Roger Williams, Sir Henry Vane the Younger, and Transnational Themes of the Puritan Great Migration, 1635-52

Massachusetts Bay and Rhode Island were established within the critical period of the build up to the English Civil War, the former by Puritan divines generally disgruntled by the conformity policies of Archbishop Laud, and the later by men who would be disgruntled with government of the Bay Colony or banished by it. Similarly, Massachusetts was chartered in 1631, at a time before a sizable crisis would threaten it, and of relative stability at home in England. Rhode Island was chartered in 1644, under very different circumstances, both in its conflict with the Bay colony and in being chartered by a war-time Parliament that was the de-facto authority in London. In 1652, Rev. Roger Williams and his fellow Rhode-Islander John Clarke would have to go to the Lord Protector when his administration was more or less secured in order to further assert that colony's existence amid internal dissentions. There are thus three critical periods in Rhode Island's colonial history- the governorship of Henry Vane in Massachusetts from 1636-7, which coincided with the Antinomian Crisis in the Bay colony, and Roger Williams' two trips to London, 1644 and 1652-4. These episodes demonstrate that Massachusetts, and later Rhode Island sought above all to replicate, and not to abandon, the English experience as their founders understood it. (It might be said that they wanted their colonies to be more "English" than England was herself) Winthrop and to a lesser degree Williams were politically conservative and held typical Puritan beliefs (as one historian, Alan Simpson, believes, Williams was only radical in his belief that the civil government had no authority to judge whether a man was regenerate or not) and would seek compliance with the English government, weather Charles or Cromwell, in order to maintain their interests. But it must be shown that Williams in particular was an unapologetic Parliamentarian, who saw real

value in that cause and an appreciation of his role in that cause, both as a statesman and a man of letters. His dealings with the English authorities, Vane in particular, demonstrate that the new powers in England were very enthusiastic about Williams' colony. These episodes reveal that Williams and Vane were two of the first truly transnational figures in modern history.

The so-called Great Migration period in English Colonial history, spanning roughly 1620-1640, has always been distinguished from other colonial movements before and since. Even though Nellis Crouse estimated that only 4,000 out of 65,000 emigrated from England at this time for the expressed desire for religious liberty[1], he and others (most notably Virginia Anderson, who analyzed scant ship manifests which were the product of Charles failed attempted regulation of immigration in 1634) admit that it is the most verifiable theme. Both affirm that though there was real economic depression at this time, there is no evidence that this would have been a cause of immigration which would be within this society's response mechanism, in the same way that we view it today, either in the motives of the "New Immigration" of several generations ago, or the contemporary motives of popularly titled illegal immigration from Mexico to the U.S. Further evidence for the religious motive is that one of the points explicitly stated in the Grand Remonstrance, which was a document Parliament presented to Charles in 1641, was that ever since the Archbishop began guiding the High Commission with a heavy hand, and the Clergy had been promoting a policy of conformity to the "grievous oppression of great numbers of His Majesty's good subjects,[2]" that great numbers of them carried themselves to America out of fear.[3] This being said, Anderson states plainly that although religion was the common thread which sent so many "ordinary families"(New England is distinct in this regard)

[1] Nellis M. Crouse, "Causes of the Great Migration 1630-40," *NEQ* 5:1 (January, 1932):3-36, 5.
[2] S. R. Gardiner, *The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution 1625-60* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927) p. 214.
[3] *ibid*, 215.

to New England at this time, "the New England Puritans should not be seen as utopians caught up in a movement whose purpose totally transcended the concerns of daily life."[4]

There is also difficulty in assessing what the exact nature of the religious theme was. Religious persecution of Puritan divines by the Anglican establishment has often been assumed to have been that underlying motive. For the most part, however, the use of the word persecution by those being persecuted could be a synonym for their own resentment at what is taking place. William Haller goes so far to say that men such as Lord Brooke, one of the more radical peers, sympathized with the Puritan party "if for no other reason than that they resented the steady intrusion into politics of churchmen like Laud."[5] Clarendon recalled this sentiment in his epitome of Laud, that the Calvinists would call anybody who was opposed to them "papist," which emboldened this party to oppose him to the utmost.[6] Governor Thomas Hutchinson, who would be the first historian of New England, himself specifically set the date of 1640 as "the importation of settlers now ceased. The motive of transportation to America was over, by change of affairs in England."[7] Therefore, at least for the men we discuss in this paper, there was a clear political and timely statement in the act of immigration for religious purposes.

It is interesting to note that both Winthrop and Williams attached especial ire to Laud's name. In June of 1641, Winthrop, declaring that "the parliament of England setting upon a general reformation both of church and state" refers to Laud as "our great enemy."[8] Williams expressed to the daughter of his former patron Sir Edward Coke while in England in 1652 that "It was as bitter as death to me when Bishop Laud perused me out of the land, and my

---

[4] Virginia Dejohn Anderson, "Migrants and Motives: Religion and the Settlement of New England. 1630-1640," *NEQ*, 58:3 (September, 1985): 339-58, 379.
[5] William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938) pg. 331.
[6] G. Huehns(ed.) *Clarendon*, 103.
[7] Thomas Hutchinson, *The History of the Colony and Province of Massachusetts-Bay*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936), 82.
[8] Richard S. Dunn, et. al (eds.) *The Journal of John Winthrop, 1630-1649*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), pg 353.

conscience was persuaded against the National Church and ceremonies and Bishops…"[9] Thus for many, disillusionment stemmed from Laud himself, or was intensified by his policies. He himself knew this, which is why he and the king briefly attempted to regulate immigration to the Bay. Hutchinson may have been well as right when he observed that Charles would have taken a much more proactive role in regulating colonial administration had not the troubles of the 1630s' intensified and marched towards civil war,[10] and left that work to after the Restoration.

Having attempted to define the relationship between politics and religion in this period, we turn now to Sir Henry Vane the Younger and his governorship of Massachusetts Bay in 1636. In many ways, this is an exceptional development, which no doubt sped up the settlement of New England. Vane had set out for Massachusetts in August, 1635, perhaps on an impulse, in which he expected (or others had wanted him to) spend the rest of his life. A G. Garrard, in a letter to Thomas Wentworth dated September 1, 1635, scathingly characterized this eldest son of the important Privy-counsillor Sir Henry Vane (part of the reason the following information would be relevant to Wentworth) as abandoning country and family "for conscience's sake."[11] Indeed, his father was against him going all together and as Winthrop recorded on his first encounter with him in Massachusetts, that Sir Henry would have stopped his son, had not the king personally intervened in the Younger's favor.[12] His father's aversion to his religious outlook, an outlook which was in part formed by his stay in the Netherlands as a teenager, was an important incentive for keeping him in England. Sir Henry had accepted unquestioningly the ceremonies of the established Church and his role at Court, and as at least one historian has

---

[9] [9] James Kendall Hosmer, *The life of young Sir Henry Vane, governor of Massachusetts Bay, and leader of the Long Parliament,* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1889), 26.
[10] Hutchinson, 77.
[11] William Woodworth Ireland, *The life of Sir Henry Vane the Younger,* (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1905), 54.
[12] *Winthrop's Journal*, pg. 157.

observed, in short embodied everything young Harry was against.[13] He was only 23 at his departure, and in a letter to his father penned a few weeks before his departure, Harry indeed shows signs of a youthful idealism and an immature faith that holds that he will either do no wrong or that God will protect him regardless of anything he does.[14] His tone displays an incompetence which may serve to indicate that he was not ready for the post that would soon be put upon him in Massachusetts.

Upon his arrival, Vane ingratiated himself into the colony's political and social life, and quickly garnered a certain level of popularity. This seems to have been a de-facto requirement for political advancement, for as early as 1631, an order had been passed by the court in the Bay that "none should be admitted to the freedom of the body politick but such that were Church members."[15] Unlike Roger Williams, who had refused to join the Boston Church "because they would not make a public declaration of their repentance for havinge Communion with the Churches of Englande,[16]" Vane unquestioningly joined that Church within a few months of arrival.[17]

Henry Vane was elected governor for the year 1636. His popularity stemming from his public spirit, youth and "grave solemn deportment" almost assured this outcome.[18] But as the son of a Privy-Counsellor close to the king, his governorship may have been calculated for an advantage to the young colony, as Clarendon seems to suggest.[19] And he was generally popular at the beginning of his term, and seems to have taken firm steps to further the security of the

---

[13] James Kendall Hosmer, *The life of young Sir Henry Vane, governor of Massachusetts Bay, and leader of the Long Parliament*, (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1889), pp. 9-10.
[14] William Woodworth Ireland, *The life of Sir Henry Vane the Younger*, (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1905), pp. 55-56.
[15] Thomas Hutchinson, *The History of the Colony and Province of Massachusetts-Bay*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936), 24-5.
[16] *Winthrop's Journal,* pg. 50. This was the most important theme in his banishment, though he remained on amiable terms with the colony throughout his career.
[17] Ibid, 158.
[18] Hutchinson, 53.
[19] *Clarendon*, 148.

colony. An important achievement in this regard was that he transacted a treaty of alliance between the English and Narragansett against the Pequod, whom according to Hutchinson showed the greater resentment against English encroachment.[20] The Narragansett sachem had come to Boston personally to discuss this matter with Vane over dinner, and terms, basically assuring a modicum of cooperation between the two, were drawn up on the following day. Williams, already at this time an authority on Indian languages and contacts, was required to interpret these terms to the Narragansett.[21] Despite this, Vane's governorship was brought to personal crisis due to the sudden troubles resulting from the so-called antinomian controversy which then flared up.

That crisis, exemplified in Anne Hutchinson's trial, and subsequent banishment, is an important prologue to the future colony of Rhode Island. Needless to say, there are several historiographical problems with this theme which make the controversy difficult to contextualize. In relation to how Vane fit in this conflict, Winthrop commented that Vane held not only the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, (a key issue in the future trial of Hutchinson), but maintained that he had a personal union with the Holy Spirit.[22] Edmund Morgan assessed Hutchinson's dogma with the following, "she broached a doctrine which was absolutely inconsistent with the principles upon which the colony had been founded." Thus if allowed to spread, it would not only mean that these Puritans' transatlantic voyage was pointless, but would have the potential to lead to a complete subversion to what the Church government believed to

[20] Hutchinson, 52-53.
[21] *Winthrop's Journal,* 191-2; John Russell Bartlett (ed.) *The Complete Writings of Roger Williams* VI (New York: Russell & Russell, 1963): 55.
[22] Ibid, 200.

be true.[23] Morgan rightly infers that there could have been no other outcome but Hutchinson's banishment.

Vane, who was a close friend to John Cotton, and who also took an early liking to Hutchinson, (and Hutchinson to him, we must note. Williams wrote to Winthrop that she "professeth if he come not to New, she must to Old England.[24]) thus found himself in an untenable position, and perhaps inadvertently at the head of a faction which aligned itself with Cotton, while the country ministers, Winthrop included, was decidedly against him.[25] As Winthrop and Thomas Hutchinson narrate how the crisis may have affected him, he experienced nothing less than a nervous breakdown, and showed that he was eager to resign. He would however finish out his term as governor at the insistence of the elders who had say in that decision, but as Hutchinson makes clear in his history, he had otherwise become completely discredited as a governor. Clarendon, who due to his historical method which discounted religious motives,[26] and perhaps his dependence on a biographical analysis of character which replicated Plutarch, did not understand the full scope of the issue, judged him as personally responsible fro the factionalizing of the colony.[27] This however is a sober observation, because Hutchinson makes it clear that by time the issue had fully manifested itself, he was powerless to do anything, let alone counter the public hostility against him.

The legacy of Vane's initial activity in New England is thus a stormy one, and reveals that many people who were interested in participating in the power structures of colonial government depended on group cohesion to keep these enterprises afloat. Vane set sail for

---

[23] Edmund S. Morgan, "The Case Against Anne Hutchinson," *NEQ,* 10:4 (December, 1937): 635-49, 637.
[24] *C.W.R.W,* VI. 92.
[25] Hutchinson, 51.
[26] Christopher Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), pg 182-183.
[27] *Clarendon,* 149.

England on August 3, 1637,[28] at a particular time, Hutchinson states that "the nation…was disposed to receive, very favorably, men of his genius and cast of mind," and he sees no reason to recount his actions in what he terms a "revolution."[29] However, it is with him that we find not only the first dissident leader, if we can call him thus, but as Haller confirms, the only English Puritan aristocrat who went oversees for that express purpose and held political office there.[30] The ensuing discussion on Roger Williams and Rhode Island will show that his interest and most especially his laboring for the colonies did not cease. It is in the establishment of the Providence Plantations where he finds his vindicating legacy.

In late November of 1639, at a court meeting of those living in the "Ile of Aqethnec" in Newport, and having begun their meeting by invoking their rights "as natural subjects to our Prince," the body ordered that "Mr. Easson and Mr. John Clarke(who we will see later) are desired to informe Mr. Vane by writing, of the state of things here, and desire him to treate about the obtaining of a Patent of the Island from his Majestie"[31] There is no mention of this intention again until 1642, when the court orders that a committee to be drawn up for investigating the possibility of getting a patent for Newport, and "to send letter or letters for the same end to Sr. Henry Vane."[32] John Clarke again was one of those chosen for this task, along with the governor of Newport, William Coddington. At one time, Coddington, who as a young man came over with Winthrop in 1630, had been an important figure in Massachusetts politics, until he took the side of Hutchinson in the recent controversy and was subsequently banished.[33] He would relocate to Aquidneck, which he purchased from the Narragansett sachem Canonicus, a year

[28] Ireland, 91.
[29] Hutchinson, 58.
[30] Haller, 332.
[31] John Russell Bartlett(ed.), *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations,* (Providence: A. Crawford Greene and Brother, 1856) Vol. 1, 94.
[32] Ibid, 125.
[33] Virginia DeJohn Anderson, 'Coddington, William (1601?–1678)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004.

earlier.[34] And not the last time in controversy over Rhode Island politics, he had recently in May split from where he was governor in Portsmith and established Newport that year.[35] There is evidence that he was especially ingratiated with Vane while he was governor, and took an active role in his administration.[36] There is less evidence for John Clarke, who seems to have been a recent convert to the Puritan cause just before his migration to Boston in 1637, and who like Coddington and so many others who would comprise the elite of Rhode Island politics, was quickly marshaled into the antinomian camp.[37] Meanwhile, back in London, Vane had been appointed joint Treasurer of the Navy by the king in 1639, and though it is hard to see how he could exert official influence in that deliberation, this shows the importance these relationships forged by the common experience of statecraft were, not only in helping to affect a result, but in the most basic sense providing an adequate source of information in an age when information moved through constricted channels. Vane was the only governor of Massachusetts Bay (though not the first colonial governor by any means) to have returned to England, which no doubt made him a virtual authority at a time mis-information ran rampant.[38]

It is at this point that Roger Williams will enter our discussion, because it is his function as a transnational figure we are interested in and it is in this period after the initiation of hostilities of the Civil War that he began his role as an advocate for colonial affairs in England, about a century before Ben Franklin, and with more success. Not only in print media as a published author, but as a prolific letter writer, he easily ranks at the top of colonials who were engaged in the public discourse in England in terms of sheer output. Like his protégé Sir Henry

[34] W. 257. Hutchinson, 63. Williams also writes to Winthrop in October, 1638, that Vane had written to Coddington to "remove from Boston…because some evil was ripening.(VI. 123-4). It is unclear what he is referring to, though it seems that Coddington received the letter while on Rhode Island.
[35] Winthrop, 290.
[36] Ibid, 215, 219.
[37] Theodore Dwight Bozeman, 'Clarke, John (1609–1676)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004.
[38] Hutchinson, 72.

Vane, his influence impacted both shores of the Atlantic in distinct ways, and in order to affect a particular outcome, in this case, to obtain legal protection and a charter for Rhode Island, he had to physically go to London to affect change.

Transnational history is a relatively new phenomenon, with various uses and methodological implications. But at its most basic level, as Patricia Steed answered in 2006, it requires the historian to situate his topic within a larger framework.[39] The English colonies at this date took their claims to English Liberty out of hand, and as Hutchinson observed, "The government of every colony, like that of the colonies of old Rome, may be considered *effigies parva* of the mother state"[40] As we have seen in Massachusetts and as we will see in Rhode Island, the governments of these colonies sought to replicate the English experience abroad, though by the very act of transferring themselves, created something very different, based on an essentially different understanding of the role of religion is in society, or more accurately, by whom it should be controlled. The theme in which Vane and Williams are working in then is one of re-alignment, not only of the English state, but of the colonies' relation to the state. I cannot hope to show the full implications of this here, but by demonstrating what Williams and his companion in London John Clarke were able to accomplish, and in reviewing the functional importance of his correspondence, the establishment of Rhode Island might show itself as a self-conscious political act.

Williams set off for England in March of 1643, and returned to Boston, from which he had been forbidden to set off from, in September of the following year.[41] The purpose of this trip was two fold, to obtain a charter, or patent incorporating the four settlements—Portsmith,

---

[39] "*AHR* Conversation, on Transnational History," *AHR*, 111:5 (December, 2006): 1463.
[40] Hutchinson, 34.
[41] Francis J. Bremer, "Williams, Roger (c.1606-1683)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography,* Oxford University Press, 2004.; James Davis Knowles, *Memoir of Roger Williams,* (Boston: Lincoln, Edmans, 1834), 200.

Newport, Providence, and Warwick—into an autonomous colony, and to publish. In the months before Milton's *Areopagitica* would be published (and it would be published after Williams' departure[42]), *A Bloudy Tenent* was published on July 15,[43] a little more than a week after the brilliant Royalist defeat at Marston Moor. Remember too that the Westminster Assembly of Divines were holding session at this time, debating whether or not England would adopt a Scottish model for church government. Although Don Wolfe claims that "his extreme tolerationism became the rallying cry of the army radicals,"[44] John Coffey states that the book, which he believes went far beyond the limits of acceptable Puritan discourse, was ordered by Parliament to be burned, and was refuted by countless pamphlets, most prominently in the printed debate with John Cotton.[45]

"Whereas by an Ordinance of the Lords and Commons, now assembled in Parliament," thus begins the Patent for the Providence Plantations, and the only such patent bearing those words, which derives it's authority from the war-time Parliament. Its signers, who included some of the most radical Puritan divines in Parliament, such as Robert Rich, the second Earl of Warwick, who was recently made the Lord High Admiral for the American Colonies,[46] William Fiennes, Lord Saye and Seale, who along with Lord Brooke had desired to transfer to Massachusetts before the war, but were disillusioned by appeared to be a lack of religious liberty,[47] and Sir Henry Vane, now an important MP. These men granted "the Towns of Providence, Portsmouth, and Newport, a free and absolute Charter of Incorporation…with full

---

[42]Don M. Wolfe, *Milton in the Puritan Revolution* (New York: Humanities Press, 1963), 58; Gordon Campbell and Thomas N. Corns, *John Milton: Life, Works, and Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 173. It must be said, however, that there is no evidence that Milton and Williams knew each other at this time. (*C.W.R.W*, III, x.)
[43] Perry Millier, *Roger Williams: His Contribution to the American Tradition,* (New York: Atheneum, 1962), 101.
[44] Wolfe, 36.
[45] John Coffey, "Puritanism and Liberty Revisited: the Case for Toleration in the English Revolution," *The Historical Journal* 41:4, (December, 1998): 961-985, 965.
[46] Knowles, 198.
[47] Hutchinson, *appendix 3,* 414.

Power and Authority to rule themselves"[48] Of course, they were expected to conform their laws to that of the Common Law of England, and the task of cooperating and establishing a set of laws took three years to institute. When these acts and orders were finally ratified in 1647, the laws are fully supported by citations to English precedent, and the form of government adapted was "democraticall," which is explicitly defined as "held by the free and voluntarie consent of all"[49] It is important to note, as Cotton did, that democracy, where power rests in the people, was not a desired end for seventeenth century politicians.[50] Thus this cannot mean democracy in the modern sense.

After this, there were real machinations in the colony, and it was only a matter of time before Williams would have to return to England, in 1652. In October of 1651, Williams announced his intention to John Winthrop, jr. to sail for England, because Providence and Warwick asked him to defend their interests in Parliament ("renewing their liberties") in the face of recent dissentions by Coddington, who was trying to subvert the charter for Newport's own purposes, thus in affect annulling it. Williams was thus sent by Providence and Warwick to seek clarity on the issue, and being accompanied by John Clarke, he set off in November.[51] His mission also had a more practical function.

An important aspect of Williams' trip (and Williams' correspondence generally) which might otherwise be overlooked is that he acts primarily as a source of information. Williams, throughout his whole career held this purpose, to the extent which it is entirely possible that Winthrop received all of his information concerning the Natives from him. Now in England, he has to report on deaths, the feelings of others and the wishes of old friends to men back in

---

[48] *Records*, I, 145.
[49] Ibid, I, 156.
[50] Hutchinson, 417.
[51] *Records* I, 233-4. It is well to note that these two men went for distinct reasons, in the interests of two separate areas of Rhode Island.

America. In an age of limited information, this is something which cannot be taken for granted. For instance, he is able to report to John Winthrop, jr., that his brother Stephen is doing well, and perhaps with a sense of self-gratification, that Vane, with whom he spent a considerable amount of time with while in England, "wishes you were in our colony."[52]

In a telling letter to his former publisher, good friend and compatriot in Providence Gregory Dexter, we get a sense that given the current political situation in England, that man is genuinely missed by his colleges. In it, Williams is frank about the state of the printing business, with the reactionary calls to "shut up the press," the stresses of the Anglo-Dutch war then being prosecuted, and his own work in combating reactionary forces in Old and New England. Williams clearly believes that there is an ideological war at hand, "we wrestle…in the hopes of an end." So even if Williams was not able to actively participate in this war as his friends Milton and Vane did in their respective literary and political spheres, we know through his output and the friends he had in London that he was firmly committed to the cause. His role in the conflict was to ensure the free will of a colony. To this end, he confidently assured Dexter, who was often chosen to be the moderator at court sessions while Williams was abroad, that the Council of State has given the colony security until the "controversy is determined."[53] The Council of State was an executive body established by Parliament shortly after the regicide, which was intended to function as the military and policy arm of the state. Its purview included among other things the promotion of trade within the Commonwealth, and of "preserving the rights of the people of this nation in foreign parts, and composing of their differences there."[54] In a separate letter to the Providence Plantation, Williams assures Providence and Warwick that Vane

---

[52] *C.W.R.W*, VI, 263.
[53] Ibid, VI, 236. This is a position that would essentially be confirmed by Cromwell three years later in 1655(c.f. *Records*, I, 315-17). The importance of Clarke in these proceedings as the agent is reveled by the letter of thanksgiving which Providence ordered to send him.(id). Finally, Coddington would submit to this.(327).
[54] Gardiner, 382.

himself would indeed plead their case.[55] Vane himself, though reveling little of his activity at this time, penned a letter to "the Inhabitants of Rhode Island, asking "how is it that there are such divisions amongst you? Such headiness, tumults, disorders, injustice?"

In the 1640's, he also had related political information to Winthrop, sr., such as when the king was captured on the Isle of Wight, or on May 29, 1649, when he informs him that Charles had been executed.[56] Later in 1655, he will report to Winthrop on the "many letters from England" he received, thus showing that he had an eager interest in English affairs and that he could be relied upon as a substantial source of information.[57] Though he does not express overt political opinions here, it becomes clearer in the 1650's that Williams is without a doubt a full Parliamentarian sympathizer. This is something we should not automatically assume. For instance, we learn in a passage of *A Bloudy Tenent Yet More Bloody*, published in 1652 that when Williams was last in England, he put himself to work in providing fire wood to for the poor of London when he otherwise could have lived a life of ease. His companion, John Clarke even found time to publish an expose recounting the disabilities he and two of his companions had faced while traveling through Massachusetts. This book, which is subtitled *That while old England is becoming New, New-England is becoming Old*., is probably the first to observe such a dichotomy. Indeed, while abroad, Williams said that he would have been a valuable asset to the Commonwealth government, as he claimed in a letter to the Massachusetts Bay, but that he refused "many offers in my native country, out of a sincere desire to seek the good and peace of this."[58]

---

[55] *C.W.R.W.*, VI, 255.
[56] Ibid. VI, 161-2; 180-1.
[57] Ibid, 287.
[58] Ibid, 270.

As final evidence that Williams was a committed Parliamentarian, we will look at some of the correspondence in which he discusses the king. In a letter to Winthrop in 1650, he referred to Prince Rupert, who had recently been defeated at the hands of Admiral Blake, as a "name in these parts sound as a north-east storm of snow."[59] In this same letter, he gave the is epitaph to the recently executed Charles: "he was truly the Bishop's King and breathed from first to last absolute Monarchy and Episcopacy…guilty of much blood." And in a series of correspondence with the daughter of the late Sir Edward Coke, Mrs. Anne Sadleir, which must be noted for its sheer drama and unfolding of Sadleir as a most conventional woman, she had exhorted him to read *Eikon Basilike,* among other things, so that "new lights will prove dark lanterns, &c." He retorted that he not only read that book, but also "Bishop Laud's." On the king he said, "I knew his person, vicious…and an oppressor and persecutor of good men."[60] After asking her to please read "impartially Mr. Milton's answer to the king's book," she responded defiantly that she knows him because of his doctrine on divorce, which is the reason he had lately been struck with blindness.[61] In her final epitaph to Williams, the protégé of her esteemed father, "a rebel to God, the king, and his country…if ever he had the face to return into his native country, Tyburn may give him welcome." Seven years later, John Bradshaw would be posthumously executed at that very place, and needless to say, Roger Williams never did return to England.

According to Perry Miller, Roger Williams was a man of few ideas.[62] This might be because he was a practical man, engaged with the world, and though not a literary stylist by any stretch of the term, he was a man of letters because he felt it was his duty to provide information,

[59] Ibid, 198.
[60] Ibid 246.
[61] Ibid, 250.
[62] Miller, 77.

weather on the Indian languages he studied, or the theological disputes he attempted to engage in. As we have been exploring, the experience of Old and New England was a transnational project. Men like Winthrop, Vane, and Williams acted on what was to them true principles, and assured of their own righteousness, set out to transact whatever they chose-- Winthrop in maintaining conformity amid crisis, Vane in the services he was able to provide as a specialist in England, and Williams who negotiated for the development of a unique colonial model which would replicate the English experience in all aspects but religious conformity. Whether in regard to the Great Migration, the largest transatlantic population transfer possibly until the potato famine in 1848, the antinomian controversy which forced many colonists to settle in different places, or in acting as an agent to a country that was in a novel process of reassessing its national identity, the theme was not in seeking freedom for its own sake, nor to establish anything radically different from English tradition, but to redefine who would control these questions in the public sphere. As the twentieth century Roman historian Sir Ronald Syme observed tersely, and what gets closest to the true approximation of how we understand freedom, they wanted "liberty for themselves…and domination"[63] As we have seen, this transnational project and a mutual project for political self-determination, required close cooperation.

[63] Ronald Syme, *Colonial Elites: Rome, Spain and the Americas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), p. 47.

Bibliography

Anderson, Virginia Dejohn. "Migrants and Motives: Religion and the Settlement of New England, 1630-1640." *NEQ*, 58:3 (September, 1985): 339-58.

Bartlett, John Russell. ed. *The Complete Writings of Roger Williams.* New York: Russell and Russell, 1963.

_____*Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations*. Providence: A Crawford Greene and Brother, 1856.

Carpenter, Edmund J. *Roger Williams: A Study of the Life, Times and Character of a Political Pioneer.* New York: The Grafton Press, 1909.

Campbell, Gordon and Thomas N. Corns. *John Milton: Life, Works, and Thought.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Coffey, John. "Puritanism and Liberty Revisited: The Case for Toleration in the English Revolution. *The Historical Journal*. 41:4 (December, 1998): 961-985.

Crouse, Nellis M. "Causes of the Great Migration, 1630-1640." *New England Quarterly*. 5:1 (January, 1932): 3-36.

Dunn, Richard S, et. al. eds. *The Journal of John Winthrop, 1630-1649*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996.

Easton, Emily. *Roger Williams: Prophet and Pioneer*. Freeport: Books for Libraries Press, 1930.

Fisher, C. D. ed. *Cornelii Taciti Annalium ab Excessu Divi Augusti Libri*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956.

Gardiner, Samuel R. *The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution 1625-60.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927.

Gray, Stanley. "The Political Thought of John Winthrop." *New England Quarterly.* 3:4 (October 1930.): 681-705.

Haller, William. *The Rise of Puritanism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1938.

Hanford, James Holly. *The Poems of John Milton.* New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1936.

Hill, Christopher. *Puritanism and Revolution*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997.

____*Milton and the English Revolution.* New York: The Viking Press, 1977.

Hosmer, James Kendell. *The life of young Sir Henry Vane, governor of Massachusetts Bay, and leader of the Long Parliament.* Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1889.

Huehns, G. (ed.) *Clarendon: Selections from the History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars and The Life by Himself*. London: Oxford University Press. 1966.

Hutchinson, Thomas. *The History of the Colony and Province of Massachusetts-Bay*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936.

Ireland, William Woodsworth. *The life of Sir Henry Vane the Younger*. London: Eveleigh Nash, 1905.

Kupperman, Karen Ordahl. *Providence Island, 1630-1641: The Other Puritan Colony.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
____"Definitions of Liberty on the Eve of Civil War: Lord Saye and Sele, Lord Brooke, and the American Puritan Colonies." *The Historical Journal*. 32:1 (March, 1989): 17-33.

Miller, Perry. *Roger Williams: His Contribution to the American Tradition*. New York: Atheneum, 1962.

Mellor, Ronald. "Academic Politics, and Regicide in the Reign of Charles I: The Tragedy of Dr. Isaac Dorislaus." *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*. 11:2 (Fall, 2004) 153-193.

Morgan, Edmund S. *Roger Williams: The Church and the State.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1967.
____*The Puritan Dillema: The Story of John Winthrop.* New York: HarpersCollins, 1958.
____ "The Case Against Anne Hutchinson." *NEQ*, 10:4 (December, 1937): 635-49.

Morrill, John. "The Religious Context of the English Civil War." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society.* 5th ser., 34 (1984) 155-78.

Pym, John, *A Speech delivered in Parliament, by a worthy member thereof, and a most faithful well-wisher to the church and common-weal, concerning the grievances of the kingdome.* (London, 1641).
____*The Declaration of John Pym, esq, upon the whole matter of the charge or High treason, against Thomas, Earle of Strafford, April 12, 1641.* (London, 1641).

Simpson, Alan. "How Democratic was Roger Williams?" *WMQ*. 3rd ser. 13:1 (January, 1956): 53-67.

Syme, Sir Ronald. *Colonial Elites: Rome, Spain and the Americas*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958.

Tenney, Mary F. "Tacitus in the Politics of Early Stuart England." *Classical Journal.* 37: 3, (December, 1941): 151-163.

Tyacke, Nicholas. *Aspects of English Protestantism, c. 1530-1700.* New York: Manchester University Press, 2001.

Wolfe, Don M. *Milton in the Puritan Revolution.* New York: The Humanities Press, 1963.