, the only means of providing meat and

⁴¹ Cave 31.

⁴² Cave 31.

⁴³ Cave 34.

⁴⁴ Vaughan 44.

⁴⁵ Vaughan 45.

⁴⁶ Cave 31.

hide. From this point of view, Puritan description of such activities as a certain play rather than labor is strongly suggestive of Puritan narrow-minded ethnocentrism, due to its failure to deliver any message about Algonquian economics.

It was not only the fishing and hunting that was their chief duty. Indian males also “prepared the fields for cultivation by felling trees and removing stumps. Theirs was also responsibility for the manufacture and maintenance of weapons”⁴⁷ – which suggests they were also engaged in the protection of the tribe. Furthermore, “construction of the dugout canoes, some of which were oceangoing vessels”⁴⁸ often admired by the Englishmen, should be also taken into account. Last but not least, all the above were activities sent the men away from their home village for weeks on end and put them often in danger of injury or death. Roger Williams voiced his appreciation for the skill and perseverance these hunters and trappers showed, when he observed that:

They take exceeding great paines in their fishing...they lay their naked bodies many a cold night on the cold shoar about a fire of two or three sticks, and oft in the night search their Nets; and sometimes goe and stay longer in frozen water.⁴⁹

Therefore, upon seeing the Indian not engaged in constant labor, the Englishmen accordingly doubted that the Natives were truly diligent. This stems from the Puritans’ failure to comprehend the social background underlying the Indians’ apparent lack of interest in accumulating wealth. As Neil Salisbury put it:

⁴⁷ Cave 32.
⁴⁸ Cave 32.
⁴⁹ Cave 32.

Algonquian society was held together by a different premise. Indian New England valued not individual wealth but rather social cohesion based upon reciprocity. Competitive economic behavior was scorned and greed considered antisocial.⁵⁰

Indian economic attitudes much baffled the colonists, since the region was rich in fur-bearing animals and prior to the early contact Indians had no particular need focused on accumulation of individual wealth other than plain meeting the subsistence needs of their community. The Indians were skilled farmers and used only small amount of food surplus for trade with “non-horticultural Indian groups to the north, and in the initial years of contact with English colonists, provided food to the newcomers as well.”⁵¹ Sadly enough, the colonists in general were not able to appreciate this fact, just as they were unable to appreciate the case of the Plymouth colonists who would not have endured bleak winter or any other cases of colonists who would not have outlived food-shortages after drought or warfare, and would have perished had it not been for the Natives indulgence to provide them with basic foodstuffs.

Cave, however, develops further on the Indian economy, stating that it was “not based only on utilization of the crops grown in their villages’ surroundings, but also on maintenance of fishing camps and game reserves.”⁵² Additionally, Indian consistent clearing out of underbrush and periodic burning of groundcover resulted in abundance of game that so much impressed the English settlers. Paradoxically, they barely ever questioned where it came from.

⁵⁰ Cave 33.

⁵¹ Cave 35.

⁵² Cave 36.

This certain “management” of game reserves and fishing camps could therefore be considered a form of husbandry, which most of the English lacked to detect in the Indians’ everyday activities. Once the Puritans misjudged the Indian reluctance to work longer hours than was necessary for providing for themselves, they then perceived such behavior in the Indian as a lack of interest as well as lack of virtue. Consequently, such conduct made the Puritans feel justified in their claim for land, which the Natives in their eyes did not put enough effort into subduing.

6.3 Commercial Relations

At high times of mercantilism, trade with the Natives would inevitably assume an important role in the white man’s adjustment to his new cultural environment. Contrary to their pursuit of monetary attraction and religious views with which the Puritans arrived equipped for the New World, their first years of existence were predominantly marked by necessity of obtaining food supplies from the Indians. Initially, they resorted to pilfering supplies from the underground storages, since the Indian food surplus kept there often represented the margin between survival and starvation. Later, in order to restore intentions of good Anglo-Indian relations, amends were made by paying the Indian for the done damages. Needless to say, the generally held idea that the English settlement was to serve primarily as a haven for religious non-conformists is entirely flawed, since the colonies were meant as commercial ventures as well, and each settlement had their own creditor back in the good old England. Therefore it was before long that the New England Puritan motivations (missionary efforts set “temporarily” aside) were also driven by economic considerations. Pragmatically speaking, the colonists soon came to understand the gravity of the role trade was to play in their economic survival, though they still held religious convictions close.

Prior to the arrival of the white man, “intertribal trading had been practiced by most Indian nations, although it was limited by the absence of extensive native crafts.”⁵³ It can be stated that although the English and Indians both understood the idea of property, they comprehended it in markedly different ways. It soon became obvious, however, that Puritan interest did not exactly follow traditional Algonquian trading patterns. It was only natural that the colonists should misunderstand the social and cultural concepts that were crucial to the old exchange patterns developed by the Natives. Within only a few years of contact it became evident even to the Natives that trading with the white man was going to throw them in competition in ways their cultural memory had not experienced ever before. Despite the English lack of cultural competence though, much of their early contact would inevitably be revolving around trade, with particular interest in beaver pelts; an exchange-based system thus soon came to characterize their initial trade activities.

Although the white man’s trading patterns differed to some extent, it did not take long before both parties started enjoying a profitable exchange, especially once the Puritans were introduced to the intricacies of Indian bead money, wampum, which was once described as “the magnet which drew the beaver out of the interior forests.”⁵⁴ This wampum, shell money coming primarily from the Narragansett Bay area, held great cultural value for the Algonquian society, as it served the Natives many purposes in a multitude of circumstances – such as to pay “tribute, redeeme captives, Satisfy for murders and other Wrongs, purchase peace with their potent neighbors, as occasion required.”⁵⁵

It should be noted here that trade, and this applies to fur trade before it got depleted or replaced by cash crops in particular, was a way of solving the colonies’ economic problems.

⁵³ Raková 212.

⁵⁴ Dallas Bogan, *Wampum, North America’s First Monetary System*, Dec. 20th 2009. <<http://www.tngenweb.org/campbell/hist-bogan/Wampum.html>>.

⁵⁵ Bogan, *Wampum, North America’s First Monetary System*

The Europeans tantalized the Indian into bartering the furs with a whole array of products, such as “knives, combs, scissors, hatchets, needles, awls, and looking glasses were common items of barter.”⁵⁶ Most cherished among Indians, “apart from articles forbidden by colonial governments – firearms - was cloth”⁵⁷, for clothing and blankets. The coarse woolen material readily filled “the gap on the market” and the Puritans were soon placing orders with their “English suppliers for coats, trousers, and stockings, often made for the Indian market, suiting the native taste in design and color.”⁵⁸ Besides helping the settlers pay their English creditors, for instance, following the “Pequot War, trade with local tribes in Connecticut helped to replace the depleted food supplies”⁵⁹ of the colony. Although the commercial relations between Puritans and Indians involved a wide variety of goods, most of the seventeenth century New England trade was still dominated by fur trade. Fur trade in Connecticut, however, “did not constitute a major economic factor, due to the competition the colony suffered from the Massachusetts truck-houses further up the Connecticut River and of the Dutch competition to the west.”⁶⁰ As a result of the competition, the urge to secure safe position within the Connecticut fur trade power politics was fairly high, which fact will prove to be one of the crucial aspects that triggered the Pequot War.

The truth is that engaging in commercial relations was not always easy. The settlers made frequent observations concerning the Natives’ perpetual suspicion towards them. Vaughan states that “the Puritans were often accused of lying or cheating.”⁶¹ This suspicion stemmed from the Natives’ incapability to understand the workings of prices of goods on the market, which was only natural because most of the prices were largely, not to say wholly, dependent on the overseas market – this must have been something beyond the Indian’s

⁵⁶ Vaughan 220.

⁵⁷ Vaughan 221.

⁵⁸ Vaughan 220.

⁵⁹ Vaughan 218.

⁶⁰ Vaughan 218.

⁶¹ Vaughan 224.

comprehension. Simultaneously, the European settlers could not comprehend the Indian's bewilderment when faced with wampum's decline in value, which was a major mistake, suggesting that the Puritan traders apparently underestimated the cultural value of wampum on regular basis.

Furthermore, fur trade was regulated by local governments, which demonstrates the following declaration made by the General Court of Massachusetts, stating that: "the trade of fures with the Indians in this jurisdiction doth properly belong to the commonwealth, and not unto particcular person[s]." ⁶² Such regulations jeopardized the very often hard-won trading relations. Yet, for the Puritan there was no way of infringing the regulations, as the demands were in accordance with the Puritan religious parcel, labeled "Covenant" - notion of working for the good of the whole community, in which concept of the pursuit of individual gain (later transformed by T. Jefferson into the famous '*pursuit of happiness*') was widely rejected. Later, however, as the settler's interest in salvation was gradually replaced with being immersed deeper in business, trade was allowed to any holder of a license, issued, often sparingly, by the General Court. Rhode Island, for instance, put up a very liberal performance in commercial regulations and "made trade with the Indians free to all men as early as 1640." ⁶³

Therefore, upon closer examination, the colonists themselves, albeit the conditions of fitting the framework of Puritan morality and communal values were fulfilled, could not draw a clear-cut line between their ideology and the pursuit of individual wealth. In this respect, it cannot be entirely dismissed that the Puritans would be oblivious to the material advantages that would pass to them in case of a successful campaign against the savages. To what extent

⁶² Mario Gonzales, *A Regulation of Indian Traders: a Historical Perspective*, Dec.20th 2009. <<http://www.jstor.org/pss/20068036>>.

⁶³ Gonzales, *A Regulation of Indian Traders: a Historical Perspective*

was the frequently-discussed monetary attraction involved in precipitation of the Pequot War is difficult to judge, however, it is important to note here that the background of the conflict should not be explained merely by motivators of economic gain. Ambition, land lust, greed and even possibly interest in profit from selling Indian slaves should not to be considered the primary motivating factors, though one can readily imagine they were not entirely absent as the recent analyses of colonial records reveal that ideology and self-interest would be extremely difficult to separate. The latter was justified by the former. Perry Miller supports this statement when he maintains that: "In America, the character of the people underwent a change; they moved further into the frontier, they became more absorbed in business and profits than in religion and salvation, as their memories of English social stratification grew dim."⁶⁴

This shift away from their original religious mission and communal commitments may be reflected in the ever-growing vigorous attempts on part of the Puritan magistrates at reestablishing the religious unity within the already vulnerable community. In order to prevent gain on individual level, the Indian trade was placed under various restrictions, of which the most practical ones were aimed at restrictions on dealing with firearms and liquor. Regulations against trade in guns were introduced once the settlers realized that they held potential security threat against their own lives, the expansion of European settlement or against balance in the local tribal power politics, with the first restrictions issued as early as the early 1620s. As soon as the white man introduced the Indian to weapons, he had to suffer the consequences, usually marked by anticipations, or even paranoia, of uncalled-for hostilities.

⁶⁴ Miller and Johnson 17.

6.4 Indian Warfare

The wars the Algonquians engaged in played an important role in settling “boundary disputes, avenging insults, extending or resisting tribal authority as well as intertribal grudges, very often held for a long time.”⁶⁵ In the course of the 17th century, these animosities were to hold significant importance for the Indian-white affairs, since the indigenous peoples were not reluctant to make use of the white man as an ally or defender if it suited their purpose, or to stand up to the white man’s presence should it threaten to upset the local power politics. Needless to say, frequent cause of introduction of imbalance in the power politics was the above mentioned distribution of firearms to the Natives. Such presence of weapons among Indians resulted in putting the relations under strain; not only on the intertribal level, but on the intercolonial one as well. Infractions of regulations against sale of firearms to the Natives were severely punished.

Unless provided with firearms or swords, the New England Indian was armed with an array of primitive – yet fairly deadly – weapons. They carried “no armor except a skin or bark shield, although their dreaded enemies, the Mohawks of upper New York, wore suits and headpieces of bark which were impenetrable to Indian weapons.”⁶⁶ They built fortified villages (usually winter residences of the band) enclosed in a “circular stockade of upright logs, reaching from ten to twelve feet.”⁶⁷ However, against white men armed with muskets, these forts could not prove very effective, which would explain the unceasing greed Indians had for the white man’s firearms. Be it as it may, the common stereotype of portraying the primitive peoples as living in a constant state of warfare has turned out to be flawed.

⁶⁵ Vaughan 37.

⁶⁶ Vaughan 38.

⁶⁷ Vaughan 38.

Scientists today agree that the “actual level of violence in most of pre-Columbian America was quite low.”⁶⁸ Although the Natives did show some skills in devising deadly weapons and in constructing defenses, the recorded material reveals that war among Indian tribes seldom claimed high casualties. Roger Williams observed that: “their warres are far less bloody, and devouring, then the cruell Warres of Europe.”⁶⁹ As a result, a tribe lost as many as twenty on a pitch field, when blood was drawn, the warriors more often than not withdrew to attend to the wounded. Military encounters in “wooded localities have been portrayed as even less lethal.”⁷⁰ English derisive perceptions of Indian warfare thus demonstrate an inevitable clash of two disparate military cultures, whose examination should enter into any serious discussion of the Pequot war.

More importantly, English chroniclers frequently “displayed contempt for war waged among the Natives”⁷¹, owing to the “apparent” lack of interest and belligerency. Needless to say, that when an occasional ambush or direct assault took a dozen lives, it “more or less ended the campaign.”⁷² The colonists further misjudged the Indians when they commented on “total absence of military tactics and unwillingness to engage in hand-to-hand combat.”⁷³ Upon seeing two tribes in southern Connecticut settle their dispute, one Puritan captain reported that:

They came not near one another, but shot remote, and point-blank, as we often do with our bullets, but at rovers, and then they gaze up in the sky to see where the arrow falls, and not until it is fallen do they shoot again. This fight is more for pastime, than to conquer and subdue

⁶⁸ Cave 39.

⁶⁹ Cave 39.

⁷⁰ Cave 39.

⁷¹ Cave 38.

⁷² Cave 38.

⁷³ Vaughan 39.

enemies...They might fight seven years and kill seven
men.⁷⁴

The apparent lack of cultural competence, as demonstrated by Puritans, in so/as diverse cultural environment as that of the New World, is explanatory for their failure to appreciate the conspicuously nonbelligerent Indian mode of warfare. As the passage above suggests, Indian warfare should have rather been interpreted as “stylized, ritualistic and symbolic”⁷⁵, as it was often “accompanied by leaping, dancing and random shooting.”⁷⁶ Each New England tribe was more or less small in membership, therefore the reason for settling disagreements in ways which would not result in large-scale casualties seems to have a strategic reason to avoid heavy losses. This fact alone would also explain why the Puritans found their cautious way of battle so ludicrous.

However, once the Indian was introduced to firearms, he was much feared. Prior to, and following the Pequot War in particular, the “Commissioners were even assuming responsibilities to control the Indian supply and use of firearms.”⁷⁷ Vaughan states that “while it may not be true that the Indian was introduced to art of war by the white man, it may well be that he was taught how to practice it more energetically.”⁷⁸ Furthermore, a more plausible interpretation would seem to be though, that the contact between the two cultures “changed the war patterns, intensified them so to say, and it is highly probable that the presence of the English colonists further introduced war among groups which previously lived in peace.”⁷⁹ As a result, Western contact could be imputed with being the impetus to many recorded wars. However, it is believed that in contrast to the mildness of Indian waging of war stands the

⁷⁴ Jeffrey P. Blick, *Genocidal Warfare in Tribal Societies as a Result of European-Induced Culture Conflict*, Mar. 17th 2008. <<http://www.jstor.org/pss/2802598>>.

⁷⁵ Vaughan 39.

⁷⁶ Vaughan 39.

⁷⁷ Vaughan 179.

⁷⁸ Vaughan 40.

⁷⁹ Jeffrey P. Blick, *Genocidal Warfare in Tribal Societies as a Result of European-Induced Culture Conflict*, Mar. 17th 2008 <<http://www.jstor.org/pss/2802598>>.

fury with which the Indians treated their war captives. It seems that the “relative mildness of battles may have increased the need for symbolic destruction of the enemy through torment and mutilation of single enemy tribesmen.”⁸⁰ It is further believed that scalping, not common until late in the century, may have been an “invention of the white man, but it was more likely a practical modification of the ancient Indian custom of bringing home the head and hands of a vanquished foe.”⁸¹ The previous observations will prove highly relevant for discussion of the origins of the Pequot War.

⁸⁰ Vaughan 40.

⁸¹ Blick, *Genocidal Warfare in Tribal Societies as a Result of European-Induced Culture Conflict*

7. Roots of the Conflict

The traditionally held theory propounds that the major motivator of the conflict was Captain John Stone's death and the Pequot failure, or refusal to be more accurate, to surrender Stone's killers to English justice. Stone's death, however, should not be considered the sole motivator of the conflict, especially in the light of Stone's reputation. Another motivating factor further fueling the conflict was the death of John Oldham, allegedly murdered in 1636 at Block Island, off the coast of what is today Connecticut-Rhode Island border. Similarly, there is a certain amount of controversy as to which of the tribes should be held accountable for his death. Historians have been troubled by the one question of whom to blame, since some theories maintain that it was the "Narragansetts that were at Block-Island that killed him, whereas other second-hand accounts claim that the killing should be blamed on the Pequots as they either killed him or were harboring his murderers, Block Islanders (a tribe tributary to the Narragansetts)."¹ It was, more or less, a combination of events which took place in the period between Governor Winthrop's meeting with the Pequot envoy and the decision to wage war against the tribe in 1636 that brought carnage on the Pequots.

Last but by no means least, their handsome share in triggering the conflict certainly had the various rumors of dubious origin of an impending Pequot attack (or Indian conspiracy against the English) on English settlements. Upon closer reading, it is suggestive that the Puritan anxieties were considerably misplaced. In their preparations for the impending war, the Massachusetts officials were too dependent on self-seeking and manipulative Indian informants such as Uncas. In addition, the fact that very few of the English had a good grasp of the Algonquian dialects presented great hindrance in the language barrier – it is thus more

¹ Cave 69.

than “probable that they were unable to detect misleading information or rumors.”² The Puritan officials badly needed information – their desperation for contact with the Indian world, however, may be further detected in their reliance on accounts provided by Roger Williams, whom the very same officials had expelled from the Bay Colony some time earlier.

Regarding the nature and reliability of Puritan documents, it is certainly worth of notice that scientists today generally agree that since Puritans had many reasons for hiding their motives and behavior, their documents frequently exhibit misleading half-truths, as well as – more exceptionally – falsifications. Although openly the Pequot war had not been fought to lay claims to the Pequot tribal lands, most of the conquered territory was annexed as spoils of war under the terms of Hartford Treaty. In this respect then, the infamous aspect of Puritan land lust cannot be entirely refuted or separated from the Puritan intentions to enter the war. Needless to say, the identity of the true aggressor has been haunting scholars for centuries.

7.1 Power Politics behind the Conflict

As already discussed in the text above, fortunately for the English and the Dutch, the Native tribes had been devastated by a series of epidemics that severely reduced their populations over the course of the previous three decades. As a consequence, the once dominant Pequot were exhausted in numbers, which must have resulted in jeopardizing their position within the local power politics. With the tables turned, the Pequot authority could now be challenged – which fact must have held a significant appeal for the English and Dutch, but for other Indian tribes as well. The Indians were not hesitant to take advantage of this situation in order to gain the upper hand in the upcoming power-struggle; it has been proven that even “as early as 1614, the indigenous peoples of New England were seeking to

² Cave 72.

employ the white man in their intertribal conflicts.”³ Neither were the English reluctant to use the situation to their own advantage. Sadly enough, it was basically the white man’s presence which introduced a considerable share of these inter-tribal conflicts.

It cannot be denied that the war has earned a reputation of one of the crucial parts of the American frontier mythology; it has become the myth of celebration of victory of civilization over savagery, for centuries held to be at the hub of this historical myth. However reasonable it may seem to locate the Mystic conflict predominantly in the rational response to the “uncalled-for” Native aggression following the Puritan punitive expedition or in the blind-folded fanatical God versus Satan duel, with the idea of the Puritans waging their “sacred” war against the “infidels”, I am inclined to think that the information I have gathered suggests that the roots of the conflict may as well have been less “lofty.”

In my opinion, it is the indigenous population loss that should be perceived as the root of the increase in competition and the steady rise in the Native-European trade conflicts. In terms of the local power politics situation, the Connecticut River Valley of 1630s was entering a general state of turmoil, as the:

Pequot aggressively worked to extend their area of control (covering fur trade and tributary network) in all directions, at the expense of the Wampanoag to the north, the Narragansett to the east, the Connecticut River Valley Algonquians and Mohegan to the west, and the Algonquian peoples of present-day Long Island to the

³ Vaughan 17.

south, who in turn contended with one another for dominance and control of the European trade.⁴

In fact, the truth is that in the fall of 1634 the Pequots – whose vilified image of the domineering, aggressive force threatening the very existence of English colonies had basically been the product of Puritan mythmaking - even turned to Boston “for assistance in dealing with their Indian adversaries.”⁵ The Pequots arrived in Boston with wampum and peltry in an earnest attempt to negotiate “Puritan help to put an end to the Pequot-Narragansett War.”⁶ Records also have it that the Pequots went even as far as to offer the Puritans “handsome land concessions to encourage English settlement in Connecticut.”⁷ Logically speaking, it seems that Winthrop and his associates of the Bay Colony had a very good grasp of the gravity of the situation which would soon arise in the intertribal power politics if they were to intervene on the Pequots’ behalf, since such an arrangement would imply obligations towards the Pequots offer of land and tribute. Secondly, the grounds for this decision seem to be the close vicinity of the Narragansetts to the English settlements along with the fact that the tribe stood very powerful and could eventually pose a considerable threat to these adjacent English outposts. Despite the fact that the Pequots failed to find a European ally and friend in arms in Boston, it still could be stated that at that time the Pequots had no anticipations whatsoever of the upcoming strain in their relationship with the white man, let alone the atrocities that were to ensue.

⁴ *Narragansett Tribe*, Jan. 19th 2009. <[http:// www.answers.com/topic/narragansett-tribe](http://www.answers.com/topic/narragansett-tribe)>.

⁵ Cave 69.

⁶ Cave 70.

⁷ Cave 70.

7.2 The John Stone Affair

As opposed to “1633 when the Bay Colony authorities made no request of avenging Stone’s death, in 1634 the same authorities revised their opinion and made it their objective”⁸ to be done so. Puritan written records reveal frequent references to Pequot refusal to comply with their demands that Stone’s murderers be apprehended. Later, the attack on Stone’s ship was generally cited by Puritan apologists as the major cause of the war, serving the Puritans as a justification of the major assault which so dramatically changed the course of American history. By demanding of the Pequot convoy to surrender those who were guilty of killing some Englishmen, Captain Stone’s murderers in particular, the Bay Colony officials hit the “retaliate” button. The controversial affair of John Stone’s death indeed did trigger a chain of events which led up to near extermination of the Pequot nation as well as consequent detribalization of the remaining Pequot. Needless to say, there is a considerable amount of doubt as to how and why Stone and his shipmates were killed, since even the one-sided evidence offers several conflicting versions of the encounter. At any rate, even the contemporary Puritan authorities admitted that “Stone’s previous career made it more than likely that he had got about what he deserved.”⁹ Yet, for the most part it was enough that he was an Englishman (the same applied to his seven companions who had been slaughtered together with him). As a result, English retribution was called for.

Although being a member of an “influential and wealthy London family, Stone’s career history was considerably stained.”¹⁰ In one particular event, he even stole Plymouth’s ship and its cargo with the Plymouth’s government consequently deciding to prosecute against him

⁸ Cave 75.

⁹ Vaughan 123.

¹⁰ Vaughan 124.

on charges of piracy, however “owing to Stone’s influence in London, Governor Winthrop decided to drop the charges in fear of the political consequences they would have to suffer.”¹¹ In 1634, on his voyage from Virginia to Boston, where he had piloted a shipload of cattle, Stone managed to embroil himself almost at every stop with local Puritan authorities who did not hesitate to charge him with being a “drunkard, lecher, braggart, bully and blasphemer.”¹² On his voyage back to Virginia, “accompanied by Captain Walter Norton and crew, he stopped off to explore the trading prospects of the Connecticut River.”¹³ Of this much, the historical accounts seem to be unanimous. As to what followed, however, the records describing the skirmish on the ship remain shrouded in mist of controversy.

Upon Puritan request, the Pequots responded that the infamous Stone had been killed as a result of their own need for revenge for the “murder by the Dutch of their grand sachem. His assailants, the envoy explained, had not known that he was English rather than Dutch.”¹⁴ Allegedly, the captain acted in a provocative manner when he “abducted two Indians at the mouth of the Connecticut River.”¹⁵ Other versions state that he captured two “braves who had boarded his ship to trade.”¹⁶ Given Stone’s poor reputation, the magistrates were initially satisfied with the Pequots’ account of the circumstances of Stone’s violent death, as it was told with such “confidence and gravity.”¹⁷ After several days of negotiations, November 1, 1634 witnessed reaching of an agreement between the Pequots and the Bay Colony. In retrospect, upon closer reading, Winthrop’s correspondence reveals that the question whether or not to go to war over Stone’s death was referred to the clergy, who sought the “Lord in it and decided that friendship with the Pequots would be possible only if they agreed to deliver

¹¹ Cave 73.

¹² Cave 72.

¹³ Vaughan 125.

¹⁴ Cave 71.

¹⁵ Cave 71.

¹⁶ Vaughan 125.

¹⁷ Vaughan 125.

up to us those men who were guilty of Stone's death."¹⁸ Having failed to gain an ally in their war with the Narragansetts, the Pequots did obtain, however, "at least a trade agreement, but the English asked a high price for their trade and friendship, which imposed a very substantial burden on Sassacus and his followers."¹⁹

The terms of the treaty demanded that the Indians "hand over the two remaining assassins when sent for and to yield up to Connecticut."²⁰ In addition, the Pequots were to pay substantial indemnity of "four hundred fathoms of wampum, forty beaver and thirty other skins."²¹ The Pequots basically found themselves in a tight corner – the Bay Colony government body required their submission, thus claiming a near-complete control of trade, expansion and governance in New England. However, the trade never took place and though the peaceful relations between the Bay Colony and the Pequots lasted until the fall of 1636, the period was marked with very little harmony. Firstly, this was due to the fact that the Pequots failed to deliver the remaining assassins of Stone and paid only part of the indemnity, as they did not find it within the boundaries of their own ideologies of justice. By not complying with the Puritan demands, the Pequots identified themselves as the "proud and insolent" Indians, whose alleged "malevolence" the Puritans feared most and considered a major threat to their security, based on their general distrust towards the Indian. This ubiquitous anxiety led to the white man's determination never to show weakness and step down to provocative behavior. And thus, so as not to become unmanned by the Indian, the English did not hesitate to resort to the use of terror when they found it necessary to intimidate the "savages occupying the wilderness" who had to be dealt with sternly. Should the Pequots fail to meet their end of the treaty, the Bay Colony magistrates threatened to

¹⁸ Cave 77.

¹⁹ Cave 71.

²⁰ Vaughan 125.

²¹ Vaughan 125.

“terminate the league of amity and to revenge blood of their Countrymen as occasion shall serve.”²²

By all means, the portrayed Pequot behavior sufficiently reflects their desperation to find ways to regain some previously enjoyed power (be it influence in fur trade or in their tributary network) within the local politics. In fact, it is most reasonable to assume that the Pequots, though now vulnerable, had no reason for driving the Europeans out of Connecticut because of their desire to resume trade with them. Simultaneously - and this should be stressed repeatedly - the Puritan missionary attempts cannot be entirely separated from their expansionist intentions. Thus at this point, settlement of the English in Connecticut could be understood as a mutual backscratching arrangement for both parties involved - which, of course, is not to say that both parties may not have had some concealed intentions. Studies of contemporary Puritan behavior draw attention to an apparent interest in further settlement of the Connecticut River Valley, which would provide the settlers with access to its rich fur trade as the region held “great trading potential, necessary to satisfy their English creditors.”²³ This is not to imply that trade should be considered their primary interest, since there were also numerable instances in which congregations in “Massachusetts, dissatisfied with their land allocation in that particular state, were wishing to improve their lot by relocating to Connecticut.”²⁴ However, rumors of lucrative trade potential in Connecticut persisted.

At times it seems as if trade rather than land was the settlers’ primary objective. Connecticut saw three conflicting forces competing for its trading ventures - those of “Plymouth and Bay Colony, as well as the Dutch who were also interested in establishing

²² Vaughan 127.

²³ Cave 79.

²⁴ Cave 77.

outposts in the valley.”²⁵ As a consequence, the prospect of fertile Connecticut land introduced a great deal of intercolonial bickering over land – especially between the Colonies of Connecticut and Massachusetts which even took their disagreements to court on several occasions. It is also understandable that for English plantations the feeling of security was becoming ever more significant, since more and more settlers were pushing outward from Massachusetts, together with new immigrants from England, into Connecticut. It was now John Winthrop Jr., the son of the renowned John Winthrop, who was in charge of the settlement of new territories to the south of Massachusetts Bay. The success of the expansion of the “City Upon a Hill” was now in his hands - as well as at stake - and should he fail, such failure would reflect the lack of Providence overseeing the Puritan venture. The colonies’ religious integrity was essentially in a tight corner, representing potentially great threat to Christian imperialism.

It did not take long before John Winthrop Jr. faced “rumors of impending Pequot attack.”²⁶ That the Pequots did not proceed to pay the full wampum tribute, nor did comply with English demands that Stone’s assailants be apprehended and surrendered, triggered further English anxieties and suspicions about Pequot motives, which were further “exacerbated by reports from friendly Indians who warned of Pequot plans to destroy the English settlement in Connecticut.”²⁷ The documentary evidence today hints at the fact that the main, and perhaps even only, source of these rumors was Uncas, from whom “Jonathan Brewster learned that Sassacus, the Pequot sachem, had called a council of war which had lasted one day, and most part of the night.”²⁸ Uncas was the source of Brewster’s account portraying “Sassacus as the leader of Stone operation.”²⁹ Accepting Uncas’ tale at face value

²⁵ Cave 83.

²⁶ Cave 98.

²⁷ Cave 99.

²⁸ Cave 99.

²⁹ Cave 99.

thus precipitated English suspicion of Pequot conspiracy. Consequently, the rumors of Pequot malevolence raised alarm with Boston authorities, resulting in “Winthrop’s instructions being to threaten war if he could not secure Pequot submission.”³⁰

Not all English settlers were too happy about the prospect of making war on the Pequots. Plymouth Colony was particularly hesitant to take part in covering the war expenses, as they still bore grudges against Massachusetts Bay Colony “because of Boston’s unilateral and irresponsible provocation of the Pequots.”³¹ Furthermore, the news of this new Pequot policy did not fall on fertile ground especially at Saybrook, the English outpost closest to Pequot territory, since its commander “Lieutenant Gardener was appalled by the proposed proceedings with the Pequots.”³² In his view, Boston officials had taken a reckless action. He feared that the newly imposed policy would aggravate the Pequots and consequently expose their settlement, not the Bay Colony, to assault and destruction, since the Saybrook settlement’s situation was much jeopardized by its “poor fortification as well as lack of supplies.”³³ Nonetheless, despite his protests, Lieutenant Gardener was left alone to suffer the consequences which might follow Boston’s ultimatum to the Pequots. Gardener’s apprehensions eventually materialized in 1636, when Massachusetts declared its intentions to send a “force against Pequots to demand surrender of the killers of John Stone.”³⁴ In response to Puritan aggressive negotiations, The Pequots began to employ guerrilla warfare along the rivers or in the woods in the vicinity of English settlements. As for Fort Saybrook, for example, the Pequot cut the garrison off and ambushed its parties, strayed from its protection, when sent to gather food. Not surprisingly, torture was involved as part of traditional Indian warfare.

³⁰ Cave 100.

³¹ Cave 137.

³² Cave 101.

³³ Cave 101.

³⁴ Cave 101.

The troubling question of what place should Pequots occupy in the contemporary historical views of this intercultural conflict remains unchallenged, as it would be most difficult to recapture the Pequots' state of mind once they were faced with the English demands. Their reactions can only be guessed at. Evidence suggests that the English perceived them as a subordinate entity. Indisputably, the terms of the treaty must have put the tribes' proclaimed loyalty to the white man, as well as their own integrity, under considerable strain. To the once proud people this must have been an affront. Yet, there are no "verified incidents of Pequot aggression against the English after their visit to Boston"³⁵, which again supports the notion of Pequot interest in establishing trade relations with the English. Needless to say that Pequot complicity in the killings has often been suspected, though never demonstrated without fail. The nature of the recovered material indicates that the treaty was drawn up primarily to intimidate the sachems, thus exposing the newly-employed strategy on part of the English. They were either decided to wage war from the very beginning or naively assumed that an intervention of God would soften the hearts of the heathen. As for the treaty itself, it is certainly worth of notice that the records reveal that the "treaty was never ratified by the Pequot ruling sachems."³⁶

Alfred Cave's text provides a plausible explanation for the Pequot failure, or refusal to be more accurate, to pay indemnity to the English. He states that it is fairly "reasonable to assume that the sachems saw no justification for the payment of a substantial tribute to the Bay Colony, once the English refused to enter protective alliance."³⁷ Additionally, the role of wampum needs to be taken into consideration, since the Algonquian understanding of

³⁵ Cave 99.

³⁶ Vaughan 76.

³⁷ Cave 90.

wampum ran along the lines that it was also a “means of atoning for murders”³⁸, thus it is more than likely that the wampum the Pequots had sent to Boston was meant, as well as thought, to have removed any serious aggravation the English might harbor over Stone’s death. Obviously, this was a major miscalculation on part of the Pequots; however, the blame should not only rest with the Indians, since it was also the Puritans who clearly underestimated the cultural value wampum held for the indigenous peoples of New England.

³⁸ Cave 77.

8. The Pequot War

In summary, as demonstrated above, a whole range of motivators excited the English to make war on the Pequots, all more or less consistent with their demands forcing the Pequots to turn over the suspected murderers. Heavily stained with a rather unfortunate set of cultural misunderstandings, the hostilities which marked the Fort Mystic massacre should be placed in the context of Puritan misleading assumptions about intercultural encounters in the wilderness, which assumptions eventually burst out of the missionary cocoon and took on a much more sinister form. Combined together with paranoid suspicions of being under the threat of what was actually an outgrowth of ambitions of rival Indian sachems, the Puritan colonies managed successfully to transform the quarrel with the Pequots into a campaign establishing English cultural and political dominance in New England.

It is most reasonable to assume that English motivations to enter the war were further fueled by conspirational initiative on part of Uncas, the grand sachem of Mohegans. Needless to say that Narragansetts did not take an indifferent stand either and are also believed to have had a substantial share in manipulating the English. They have been demonstrated as more than willing to assist in making war on the Pequots, as they provided “intelligence about Pequot positions, and the best locations from which to attack Fort Mystic”¹ on several occasions. Given the fact that the Pequot were posing a particularly great threat to them within the New England power politics and trading relationships with the white man, both tribes must have undeniably perceived a potential benefit from provoking the war between the English and the Pequots. Following this line of argumentation, it is non-negotiable that the white man’s Indian allies had their own grievances against the Pequot. The possibility of the Indians’ deft manipulating with the English must therefore be taken into consideration, based on the hopes these Indian tribes were pinning on the English superior military capability to

¹ *Mystic Voices: The Story of the Pequot War*, 26 Mar. 2008. <http://www.pequotwar.com/index_files/history1.htm>.

eradicate the Pequots for them. The following passage supports this idea: “Mohegans being a recent offshoot of the Pequot, Uncas may as well have had an interest in becoming grand sachem of both Mohegans and Pequots.”²

Yet, even if the English were to be taken as pawns in the game of chess over hegemony in New England, it is more than likely that it was the English who were the real driving force behind the war, for various reasons. To begin with, their very presence in the area was the initial impetus to start the chain of events leading to the intercultural conflict itself. Finding one particular party to put the blame on is always a difficult task, since the underlying causes of the Pequot War were complex and, even though it was a small-scale skirmish, its consequences were far-reaching. To what extent did the Puritans take advantage of old, or newly-introduced, hostilities between Indian tribes or to what extent did the Narragansetts and Mohegans really manipulate the English into the war remains a debatable issue, though if we are to see the bigger picture and the exact roots of the Pequot War, I am inclined to agree with Alfred Cave’s interpretation in his article on the Puritans and the Pequots of the 17th century, that on the whole it was an “unhappy outgrowth of petty squabbles over trade, tribute, and land among Pequots, Mohegans, Narragansetts, Dutch traders, River Indians and English Puritans.”³ As with many wars, these various factors, deeply rooted in the clash of the two cultures, seasoned by a series of incidents that created animosity and introduced suspicion among the English, Dutch, and Pequots must have ended in the Pequot War, as the two conflicting cultural concepts were simply incompatible. The conflict should not be considered a “just war” against an aggressive and dangerous tribe, fought out of military necessity, but rather an inadequate response to cultural values radically different from the European ones. The great deal of intolerance renders the English colonists a group almost “as savage” in their

² *Mystic Voices: The Story of the Pequot War*

³ Robert E. Weir, “The Pequots and the Puritans of the 17th Century,” Feb. 12th 2009. <<http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.cgi?path=4757851716593>>.

extremely violent response as the Pequots against whom they brandished their sword in the name of their doctrine.

8.1 Hostilities

In 1636, with clerical blessing, Captain Endecott found himself to be in charge of a punitive expedition which also included an attack on the Pequots, the main objective of which was to force Sassacus, the chief sachem of the tribe, to meet the English demands and turn over Stone's murderers. In their minds the English believed to have fulfilled the obligation to provide the Pequots with an opportunity to atone for murders of Stone and Oldham. Thomas Hooker's letter, warning "of the dangers of hesitation or leniency in dealing with the Pequots"⁴, may be illustrative enough of the Puritan line of thought once it came down to responding to an alleged threat to their security. If the English did not live up to their determination to intimidate the Natives, they feared that the Pequots, as a result, would most probably draw the conclusion that the English were cowards. Such concerns have been demonstrated to be one of the central assumptions the Puritans applied to their Indian policy. Not only was the strategy of intimidation meant to scare the Pequots, but also "to remind the Saints that they lived in daily peril of massacre at the hands of Satan's minions."⁵ However, the Puritan attempts to intimidate the Pequots developed into a response far from their original expectations. Cotton Mather later declared that "through God's Providence they were enabled to achieve not only utter subduing of all the Pequots but also the affrighting of all the other Natives."⁶

It even gives the impression that the English hostilities of the punitive expedition stepped over the line of the Pequot notions of acceptable warfare, therefore resulting in a

⁴ Cave 169.

⁵ Cave 168.

⁶ Cave 169.

more dramatic reaction on their part, and in this “response to the punitive expedition, the Pequots launched a series of kidnappings, murders, and there were records of tortures of prisoners from the frontier communities then being established in Connecticut.”⁷ However, as already discussed in the section on Indian warfare, one must bear in mind that torture of captives was a crucial, and traditional, part of Indian way of waging war, believed to be functioning as a certain compensation for the limited scale on which the Indian warfare, for which the Europeans found so many derisive comments, was conducted. It only seems bit incomprehensible that rumors of torture should render the Puritans petrified and appalled, given the tremendous amount of violence they were accustomed to and which they so skillfully translated from the battlefields of the Old World into their New England environment. It appears that, contrary to their cultural adversaries, the settlers’ military traditions held torture dishonorable, given that the majority of Puritan accounts describing the kidnappings spoke of torture and atrocities inflicted upon the settlers. As for the accounts, Captain Mason, for instance, in his A Brief History of the Pequot War, adds to the list of tortures the following: "their Flesh was first slashed with Knives, and then filled with burning Embers."⁸

Not surprisingly, these accounts of torture inflamed the colonial attitude towards the Indians to such an extent that the settlers decided to enter the conflict. The Puritans’, however, was a self-righteous anger. God’s providential plan left virtually no room for vigorous assertions of Native American autonomy - such assertions were perceived as an offense to the Puritan sense of mission. What happened was that the Puritans saw no other option than to allow themselves to mirror the very “savage traits” they claimed to be the abominable in their cultural adversaries. The decision to get involved in the conflict was entirely on the Puritan

⁷ Cave 168.

⁸ John A. Mason, *A Brief History of the Pequot War: Especially of the memorable Taking of their Fort at Mistick in Connecticut in 1637* (Boston: Kneeland and Green, 1736), Electronic Texts in American Studies, Dec. 8th 2009. <<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1042&context=etas>>.

elite who eventually rendered this detribalizing counteraction into a war for land, as well as for cultural and political hegemony in New England. Upon declaration of the war, a certain minister from Massachusetts exhorted the military leaders to:

execute those whom God, the righteous judge of all the world, hat condemned for blaspheming his sacred majesty and murdering his servants and thus execute vengeance upon the heathen...binde their Kings in chaines, and Nobles in fetters of Iron...make their multitude fall under their warlike weapons.⁹

On May 26, 1637, shortly after daybreak, the Puritans massacred a large Pequot village at a place called “Missituck, located near Mystic River in Connecticut.”¹⁰ They set fire to the village and literally slaughtered the villagers even as they tried to escape the flames. Captain Mason claimed that the original intention was “not to burn the village but to destroy by the Sword and save the plunder.”¹¹ Alfred Cave finds this claim fairly believable, as the “troops relied on the spoils of war for their compensation.”¹² The Pequots put up a fierce resistance with some “twenty Underhill’s men being wounded and two killed during the attack.”¹³ As for casualties on the side of the Natives, there are several conflicting versions – “Gardener claimed that at least 300 Pequots died, Bradford’s second-hand account claimed 600-700 Pequots killed”¹⁴, whereas Mason’s eyewitness account claims “somewhere between six and seven hundred with only seven taken prisoners and seven escaped.”¹⁵

⁹ Cave 137.

¹⁰ *Mystic Voices: The Story of the Pequot War*

¹¹ Mason, *A Brief History of the Pequot War*

¹² Cave 148.

¹³ Cave 148.

¹⁴ Cave 148.

¹⁵ Mason, *A Brief History of the Pequot War*

The alleged “model of Christian charity” thus claimed some 700 lives within two hours in a carnage which William Bradford described in the following passage from his History of the Plymouth Plantation:

Those that scaped the fire were slaine with the sword; some hewed to peeces, others rune throw with their rapiers, so as they were quickly dispatche, and very few escaped. It was conceived they thus destroyed about 400 at this time. It was a fearful sight to see them thus frying in the fyer, and the streams of blood quenching the same, and horrible was the stincke and sente thereof, but the victory seemed a sweet sacrifice, and they gave the prayers thereof to God, who had wrought so wonderfully for them, thus to inclose their enemise in their hands, and gave them so speedy a victory over so proud and insulting an enimie.¹⁶

8.2 Why the massacre at “Missituck”?

Having discussed Indian warfare and the white man’s perceptions of it, it has been demonstrated that in this cultural clash there was a dramatic absence of some sort of a mutually accepted code that would be governing the general conduct of war. The Puritans were following certain military customs and techniques, developed and practiced on a large variety of battlefields in Europe. The Pequot, in a similar fashion, also engaged in war in accordance with their military traditions, though much different from the white man’s. The

¹⁶ *Native Blood: The Myth of Thanksgiving*, Nov. 8th 2009. <<http://www.rwor.org/a/firstvol/883/thank.htm>>.

greatest disparity seems to be the degree to which these traditions were ingrained in the respective cultures and, most importantly, the cultural value these traditions were enjoying. Without a doubt, the ideology behind the English warfare was heavily charged with religious overtones, gradually placing more and more emphasis on the justification and appeal to wage war, which rather encouraged the fierceness of combat rather than restrained it. The fact that for many a Puritan there was a deep sense of divine mission and justice in the violent extermination may be gathered from the written records, stating that they were only asserting their religious authority over “savagery.” The violent attitude assumed by the English on May 26, 1637, however, was similar to the one the English themselves reserved for heretics or infidels.

The Puritans were victorious in “little less than an hour”¹⁷, giving full credit to their God. In between the lines, the Pequot War was a means of facilitating a shift from an identity of humble God’s servants struggling for survival to an invincible army on holy crusade, which had the power to smite their enemies and consequently lay claims to their land. The preconceptions and constant worries that all Indians are natural enemies of all Christians who may be plotting against the English and that the colonies can be secured only through employment of drastic measures against these savages may be demonstrated on the following statement by Captain Underhill who participated in the massacre:

“It may be demanded, Why should you be so furious?
Should not Christians have more mercy and compassion?
Sometimes the Scripture declareth women and children
must perish with their parents. Sometimes the case alters,

¹⁷ Vaughan 145.

but we will not dispute it now. We had sufficient light
from the word of God for our proceedings.”¹⁸

Such and other confessions or reflections on the Fort Mystic massacre were supposed to justify the unnecessary carnage. Captain John Mason joined Underhill in believing that the colonies had been saved from Indian uprising only through the workings of divine Providence when he confessed in his Brief History of the Pequot War that: “the whole Earth should be filled with his Glory! Thus the Lord was pleased to smite our Enemies in the hinder Parts, and give us their land for an Inheritance.”¹⁹ Mason’s text illustrates that the theories interpreting the extermination, justified by the Puritan religious leaders, as an act of premeditated land and power lust should not be entirely brushed away. Viewing Mason’s text from a broader perspective, the Puritan heritage can be said to extend the cultural conflict of the seventeenth century into its later forms, such as relegating the Indians into reservations and ultimately, for instance, in ratification of the Religious Crimes Act, which outlawed all kinds of expression of Indian spirituality.

It is rather disturbing to realize that the Puritans viewed such an atrocity as a display of divine will and power, and that putting the Pequots to torch was considered a righteous act of divine retribution, which Providence played into their hands so that they could establish their “City Upon the Hill.” What is more, it was also considered to secure English hegemony in New England and perhaps even several years of peace. The very fact that the Puritans attributed the role of divine Providence to Indian wars may to an extent be reflected in the apologist historian’s suggestions that the Puritan understanding of war on Indians should be seen as a test or manifestation of God’s wrath with his chosen.

¹⁸ *Mystic Voices: The Story of the Pequot War*

¹⁹ Mason, *A Brief History of the Pequot War*

The Pequot War was thus one of the earliest expressions of such beliefs. In this respect, it is worth of notice that military actions were ultimately decided by Puritan religious authorities - they were the ones who had the final say in sweeping away reluctance to brandish Bible as an instrument of destruction against those who refused to embrace Puritan Christianity. It was necessary for the settlers to employ a rhetoric that would justify the upcoming violence inflicted on the Pequot men, women and children. From this perspective, warfare against the Pequots was regarded as a “holy crusade” and the truth is that official histories portrayed it as such. However, given the various expressions of remorse or regret that appear in a number of primary sources dealing with the Fort Mystic massacre, it should be noted that the portrayals of the conflict do not seem to reveal any intentional efforts to deliver the atrocities in the best possible light, without direct lying or sugarcoating the description of the slaughter. Furthermore, several accelerators justifying the employment of extremely violent warfare that the Puritans displayed can be identified in the written records.

Generally speaking, the complexity of contest for power in New England was rendered all the less difficult by the deaths of Stone and Oldham, which allowed the Puritans to appropriate the role of warriors, relying heavily on the image of contested manhood in the Pequot warfare, since the Pequots, construed as formidable warriors, signified the greatest threat to the security, stability and expansion of English settlement in the area. The massacre had thus been construed as a Puritan response to the violence and marks of torture on the recovered English bodies which were recounted in detail following the punitive expedition run by Endicott, of which the following passage is supportive:

The circumstances of Stone’s death, as well as the evidence that justice had been meted out according to Pequot requirements, failed to soften the English

insistence on retribution, for if the English acquiesced to the laws maintained through empowered Pequot manhood, English male authority would be undercut.²⁰

It has been already stated in the section on Indian warfare that the English perceived it as something that in their approach was clearly a misunderstanding of the purpose and execution of war, lacking the potential to settle a dispute. Accordingly, this notion of contested Pequot manhood may be identified in Mason's text which reveals that the captain did not hold Indian warfare in high esteem, quite the opposite. Mason longed to prove the Pequot warrior reputation wrong. And yet, running contrary to this notion, the Pequots were often described as brave warriors, which is reflected e.g. in Gardener's attempts to discourage the campaign on the Pequots, for his fear of their retribution. Another instance of a positive assessment of Indian warfare can be spotted in Underhill's praise of the Pequot courage, when he declared in his description of the massacre that "mercy did they deserve for their valor, could we have had the opportunity to have bestowed it."²¹ The real situation of the Pequots, however, was far from the once proud warrior nation. If the numbers on each side of the conflict are taken into consideration, the equation shows that the Pequots were by far the most vulnerable party, although the Puritan mythmakers still portrayed them as a deadly threat to their survival in the wilderness. The truth was that by "1636, Pequots had lost most of their already scant allies."²²

In the light of the arguments outlined above, the Pequot warrior reputation, though to a great extent construed as part of Puritan mythology, should be regarded as yet another accelerator leading to the atrocities committed during the Pequot war. The justification of

²⁰ Andrea Robertson Cremer, *Possession - Indian Bodies, Cultural Control and Colonialism in the Pequot War*, Feb. 23rd 2009. <http://works.bepress.com/andrea_cremer/2/>.

²¹ Cave 149.

²² Cave 150.

turning from a defensive to an offensive war against the Indians could be further exemplified by the image of threat represented by a “savage warrior nation.” Vaughan states that the total of English victims “between 1620 and 1638 may have been as high as fifty, but since most of the killings were committed by hostile tribes, no trials were held.”²³ This would seem to suggest that military vengeance rather than legal action held the position of immediate Puritan response, as English primary interest now lay in achieving acknowledgement of superiority on battlefield in order to intimidate the Indian by an overwhelming display of their military skills. Long before the Pequot War, General Court demanded that “military trainings be held in the open to demonstrate the military power”²⁴ the English had at their disposal. Lieutenant Gardener voiced his concern with living up to English military superiority over the local indigenous nations in the following passage:

All the eyes of all the Indians are fixed up on us, to see what we will do; and all may be assured of this, that some serious and very speedy course be taken to tame the pride and take down the insolence of these now-insulting Pequots, though with charge and loss and damage for the present, we are like to have all the Indians in the country about our ears.²⁵

The resulting conflict actually involved five distinct indigenous tribes, each one of them with a complex network of different allegiances and interests. The Pequots, the Narragansetts, the Western Niantics (subordinate to Pequots), the Block Islanders (in alliance with the Narragansetts) and the Mohegan tribe (though separated from the Pequots, still their cultural offshoot). On that particular morning, the colonial army that mounted the attack counted “77

²³ Vaughan 202.

²⁴ Cave 150.

²⁵ Cave 153.

Englishmen, 60 Mohegans, and 400 Narragansetts and Niantics”²⁶, which precipitated the English fear that their numbers might become relative, due to the much-feared contingency of large numbers of their Indian allies changing sides. In the final result, this could mean a considerable reduction in their effective fighting force. Mason’s text supports this notion when he claims that immediately before the battle, many of the Indian allies had fled, being “exceedingly afraid.”²⁷

The evidence in written records is further suggestive of yet another catalyst of the bloody confrontation; from Puritan point of view it was blasphemy on part of the Pequots that also contributed to the bloodshed. In an assembly at Hartford, the congregation was exhorted by its minister:

to execute those whom God, the righteous judge of all the world, hath condemned for blaspheming his sacred majesty, and murdering his servants, to execute vengeance upon the heathen, binde their Kings in chaines, and Nobles in fetters of Iron, make their multitudes fall under our warlike weapons.²⁸

The above passage clearly demonstrates the importance which the Puritans attributed, apart from other transgressions, to blasphemy. As discussed previously in the section on Indian warfare, it should be emphasized here that indigenous tribes, once engaged in warfare, taunted their enemies in an effort to contest their warrior skills. Lieutenant Gardener portrays an encounter in which one of the Pequot braves boasted that: “They were Pequits, and have killed Englishmen, and can kill them as mosquitoes, and they will go to Conectecott and kill

²⁶ Cave 168.

²⁷ Mason, *A Brief History of the Pequot War*

²⁸ Cave 137.

men, women, and children, and that they could kill but one more of us and be equal with God, and as the Englishman's God is, so would be they.”²⁹ With prospects of possible achievement of dominance in New England, the colonists could by no means afford to accept such boasts with stone face. Furthermore, given the reported Pequot kidnappings and raids on frontier settlements, the tortures inflicted on English captives must have been taken as indisputable evidence of Pequot savagery. Hitting of the “retaliate” button therefore seems to be in accordance with a certain amount of military necessity. Based on the nature and aftermath of the retaliation, however, the “systematic killing of those who broke through the flames”³⁰ does not correspond to pure military necessity by any standards; let alone deliberate killing of women and children.

One important fact should not be neglected - and that is that it was the indigenous tribes who made up the majority in the attacking force at Fort Mystic, and after the horrific inferno ended it was the “Mohegans who executed the Pequots' captured chief.”³¹ Alfred Cave mentions one recent study in Native American politics which notes that “the Puritans by siding against Pequots aligned themselves with a powerful network of Indian allies that was already in the process of isolating and breaking up the Pequot Confederation.”³² In this respect, the fact that both Puritans and Indians fought “shoulder-to-shoulder” against the Pequots should be understood as crucial. The bottom line is that the war cannot be portrayed merely as a Puritan-versus-Indian conflict. The English colonists, rather than being regarded as the sole prime villains in the whole Pequot War, should perhaps be partially seen as pawns in the game of intertribal power politics.

The Indian display of proclaimed loyalty to the English stands corrected though – the most probable reason for which would be another instance of the already discussed Indian

²⁹ Cave 171.

³⁰ Cave 151.

³¹ Zinn, Howard, *Biased History*, 20 Sep. 2009. <[http://hnn.us/articles/1493.html/the biased history](http://hnn.us/articles/1493.html/the_biased_history)>.

³² Cave 122.

understanding of warfare. It can be inferred that the Indian warriors had never seen war of such ferocity and scale as on that day and, as a result the atrocities they witnessed may have contributed to split loyalties on their part. This can be demonstrated on the passage dealing with the massacre, which maintains that from “a certain vantage point, they [the English] slaughtered anyone trying to flee the flames. The carnage was so frightening that Uncas himself, a Mohegan sachem allied with the English, cried ‘No more! You kill too many.’”³³ Apart from all the fears of an Indian conspiracy the English harbored, the extreme violence with which they attacked the fort at Mystic could also be attributed to military necessity of establishing a certain hierarchical relationship between their soldiers and their Indian allies. The fact that prior to the war “Miantonomi, the Narragansett chief, offered to bring the Pequots to their knees and Boston was unwilling to accept the offer”³⁴ suggests the white man’s premeditated desire to pull the strings in New England without owing the Narragansett such a favor. The Pequot War thus can be said to have redefined the relationship between the English settlers and the indigenous peoples of New England.

English takeover of the Pequot dominant role within the New England power politics would by all means facilitate achievement of such hierarchy. By bringing along their own military traditions, forged over centuries of vicious combat, and unleashing the demonstration of supreme warrior skills upon the Pequot, the English, motivated by fervent religious zeal, managed to displace the Narragansetts and Mohegans as potential successors to the Pequots in the governance of New England. Although the skirmish did not put an end to all the intercultural fighting, it was a decisive act which replaced the anger of the Pequots with dismay by shattering their will to put up more fight. The tribe was now forced to struggle for survival, gradually dissolving as its remaining bands drifted away seeking shelter and

³³ *Massacre at Mystic*, Oct. 11th 2008.

<[http://www.randomhouse.com/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780739333358&view=excerpt/massacre at mystic](http://www.randomhouse.com/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780739333358&view=excerpt/massacre+at+mystic)>.

³⁴ Cave 146.

sanctuary from the English wrath, only to support them later during King Philip's War as a means of self-preservation. In having conquered the Pequots, the English asserted what they understood to be their privileged right to the cultural conquest.

In the long run, the war's various implications inevitably foreshadowed other campaigns, even on a much larger scale, fought for dominance in New England, later perhaps extending the struggle for dominance in North America, when notion of Divine Providence was gradually anticipating aspects of the concept of Manifest Destiny. The resulting competition between the ever-growing English settlements and the divided tribes of New England did not offer fertile ground for much compromise and accommodation. English dominance would not encounter any serious challenge by the Indigenous nations for another three decades, which conflict is generally considered to have even surpassed the infamous extent of violence employed during the Mystic Massacre.

9. Treaty of Hartford and its Implications

Not only did the everyday rhetoric of the English operate within the bias of their religious and ethnocentric cultural views but, what is more, these views were also translated into the Treaty of Hartford, signed on September 21, 1638, which formalized the final steps in the cultural annihilation of the Pequot nation and, as a result, consolidated the English position within the New England cultural environment and power politics. Given its terms of surrender, the document should be considered to fall more within terms of conquest rather than within terms of negotiated surrender, as it strove to dissolve the political, social and cultural power of the Pequot community through uprooting its tribal identity. In its final effect, the treaty basically achieved detribalization of the Pequot. It should be further noted that while the treaty settled the Pequot War, the Pequots were not a party to it; meaning that, from their perspective, the Puritans felt confident enough, as well as fully entitled, by virtue of their cultural superiority to the takeover of the Pequot land. Under its restrictions, the “allied tribunal, consisting of the Connecticut magistrates, Uncas for the Mohegans, and Miantonomo for the Narragansetts”¹ decided that:

The Pequots ceased to exist as an independent polity, with the treaty specifically forbidding any of the former followers of Sassacus to be called Pequots and denied them habitation on the old tribal lands. The Pequots who survived were assigned, with their families, to the Indian allies: eighty to Uncas and eighty to Miantonomo. Both

¹ Vaughan 150.

chiefs agreed to pay annual tribute to the English for these captives.²

If considered from broader perspective, the Puritan rhetoric underlying the treaty was thus to foreshadow the Indian and European-American relations for the next couple of hundred years, as it asserted English sovereignty over Southern New England in very specific ways, placing the white man in an extremely favorable position. This was achieved through the Hartford settlement, which rendered the English self-proclaimed police force and arbitrator, wielding supreme power over all significant disputes, future treaties and law enforcement. Rather than treating the Mohegans and Narragansetts as equal partners in war, or friends in arms, the Puritan authorities employed the treaty to make them their colonial subjects. It “stipulated that the Mohegans and Narragansetts would not resort to arms against each other without the approval of the English.”³ Nonetheless, this particular article held a promise of a considerable dilemma; should the intertribal frictions happen to turn into a feud between Uncas and Miantonomo, the English were more than certain to become involved. The conundrum lay in the fact that both Uncas and Miantonomo proved to be loyal allies during the Pequot campaign. Therefore, it was the very existence of the article that put them in a tight corner, as it was jeopardizing their capability of holding up their end of the deal without taking sides. Interestingly enough, as far as distribution of their loyalty was concerned, the very same article which brought the Indian allies under English authority led eventually to the “establishment of the Confederation of New England in 1643”⁴ as a way out of this split-mindedness.

² Vaughan 150.

³ Vaughan 150.

⁴ Vaughan 157.

The war effects on the English-Indian relations were profound. With the treaty signed, the balance of power shifted from the rather unorganized indigenous nations to the English settlements almost overnight. The launching of total war on the Pequot marked a crucial point in getting rid of the “Indian menace”, since as of that point on there was basically no, at least for a certain period of time, competition in the form of any potential Indian conspiracy against the English – which is not to say that the English conspiracy paranoia did not linger over the settlements. Binding the Mohegans and Narragansetts into submission in combination with the extermination of Pequots cleared away the only major obstacle to Puritan expansion, particularly due to the impression the thoroughness of the destruction made on the other tribes. Even though the Pequot War was not openly fought to claim the Pequot land, most of the conquered territory was annexed as spoils of war under one of the above-mentioned articles of the Hartford Treaty. Needless to say, the consequent annexation of the Pequot land cannot be entirely dismissed nor separated from the frequently discussed Puritan premeditated land lust prior to their entering the war.

The land annexation, however, only reignited intercolonial friction over rival claim to the Pequot land. This bickering over land was set off by jurisdictional disputes between the “Connecticut and Massachusetts Colonies that soon followed the war, for Miantonomo had previously given title to the Pequot country to Massachusetts Bay [although it had not really been his to give].”⁵ Eventually, the Crown awarded the annexed tribal lands to the colony of Connecticut some decades later. In the meantime, the Pequot extermination still managed to trigger a whole new wave of extensive expansion and settlement of Connecticut, and “four years after the Treaty of Hartford the colony boasted 3000 souls, with towns such as Farmington, Fairfield, Stratford and Middletown soon dotting the countryside where the

⁵ Vaughan 153.

Pequots had roamed but a few years before.”⁶ Even the Puritan apologist Vaughan claims that all this could not eventually have happened without the defeat of the Pequots as it would be “a distortion of the case, but there is little doubt that the process of settlement was significantly speeded by the elimination of the only ‘hostile’ tribe in southern New England.”⁷ However, relocation of the remaining Pequots under the article forbidding them future resettlement of their ancient tribal lands in the months following the Hartford Treaty did not turn out to be all that simple, since not all of them “went willingly to their new masters and a fairly large group returned to their former lands in violation of the agreement.”⁸

9.1 The Aftermath of the Conflict at Mystic Fort

As seen previously, the rhetoric justifying the attack on the Pequot fort in Mystic employed heavily the intervention of the Almighty who delivered his chosen followers from the clutches of the cruel and powerful unChristian enemy. Without a doubt, the victory over the Pequot related to the same motivation. The war’s final outcome should be mainly understood in terms of the obvious technical differences between the parties involved, emphasized by the contrasts in the perceptions and expectations of warfare, including the very practice of combat. The totality of Puritan warfare managed to break the Pequot spirit of resistance, contributing considerably to the near annihilation of the Pequot peoples, materially as well as culturally. The result of the cultural conflict could be attributed to the profound upheaval which the Pequot longstanding cultural norms experienced after their initial encounter with the white man, further disturbed by the fact that in a in a very short period of time they were forced by circumstances to go through times heavily marked by devastating

⁶ Vaughan 153.

⁷ Vaughan 153.

⁸ Vaughan 151.

disease, annihilating war, humiliating subjugation and eventually an imposed absorption into other tribes. As of that moment, the Pequot were basically detribalized.

The Pequot War carried significant weight for the colonial life also in terms of Indian policy, since in its final effect the war also represented an important step towards a certain renegotiation and consequent stronger unity of the previously ambivalent Indian policies. The war, which turned into a vehicle through which Puritans were able to prove their governing and organizational skills and eventually also make good use of their authority over the land of Southern New England together with its indigenous populations, set a precedent for actions against other Native tribes, both in New England and later even beyond. The newly acquired firm stance of dominion removed, for a very short period of time, a notion of vulnerability for the settlements.

As for the Natives, they were left with virtually two options – they could either take the path of assimilation (and become absorbed by the English) or the one of resistance. The cultural clash thus derived primarily from colonists' projection of false benevolence towards the Natives in combination with the inevitable resistance of the Indians to the impositions of English colonial rule. Either way, both proved to have great potential to jeopardize the sustainability of the indigenous cultural values and identity. The way of resistance offered only one prospect – the one of war with the English - given how aptly they had demonstrated their ruthless and predatory habits of attaining their ends, as well as severe punishments of those who opposed them.

In order to ensure utter subjugation and power takeover – most probably to give it some symbolic form - the English also demanded of their Indian allies that the heads and hands of

any Pequots they slayed be delivered to them as “evidence of loyalty and good intentions.”⁹ Even Roger Williams himself urged a “hasty pursuit lest the remaining Pequot warriors escape to fight another day.”¹⁰ Following these Puritan demands, several tribes sent “representatives to colonial officials with proffers of friendship and promises of tribute.”¹¹ Those who were lucky enough to escape the carnage were constantly falling prey to or in captivity of their Indian pursuers. Captain Mason later observed that such tokens of “loyalty came almost daily to Windsor or Hartford, and in early August there arrived a gift from the Mohawks, the greatest prize of all: the scalp of Sassacus.”¹² As for the Mohegan and Narragansett sachems, for instance, they agreed to offer “no sanctuary to Indian enemies of the English and promised to apprehend and execute any surviving Pequot warriors guilty of killing Englishmen and deliver their heads or hands to the Puritan authorities.”¹³ In return for their loyalty in combat, those Pequot noncombatants not yet disposed of were “awarded as prizes of war to Uncas of the Mohegans and Miantonomi of the Narragansetts, each of whom received eighty.”¹⁴

9.2 The Economic Aftermath of the Conflict

It is apparent that the ending of the above passage touches upon colonial economy. As for the economic effects of the Pequot War, they are multifarious. On the one hand, the campaign must have proved to be an expensive enterprise, which generally holds true for waging any war. Vaughan, for instance, mentions large quantities of “provisions requisitioned for the army, together with the absence of all able-bodied men who had left the fields only

⁹ Vaughan 150.

¹⁰ Vaughan 149.

¹¹ Vaughan 150.

¹² Mason, *A Brief History of the Pequot War*

¹³ Cave 161.

¹⁴ Cave 161.

partially tilled and new crops were unplanted.”¹⁵ Emergency rationing, as a temporary solution to getting by for the struggling plantations during the critical food shortages, reminded the settlers of their colonial beginnings. On the other, it was the Natives once again who provided the white man with surplus corn. This time, however, the white settlers had to “purchase the corn from the Indians at Pocumtuck.”¹⁶ Needless to say though, that the war, in its final effect, did not prove to be merely great expenses but a means of making profit as well.

Besides finding themselves in a heavy war debt, it is without a shadow of doubt that the Puritans eventually profited from the war, as one of its outcomes was “in effect the partial underwriting of New England colonization costs by the conquered Natives.”¹⁷ From a broader perspective, the economic implications of the Pequot War should by no means be dismissed since they basically involved the consequent expansion of the white man’s settlement across the conquered agricultural land together with absorption of Indian labor into the colonial economy. Tribes once “tributary to the Pequots bought peace and protection from the Puritans”¹⁸, on top of which were some Indians “required to pay fines in wampum for various offences.”¹⁹ With the Narragansetts and Mohegans now skillfully blocked from claiming the Pequot tribute, the Puritans were enjoying tributes paid to them not only by other Indian tribes, but by Narragansetts and Mohegans as well, since they were obliged under the terms of the Treaty of Hartford to “contribute annual wampum payments for each of the Pequots they received.”²⁰ Although it is believed that the records are too fragmentary in their nature to allow a more accurate analysis of the real economic impact of the new income, one important

¹⁵ Vaughan 151.

¹⁶ Vaughan 152.

¹⁷ Laurence M. Hauptman, *The Pequots in Southern New England: The Fall and Rise of an American Indian*, Oct. 5th 2007. <http://www.america.gov/esp/media/pdf/ejs/indigenousepeople0609_sp.pdf>.

¹⁸ Cave 163.

¹⁹ Cave 163.

²⁰ Cave 164.

fact cannot be denied – and that is that in the long run the Natives played a significant role in the colonial economics.

In order to give due credit to Native ties to colonial economy, James Drake in his King Philip's War mentions, for instance, that the “Natives, just like the English, received money payments from English towns whenever they killed wolves or built fences.”²¹ He supports this notion by giving an example of a certain “Ephraim, an Indian, who paid taxes and assisted with building roads and the meetinghouse in the town of Dedham.”²² Therefore, it can be argued that the fairly intimate contacts between the Puritans and Indians allow for claims that the economic interdependence eventually resulted in a noticeable extent of economic integration of the Indian into the colonial economy – which is not to say he had not already been part of it prior to the war. As stated previously in the section on Indian economics, the Natives produced desired articles like furs, wampum, as well as foodstuffs in short supply like corn, fish and venison. The truth is, however, that the Puritans relied heavily on the foodstuffs especially in the beginning of their settlement or at times of food shortage following the war. More importantly, however, the war's economic impact held yet another significant implication for Native production of wampum.

Following the Pequot war, some aspects of Indian involvement in colonial economy attenuated. This could be primarily attributed to the decline in colonist's interest in wampum, rooted in the fact that “English overseas trade grew and currency began flowing into the region after 1662.”²³ Naturally, fur-bearing animals were becoming more and more scarce due to commercial over-hunting, which held a number of implications for the English-Indian relations. First and foremost, the fact that the Indian's role as a fur producer

²¹ Drake 42.

²² Drake 42.

²³ Drake 55.

considerably diminished was accordingly accompanied by the decline in Puritan interest in their wampum, which was undoubtedly influenced by the long-expected influx of English currency. As a result, a steady increase in land values was triggered, with greater numbers of settlers streaming continuously into the region. Once again, this proves that the English did not learn their lesson and repeatedly failed to recognize the cultural value wampum held for the indigenous populations, which cultural incompetence had effects of enormous significance. After putting the whole economic implications into perspective, one realizes that what the practical demands of commerce had brought into proximity, the increase in land speculation eventually brought into conflict.

The way this influx was translated into the postwar colonial economy is mainly reflected in the fact that from this point on real estate proved more profitable in comparison to the declining fur trade. Consequently, the disturbed patterns in distribution of wampum soon became the bone of contention. Despite the previously ongoing, and hard-won, trend in reciprocity in networking and trade, the precarious balance of power which emerged after the Pequot War in southern New England began to suffer from external influences, reaching in from regions immediately neighboring with New England boundaries. The intertribal power politics were to suffer the consequences of this economic impact, due to the dissolution of the “ties – a strong fur trade and access to wampum - that had bound the Mohawks to the Connecticut River Indians and the Narragansetts.”²⁴ As a result, animosities between the Iroquoian Mohawks and the Algonquians of New England resurfaced for old times’ sake, due to lack of wampum to support in particular the Iroquois diplomacy. The breakdown of the Iroquois-Algonquian relations made itself felt soon, and was manifested through a series of deadly attacks and counter-attacks, stirring further intertribal conflicts, which heavily jeopardized the already fragile peace and vulnerable stability in New England.

²⁴ Drake 60.

Despite the fact that some boundaries had been drawn, it was only natural that scant numbers of the contemporary inhabitants paid attention to keeping them at the expense of pursuing their own cultural, military, social and, above all, economic interests. Interestingly enough, this also applies to the three hundred surviving Pequot males, as they are known to have joined with the English against the Wampanoags and Narragansetts as part of their survival strategy, just as well as out of economic necessity. This clearly demonstrates that the underlying economic and political ties between the Indians and English played a crucial role in forming alliances, the King Philip's War between 1675 and 1677 included.

10. From Pequot War to King Philip's War

Although it is not intended here to describe the causes and events of King Phillip's War, deserving nothing less than separate and in-depth treatment, it is necessary to outline the conflict in order to put the Pequot War aftermath into a broader perspective. The four decades between the wars have been portrayed as a period of a social harmony between the Pequots and Indians, though Alfred Cave argues that not only were they marked by "relative absence of interracial violence, but paradoxically, also by a profound lack of trust."¹ This important aspect of Puritan-Indian relations after the war can be readily traced back to the fact that Puritan communities of the 17th century New England followed tenaciously the more or less stable Indian policy governed by the assumption that "a satanically inspired Indian war of extermination against the Saints was a very real possibility and could be averted only by constant intimidation of potential adversaries."² Although in principle the Pequot War removed the major threat to the expansion of and peace in English settlements, some tribes, undoubtedly, still rendered the English considerably apprehensive. The English interpreted, for instance, the occasional "reluctance of some Indians to kill the surrendering Pequots or turn them over as evidence not of compassions but of particularly malevolent"³ intent toward them.

Particularly due to the close geographical ties and unquestionably stronger economic interdependence, it was inevitable that after the Pequot War the Natives and the English enter into a period of a far more intense cultural accommodation and renegotiation. Contrary to the generally held assumptions, the defeat of the Pequots did not introduce any really tangible sense of security. Alfred Cave supports this notion when he mentions that:

¹ Cave 164.

² Cave 165.

³ Cave 165.

Once engaged in reading New England correspondence, diaries, journals, chronicles, and legal records from the four decades between the defeat of the Pequots and the outbreak of King Phillip's War, one is struck by the persistent fear of Indian conspiracy.⁴

It was only a matter of time before the pre-war legal and political ties were perceived as necessary to be given a determinate form in order to practice at least some degree of control over the Natives and retain hegemony in New England. In this respect, James Drake speaks of various factors such as the "English cultural biases, including the civilization-savagery ideology, rivalries among English groups, and pressures imposed by charters and millennial beliefs, which led the English to try to incorporate Indians into their polities as subjects."⁵ This stems from the fact that the colonists were fully aware of their fears of not being able to have full control over intertribal frictions, which their very presence was causing, even despite the introduction of the articles in the Hartford Treaty regulating intertribal conflict policies.

Regarding the grounds for forming alliances with the colonists, it is certainly worth of notice that indigenous tribes, such as Philip's Wampanoags, Uncas and his Mohegans, and Miantonomo and the Narragansetts were facing a steadily growing threat to their land due to the increase in English population growth and, accordingly, the progressive English attempts at cultural encroachment. Interestingly enough though, a good deal of these Natives followed the line of thought that "submission to the King did not necessarily conflict with their own

⁴ Cave 165.

⁵ Drake 44.

autonomy”⁶ and thus understood encapsulating themselves within the larger political structure of the English as a way of gaining advantages and empowering themselves in various intertribal conflicts. Yet, the paradox of the predicament lies in the whole setup of the situation – the Natives were at the same time subject to legislation which regulated certain amount of their subsistence activities that might potentially interfere with the settlers’ economic interests, and which also separated them socially from the white man. Despite such autonomy hindrances, the Narragansetts, Mohegans and Wampanoags still counted among the most formidable indigenous nations in the late seventeenth century New England - which stemmed from the fact that these Indians retained a substantial land base through alliances with the English. Hence, the Native tribes in question enjoyed the possibility of pulling the strings they had at their disposal, particularly to take care of their dealings with other Native tribes.

This was especially true of the Narragansetts and the Mohegans, whose sachems Miantonomo and Uncas were both boasting large numbers of followers as well as allies. Consequently, it was the expectations of an impending feud between the two sachemships that stirred the colonists’ biggest concerns. Therefore, as stated previously, alliance with both tribes soon proved difficult in terms of deciding which direction to distribute their loyalty. Combined with persistent rumors circulating “among the colonists that told of a vast Indian conspiracy against the English, with the Narragansetts cast as prime instigators and organizers,⁷” the rumors delivered to them through shrewd manipulation by Uncas once again infuriated the English, simultaneously contributing to further enhancement of distrust towards the Narragansetts. Uncas, making good use of his strong ties with the authorities in Connecticut, made attempts to advance his interests concerning the Narragansetts. It has been

⁶ Drake 49.

⁷ Vaughan 157.

agreed, that on a number of occasions he fed the English with false claims that the Narragansetts were preparing for war. The amount of trust he was enjoying with the English can be demonstrated by the fact that the English allies “defended him militarily in 1643, 1645, 1657, and 1658, with the year 1643 seeing Uncas get the English to convict the Narragansett leader Miantonomo of murder and allow him to carry out the execution.”⁸

Having experienced firsthand manipulations from Uncas, the Narragansett learned their lesson and before long also tried to take advantage of the English. If skillfully manipulated, rumors of conspiracy never fell on deaf ears with them. Their attempts were not a waste of breath; the Narragansetts employed some of Uncas’ methods by turning their attention against their biggest competition to the east, Philip’s Wampanoags. As a result, Philip soon came to understand the power of misinformation. He was summoned in front of Plymouth authorities on several occasions, where he was questioned on accounts of rumored accusations that he had been planning an insurrection against their settlements. Faced with challenge from the Narragansetts, Philip’s position with the English was further jeopardized due to the passing of Wampanoag great sachem Massasoit, his father and a long-time ally of Plymouth Colony, in early 1660s. Massasoit’s particular talent was his ability to use his diplomatic skills to maintain the shaky alliance with the English, mainly to secure counter-weight to his traditional enemies, the Pequots, Mohegans and the Narragansetts. As discussed above, the colonial encroachment on the Wampanoag territory and their political and cultural autonomy was the price Massasoit was willing to pay to empower his tribe in potential intertribal conflicts. Once the Wampanoags were forced to abandon trade with native trade goods to the English and started trading land with them, succession of Massasoit’s son, Metacom, or King Philip, as he was known to the English, drove another wedge into the already strained Indian-English relations.

⁸ Drake 67.

Contrary to his father Massasoit, Philip was famous for his reluctance to follow in his “father’s policy of complete submission to the English, including extensive land sales to the Plymouth Colony, which proved to mark the period following Philip’s succession as considerably richer in tensions in English-Indian relationship.”⁹ This is not to say that Philip should be perceived as the last man standing and opposing English submission, or as the solitary impetus that provoked adverse attitudes towards English encroachment upon their autonomy. Other tribal lands found themselves open to extensive English land speculation as well, which naturally contributed to escalated feelings of hostility towards the English. Other than that, the biggest issue with the increasing, at times even immediate, physical closeness of the two cultures seems to be in tensions triggered by the growing number of trials. Lawsuits of various sorts became as much an extension of battling out of tensions between the English and the Natives in court, just as they were increasingly representing rivalries among the Indian tribes themselves, in which “the praying Indians enjoyed relative success as opposed to the nonmissionized ones.”¹⁰

Undeniably, the expanding population of praying Indians posed a considerable threat to traditional Indian leaders, who derived their power from demonstrated skill to act on their followers’ behalf. Due to Philip’s lack of ability to control the English, the Wampanoags felt that not only their sachem but also the Plymouth Colony was not fulfilling the terms of reciprocity, which might have made them realize there was a need for a change of course. Some historians are thus inclined to portray the conflict as a civil war, since the underlying causes of the campaign, as well as its instigators, remain shrouded by controversy. The label “King Philip’s War” is more or less suggestive of an organization and structure for the

⁹ Drake 70.

¹⁰ Drake 71.

conflict, rather than designating Philip as the sole conspirator. Historians till this day seem to agree only on claims that the war was an extension of failed diplomacy, an outcome of a whirl of stimuli in the 1660s that began to undermine the intricate network of relations, so painfully created.

Issues on land sales and the resulting progressive encroachment on indigenous autonomy proved to be closely related. The inevitable outcome of the obstinacy of English expansion and the imposed retreat of the Indians, as well as their social marginalization - which was essentially inconsistent with the indigenous concept of balance and reciprocity - was to sever relations with the English. Eventually, the Native necessity to protect their autonomy took on a physical form of violence. The war seems to have been less related to intertribal conflicts, compared to the Pequot War, rather than to the economic, political, missionary and cultural pressure on Indian autonomy that eventually culminated in the outbreak of King Philip's War in 1675, which was essentially an uprising by most of the bands inhabiting the pocket of land stretching from the Narragansett Bay to the Connecticut River Valley.

11. Conclusion

As the first Anglo-Indian war in colonial New England, the Pequot War has proven to be the subject of extensive scholarly discussion and, what is more, controversy. If considered from a broader perspective, it is only recently that various reactions against racial intolerance in the U.S. triggered tendencies that have been gradually building up their share in renegotiations of the numerous misleading assumptions and stereotypes about the Indian-Puritan relations held over many generations. Such treatment of historical material holds true not only for the apologists, but revisionist scholars in particular and quite interestingly, however, even today both approaches still manifest a certain amount of need for negotiating the middle ground.

Such statements are primarily based on, and to quote from many, the demonstrated extensive vilification of Indians and victimization of the Puritans, including the frequent dismissal of the Puritan aggressive attempts at renegotiations of indigenous cultural identities on part of the apologists. As for some of the revisionist approaches, their treatment of this historical material may also be considered flawed, based on their hesitance to examine in a more profound manner the Puritan mindset, which had been so heavily driving their actions, at the expense of explaining the background of the conflict predominantly in terms of Puritan monetary considerations and land lust.

Apparently, as demonstrated above, progressive land speculation on the part of the Puritan carries a certain weight in the colonial New England context. Reliance on land-grievance interpretation can be undermined though, given the contributions, their Indian allies made to the outcomes, both to the Pequot and King Philip's Wars. It simply could not have been merely the lure of annexing land, or prospects of monopoly of markets, since those

outcomes would eventually emerge with conversion, absorption and subsequent “civilization” of the indigenous nations anyways.

As a result of the progressive English encroachment on the autonomies of the indigenous peoples of New England, which was essentially setting a further pattern to a long history of oppression, it was the perceived resistance of the Pequot originally, followed by other tribes towards the end of the 17th century, to the Puritan objectives of colonization and conversion that inevitably set the two cultures on a path of armed conflict. Although the Pequot War was a small-scale skirmish, the scholarly interest it has been receiving is clearly suggestive of the significance it holds within the context of American history and culture, given its far-reaching implications and consequences. It transformed dramatically the political and social boundaries of colonial New England.

The reasons for the war remain obscure and controversial and therefore instead of designating one particular party to put the blame on, I am inclined to conclude that the conflict has proven to be an unhappy outgrowth of a complex network of intertribal and intercolonial grievances, ambitions, cultural misunderstandings, and petty squabbles over land and tribute. In spite of the persistence on part of some of the Indians to retain their cultural identity, the colonial ideologies managed to marginalize the colonized peoples, establishing patterns of increasingly violent attempts at cultural control over Native Americans. Given the close geographical ties and the importance of strong economic interdependence, progressive expansion and power struggles, it was only inevitable that the indigenous tribes and the English enter into a period of a more intense cultural accommodation and renegotiation. The colonial environment of New England was essentially turned into a breeding ground for animosities.

Sadly enough, once the Puritan line of thought took on the course of a hot pursuit of colonial authority in all of New England, the local history of Puritan-Indian policy displayed several common denominators. However, one stands out in particular. The English and Indians mostly misinterpreted one another's motives, desires and cultural values. The Natives perceived the presence of the English as a certain enrichment of their world, and certainly not in terms of an imposed cultural identity renegotiation, let alone assimilation and replacement, whereas the English saw themselves as people apart, assuming sovereignty over the savage Natives based on their believed cultural superiority, with a long-term interest in displacing the original inhabitants and converting them to their religious practices and cultural values. Native Americans have struggled to retain and sustain their cultural identity, which attempts turned out particularly difficult in the face of changing economic relations introduced by the Europeans, drawing them deeper into economic interdependence. Thus, what the practical demands of commerce had brought into proximity, the absolute requirements of Puritan religion brought into conflict.

Despite the wealth of studies into various aspects of this particular cultural conflict, much that has been written on the subject, be it apologist or revisionist treatises, is still open to criticism, based on the fact that the wide range of material dealing with it seems to lack a certain detailed narrative study of the events leading up to its outbreak, as well as its aftermath. In this respect, not only the actions and reactions of both the cultures need to be taken into account, but, more importantly, a recurrent and stronger emphasis should be placed on their respective cultural values, and especially the mindset that was driving their actions.

Paying closer attention to the multifarious realities of the profound cultural differences between the indigenous and European communities is thus crucial to obtaining a better conception of the ways in which the velocity and impact of various provocations and

misunderstandings were magnified and precipitated. Undoubtedly, the mutual perceptions and misconceptions deserve to be put into a more comprehensive view that would strive to employ an interdisciplinary approach in order to avoid generalization or perpetuation of long-standing stereotypes that are so difficult to dispel. In short, the traditional historical approaches to and notions about “Puritanism” and the American indigenous cultures have been characterized by more hindsight rather than insight.

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Resumé v češtině

Ve své diplomové práci se zabývám kulturním konfliktem mezi puritány a Indiány v Nové Anglii 17.století. V úvodu zmiňuji v beletrii známou paralelu mezi Achabovou lodí Pequod a tendencemi puritánských hodnot k nadvládě nad divošskými, nekřesťanskými kulturami Nového světa, kterou ve svém díle Moby Dick využívá Herman Melville. Nastiňuji tak aspekty současné americké společnosti, která dodnes nepochybně vykazuje návaznosti na některé z hodnot puritánské společnosti a následně se zabývám druhým, protichůdným, názorem, který velmi často zastává, že „puritáni s sebou do Nového světa přinesli Boha.”

Cílem práce bylo především zjistit, jakou váhu nese každý z těchto dvou zdánlivě protichůdných názorů, obzvláště ve světle revisionistických přístupů k současnému výkladu historických materiálů. Za tímto účelem jsem si vybral Pequotskou válku, či spíše půtku, často nazývanou masakr u řeky Mystic, ke které došlo 26. května 1637 časně zrána. Pozadí a okolnosti vzniku této bitvy se nabízejí jako ideální k prozkoumání konfliktu mezi těmito dvěma neslučitelnými kulturními entitami. Především specifičnosti a okolnosti vzniku této války mi měli umožnit zaměřit se na dynamické vztahy mezi puritány a Indiány, se zvláštní pozorností věnovanou Pequotům, jejichž do té doby výsostní postavení v novoanglické mocenské politice je důležité k pochopení počátečních snah obou stran o soužití, ale i následovných nevyhnutelných manipulací i bojů o udržení nebo následné převzetí dominantního postavení v Nové Anglii.

Důležitost této bitvy se projevuje především v jejích důsledcích pro budoucí mocenské a diplomatické vztahy mezi těmito dvěma kulturami, počínaje sesazením Pequotů z mocenského trůnu a nastolením hegemonie anglických osadníků na území Nové Anglie. Z tohoto důvodu je tato událost také považována za jednu z nejdůležitějších v kontextu

koloniální historie Ameriky. Tento fakt odráží i skutečnost, že se tento ozbrojený konflikt velice často ocitá na mušce vědeckých debat, mnohdy však kontroverzní povahy. V současné době totiž neexistuje dílo, ani apologistického ani revisionistického charakteru, které by zevrubně pojednávalo o veškerých aspektech vedoucích k vyústění tohoto konfliktu. Toto tvrzení se především opírá o skutečnost, že většina děl v určitých svých aspektech opomíjí např. nedostatek jednotlivostí, přehlíží předpojaté názory a zároveň vyvozuje závěry, aniž by zohledňovala nutnost interdisciplinárního charakteru přístupu k historickým pramenům, který si tento konflikt jistě zaslouží. Toto ovšem neznamená, že neexistují žádné historické prameny, z kterých by se dalo čerpat. Spíše naopak. Dokumentů o Pequotské válce je doslova přehršel. Většina z nich ale o tomto kulturním střetu nevyvozuje přesvědčivě jednoznačné závěry.

Další kapitola mé diplomové práce se tudíž zaměřuje na povahu historiografických přístupů, přičemž shrnuji rysy dvou výrazných teoretických postupů. Perry Miller ve své knize The Puritans nastiňuje skutečnost, že díky určité teologické povaze materiálu, puritánům neodmyslitelně vlastní, musí být brány v potaz specifičnost a akurátnost údajů. Na druhé straně ale Miller upozorňuje, že stejným dokumentům musí být zároveň připisována určitá interpretační či didaktická povaha. Na základě toho se odkrývá fakt, že důsledkem tohoto potencionálně vysoce selektivního aspektu puritánských písemností je tendence všech materiálů k určitým dvojznačnostem. Skutečnost, že dostupné materiály pocházejí pouze od jedné strany v tomto konfliktu zúčastněné tedy pouze ztěžuje vyvozování jednoznačných závěrů.

Abych nastínil první z teoretických postupů, využívám příkladu neobyčejné krutosti, s jakou puritáni vypálili vesnici v Mysticu. Apologisté k jejímu osvětlení vykazovali doposud silné tendence demonizovat Indiány, čímž využívali odvěkých stereotypů popisujících oběti

masakru jako proradné a zákeřné divochy, kteří svými intrikami usilují pouze o zmaření puritánské mise šířit křesťanství v Novém světě. Z tohoto pohledu tudíž puritánům nezbývalo nic jiného, než udeřit jako první, aby tak rázně ztrestali své pohanské protivníky, o kterých si již před příjezdem do Nové Anglie utvořili utkvělé představy, od kterých nechtěli, či nemohli, z různých důvodů upustit.

V poslední době se na scénu ale také dostávají postupy revisionistické, které usilují hlavně o to, aby vina za rozpoutání konfliktu nespočívala pouze na Indiánech. Tato nová perspektiva, ač zaznamenává úspěchy v postupném odčerňování Indiánů a prokazuje ohleduplnost k bezprávním na domorodcích dosud spáchaných, avšak zbytečně často protěže puritánský ethnocentrismus, bigotnost a v neposlední řadě i lačnost po zisku. Proti tomuto se někteří vědci ohrazují a poukazují na skutečnost, že snahy vysvětlovat Pequostkou válku pouze z hlediska předem promyšleného anektování jejich země, či snahy o získání kontroly nad výnosným obchodem s kožešinami z interdisciplinárního hlediska neobstojí. Jiní zase zastávají názor, že politika, kterou puritáni zaujali vůči Indiánům odpovídá jejich náboženskému přesvědčení, řízenému Prozřetelností, a především snaze o znovunastolení řádu v již tak dosti zranitelné komunitě, která se ocitla tvář v tvář s poskoky ďábla, jež je třeba smést s povrchu zemského, aby se jim tak opět podařilo dosáhnout celistvosti, pro puritánskou komunitu tak důležitou.

Kromě připisování Prozřetelnosti veškerým svým činům využívám dále pro pochopení těchto náboženských pohnutek k obrácení novoanglických „divochů“ na pravou a jedinou správnou víru v další kapitole puritánského pojetí „divočiny“ jako důležitého faktoru, který do značné míry řídil jejich předem promyšlenou a zároveň často neměnnou předpojatou politiku vůči Indiánům. Při bližším prozkoumání všemožných postojů zastávaných oběma kulturami se postupně odkrývaly nové skutečnosti, osvětlující vznik onoho konfliktu. V tomto

ohledu tak veškeré praktické postoje kolonistů formoval předem přijatý stereotyp amerického Indiána, jako divocha ovládaného zlými silami. Tato přesvědčení puritánům nepochybně poskytla nejednu záminku pro to, aby vnímali domorodce jako spiklence, na jejichž půdu si mohou činit nároky. Na druhou stranu ale taky představovala způsob, kterým si puritáni vysvětlovali svou přítomnost v Novém světě a která byla pro přežití jejich náboženské mise nesmírně důležitá, jelikož jim poskytovala určitý způsob jak otestovat svou víru a tím i soudržnost své komunity.

Domnívám se tedy, že veškeré hodnoty se kterými se puritáni do Nového světa vydali nesou důležitost, která nesmí být opomíjena, jelikož nám umožňují pochopit hlouběji všechny jejich pohnutky, činy a chápání, či spíše často mylné výklady, kultury tak odlišné, jako byla právě ta novoanglických domorodců. Přes všechny tyto skutečnosti se ale dá jen velmi těžko prokázat, že by puritáni v průběhu kolonizace měli snahu o přehodnocení svého chápání domorodých kultur, což nasvědčuje jejich neochvějnému přesvědčení, že jsou vyvolenými Boha, se kterým uzavřeli „smlouvu“ (covenant) a který pro ně našel novou zaslíbenou zemi, kde mají vytvořit jeho baštu a odtud nadále šířit jedinou pravou formu křesťanství. Dále se domnívám, že přes veškeré ideologické pohnutky nelze zcela upustit od faktorů vidiny zisku a mocenské politiky, kterými se puritáni nechali nepochybně zčásti ovlivňovat.

Další kapitola se věnuje povaze soudobého písemnictví o novoanglických indiánech. V jejím úvodu popisuji genealogii Algonkinů a snažím se vyobrazit komplexnost jejich společnosti, s důrazem na nesourodost jejich organizace, která byla opakem soudržnosti puritánských osad. Dále se věnuji vztahu, který měly domorodé kmeny k půdě, kterou obývali a popisují charakter jejich společnosti a politických systémů, zemědělství a hospodaření, přičemž zrazuji od jakéhokoliv vyvozování všeobecných závěrů, čehož se velmi často dopouštěli angličtí pozorovatelé, což mělo za následek prohlubování jejich mylného chápání

domorodých kulturních hodnot. Důležitým aspektem domorodého vztahu k půdě, chápání jejího vlastnictví a jejímu obývání je skutečnost, že algonkvinské kmeny migrovali po několika svých stálých lokacích, v návaznosti na ročním období a dostupnosti potravy. Od tohoto zvyku se odvíjí velice důležitá pohnutka, která pro puritány představovala jedno z několika ospravedlnění pro obývání jejich půdy.

V následující kapitole se zabývám Pequoty, jejich populací, původem a především jejich dominantnímu postavení v mocenské politice Connecticutu, které zároveň přesahovalo hranice tohoto státu až do celé jihovýchodní Nové Anglie. Tyto souvislosti chápu jako podstatné k vykreslení vzniku konfliktu mezi jejich kmenem a puritány, kteří utvořili alianci se jejich nepřátelými kmeny. Důležitou roli zde dlouhou dobu hrál tradiční etymologický výklad jména Pequot, z algonkvinského „ničitel.“ Tato skutečnost umožnila puritánům vnímat Pequoty jako bezprostřední nebezpečí pro jejich komunitu. Přes všechny tyto mylné představy se ale Pequoti již dávno netěšili neochvějněmu dominantnímu postavení, což z velké části zapříčinila vlna epidemie, která zasáhla ve druhém desetiletí 17. století a později opět v letech 1633-1634 a zdecimovala tak skoro 90% veškeré domorodé populace východního pobřeží Nové Anglie. Šlo především o Indiány kmenů Massachusett, Wampanoag, Narragansett, Pequot, Niantic a Mohegan.

Na Pequoty měla epidemie téměř ničivý dopad, což je při očekávané expanzi anglických osadníků do vytouženého Connecticutu stavělo do svízelné situace. Ocitli se pod tlakem ze všech stran, a to nejen ze strany svých nejsilnějších nepřátel Narragansettů, kteří usilovali o převzetí jejich dominantní pozice, se kterou šel ruku v ruce vliv v obchodu s kožešinami, ale i ze strany puritánů, kteří postupně stále více osidlovali jejich území. Vztahy s Indiány nabraly na intenzitě, když do v roce 1630 začalo do oblasti proudit mnohem více osadníků z Anglie. Aniž by to ovšem tušili, stala se přítomnost puritánů důležitým faktorem

mezikmenových vztahů, které do značné míry narušila. Většina místních kmenů a komunit je chtěla získat za obchodní partnery a spojence ve zbrani. Následkem jejich osidlování se tak porušily dřívější aliance, obchodní vazby, vznikala nová soutěživost v mocenské politice a díky častým nedorozuměním a manipulacím některých indiánských náčelníků zároveň i bojechtivost.

Kapitola pátá pojednává o osidlování Nové Anglie puritány. Důležitým faktorem osidlování tohoto regionu byl fakt, že se jednalo o utopistickou skupinu separatistů, která dorazila ve větším počtu, ne jednotlivě, nýbrž jako celé rodiny rodiny usilující o založení náboženské komunity, tzv. “města na kopci” (City Upon the Hill). Po vylodění ale narazili na Indiány. Epidemie, která místní kmeny postihla se však pouze stala další záminkou, kterou si puritáni vyložili jako znamení Prozřetelnosti, která očividně přála jejich náboženské misi. Kromě náboženské dimenze měla epidemie ještě výhodu z hlediska praktického, jelikož do značné míry ulehčila osadníkům osidlování nové půdy. V návaznosti na osidlování se zabývá puritánským pojetím jejího vlastnictví a zároveň potřebou a praxí vykupování indiánských území, které se často řídilo přísnými pravidly, na což dohlížely koloniální autority. Důvodem jejího vykupování byly časté spory o její vlastnictví mezi koloniálními podnikateli.

Zabývá se proto způsoby, kterými si puritáni ospravedlňovali osidlování indiánského území. Těch bylo hned několik. Kromě legálního skupování měli po ruce ještě několik konceptů, které měli jejich přítomnost v Nové Anglii posvětit. Nároky na indiánskou půdu byly založeny především na konceptu tzv.“patentu“, dále vyplývaly z nároku na tzv.“první objevení” (discovery). Tyto dva však bylo velmi často obtížné uplatnit, jelikož si tuto jinak obecně uznávanou zásadu mezinárodního práva každý národ vykládal po svém. Zajímavý, a vcelku práva Indiánů přehlížející, zásadu zastával Jonathan Winthrop, jehož výklad byl

postaven na názoru o tzv. “prázdném uzemí” (vacuum domicilium). Na tomto případě poukazují na fakt, že se nepochybně projevila neschopnost i neochota anglických přistěhovalců o snahu pochopit indiánský koncept vlastnictví půdy a tudíž si nárokovali kmenová území na základě toho, že Indiáni neměli trvalá sídla, kromě toho ani neoplocovali půdu, a podle anglického chápání vlastnictví půdy tak nemohli ani být jejími vlastníky.

Kulturní rozdíly v konceptech vlastnictví půdy tak patří mezi jedny z nejdůležitějších aspektů vzniku války s Pequoty. Někteří jedinci, jako např. Roger Williams s těmito koncepty nesouhlasili a zastávali názor, že jediným způsobem jak indiánskou půdu získat je vykoupit ji. Rozpory v přístupu k vlastnictví půdy se ale nenacházely pouze na úrovni ve vztahu k indiánské půdě, ale i na mezikoloniální úrovni. To se např. projevilo po konfliktu u řeky Mystic, kdy si anexovanou údu nárokovalo hned několik kolonií. Spekulace s půdou se stala po válce s Pequoty velice výnosnou záležitostí.

Následující kapitola pojednává o puritánských očekáváních a realitě, se kterou se v Novém světě setkali, obzvláště o jejich mylných úsudcích, které vyvozovali při vnímání svého okolního světa a odlišnostech indiánských kultur. Prvním očekáváním, které se projevilo být bylo v rozporu se skutečností byla jejich misijní snaha. Zpočátku ze zcela praktických důvodů nemohli tuto snahu vyvíjet. Teprve když k ní přistoupili a podařilo se jim založit několik měst pro konvertity, tzv. “modlíci se Indiány” (praying Indians), projevila se jako daleko obtížnější, jelikož proslavená puritánská nesmiřitelnost, striktnost a důraz na znalosti Bible, které kladli na potencionální konvertity nepadla na zcela úrodnou půdu. Ve světle skutečnosti, že celou podstatou puritánské misie byla tendence vnucovat Indiánům radikální změnu života a nekompromisní přehodnocení kulturních hodnot, dodržovaných po generace, se ukázala misijní snaha jako neslučitelná s tamním kulturním prostředím, alespoň v době počáteční kolonizace.

Dalším zásadním „omylem,“ kterému lze zčásti připisovat brutálnost, se kterou proběhl konflikt v Mystic je způsob, kterým puritáni vnímali indiánský způsob boje. I v Novém světě byla válka prostředkem k urovnávání různých sporů. Způsob boje, který zastávali Evropané ovšem představoval zvrát v mezikmenových vztazích. Manipulací s paranoiou anglických osadníků, že všechny kmeny usilují o jejich životy, se různí indiánští náčelníci snažili jak řešit dlouhodobé rozbroje mezi kmeny, tak posunout svůj kmen výše v mocenské politice Nové Anglie. Angličtí vojáci pro indiánský způsob boje nenacházeli mnoho pochvalných slov. Odsuzovali Indiány za to, že nechápou podstatu důvodů, ze kterých se války vedou, a že podceňují způsob vedení boje. Usuzovali tak proto, že konflikty které měli možnost shlédnout nikdy nekončily velkými ztrátami ani nebyly provázeny nelítostným sražením nepřítele na kolena. Indiáni totiž považovali svůj způsob boje za spíše symbolickou událost, při které se doceňovala především taktika, nikoli míra újmy, kterou nepříteli způsobili. Etnohistorické studie mají ovšem za to, že Indiáni si tento malý „nedostatek“ kompenzovali při mučení válečných zajatců. Díky pocitu své kulturní nadřazenosti však i tato skutečnost, jako jedna z mnoha, prošla u puritánů bez povšimnutí.

Tato skutečnost sehrála důležitou roli v kořenech konfliktu u řeky Mystic. Tradiční výklad má za to, že událost, která způsobila, či spíše urychlila, neodvratný konflikt byla smrt kapitána Johna Stonea. V několika detailech se apologeté i revisionisté rozcházejí, pravdou ovšem je, že se přikláním k interpretaci, která zohledňuje sloučení celé škály motivačních faktorů, jelikož tak komplexní záležitost jakou je střet dvou rozlišných kultur nelze vysvětlit za pomoci jediné příčiny, natož klást vinu na jednu jedinou stranu sporu. Nepochybně nemalou roli sehrála tíživá situace Pequotů, kteří usilovali u udržení svého dosavadního výsostného postavení v mocenské politice. Jejich snahu dokládá i skutečnost, že se v roce 1634 vydali do Massachusetts, kde s puritánskými autoritami uzavřeli dohodu o obchodu a

neútočení a dokonce je přizvali ke kolonizaci údolí řeky Connecticut. Požadavky, které si na ně puritáni kladli ovšem zahnali Pequoty do úzkých. Za zmínku též stojí role tzv. "wampumu", platidla, které neslo pro algonkvinskou společnost nemalou kulturní hodnotu, kterou puritáni opět podcenili.

Svůj podíl měl rozhodně Uncas, náčelník Mohegánů, který se chytrou manipulací vlichotil puritánům a dostal se tak na jejich stranu, přičemž doufal, že odstranění Pequotů z trůnu v jihovýchodní Nové Anglii pro něho a jeho kmen bude skýtat výhody, ne-li nástup na samotný trůn. Skutečnost, že Angličané později obvinili Pequoty ze zabítí Stonea a dalších, a dále z toho, že neplní sjednanou dohodu přiměla obě strany, aby se jaly intenzivně hledat spojence pro nadcházející konflikt. V tomto ohledu byli úspěšnější kolonisté, jimž se podařilo získat na svou stranu v té době nejpočetnější novoanglický kmen a tradiční rivaly Pequotů Narragansetty a Mohegány, dřívější příbuzné Pequotů.

Po přehnané kárné výpravě proti Pequotům a odvetných akcích, při kterých Pequoti podrobili kolonisty mučení, se z neoficiální války stala válka oficiální. Masakr u řeky Mystic zpečetil budoucí osud Pequotů během jediné noci, zvláště díky brutálnímu způsobu boje, který puritáni nasadili. Během nastalé bitky zemřelo zhruba 700 válečníků, žen a dětí. Tato bitva prakticky rozhodla o osudu války, jelikož zlomila pequotského ducha a následně při konferenci konané v Hartfordu v září 1638 napsala za konfliktem definitivní tečku a tím tak nastolila anglickou hegemonii na léta dopředu. Ve svém důsledku zbavila podepsaná smlouva Pequoty jejich kmenového jména, identity a následně rozdělila přeživší členy kmenu mezi Narragansetty a Mohegány, z kterých tyto kmeny puritánům odváděly podíl. Pequotské území připadlo po vleklých soudních sporech mezi koloniemi pod jurisdikci kolonie Connecticut. Přestože měli Pequotové jako etnikum zaniknout, nebylo tomu tak. Rozptýlené skupinky se později osamostatnily a o čtyři desítky let později stáli ve válce krále Filipa na straně

Angličanů. Aliance s Angličany se tudíž prokázala jako určitá strategie zajišťující kmenům jistou dávku moci v mezikmenových konfliktech.

Na závěr své práce se přikláním k tomu, že onen neblaze proslulý masakr u řeky Mystic byl spíše nežšťastným důsledkem komplexní souhry hned několika faktorů, a to především neúspěšné diplomacie, dále pak podceněním mnoha kulturních hodnot na straně puritánů, vzájemných kulturních nedorozumění, mezikoliálních a mezikmenových křivd, výsledkem manipulací a zároveň malicherných sporů o získání půdy. Za daných okolností se koloniální ideologii podařilo ve stále těsnějším a napjatějším prostředí odsunout domorodé kmeny na okraj společnosti, což se neslučovalo s jejich chápáním společnosti postavené na reciprocitě. Nezanedbatelná ekonomická vzájemná závislost spolu s postupující expanzí kolonistů do vnitra indiánského území a bojem o lepší postavení v mocenské politice tudíž nevyhnutelně vedla k jedinému důsledku. Koloniální prostředí se stalo semeništem pro další nastávající konflikty. Další v řadě byla válka krále Filipa roku 1675.

Jakmile se ovšem puritáni vydali na cestu za mocí a nadvládou v celé Nové Anglii, objevuje se v koloniální historii, potažmo ve vztazích mezi puritány a Indiány, jeden společný jmenovatel. Tím je bezpochyby vzájemné nedorozumění. Novoanglické domorodé kmeny vnímali přítomnost puritánů jako určité obohacení svého světa, rozhodně ale ne ve smyslu přijetí vnucovaných koloniálních kulturních hodnot, natož asimilace a následného vytlačení jejich kulturní identity za cenu spojenectví s Angličany. Zatímco Puritáni se brali za samostatnou identitu, která nemůže jinak, než zaujmout svrchovanost nad divošskými indiánskými kmeny z důvodu své kulturní nadřazenosti, puritánským hodnotám tak vlastní. Jejich chování vykazuje dlouhodobý zájem na vytlačení původních obyvatel a jejich obrácení na svou víru a samozřejmě kulturní hodnoty. Vzdor Indiánů podřídit se těmto koloniálním tendencím se poslední dobou vyzdvihuje a oceňuje se především jejich snaha o zachování si

své kulturní identity. Tato snaha se ale projevila jako marná, obzvláště s přihlédnutím ke skutečnosti odrážející nové a měnící se ekonomické vztahy, které byly zavedeny v souvislosti s přítomností kolonistů. Celkově by se tak dalo říci, že vzájemná ekonomická závislost ve svém důsledku částečně přispěla k propuknutí různých konfliktů, ať už mezikoloniálních či mezikmenových.