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CH 203

Response Week 2

12 February 2017

Group 1, Question A

In *A Model of Christian Charity* John Winthrop writes, among other things, “For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us” (Winthrop 10). He is referring in this statement to a certain call to action he feels is being presented to the colonizers, specifically the puritans. Winthrop feels it is their responsibility to prove to Him that they deserve to be there. He goes on to talk about what would happen in the case that the puritan colonizers neglect praising God, writing “But if our hearts shall turn away... we shall surely perish out of the good land whither we pass over this vast sea to possess it” (Winthrop 10). To the puritans who read Winthrop’s work, the idea of being left alone by God in this unforgivable new land must have been terrifying.

Group 2, Question A

The story told by Mary Rowlandson of her capture by Native Americans is an almost unbelievable narrative detailing the murder of her family and friends, followed by her child slowly dying child in her arms while she was brought around with a tribe. Throughout the narrative she quotes from the Bible many times, making a point to establish that the only reason she survived was because of her faith. The story is the ultimate proof to religious colonizers that faith would protect them in this new land. An example of Rowlandson’s use of Bible versus comes up when she is wading through a muddy swamp, “Being almost spent, I thought I should have sunk down at last, and never got out; but I may say, as in Psalm 94.18, ‘When my foot slipped, thy mercy, O Lord, held me up’” (Rowlandson 113). These repeated references can be seen as a thinly-veiled PSA of the importance of God to puritans. This seems so deliberate because it was. Rowlandson’s editors steered her in the right direction with these references.

Group 3, Question B

The timeline of slave laws provided a sobering opportunity to realize just how bad humans can be to each other. Of course the groups like the Nazis performed terrible acts on vast amounts of Jews and other groups, but seeing how this country was essentially built on the lashed backs of slaves one law after another was jarring. Some laws were specifically directed at the children of slaves, even in the case that a slave owner forces himself on his slave women. “WHEREAS some doubts have arisen whether children got by any Englishman upon a negro woman should be slave or free, Be it therefore enacted and declared by this present grand assembly, that all children borne in this country shall be held bond or free only according to the condition of the mother...” (Slave Law 1). The logic here being that even mixed-race offspring of a piece of property was still just property in the eyes of the law. The law was and is restrictive since it placed a group of humans on a level below white men.

Group 4, Question B

The piece *Mrs. Elizabeth Freake and Baby Mary* perfectly displays what I feel when I read about puritan settlers. It portrays a mother and daughter sitting upright, almost as planks of wood, in front of a dark wall wearing very simple delicate clothes. The baby is held up and looks like an inanimate doll. Both the mother and the daughter sit expressionless. One aspect which stood out to me is the clothes the woman is wearing under her dress. They are more colorful and bright, almost symbolizing the way these people were forced to live. Due to their strict religious beliefs these women had to wear restrictive clothing, not practical for the type of weather and hard-work these people experienced regularly.

Works Cited

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