

*Race and Redemption in Puritan New England.* By Richard A. Bailey.  
(New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. Pp. xiv, 210. \$55.00.)

Historians have long neglected the subject of slavery in seventeenth-century New England, specifically the ways in which colonial attitudes toward blacks were influenced by puritanism. In *Race and Redemption*, Richard A. Bailey attempts to undertake this task as he asks how puritan efforts to extend redemption to both blacks and Native Americans were influenced by, and in turn shaped, colonial understandings of those peoples. He observes that “some white New Englanders developed a sense of moral dis-ease with the institution of slavery—a dis-ease seen most clearly in their attempts to redeem the contradictions of their society”—but in general colonists believed that “God had ordained that life in the ‘city upon a hill’ should include slavery” (p. 114). He concludes, “white New Englanders neglected to recognize, however, that as they strived for redemption, they all too often created racial identities that denigrated and racialized the very persons they hoped to redeem” (p. 114).

Bailey’s consistent application of his argument to both Native Americans and blacks is not persuasive. Moreover, although he offers some useful insights, his effort, which betrays curious gaps in research, is seriously flawed: he fails to account for how New Englanders’ ideas evolved over time from first settlement to the American Revolution and to distinguish between puritan and non-puritan sources; he misapprehends how key words were used in the seventeenth century; and he tends to turn possibilities into certainties.

Whereas on various occasions Bailey notes that ideas and practices evolved over the colonial period, he still uses eighteenth-century statements and actions to illustrate what he claims to be the beliefs of the first settlers. To cite an egregious case, he repeatedly quotes Cotton Mather in support of his argument regarding the founding generation of puritans. Mather might be typical of his eighteenth-century contemporaries in the puritan world (though some would disagree), and his comments might be of value when he is explicitly discussing the history of seventeenth-century New England, but his views on these issues cannot be taken as representative of his grandfathers’ generation. Moreover, on numerous other occasions Bailey makes a general point about colonial attitudes or practices and supports it entirely with quotations or examples from the 1740s or later.

It is often difficult to know whether an individual colonist was a puritan or not, and such a distinction is not necessarily important for all studies of “Puritan New England,” many of which treat the region as a cultural whole. But since Bailey is explicitly focusing on “the specific ways that New England puritans used their theological system . . . to help them make sense of their social realities” (p. 7), it is important to know if those he is quoting were actually puritans and not merely English Protestants. On twenty-one occasions noted in the index, Bailey deals with the beliefs and practices of James MacSparran, identified in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* as a “Church of England clergyman in America.” Born and raised in a Presbyterian household in Ireland, he permanently settled in New England in 1721 as a missionary of the Anglican Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. There is no denying that he is an important figure in eighteenth-century New England and that he had decided views on blacks in general and slavery in particular, but to make his views in any way representative of puritanism is to mislead readers.

If Bailey sometimes presents non-puritans as exemplars of puritan views, he also appears to distort the meaning of various texts to advance his thesis. In a critical argument, Bailey states that “white colonists often relegated unconverted New Englanders to the status of animals by calling them ‘creatures’ or ‘beasts’” (p. 58). He then provides a number of quotations in which authors referred to natives as creatures, including Edward Winslow calling them “poor creatures.” His conclusion is that from the seventeenth into the eighteenth century “white men and women continued to see their indigenous neighbors as little more than animals” (p. 58). Following similar references to Africans as “creatures,” Bailey then asserts that whites thought of “Africans and Native Americans as other than human” (p. 59). But this is to ignore that in seventeenth-century English the word “creature” meant any “created thing or being” and “a human being; a person, an individual” (*Oxford English Dictionary*). All humans—whites as well as blacks and Native Americans—were creatures. The word was not, as Bailey assumes, a synonym for “beast.” Similarly, the use of possessive pronouns such as in John Eliot’s remark about “our poor Indians” and Jonathan Edwards’s reference to his native charges at Stockbridge as “my people” cannot be assumed to mean that they viewed Indians as “things that in some sense belonged to them” (p. 64).

On numerous occasions, Bailey is too quick to turn possibilities into probabilities or certainties. This is especially evident in his treatment of Jonathan Edwards’s slave Venus. Basing his conclusions on a study

of antebellum slave markets in the south, Bailey decides that “if Edwards acted as shrewdly as many potential buyers” when purchasing Venus in Newport in 1731, he “probably touched Venus’s body, examined her arms, legs, muscles, and skin tone” and “her naked back” (p. 68). Elsewhere, this episode is presented less as a possibility than as a certainty—“Edwards poked and prodded the young girl’s nearly naked body” (p. 62). As Bailey says, such a process would be dehumanizing, but there is no evidence that Edwards actually conducted such an examination.

The bibliography also raises questions. Why use the first, 1790, partial edition of John Winthrop’s journal and not the definitive Richard Dunn, James Savage, and Laetitia Yeandle version published in 1997? Why are the *Winthrop Papers* (6 volumes, 1929–), which contain numerous references to natives and to slavery, not listed among the printed primary sources (though John Winthrop’s “A Modell of Christian Charity” is cited as being in volume 2 of the series)? Why are the Colonial Records of Connecticut included but not those of Massachusetts, New Haven, or Rhode Island? Although no scholar can examine all potentially relevant secondary sources, readers gain confidence when an author appears to have engaged with the best in existing literature. In this case, the absence of some items is striking—Richard Cogley’s *John Eliot’s Mission to the Indians before King Philip’s War* (1999) and Jenny Pulsipher’s *Subjects of the Same King: Indians, English, and the Contest for Authority in Colonial New England* (2006) stand out among absent works dealing with puritans and natives. While the literature on puritans and slaves is very sparse, Bailey may have profited from Robert C. Twombly and Robert H. Moore’s essay “Black Puritan: The Negro in Seventeenth-Century New England” (*William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser. 24 [1967]: 224–42). Additionally, Alden T. Vaughan and Virginia Mason Vaughan’s “England’s ‘Others’ in the Old and New Worlds,” in Francis J. Bremer and Lynn A. Botelho’s edition of *The Worlds of John Winthrop* (2005) speaks directly to the issues raised in this book.

Bailey’s goal in *Race and Redemption* is admirable; the execution leaves much to be desired. Ideally, more effort would have been taken in turning a dissertation into a well-argued book. Hopefully, Bailey will continue to explore these matters and inspire others to do so as well.

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*Midnight Ride, Industrial Dawn: Paul Revere and the Growth of American Enterprise.* By Robert Martello. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010. Pp. viii, 422. \$65.00 cloth; \$30.00 paper.)

Robert Martello's finely crafted book succeeds on several levels. First, it offers an engaging biography of Paul Revere's professional career, one that takes us far beyond the famous Midnight Ride and into the minutiae of Revere's many artisanal endeavors. Second, it contextualizes Revere's versatile smithing operations in the shifting framework of Revolutionary-era social relations, highlighting the barriers and opportunities Revere experienced in his ongoing quest to become a gentleman, or at least a man deserving of the designation "Esquire." And finally, as the subtitle suggests, it delivers a nuanced and technologically thorough—at times, perhaps, overly thorough—analysis of the halting transitions from cottage-scale craft work to industrial capitalism. Martello deftly weaves these themes into a compelling narrative.

Professionally, Revere was less an innovator than an emulator. His pre-war silver pieces were known more for their precision than originality of design and his later work more for its consistent high quality than its uniqueness. However, Revere had a solid work ethic, complemented by an unbridled confidence in his ability to overcome technical hurdles. Faced with the task of smelting domestic copper into malleable copper, he responded, "I have never tried, but from the experiments I have made, I have no doubt I can do it" (p. 226). As a result, he achieved considerable success as a versatile metal worker who could craft silver teakettles, cast iron cannons and bells, and roll copper for ship siding. He was guided toward success by his unwavering self-assuredness, whether forging business relationships, managing workers, or scrutinizing demand. "His self-confidence," Martello aptly writes, "ran unchecked" (p. 227).

Despite his achievements, Revere did not escape adversity. He labored not only out of genuine love for his craft but in a quest for social status, which was somewhat more fluid in the Revolutionary era than in the nineteenth century. In this, he was less successful. To