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Duration and Depravity: Religious and Secular Temporality in Puritanism and the American Gothic

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Abstract

Duration and Depravity identifies a temporality of “sinful feeling” operating in the archive of Puritan writings of personal piety, such as diaries, autobiographies, conversion narratives, and sermons, and persisting into early American gothic literature. This temporality of sinful feeling is an attempt to discipline the self through temporal projection oriented towards the theological fact and religiously experienced feeling of sinfulness. *Duration and Depravity* engages with the proliferation of postsecular criticism in American literature studies generally, and Puritan studies more specifically. Postsecular criticism in literary studies is a style of historicism that reconsiders its primary archive’s position in newly complicated narratives of secularization provided by such thinkers as Talal Asad and Charles Taylor. This project’s identification of a temporality of sinful feeling in the Puritan archive and in the early American gothic both builds on and complicates Charles Taylor’s proposition that secular modernity is defined by the assumption of Walter Benjamin’s “homogenous, empty time” as the primary source of modern disciplinary culture. Charles Taylor believes that Puritanism is paradoxically responsible for producing this modern secular phenomenological condition. In contrast, I argue that, while the Puritans did indeed assume time as a homogenous empty medium and “precious resource, not to be wasted” in the quest for personal self-discipline and religious industry, they also defined themselves according to a temporality of sacramentalism, repetition, and queerness that resisted this homogenous disciplinary time and oriented itself around recurrent experiences of personal depravity—or sinful feeling. This temporality of sinful feeling persists in the early American gothic not as something which the “secular” novel form critiques, but which it proposes as a morally desirable component of citizenship in the early American republic.

Among other theoretical approaches, *Duration and Depravity* engages the Puritan archive with postsecular theory (Talal Asad, Charles Taylor), queer temporality theory (Elizabeth Freeman, Lee Edelman), phenomenology of time and affect (Henri Bergson, Martin Heidegger, Charles Altieri), and pain studies (Elaine Scarry). The first seven chapters examine the formation of a New England Puritan tradition of a temporality of sinful feeling in Puritan authors (Thomas Hooker, Thomas Shepard, Michael Wigglesworth, and Jonathan Edwards). Through a reading of Charles Brockden Brown's 1798 gothic novel *Wieland*, chapter eight contends that the gothic tragedy of the novel transmits a Puritan lesson about the need for responsible American citizens to embrace rather than repudiate a temporality of sinful feeling as a method of judgement and self-discipline. *Duration and Depravity* concludes by suggesting that the early American gothic style portrays a depraved temporality which it inherits from Puritanism and transmits in "secular-religious" form as an important source of responsible republican selfhood. The early American gothic is not so much a secular critique of Puritan origins as it is a carrying forward of Puritanism as itself a necessary form of self-critique and democratic citizenship.

Keywords: American literature; postsecular; depravity; temporality; queer; Puritan; Jonathan Edwards; David Brainerd; Charles Brockden Brown; Washington Irving; gothic; Talal Asad; Charles Taylor; Elaine Scarry; Martin Heidegger

Summary for Lay Audience

This dissertation is about a group of colonial settlers in the New England region who came to the area in 1630 from England to form a system of church and government that they believed was more faithful to true Christianity than the Church of England system, which they saw as too Roman Catholic. These settlers are commonly known as the Puritans, and they have become famous for founding a supposed “City on a Hill” in New England: a form of church and government that they hoped would be an example of purity to the Church of England. These Puritans are often viewed as anti-literary, since they opposed plays and secular literature. However, this dissertation observes in the Puritans an obsession with the maximization of guilty feelings that was in fact a source of creative expression for them. This obsession with guilty feeling as a source of creativity in novels persists in American literature long after the Puritans fade away, and becomes a cultural form through which to criticize the naiveté of Enlightenment faith in the rational innocence of American citizens.

I connect the Puritan creative obsession with maximizing guilty feelings to their obsession with maximizing every moment of time. Scholars have traditionally thought of the Puritans as aiming to live lives as holy as possible in order to use all of their time to demonstrate that they were saved by God. However, this dissertation counters that the Puritans were actually interested in connecting their sense of the passage of time to their heavily indulged feelings of guiltiness, which they took pleasure in expressing.

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Introduction

Duration and Depravity: Religious and Secular Temporality in Puritanism and the Early American Gothic, is a dissertation on New England Puritanism and early American literature. It embraces a postsecular critical approach to provide a historicist account of the resonance of Puritanism with the early American gothic. This genealogical resonance is based on what I identify as a shared investment in a temporality of depravity, a concept which connects the marking and management of time (temporality) with sinful feeling (depravity). Ultimately, *Duration and Depravity's* assessment of the development of depraved temporality in Puritanism and the American gothic both builds on and departs from Charles Taylor's proposition in *A Secular Age* that homogenous, empty time defines modern secular experience for its subjects. After claiming Talal Asad and Charles Taylor as key inaugural postsecular theorists, this introduction identifies important postsecular critical developments in American literature studies and Puritan studies more specifically. I then identify *Duration and Depravity's* key intervention in Charles Taylor's own historical narrative of secularization by contending that Puritanism, as a religion of Reform, does not contribute to a modern secular assumption of time as exclusively homogenous, empty, and disciplinary; rather, there is a proliferation of models of temporal experience (recurrent, sacramental, queer, and aesthetic) in Puritan devotional writings all oriented around the repeated personal aesthetic and affective experience of inner depravity. These heterogeneous temporalities resist disciplinary models of homogenous, empty time. Insofar as modern American secularity contains genealogical traces of Puritanism, it contains forms of temporal experience oriented around the gothic experience of personal depravity and resistant to empty homogeneity and disciplinary teleologies. This Puritan temporality of

depravity has an important afterlife in the early American gothic in novels such as *Wieland*, which the final chapter of this dissertation examines.

Postsecular Scholarship: Talal Asad, Charles Taylor, and *The History of a Methodology*

Critical narratives of postsecular studies generally begin with appeals to Talal Asad and Charles Taylor. Neither of these theorists invoke the name of the postsecular themselves, and the titles of both of their most important works make reference to the “secular”—not the postsecular. Nevertheless, these are the theorists who have provided the broad anthropological and philosophical framework in which the field of postsecular studies operates. Both of these scholars are important to postsecular studies, each for different reasons. Asad and Taylor are not themselves invulnerable to the postsecular style of criticism they have exemplified and produced, but their respective critical interrogations of the categories of the religious and secular are widely cited as tentative origin points for postsecular studies as a field. It is important to note, however, that Talal Asad and Charles Taylor do not so much inaugurate the field of postsecular studies as, in *Formations of the Secular* and *A Secular Age* respectively, provide the most concrete examples of a postsecular style of scholarship that was already developing in both their own careers and in the thought of other scholars. Indeed, both Talal Asad’s and Charles Taylor’s work stand in an uncomfortable dual role of being simultaneously works of secularization scholarship and talismans for postsecular thought. As Tracy Fessenden has noted of Taylor (and could have noted of Asad as well), he never “cit[es] the postsecular by name” (“The Problem of the Postsecular” 156). To claim Asad and Taylor as key theorists of postsecular methodology is simply to say that their own critical narratives of secularity depart from and critique traditional secularization narratives by complicating categorical distinctions between the religious and the secular.

Talal Asad's 2003 study, *Formations of the Secular*, provides a post-structuralist anthropological account of several of the most important premises of post-secular thought and criticism, all of which assume the secular as a modern condition that does not preclude, but contains (both in its genealogy and in its present), religious forms of knowledge and personhood. First, Asad claims, post-secular criticism dispenses with classical secularization theories of history: "If anything is agreed upon, it is that a straightforward narrative of progress from the religious to the secular is no longer acceptable" (1). Traditional "triumphalist" narratives of modernity as a secular, non-religious epistemological and historical condition detached from its own religious genealogy will no longer do (25). But at the same time, accounts of modernity as merely a continuation of the religious under another name will not do either: "The secular, I argue, is neither continuous with the religious that supposedly preceded it (that is, it is not the latest phase of a sacred origin) nor a simple break from it (that is, it is not the opposite, an essence that excludes the sacred)" (25). In a poststructuralist rhetorical move here, Asad frames modern secularity as a neither/nor condition: it is not a simple continuation of the religious, and it is not a simple break from the religious. Instead, Asad articulates a Foucaultian approach to understanding the secular as a complex genealogical episteme: "I take the secular to be a concept that brings together certain behaviours, knowledges, and sensibilities in modern life" (25). The secular as an episteme of "modern life" that forms subjectivity produces behaviours, cognitions, and feelings that are neither religious nor non-religious by default, although, as Asad states, the secular can "contain" religious forms of subjectivity on the condition that they do not themselves threaten the secular episteme (115). "Religious beliefs," Asad contends, can and do exist in the secular, but they only exist as beliefs that the secular episteme as a disciplinary, governmental

knowledge-formation “can afford to let go” (147). The secular is for Asad a modern condition of knowledge and discipline that can thus contain—that is include and restrict—religious subjects.

Asad articulates the secular as a modern condition that can contain a certain definition of the religious, and he simultaneously proposes that the secular as a modern category of knowledge and subject-formation both produces a particular definition of religion, and depends on that religion for its own existence. In other words, the secular and the religious as signifiers are not mutually exclusive; the secular and the religious in modern life are mutually constitutive. Although classical and triumphalist secularization narratives have articulated religion as “alien to the secular,” the lesson Asad wishes to drive home is that, in fact, it is “the secular” as a formation of knowledge that has “generated religion” as a modern concept (193).¹ The secular and the religious are conceptual categories that depend on each other for their coherence. And while Asad seems clear in his proposition that it is the secular that generates the religious, he also makes it clear that, in their continued dependence on each other, these categories are constantly redefining each other: “The unceasing pursuit of the new in productive effort, aesthetic experience, and claims to knowledge, as well as the unending struggle to extend individual self-creation, undermines the stability of established boundaries” between the religious and the secular (201). Asad’s scholarship thus does not so much articulate a new academic origin myth of the religious as a secular production as it articulates the need to recognize these categories as constantly re-forming themselves and each other through history in a mutually constitutive relationship.

¹ Asad’s attention in *Formations of the Secular* to ways in which religion as a category is a secular domain of knowledge that the secular produces in order to legitimate itself is a continuation of his project in *Genealogies of Religion* (1993). In *Genealogies of Religion*, Asad demonstrates how religion as a secular anthropological construct exports itself as universally valid by ignoring that it is “itself the historical product of discursive processes” of European secular power-knowledge (29). This secular disciplining of the definition of religion, Asad shows, “has a specific Christian history” which is ignored when this Christian-secular anthropological category of religion is “abstracted and universalized” (42).

In addition to Asad, post-secular study has been deeply informed by the work of the philosopher Charles Taylor in his magnum opus *A Secular Age*, a monumental and controversial historical assessment of secularity in what he calls the “North Atlantic” world. Charles Taylor opens *A Secular Age* by clarifying three ways in which scholars generally use the term “secular” in conversations:

1. Secularity can describe the general state of religion “as that which is retreating in [the] public space” of politics and collective reason (15).
2. Secularity can describe a type of belief—religion—which “is or is not in regression” depending on who and where you consult (15).
3. Secularity can describe “a kind of belief or commitment [religion] whose conditions in this age are being examined” (15).

By Secularity 1 Taylor means that generally, in the so-called “North Atlantic” world, the importance of religion in public affairs—the Habermasian public sphere—has declined.² By Secularity 2 he means that religion as a privately held set of beliefs or practices has become a philosophical and sociological object of measurement and study—often but not always a study and measurement of decline. Most importantly by Secularity 3 Taylor means that religious commitment can no longer be assumed “naively” by anyone, but generally involves significant cognitive reflection: if, like the Roman Catholic Taylor, you are religious, you have to explain

² Taylor’s documentation of a history of the “North Atlantic” world has come under criticism for its Eurocentric focus, what Saba Mahmood called the “normative thrust” of his narrative which also links Christianity to the secular without giving much attention to the secular’s relationship to other religions (“Can Secularism Be Other-wise?” 282). A less compelling, but no doubt important criticism, comes from the American historian Jon Butler, who contends that “All three of Taylor’s ‘securities’ are problematic and probably wrong” (“Disquieted History in *A Secular Age*” 195). Butler especially appeals to the fact that religion and politics are hardly separate in modernity, especially in the US. But the problem with Butler’s criticism is that it assumes Taylor himself can’t account for the persistence of religious importance in the secular age, whereas it seems that a major point of Taylor’s work is to account for the various ways in which religion can indeed do so. This is why Taylor takes pains to make clear that all three versions of secularity he articulates “make reference to religion.”

your religious choice to yourself and others in ways you didn't have to before modernity and enlightenment. The conditions of both religious belief and non-belief have shifted in the secular age, and this for Taylor is its defining characteristic.

A key insight of Taylor's categorizations is that he shows how all definitions of secularity "make reference to 'religion'" (15). As with Asad, the implication is that in order to understand the genealogy of secularity scholars need to understand its relation to religious history, and the way that history informs concepts of secularity as they are understood and employed today. Most postsecular scholars assume that secular paradigms of ontology, epistemology, and bio-political subjectivity are palimpsests that both contain and obscure the religious contributions to their cultural formation. Postsecular scholars believe they can only understand the secular as a governing political, social, and philosophical concept if they understand its dependence on religion as both a historically formative contribution and a persisting corresponding term without which the secular makes no sense. This point might be put another way: In the same way that, as Foucault's *History of Sexuality* shows, the concept of the heterosexual emerges in Victorian clinical discipline as a discursive back-formation of the concept of the homosexual, so the secular as a normative modern concept emerges only in response to, and dependence on, a conception of the religious that both pre-exists and persists within the secular.

Post-Secular Studies in American Literature

In the same way that Asad and Taylor do not so much inaugurate postsecular studies in the 2000s as summarize and provide concrete examples of a style of scholarship that was already developing in the 1990s, and especially increased after 9/11, so the practice of post-secular criticism in American Literature does not have a specific and clear inaugural moment. However,

most scholars point to Jenny Franchot's 1995 essay in *American Literature* entitled "Invisible Domain: Religion and American Literary Studies" as both summarizing a consensus and initiating the call for scholars of American literature—especially early American literature, to increase their attention to religion in the texts they study. This call also came with a clear identification of a theoretical literacy gap among American literature scholars when it came to their ability to critically discuss religion. Franchot contended that the academy's near-exclusive focus on "gender, race...ethnicity, and class" in the 1980s and 90s came at the expense of adequate historicist attention to "theological traditions" that shape the "interior life of the person" in genealogies of American culture, leading to a "disable[d] scholarship" (834). By pretending that religion had little to do with the historical "construction and reconstruction of American national identity," scholars were not only misreading their primary archives, but were reflecting a broader "evading" of "the larger culture's religious concerns"—reflected for Franchot by the so-called Republican Revolution, the landslide takeover of the House of Representatives and the Senate in 1994, an election victory that depended on a successful Republican appeal to the organized vote of the evangelical block (838, 834). Proposing a way forward, Franchot called for discussion of religion in texts of American literature to "engage intensively with the religious questions of the topic at hand as religious questions" rather than reading religion as "false consciousness" that masked the supposedly real issues of "sexuality, race, or class" (839-840). Franchot's essay ultimately contended that religion as a critical concept in American literary studies should be elevated to the same level as categories such as race, gender, sexuality, and class, worthy of the same critical theorization and genealogical assessment.

In more complex forms and varieties than Franchot would have imagined, her call was answered by the proliferation of religious studies approaches to American literature, particularly after 9/11. This body of scholarship came by the late 2000s to be labeled as part of “postsecular” scholarship, or “the religious turn” in American studies. Tracy Fessenden’s ground-breaking 2007 *Culture and Redemption* led the way. Her study ranged in focus from early American Puritanism to F. Scott Fitzgerald’s modernism, contending that, in American culture, “A Protestantized conception of religion [controls] the meanings of both the religious and the secular” (*Culture and Redemption* 4). In other words, American secularism as the underpinning of statehood and citizenship works only when those who practice religion do so within the confines of a Protestant conception of religion. But equally important in Fessenden’s assessment is the point that the American vision of secularity is cast by Protestant religion. As Fessenden puts it, “Far from being a neutral matrix...the secular sphere as constituted in American politics, culture, and jurisprudence has long been more permeable to some religious interventions than to others.” This is due to a “co-implication of secularism and Reformed Christianity” (4). For Fessenden, there is never a clear distinction between the religious and the secular in American culture’s political and cultural vision of secularism. Rather, there is only ever a “Protestant-secular continuum” that often either excludes non-Protestant religious people from participation in American society, or accepts non-Protestant religious practice only if it manages to re-articulate itself in America on a model of Protestant religion (9).

In 2010, *Early American Literature* published a special issue on “Methods for the Study of Religion” in the field. Editors Jordan Stein and Justine Murison noted that, in many ways, religion never really left the scholarship of early American literature, although postsecular approaches had enriched the study of religion in the field. In various chapters, *Duration and*

Depravity cites essays in that issue from scholars such as Michael Kaufmann, Jennifer Snead, Tracy Fessenden, and Elizabeth Maddock Dillon. Although not all of these scholars would be comfortable with the label of postsecular, the approaches in the issue share a common theme of reconsidering secularization narratives in the field of early American literary studies, while also attending to the complexification that postsecular studies performs on the categories of “the secular” and “the religious” respectively.

In 2014, both *American Literary History* and *American Literature* published special issues on religion. In their introduction to *ALH*'s “American Literatures/American Religions,” editors Jonathan Abel and Justine Murison noted postsecular scholarship's rich re-theorization of the category of religion, contending that American literature scholars were especially equipped to do this kind of theorizing:

“Above and beyond the details of theology and history, religious scholars have expanded our understanding of what constitutes religion itself, particularly in the explication of lived religion and religious practices. For scholars of American religion, literary studies scholarship offers not only a broader and, perhaps, even more provocative archive, but also hermeneutical strategies refined by engagement with theories in which precious few scholars of religion are conversant” (3).

In many ways, *American Literature*'s 2014 special issue “After the Postsecular” marked the overwhelming consensus of the field with its claim in the introduction by editors Peter Coviello and Jared Hickman that “The secularization thesis is dead” (645). But, as Coviello and Hickman state, postsecular approaches to American literature have not so much dispensed with historical narratives of the secular as wrestled with the hauntology of a dead thesis even as they richly complexify and contextualize the relationship of the secular and the religious to each other in the

texts they study. In many ways, Coviello's and Hickman's observation that "the secularization thesis is dead" is the condensation of postsecular approaches to American literature, and a re-statement in the field of Asad's 2003 observation that "If anything is agreed upon, it is that a straightforward narrative of progress from the religious to the secular is no longer acceptable" (Asad 1).

Puritanism and Post-Secular Studies

One of the most prolific areas of American literature studies for the production of postsecular scholarship has been the field of early-American literature, particularly in Puritan Studies. Fessenden's identification of a "Protestant-secular continuum" in American culture emerged out of a study of Puritanism in *Culture and Redemption*. Elizabeth Maddock Dillon's 2004 *The Gender of Freedom: Fictions of Liberalism in the Public Sphere* reconsidered Puritanism's position in the genealogy of an ostensibly secular liberal register in American public life that depends upon a distinction between private and public spheres of belief and performance initially demarcated by Puritanism. Sarah Rivett's 2011 *The Science of the Soul in Colonial New England* uncovered ways in which the transatlantic development of the Puritan conversion narrative form, as well as its adjudication by both Puritan clergy and laypeople, was "as much a part of seventeenth and eighteenth-century philosophy, metaphysics, and empiricism as it was a part of an evolving post-Reformation theological tradition," and by applying so much attention to how the New England Puritan way contributed to an "epistemology of spiritual knowledge" about both English settlers and indigenous converts, she proposes that Preparationism was a "quasi-empirical" process (*The Science of the Soul in Colonial New England* 5, 50, 69). In *Sympathetic Puritans* (2016), Abram Van Engen demonstrated how attention in the Puritan archive to the

continuities and differences between a “Calvinist theology [of sympathy]” and modern secular values of tolerance “helps [scholars] see the religious history of a concept that has largely been traced to more secular roots in [Scottish] moral sense philosophy” (3). In *Female Piety and the Invention of American Puritanism* (2016), Bryce Traister examines how production and performance of a particular kind of “female piety” in the colonial New England archive “invented the text that is American Puritanism,” leaving a gendered and religious legacy that “continue[s] to be heard in some of the most preoccupying political, cultural, and social debates of the contemporary United States” (28). Traister makes an expansive but convincing claim that New England Puritanism relates to the genealogy of modern America through “both a story of profound and controlling American religiosity and an equally American story of religious tolerance and secularism” (20). Traister’s contention, then, is that a close examination of the Puritan archive shows that, while it is perhaps obvious that “America has never not been religious,” it is also true from a postsecular perspective that America “has never not been secular” (203-204). Traister’s comment here summarizes and illuminates the general thrust of postsecular scholarship in Puritan Studies by stating that the Puritan archive of the 17th and 18th centuries itself already forces scholars of it to call into question any neat distinctions between the religious and the secular. The Puritans are both religious and secular at the same time. Scholars such as Dillon, Fessenden, Rivett, Van Engen, and Traister exemplify postsecular scholarship in Puritan Studies by demonstrating what has always been hidden in plain view: The Puritan archive is at once religious and secular; the two categories come together in this archive, are mutually constitutive, and can never be easily separated from each other in their co-imbrication. The Puritans who settled New England in the 1620s and 1630s, and whose vision of congregational government as the centre of colonial life dominated New England until the

explosion of de-centralized and anti-clerical religion in the 1730s and 1740s, articulated forms of knowledge and subjectivity in their religious practices that are, as postsecular Puritan scholarship indicates, part of a double-genealogy that informs both modern religion and modern secularity in American culture and politics. The identification of the Puritans in this double-genealogy speaks to a “paradox” that Rivett and Van Engen have noted about the resurgence of Puritan studies in their introduction to a 2018 *American Literature* special issue on Puritan studies: “scholars studying the Puritans today see their subjects as tension filled, impossible to define, and diverse beyond any clear or concise coherence” (“Postexceptionalist Puritanism” 686). Perhaps Puritanism is “impossible to define,” but postsecular methodology empowers scholarship to identify key ways in which Puritanism informs both secular and religious modernity in America.

The Temporality of Puritan Piety: A Critique of Charles Taylor

Duration and Depravity extends postsecular Puritan studies specifically by both building upon and critiquing Charles Taylor’s assessment of secular time-consciousness. Taylor’s account of the conditions of belief in a secular age, while compelling, depends on a questionable proposition that secular modern consciousness is defined by the assumption of a “homogenous, empty time” which paradoxically emerges from early-modern religions of “Reform”—especially Puritanism. *A Secular Age* is, in my view, defined by Taylor’s descriptions of the time-consciousness of secularity and how it both emerges from and differs from pre-modern religious modes of time-consciousness (55-59). Charles Taylor believes that the determining condition of modern secularity is its time-consciousness defined by what Walter Benjamin, and Benedict Anderson following him, call homogenous, empty time (more on Benjamin later). The normative time in which people operate, both in public and private space in modernity is homogenous, empty time.

It's not necessarily easy to understand how homogenous empty time works, because, Taylor says, to us "it's just time, period," so it is important to explain what it is and how it operates by investigating its genealogy as Taylor does. (55)

In pre-modern "North-Atlantic" societies, linear chronological time bears an important relationship to temporal orders that are not chronological: "the time line encounters kairoitic knots, moments whose nature and placing calls for reversal, followed by others demanding rededication, and others still which approach Parousia: Shrove Tuesday, Lent, Easter" (54). These sacramental-liturgical moments interrupt and undo the notion of the empty chronological time line as the model for temporal experience to the point that they are the governing models of temporal experience in "the pre-modern era": "the organizing field for ordinary time came from what I want to call higher times" (54). These higher times were dominant: "they gathered, assembled, reordered, punctuated profane, ordinary time" (54). This latter profane ordinary time is what Taylor identifies as "secular time" from the Latin "*saeculum*" which refers to "a century or age" (54). Taylor admits that this secular mode of time consciousness was present in the "pre-modern" era to which he refers. In the pre-modern "North Atlantic" world "People who are in the *saeculum*, are embedded in ordinary time" and "are living the life of ordinary time" (55). In contrast to these secular people, Taylor describes those who "have turned away from this in order to live closer to eternity" (55). This latter category refers to pre-modern clerics, monks, nuns, and religious ascetics. Taylor's description of pre-modern time consciousness points out two important things. First, time was not homogenous and empty, but was hierarchically double; there was the normative realm of secular time, but sacramental times interrupted and controlled that secular time. Second, there was a spatial but overlapping distinction between the sacred and

the secular as separate spheres of activity; this distinction was phenomenologically based on the distinction between sacred and secular time.

Taylor likes to explain how “kairotic,” or “gathered” time takes control over secular time in the pre-modern world by using examples of sacramental times that “gather and re-order secular time,” thereby introducing “warps and seeming inconsistencies in profane time-ordering” (55). For example, Good Friday is a day which, no matter what year it falls in according to secular measurements of time, brings participants “closer in a way to the original day of the Crucifixion of Christ” (55).³ The primary characteristic of the pre-modern experience of time, then, is this: “The flow of secular time occurs in a multiplex vertical context, so that everything relates to more than one kind of time” (57). In the pre-modern world, “tracts of secular time were not homogenous, mutually interchangeable. They were coloured by their placing in relation to higher times” (58). Secular time exists in the pre-modern world, even as the most common kind of time, but it is shaped and controlled by higher time.

It is important to note that, in Taylor’s telling here, secular time is still a mode of experience in the pre-modern, or pre-secular world. Taylor merely makes the point that the experience of secular time is not the exclusive or even governing mode of time consciousness, whereas in secular modernity the experience of homogenous empty time is, supposedly, exclusive and dominant: “On this [secular modern] view, time, like space has become a

³ It’s not clear at this point in Taylor’s analysis whether or not he believes that sacramental time can still operate in the secular age. When he explains how Good Friday “knots” or “warps” secular time, he is startlingly modern in his choice of illustration: “Good Friday 1998 is closer in a way to the original day of the crucifixion than mid-summer’s day 1997” (55). At the very least, though, it’s clear that if this sacramental temporality works in 1998 it only works for the minority of people that perform it. Elsewhere Taylor declares that the “Easter Vigil...brings us back to the vicinity of the original Easter, closer than last year’s summer day—although that was closer in terms of secular time alone” (96). His point is that “Two events very far apart in secular time might nevertheless be close because one of them approaches the time of origins” (96). Again, Taylor’s use of the present tense is confusing since he claims that this is a pre-modern condition, but it still holds that this kind of sacramental time is an minor exception in the modern secular age.

container, indifferent to what fills it” (58). Taylor grants that, in the modern secular world, there are still ways in which people experience time as not simply homogenous and empty. In particular he proposes that “we have forms of narrativity, gathered around notions of potential and maturation” (59). However, these instances are minor exceptions to his rule: “in relation to the earlier complex consciousness of higher times, our outlook [on time] enshrines homogeneity and indifference to content” (55). In secular modernity there is generally nothing outside of secular homogenous empty time: “we tend to see our lives exclusively within the horizontal flow of secular time” (59). Everything important happens now in linear, chronological, secular time.

Important in Taylor’s analysis is the fact that modern secular time—homogenous empty time—is a primary form of social control in modernity. As he puts it, “Our encasing in secular time is also something we have brought about in the way we live and order our lives” (59).

Homogenous empty time is the shared assumption that controls behaviour in secular society:

The disciplines of our modern civilized order have led us to measure and organize time as never before in human history. Time has become a precious resource, not to be ‘wasted’.

The result has been the creation of a tight, ordered time environment. This has enveloped us, until it comes to seem like nature. We have constructed an environment in which we live a univocal secular time, which we try to measure and control to get things done (59).

Taylor sees this default time-consciousness of secular modernity as the defining characteristic of the secular age he describes. Furthermore, it seems clear that Taylor himself is ambivalent at best about social control based on the appeal to temporally industrious production that this time-consciousness employs: “This ‘time frame’ deserves, perhaps more than any other facet of modernity, Weber’s famous description of a *‘stahlhartes Gehäuse’* (iron cage). It occludes all

higher times, makes them even hard to conceive” (59).⁴ (More on Weber’s connection to postsecular early-American studies in chapter four.) Secular time enhances social productivity in the way that its time-consciousness in each individual creates the ostensibly spontaneous internal impulse in the individual to maximize secular time in service of productivity. Secular time, in Taylor’s telling, achieves social control through its command over the individual’s own impulses to organize that time productively—not imaginatively, creatively, or in relation to another religious order of time.

Taylor’s explanation of the “North Atlantic” phenomenological shift from a sacramental normative time-consciousness to a secular one based on the assumption of homogenous empty time is important for thinking about the temporality of Puritan religious practice in seventeenth and eighteenth-century New England. Taylor explains this tectonic shift as paradoxically depending on the work of Reformation religion. In particular, Taylor points to Puritanism as an origin point for the shift to secular temporality. The Puritan urge to reform society to perfection is based on a desire to make secular time the all-important frame in which to religiously operate, and Taylor notes this explicitly:

Our lives are measured and shaped by accurate clock-readings, without which we couldn’t function as we do. This thick environment is both the condition and the consequence of our far-reaching attempt to make the best of time, to use it well, not to waste it. It is this condition and consequence of time becoming for us a resource, which

⁴ Martin Hägglund has criticized both Taylor and Weber as endorsing narratives of Secularity that posit its time-consciousness as “a *normative deficit*” in which secularity’s homogenization of time and the political is a tragic loss (*This Life* 14).

we have to make use of wisely and to advantage. And we remember this too was one of the modes of discipline inculcated by the Puritan Reformers” (542).⁵

Originally, in “Latin Christendom,” secular “comes to mean ordinary time, the time which is measured in ages, over against higher time, God’s time, or eternity. And so [sic] it can also mean the condition of living in this ordinary time, which in some respects differs radically from those in eternity, the conditions we will be in when we are fully gathered in God’s time” (265). With the rise of religious reform through Puritanism this distinction between secular time and eternity, previously only punctuated by those sacramental moments, collapses: “Reform alters the terms of this coexistence; in the end it comes close to wiping out the duality altogether” (265). Reform movements collapse the relational dichotomy of secular and sacred times into “one relentless” temporal “order of right thought and action, which must occupy all social and personal space” (266).⁶ The work of religious improvement in religious Reform rejects temporal mystery, and “time is homogenized” (271).⁷ And Taylor sees a “proto-totalitarian” temptation in the way religious reform homogenizes time (772):

Reformed Christianity demanded that everyone be a real, 100 percent Christian. Reform not only disenchant, but disciplines and re-orders life and society. Along with civility, this makes for a notion of moral order which gives a new sense to Christianity, and the demands of faith. This collapses the distance of faith from Christendom. (774)

⁵ In his essay “Were There Any Puritans in New England?” Michael Winship points out how problematic the term “Puritan” is as a moniker for New England colonizers of 1630.

⁶ Taylor attributes Reform as an historical phenomenon mostly to the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, although he does find its origins in late-mediaeval Roman Catholicism (265).

⁷ Taylor explains this shift through a then/now contrast: “Then there was a strong sense of the gap and inescapable tension between the ultimate order of parousia, which is in gestation today, on one hand, and the established order of civilization as we live it, on the other. In many Christian millieux in modern times, the gap has been narrowed, and the tensions lost sight of” (737).

The relentless temporal order of right thought and action that Reformed Christianity demands ultimately produces an assault on temporal mystery and duality that leads to the homogenization of time as exclusively secular. To be sure, advocates of this kind of reform are pushing for a religiously controlled vision of the self and society, but they see this vision as being completed in this-worldly, secular time. The paradox, then, is that the earnestness and intensity of religious reform secularizes and homogenizes time.

In his explanation of how Reformed Christianity helped to produce the secular age, Taylor argues that the goal for a society that is a “relentless order of right thought and action” and the demand that “everyone be a real, 100 percent Christian” led to the articulation of a secular time-consciousness. This is where the New England Puritans connect importantly with Taylor’s assessment. The famous New England goal to achieve the perfect “city upon a hill” was undoubtedly the goal for a perfect society of right thought and right action (Winthrop, “A Modell of Christian Charitie” 158). The relationship of this goal to the use of time as the achievement of millennial aspirations in secular time—the unity of “sacred and secular history” in an “American City of God”—is Sacvan Bercovitch’s entire subject in *The American Jeremiad*—a book with a thesis that resonates entirely with Taylor’s linking of religious reform to the homogenous, empty time of modern secularity (Bercovitch 9, 40).⁸

⁸ It is important to acknowledge that the Puritans’ theology of history did indeed seek to fuse sacred and secular history into one homogenized narrative. Traditionally, the separation of sacred and secular histories was the orthodox narrative of Christian history, going back to Augustines argument in *De Civitate Dei*: “true justice is found only in that commonwealth whose founder and ruler is Christ”—and that true justice will be realized in the *Parousia*, the second coming of Christ the King (11.21). It’s also important to keep in mind that the seventeenth-century New England Puritans are not exceptional with regard to their millennial aspiration. They merely absorbed and repackaged the general millennial fervor that characterized many of these radical movements in the English-speaking Protestant world of the time. Many radical Protestants in seventeenth-century England before the Restoration believed that “Christ’s kingdom was at hand,” and that they had the primary hand in that kingdom (Hill, *The World Turned Upside-Down* 27). See also Sacvan Bercovitch’s “Typology in Puritan New England.”

In this dissertation I am less interested in examining, as Bercovitch does, a New England Puritan theology of history (think Cotton Mather's *Maganlia Christi Americana* or Jonathan Edwards's *A History of the Work of Redemption*), and more interested in the temporality produced in the individual religious experiences of New England Puritans who sought to prove to themselves and others on a personal networked level that they were "real, 100 percent Christian." This dissertation is not, like *The American Jeremiad*, about Puritan theories of the relationship of sacred and secular time in a cosmic vision of history; rather it is about how individual Puritans experienced their time in relation to their quest to prove their spiritual rightness with God to themselves and to others.

To focus on the individual, personal, and networked experience of time in Puritan piety, as opposed to studying the Puritan theology of history, is to conduct an intervention into prevailing readings of Puritanism. Time is, first and foremost, a personal experience—not a theological or philosophical construction. Martin Hägglund, in his own theorizing of secularism, has duly recognized this in his reading of Augustine: "when Augustine pursues his philosophical analysis of time-consciousness in the *Confessions*, he also makes his readers feel how the problem of time is an intimate, personal concern" (*This Life* 101). If we want to theorize how religious history brings us into the secular, we must not only attend to Reformed religion's theologies and then philosophies of history, but also to its intimate and personal generations of forms of temporal experience.

Duration and Depravity contends that, although Charles Taylor's general narrative regarding the production of secular time-consciousness is immensely helpful as a way to understand modern secularity, the temporalities produced by Puritan devotional life on the individual level are hardly reducible to the characterizations of secularizing "Reform" that

Taylor lays out in *A Secular Age*. Instead, the following chapters map out ways in which the Puritan experience of time in sermons, journals, diaries, confessions, and conversion narratives leads to a complex temporality that is neither cloistered in the purely sacramental (pre-secular) nor limited to the purely homogenous and empty (secular) in its outlook. While I depend on Charles Taylor's assessment of the production of secular time-consciousness through the mechanism of religious reform, I highlight ways in which the New England Puritan archive discloses a temporality that often confounds his characterizations.

The result of *Duration and Depravity*'s response to Taylor's characterizations of the secularizing temporality of "Reform" also leads to an important reframing of Sacvan Bercovitch's narrative in *The American Jeremiad* and *Puritan Origins of the American Self* of Puritanism's relationship to American secularity. Bercovitch characterizes Puritanism as aiming to produce in America "a new heaven and a new earth" in a "New World vision of the future" that would "demand progress" towards giving "the kingdom of God a local habitation and a name" (*American Jeremiad* 8, 23, 24, 40). This ambition, Bercovitch argues, results in a "fusion of sacred and secular history" first in an "American City of God," and later in a national vision of "manifest destiny" (9, 92). While it is true of the sermons on the Puritan theology of history that Bercovitch examines that the fusion of the sacred and secular orders of time may be an important Puritan ambition, *Duration and Depravity* notes in the archive of Puritan journals, diaries, autobiographies, and conversion narratives, how individual Puritans, in their documentation of their religious experiences, linked their experience of time and their experience of personal depravity in a temporality of sinful feeling that ultimately resisted the controlling social vision of reform that Bercovitch identifies. This is not to say that we fail to find a secularizing tendency on the level of individual Puritan religious experience. But, as *Duration*

and Depravity demonstrates, this secularizing tendency on the level of individual religious experience leads to a much more intricate Puritan secularity than either Taylor or Bercovitch would give room for.

“Nothing is Ever Lost”—Including Complex Temporality

Duration and Depravity argues that the temporality of Puritan religious experience was not one of empty homogeneity in service of a maximum personal production of rigorous piety; time does not “homogenize” in Puritan devotional life, but complexifies in fascinating ways. By observing the continuation of a multiplex temporality into American secular modernity insofar as it is routed through Puritanism, this dissertation takes the observation from Robert Bellah that, in the course of human evolution, “Nothing is ever lost” (“What is Axial About the Axial Age?” 72). Bellah’s declaration that nothing is ever lost means that cultural memes tagged in history under the category of religion usually persist in genealogical proliferation in modern culture under the sign of the secular. Bellah takes this mantra much further back than the scope of this dissertation to account for the history of religion in terms of evolutionary biology, but I take it in the context of this study to mean that sacramental, circular, and recurrent temporalities of religious ritual persist in Puritanism, and are not lost in American secularity, but are in fact displaced and adapted in the process of cultural evolution to other secular cultural sites—such as early American gothic fiction (71, 111).

The application of this principle that nothing is ever lost to the domain of temporality speaks back to a deficiency in the Charles Taylor thesis regarding the supposed homogenization of time in the secular age, in which alternative forms of temporality simply drop out of the phenomenological picture: I contend that sacramental, recurrent and other non-chronological

linear forms of temporal experience do not simply disappear, or “subtract” in the face of the emergence of homogenous empty time. Rather, they persist into modernity in displaced forms in many facets of both religious and non-religious experience. This view is more consistent with Martin Hägglund’s articulation of secular existence as containing multiple “forms of time” to which individuals are “recalled” (*This Life* 3). Taylor himself sustains a polemic throughout *A Secular Age* against “subtraction stories” of secularity that account for it as a loss of something: enchantment, mystification, belief, credulity, or some other pejorative cultural characteristic. It is a notable deviation from this practice, then, that he generally declines to account for the persistence of complex temporalities in the secular age, especially since he himself cites Bellah’s mantra as inspiring his rejection of subtraction narratives of secularization (22, 772). To put this another way, Bellah’s notion that nothing is ever lost in human religious evolution is supported in the New England Puritan archive when we see the operation of homogenous empty time alongside and in coexistence with a displaced but still persistent experience of time as circular, recurrent, and sacramental.

Benjamin’s Heterogeneous Temporality of Modernity

Taylor’s thesis about temporality in *A Secular Age*, part of a book that refuses a triumphalist history of secularism, largely ignores Benjamin’s original articulation of homogenous, empty time as the ground of his larger critique of triumphalist secular historiographies. In his “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” Walter Benjamin proposes the idea of homogenous empty time as that which defines secular modernity even as it is a myth of cognitive assumption that is repeatedly shattered by the temporal complexity of experience. First, Benjamin articulates the idea of homogenous empty time as a cognitive assumption of modernity which needs to be

critiqued: “The concept of the historical progress of mankind cannot be sundered from the concept of its progression through a homogenous, empty time. A critique of the concept of such a progression must be the basis of any criticism of the concept of progress itself” (252). In order to have progress, those who subscribe to a progressive notion of enlightened secular modernity must have an assumption of time as homogenous and empty. The response to this kind of triumphalist historiographical position is not to critique progress simply by saying that it hasn’t happened or that it hasn’t happened to the degree some claim it has. The response is not to go after the idea of progress in time, but rather to probe the fundamental concept of time as homogenous and empty that must pre-exist and sponsor the subsequent notion of progress in it.

Immediately after he suggests the need for a critical method that problematizes the notion of homogenous empty time, Benjamin makes his own first explicit criticism: “History is the subject of a structure whose site is not homogenous, empty time, but time filled by the presence of the now [*Jetztzeit*]” (252-3).⁹ In a section of the “Theses” that begins with an epigraph “Origin is the goal,” it’s clear that the primary context of Benjamin’s observation here is that history tends to tell the past from a teleological perspective that assumes the pre-eminence of the present. But more fundamentally, Benjamin’s proposition implies that time tends to be experienced as a saturation of a present moment pregnant not only with its own history, but the possibilities of its future. The key to a sustainable critique of homogenous empty time, then, would be in the analysis of experience on the individual and personal level of narrative, to identify those parts of experience that undo abstract homogenous emptiness through the compelling nature of a multiplex temporality that resists it.

⁹ Habermas also points out that Benjamin exploded his own idea of homogenous empty time when he “fashioned the concept of a ‘now-time’ [*Jetztzeit*], which is shot through with fragments of messianic or completed time” (“Modernity’s Consciousness of Time and Its Need for Self-Reassurance” 10).

If the experience of time tends itself to undo the triumphalist secular historiographical foundation of homogenous empty time, the question must be how it is that experience can be produced in opposition to this cognitive assumption. In this regard, Benjamin keys into the fact that the experience of time is produced by the contingent ways in which it is measured. If clock time is the ultimate achievement and production of homogenous empty time, then it must be other methods of measurement that resist it. Benjamin turns to the calendars and their holidays as examples to illustrate how time can be measured in a way that both assumes and resists progress through its appeal to recurrence: “Calendars do not measure time as clocks do; they are monuments of a historical consciousness of which not the slightest trace has been apparent in Europe in the past hundred years” (253). Homogenous empty time is ascendant for Benjamin because the clock is ascendant as a method of temporal measurement. But the model of the calendar illustrates how time’s passage can be measured as passing yet recurrent, cyclical, and non-progressive. The key point here is that temporal experience is produced by the method and technology of its measurement. *Duration and Depravity’s* exploration of personal devotional literature in the Puritan archive views these forms (journals, diaries, conversion narratives, etc.) as ways of measuring time that undercut its supposed empty homogeneity.

Benjamin’s observation that time doesn’t exist except in its measurement is extremely important, especially because it illustrates Durkheim’s own reflections on the relationship of ritual religious practice to temporality: “try to represent what the notion of time would be without the processes by which we divide it, measure it or express it with objective signs, a time which is not the succession of years, months, days and hours! This is something nearly unthinkable. We cannot conceive of time, except on condition of distinguishing its different moments” (Durkheim 10). And Durkheim further notes that temporality as measured and

managed time is deeply bound up with religion: “The divisions into days, weeks, months, years, etc., correspond to the periodical recurrence of rites, feasts, and public ceremonies” (10). Puritan diaries, autobiographies, and conversion narratives are ritual technologies of temporal measurement that both produce and resist secular time-consciousness by aspiring to linear temporal progress in spiritual life even as they associate a failure to do so with sacramental temporal markers that reinforce notions of time as cyclical, recurrent, and non-progressive.

The Puritans, as purveyors of “Reform” in Charles Taylor’s schema of secularization, figure as simultaneously religious and secularizing. They figure as producers of homogenous empty time, supposedly the fundamental phenomenological condition of the secular age. But if it is indeed true that the Puritans subscribe to such a homogenized conception of time in their theology and philosophy of history—as I would grant along with Bercovitch and Taylor that they tend to do—it is also true that they undo this very conception of time in the temporality of their narrativized personal lives of daily devotion. In diaries, autobiographies, conversion manuals, conversion narratives, and sermons, the Puritans mark time aspiring for incrementally progressive, linear chronological narratives even as they experience time as recurrent, cyclical, and sacramentally oriented around documented experiences of their own feelings of sinfulness.¹⁰

¹⁰ The process by which New England theology of history produces through religious means a secular conception of time is best articulated in Sacvan Bercovitch’s two seminal studies of Puritanism, in which he explores what he explicitly calls the Puritans’ “fusion of secular and sacred history... [into the] American City of God” (*American Jeremiad* 9). See also *The Puritan Origins of the American Self* and “Typology in Puritan New England.” But seventeenth-century New England Puritans are not exceptional with regard to their millennial aspiration. They merely absorbed and repackaged the general millennial fervor that characterized many of these radical movements in the English-speaking Protestant world of the time. Many radical Protestants in seventeenth-century England before the Restoration believed that “Christ’s kingdom was at hand,” and that they had the primary hand in that kingdom (Hill, *The World Turned Upside-Down* 27).

Terms: Time, Temporality, Projection, Guilt

The terms time and temporality are critical to this dissertation; I use them in the same way Bruno Latour does in his 1993 study *We Have Never Been Modern*, in which time is the production of temporality. For Latour, time is an abstract ungraspable medium only comprehended through its measurement and experience (temporality)—which is an act of original interpretation. Latour reminds his readers that anthropology has shown how time is not a pre-interpretive constant, but is a product of interpretation itself: “the passage of time can be interpreted in several ways—as a cycle or as decadence, as a fall or as instability, as a return or as a continuous presence” (68). Time in the abstract or as a transcendental concept doesn’t exist. The idea of time is always produced in the interpretation of its passage. With tongue in cheek, Latour advises that one “call the interpretation of this passage temporality, in order to distinguish carefully from time” (68). The marking of time produces the time it marks. Time is a product of its measurement: “It is the sorting that makes the times, not the times that make the sorting” (76). Latour’s observation here is a contemporary update of Augustine’s own point that the measurement or experience of time (temporality) is time itself: “When I measure periods of time, that is what I am actually measuring. Therefore, either this is what time is, or time is not what I am measuring” (*Confessions* 11.36). As Martin Hägglund puts it in his reading of Augustine, “The investigation of time is itself a temporal activity” (*This Life* 101). Time and temporality are thus closely related but distinguishable terms that can nevertheless be used in overlapping ways.

In modernity there is, of course, a temporality of homogenous empty time, but it is based on an artificial restriction of experience: “Modern temporality is the result of a retraining imposed on entities which would pertain to all sorts of times and possess all sorts of ontological statuses without this harsh disciplining” (Latour 72). As Benjamin does, Latour recognizes that

modernity relies on an exclusive conception of homogenous empty time in order to contain all events within one teleological narrative (73). And Latour, like Benjamin, sees how individual experience tends to undo homogenous empty time through temporalities (experiences and measurements of time) that are otherwise. In Latour's telling, these alternative experiences are produced by actors in networks that resist the systematization of reality according to master discourses (90). But the clearest insight in Latour's thinking on time and temporality is his distinction between the two: time is an abstract production of its own measurement; temporality is that measurement of time. This means that the method by which individuals measure and use their time (temporality) is itself an act of interpretation that creates an idea of time. If, on the one hand, Puritans are, in their work of religious reform assuming time as homogenous and empty, "a precious resource not to be wasted," they also on the other hand mark and experience time as sacramental, recurrent, and sometimes queer, ordered in this latter way around their religious encounters with their own feelings of personal sinfulness.

Duration and Depravity identifies the Puritans as employing religious technologies of temporal self-projection, and adopts from *Being and Time* the key Heideggerian term projection (*entwurf*), because it helpfully illustrates the self's original state as the linked affective condition of temporality and depravity. For Heidegger, projection of the self upon possibilities is a determining characteristic of "temporal sojourn in the world" (187). And in Heidegger's lexicon, the authentic self projects itself temporally toward its ontological state of "Being-guilty" (335). Heidegger indissolubly links temporal projection of the self to the original affective state, or "mood," of "Being-guilty." "Hearing the appeal" of "conscience," the self answers by "projecting oneself upon one's ownmost authentic potentiality for becoming guilty" (333-4). The original state of being for Heidegger is thus a temporal "projection" that is "futural," oriented

toward the key ontological fact: a feeling, or “mood” of guilt (385-6, 390). Importantly, this temporality of guilty affect is not the tallying of wrongful deeds, but the articulation, acceptance, and management of a deep ontological state of guilt regardless of morally good or bad individual actions; in fact, to focus on guilt as “infraction” of a moral code or “mistakes” is for Heidegger an inauthentic state and the avoidance of temporal projection as original “resoluteness” (334, 343). Heidegger provides the fundamental insight that *duration and depravity are linked indissolubly as original acts of interpretation*. Our crafting of time (temporality) is always already inseparable from our articulation of guilty feeling. Put another way, our temporal projections of ourselves always emerge out of an original affective apprehension of guiltiness.

Duration and Depravity reads the Puritan archive of writings of personal piety as a gradual temporal process—projection—of coming to terms with the fact and feeling of original guilt—what Patricia Caldwell has called in *The Puritan Conversion Narrative* the original New England Puritan affect of “bad feelings” (161). Although I take Charles Taylor’s identification of a temporality of homogenous, empty time as the defining feature of secular modernity to be a reductive assessment, I nevertheless engage Taylor’s focus on the experience of time as the fundamental insight of *A Secular Age* because it reflects the phenomenological truth of the self as temporality. When Heidegger states in *The Concept of Time* that “to appreciate and study time, one must genuinely ask: ‘Am I time?’”—he means for the answer to be a resounding yes (71). *Duration and Depravity* reads Puritan piety as crafting religious technologies of temporal self-projection intended to both intensify and manage an original state of guilt—what Caldwell calls bad feelings. This reading both extends and critiques Taylor’s premise about the temporality of secular modernity by identifying circular, recurrent, queer, and other non-normative forms of temporality that resist and shatter homogenous empty time even as they often

depend upon it. For the Puritans in their individual religious experiences crafted in journals, diaries, and conversion narratives, time tends to ground the individual in secular temporal concern by circling around the recurrent experience of personal sinfulness, not flattening out in a narrative that conforms to homogenizing progress.

The Chapters

Duration and Depravity contends that the network of New England Puritan piety from 1630-1758 (The colonial settlement at Boston to the death of Jonathan Edwards) produced a complex temporality that resisted its own calls to disciplinary and “proto-totalitarian” homogenous empty time, and this complex temporality has an afterlife in Charles Brockden Brown’s inaugural gothic fiction of the early republic.

In chapters one through three, I demonstrate through readings of Thomas Hooker’s and Thomas Shepard’s conversion manuals that Puritan religious experience was not linear but sacramental, oriented around recurrent temporal preparation for the Lord’s Supper on most sabbaths. As Thomas Shepard develops this form of Puritan Preparationism, he increasingly orients the temporal cycle of sacramental preparation around the personal experience of felt depravity. Eventually, the profound experience and written expression of one’s own sinful feeling becomes the primary content of the sacramental cycle of communion preparation, rather than the actual elements of the Lord’s Supper. The recurrent experience and expression of one’s sinful feeling becomes the sacrament.

In chapter four, I engage queer temporality studies to show how Puritan religious experience was occasionally queerly sacramental. The injunction to experience oneself as totally depraved in personal life as part of the required circular temporal process of preparation for the

Lord's Supper produced in figures such as Thomas Shepard and Michael Wigglesworth a focus on a temporally recurrent interior life that emphasized queer erotic desires and activities. This queer sacramental temporality resisted progressive linear narratives of sanctification and chronological progress through homogenous empty time. By identifying queer sacramental temporality in the preparationist lives of Thomas Shepard—and especially Michael Wigglesworth, I am responding to a need that Jordan Alexander Stein has recently addressed for scholars to “forge connections between seventeenth-century devotional literature and the history of sexuality” to show the queerness of this literature (“How to Undo the History of Sexuality: Edward Taylor’s *Meditations*” 775).

In chapters five and six, I propose that the disciplinary temporality of Puritan piety did not, in its emphasis on the need to achieve maximum sanctification and spiritual productivity in this-worldly time, preclude in Charles Taylor’s supposed “proto-totalitarian” fashion an emphasis on moods, emotions, and aesthetic dimensions of personal religious experience. In fact, as these chapters study Jonathan Edwards, they show how his emphasis on personal religious progress in everyday, mundane, secular time, was entirely compatible with—even dependent on—a Puritan style of piety that emphasized the sublime need to experience the depraved side of oneself on an affective and aesthetic level, ever more intensely and eloquently in Christian life.

In chapter seven, I further explore Edwards’s legacy through his publication of *The Life of Brainerd*. In this text, Edwards wants to emphasize for the evangelical reader both the need to use time industriously for evangelical ends and the need to experience the sublimity of one’s own depravity. Edwards wanted evangelical converts who, unlike the tragic and cautionary figure of David Brainerd, were not liable in their cultivation and performances of sinful feeling to degenerate the process into uncontrollable temporal interruptions of psychic pain that

shattered narratives of religious industry. My reading of *The Life of Brainerd* challenges characterizations of the text as Edwards's articulation of ideal evangelical sainthood, and instead proposes that Brainerd is a figure which the temporally industrious believer should improve upon by better managing and expressing sinful feeling as part of a life of temporal industry.

In chapter eight, I contend that the twin Puritan emphasis on methodical temporal self-management and the progressive experience and apprehension of one's own personal depravity as a necessary component of good citizenship has an afterlife in early gothic fiction of the republic. Charles Brockden Brown, who read Jonathan Edwards and may have used Edwards's David Brainerd as a model for the Wieland patriarch, transmits Puritan lessons about the need to attune oneself to one's internal depravity through an industrious relationship to time. Brown proposes this lesson through the gothic tragedy of *Wieland*, in which the Wielands serve as cautionary pillars of salt in much the same way that David Brainerd was posthumously produced by Edwards as a cautionary figure—exemplifying through failure the double need to acknowledge and actively control one's own depravity and time.

Why Postsecular Puritanism? Why Now?

Coinciding with the postsecular, or “religious turn” in early American Studies, there has been a major resurgence of Puritan Studies in recent years. In his introduction to the essay collection *American Literature and the New Puritan Studies*, Bryce Traister notes the use of “multiple and unconventional perspectives that challenge us to reconsider our received knowledge about New England Puritanism's formative place within a United States national culture” (1). In December 2018, *American Literature* released a special issue on “Postexceptionalist Puritanism.” While the methodologies of different scholars operating in the field differ widely, they are, generally, connected by a “post-secular perspective” (or, if you like, a “secular studies” approach) that

revisits the Puritans as part of a broader “interrogation of the classical thesis of secularization in the West” (Traister 4-5).

Postsecular considerations of Puritanism’s place in the American secular genealogy have never been more relevant: in popular and political discourse, the Puritans find themselves in competing cultural narratives, framed on one hand as the origin point of regressive religious values, and on the other hand as a source of progressive religious inspiration for the modern secular state. As I completed this dissertation in the Spring of 2018, Alabama had just passed legislation that, in effect, banned abortion in the state—a law intended to challenge *Roe v. Wade* and lead to its overturning in a Supreme Court case. Women protesting the law wore the outfits that women wear in the Republic of Gilead in *A Handmaid’s Tale*, a dystopian vision of theocracy that Atwood developed from studying the Puritans at Harvard under Perry Miller.

On the other hand, Puritan cultural legacy has been recruited in political discourse as being a progressive force. *The Washington Post* celebrated Pete Buttigieg’s bid for the Democratic presidential candidacy with this lead: “A gay mayor from Vice President Pence’s home state who wrote a Harvard thesis on the Puritans, Democratic presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg wants his party to embrace religion but not at the expense of excluding others” (Sarah Pulliam Bailey, “Evangelicals helped get Trump into the White House. Pete Buttigieg believes the religious left will get him out”). Buttigieg, a Rhodes Scholar, went on to pitch his approach as rooted in progressive religion: “I think it’s unfortunate [the Democratic Party] has lost touch with a religious tradition that I think can help explain and relate our values.” He then argued for a “‘less dogmatic’ religious left.” Buttigieg, who is gay, is a practicing Episcopalian who married his husband in the Church. At least one “New Puritan Studies” scholar connected Buttigieg’s progressive political persona to his academic Puritan connection. Indeed, I

first started reading about Buttigieg when Abram Van Engen tweeted the *Washington Post* article with his own validation attached: “Mayor Pete wrote a thesis on the Puritan Samuel Danforth under Sacvan Bercovitch. One of the many ways he is fantastic.”



Buttigieg’s appeal for Van Engen appears to be connected to the former’s academic interest in Samuel Danforth, the Puritan who famously preached the “Errand into the Wilderness” sermon, which Perry Miller later made famous as a one-line metonym for the Puritan Origins thesis of American exceptionalism as initially a product of Puritan religious ambitions. And, in a dizzying intersection of the political, the historical, and the academic, Buttigieg wrote this thesis under the direction of Sacvan Bercovitch, the Canadian Americanist who amplified Miller’s Puritan Origins work in his own canonical academic work.

Others have expressed important concerns about Buttigieg’s (and his acolytes) connection of Christianity and progressivism. Writing in *The Atlantic*, Peter Wehner noted that

“To say that Christianity points you in a progressive direction is in effect to say that Christianity and progressivism are synonymous” (“Pete Buttigieg’s Very Public Faith is Challenging Assumptions”). The danger here is that Buttigieg’s form of Christianity becomes the Protestant-Secular position of American power from which to enforce progressivism for the national—and global—masses. And how does Buttigieg’s Puritanist past fit in here? Both Van Engen and Wehner think this part of his history is important. Understandably for a Puritanist scholar, Van Engen seems to indicate that Buttigieg’s bona fides as a Puritanist scholar make him a better candidate as a progressive Christian-secular leader of the free world. Wehner, on the other hand, seems to think that there is too much of the Puritan in the Puritanist. So the question—one that I don’t pretend to have a direct answer to—becomes this: what is the difference between a Puritanist and a Puritan?

I do not have a simple answer for what the link between Puritanism and progressive politics means for *Duration and Depravity* as a dissertation. On one hand, there is no question that the Puritans have earned their symbolic status as markers of the most regressive American Gilead-style political impulses. On the other hand, post-secular studies should have prepared us for someone like Mayor Pete. But my articulation in this dissertation of a Puritan religious experience defined by circular temporalities ordered around the experience of personal depravity doesn’t fit neatly on either side of this divide. Wigglesworth, for example, is an unquestionably queer Puritan figure. A Harvard tutor who confesses homoerotic attraction to his students and writes incessantly about masturbation and nocturnal emissions as he associates them with the Lord’s Supper, Wigglesworth nevertheless celebrates his own behaviours as part of his depravity—not his progressiveness. But while Wigglesworth doesn’t fit into any *Handmaid’s Tale* version of Puritanism, he is also no “progressive.” And it’s just as difficult, if not

impossible, to see the connections of what I call Wigglesworth's "queer sacramental temporality" to Mayor Pete, a "white," "Christian," "clean-cut" Midwestern man who is "also gay" and who happens to have studied Puritanism at Harvard. Insofar as I see a connection in Puritanism between its emphasis on the experience of personal depravity and the production of recurrent and sacramental forms of temporality that persist in a secular age, there is not much in this proto-gothic American cultural form that would connect us to Mayor Pete.

Although I have no interest, then, in contending for a "progressive" or "regressive" Puritanism, *Duration and Depravity* contends at every turn that it is precisely in their gothic valuation of the disruptive temporality of personal depravity that the Puritans are valuable for genealogical considerations of the religious roots of American secularism. We do not learn from the Puritans as Buttigieg might have it that Christianity is inherently progressive, thereby articulating a Protestant Christian secular continuum as the privileged political space in America as the assumed leader of the free world. Rather, we learn from the temporal disruptions of Puritan sinful feeling that the valuation and even valorization of this negative affect is an important vantage point of political critique from which to interrogate the secular disciplinary notion of temporal progress itself. Insofar as American Puritan religious experience emphasizes the temporal disruption of sinful feeling, it provides for American secularism an important cultural heritage of critique. This is a critique of religious-secular aspirations of Reform that, in their progressive, eschatological, and temporally disciplinary orientations are, as Charles Taylor has recognized, "proto-totalitarian." Whatever resonance we may find in the Puritan political aspirations for a City on a Hill with coercive secular eschatological goals of "prodding the community forward, in the belief that fact and ideal would be made to correspond," we also find a counter-genealogy of Puritan religious experience that gives its subjects a powerful language of

personal depravity and temporal recurrence that resists and critiques this disciplinary tendency (Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad* 61).

A Note on Depravity

The only way for *Duration and Depravity's* reading of the link between secular time-consciousness and sinful feeling in Puritan religious experience to make sense is for it to reject, at every turn, the incorrect tendency to absorb the Puritan emphasis on depravity into a larger sin-grace-sanctification dialectical resolution. To be sure, John Calvin's, John Preston's and William Ames's emphasis in their theology on total depravity is ostensibly supposed to drive the individual to God's grace. But my contention in *Duration and Depravity* is that New England Puritanism intensifies and privileges the temporal experience of personal depravity and cuts it off from this dialectical process of conversion. Depravity places the New England Puritan in secular, this-worldly time. The Puritans value their depravity because it repeatedly places them in this time, rather than resolving in salvation and a subsequent release from secular care.

It is important to note from the outset this resistance of New England Puritanism's privileging of duration and depravity over a dialectical resolution in grace, because this is what makes the Puritans truly democratic. For example, a 2018 *Vox* article on the legacy of Puritanism in contemporary America cites Marilynne Robinson's essay "Puritans and Prigs" to illustrate the article's suggestion that we might not be "Puritan enough" (Alissa Wilkinson, "What Two fictional Gileads can teach us about America"). "Total depravity" as inherited from the Puritans, in Robinson's telling, is simply "the belief that we are all sinners," and "gives us excellent grounds for forgiveness and self-forgiveness, and is kindlier than any expectation that we might be saints, even while it affirms the standards all of us fail to attain." Robinson's explanation of

Puritanism here differs from my understanding of it because it continues to use the concept of total depravity as a disciplinary force by making it part of a sin-grace dialectic. In her telling, Calvinism is valuable because it allows us to forgive ourselves and others while still “affirm[ing] the standards all of us fail to attain.” In Robinson’s liberalized telling, the depravity of individuals in this world resolves in a sweeping eschatological resolution of grace, salvation, and forgiveness that still manages to enforce a given disciplinary notion of “standards.” In my telling, New England Puritan religious experience cuts the twin experience of duration and depravity off from its resolution in grace and salvation (eternity). In doing so, Puritanism grounds the individual in secular temporal concern (duration) by repeatedly disrupting temporal aspirations for release from secular care. It does this through the persistent experience of sinful feeling (depravity). It is only when duration and depravity in Puritanism is cut off from dialectical resolution in grace and salvation that it can be truly secular and truly democratic. Only then does it ground the individual squarely in secular time (duration) through the repeated and privileged experience of personal sinfulness that also undoes disciplinary social standards.

Chapter 1

The Ambiguously Linear Temporality of Thomas Hooker's model of Preparationism

If Charles Taylor is correct about the formative relationship of religions of “Reform” to secular modernity based on the former’s rejection of sacramental times and introduction of a homogenous disciplinary temporality, then the archive of religious reform should contain literature that demonstrates this emphasis on linear, chronological, homogenous, empty time as a medium in which to enact progressive religious narratives of the self. In Puritanism, these religious narratives generally fall under the rubric of reformed conversion theology known as Preparationism; in diaries, autobiographies, conversion narratives, and sermons, Puritans temporally projected themselves in ways that they hoped would demonstrate to themselves and their fellow congregants that they were indeed “real, 100 percent Christian” (Taylor 774). This chapter begins by summarizing the history of criticism on New England Preparationism as one that generally characterizes it as articulating a model of religious experience based on linear progress through discrete temporal stages of preparation for conversion. This chapter then reads the initial articulation of Preparationism in New England in the homiletic writings of Thomas Hooker as indeed invoking a progressive and linear model of time that would seem to confirm the scholarship on Preparationism, and support Taylor’s narrative in which the disciplinary temporality of Puritanism as “Reform” eventually lends itself to the modern secular assumption of homogenous, empty time that Walter Benjamin and Taylor both believe underwrites secular narratives of progress. However, while this chapter finds Hooker articulating a progressive and linear model of time for prospective Puritan converts to follow in the method of Preparationism, it also finds a mostly muted but occasionally explicit presence of a temporality of religious experience that is sacramental, recurrent, and oriented around the repeated experience in religious life of the fact and feeling of personal depravity. This latter temporality emphasizing

the recurrent experience of personal depravity and associating it with the sacramental emerges in the following chapters as, in fact, the principal mode of temporal experience in Preparationism as Puritans such as Thomas Shepard and Michael Wigglesworth develop the method. The presence of this recurrent depraved temporality in Puritan religious life calls for a revision to both Preparationist scholarship and Charles Taylor's characterization of Puritanism, a "Reform" religion, as contributing to the disciplinary homogenous, empty time of secular modernity.

The History of Scholarship on New England Puritan Preparationism

The New England doctrine of conversion known as Preparationism presented itself as offering a linear model of the *ordo salutis* (order of salvation), and emphasized the need for a "preparatory" experience of abject confrontation with personal depravity, combined with a sense of the absence of any real divine presence prior to the saving experience of free grace. On the surface, Thomas Hooker understood his development of Preparationism to be the fabrication of a linear model of the *ordo salutis*, and the history of criticism on the subject has followed suit, with seminal scholarship from Perry Miller, Edmund Morgan, and Norman Petit all accepting that Preparationism assumed a valuation of covenant over sacrament that, in soteriological emphasis, expressed interest in linear progression, or ascent by steps, of the believer in the morphology of conversion¹¹. In *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province*, Miller explains preparation as "a period in time when a saint, working at his calling and listening to sermons, would suffer preliminary motions which sooner or later would eventuate in conversion" assuming that "there

¹¹ When I challenge the idea the Puritan model of Preparationism is in fact sacramental, cyclical, and recurrent, rather than linear and progressive, I am proposing the model as departing substantially from the Augustinian notion of preparation for salvation, in which the birth pangs of conversion are resolved for a progressive life of sanctification, or "ascent...of steps" (*Confessions* 13.10). Although they deal with identical themes, the Preparationist confession departs fundamentally from "Augustinian" piety, contrary to Andrew Delbanco's depiction (*Death of Satan* 51).

must be a moment in time, however infinitesimal, between absolute depravity and concluding the bond” between the believer and Christ (55). For Miller, New England Preparationism’s obsession with the *ordo salutis* as a chronological and sequential process reflected a broader “phenomenon of Calvinism everywhere” to “analyse the process of regeneration into a series of moments” (55). As New England Puritan pastors participated in this broader Calvinist obsession, they began increasingly more precisely “to distinguish and divide the temporal sequences of regeneration” into “marked off chronological phases” (56-57).¹² Following Miller’s analysis, Morgan describes New England Preparationism in more detail as proposing a devotional model that interpreted salvation measured by a linear model of temporal progression in secular time.

The Puritans

wished to trace the natural history of conversion in order to help men discover their prospects of salvation; and the result of their studies was to establish a morphology of conversion, in which each stage could be distinguished from the next, so that a man [sic] could check his *eternal* condition by a set of *temporal* and recognizable signs. (*Visible Saints*, emphasis added 66)

Morgan proposes that the New England Puritans followed and adapted the model of William Perkins, the English Puritan, who identified “ten stages in an individual’s acquisition of faith” (68). He further proposes that the Puritans in New England adapted the ten-stage model to something simpler, but far more scrutinizing of individual candidates for salvation. The stages were discrete periods of time played out in the experience of secular (linear and chronological)

¹² In his essay on the subject, “‘Preparation for Salvation’ in Seventeenth-Century New England,” Miller again characterizes Preparationism as adhering to an assumption of the salvation-to-sanctification process as a linear sequence of discrete stages: “it became possible, even probable, that men should undergo a preliminary state of ‘preparation’ before they actually were called” (260).

temporality: “knowledge, conviction, faith, combat, and true, imperfect assurance” (72).¹³ Norman Petit’s study of New England Preparationism is as erudite as Miller’s and Morgan’s respective works, with a deeply researched *longue durée* approach that rightfully views the Preparationists as they emerge from much earlier Protestant considerations of the *ordo salutis*. But Petit, like Morgan, believes that Preparationism adheres to a linear model of the process of salvation and sanctification: “By preparation they meant a period of prolonged introspective meditation and self-analysis in the light of God’s revealed Word. In this process, man first examined the evils of his sins, repented for those sins, and then turned to God for salvation” (*The Heart Prepared* 15). Petit does, to be sure, recognize (as Miller and Morgan also do), that the Puritans “ceaselessly devoted themselves to describing the interior life”; but Miller, Morgan, and Petit, the early scholars on New England Preparationism, do not explore the idea that Puritan Preparationism is more sacramental, ritual, and recurrent than linear and chronological in its temporality.

Charles Hambrick-Stowe’s study of New England Puritan Preparationism, *The Practice of Piety*, recognizes that the practice had a wide range of devotional applications: “Seventeenth-century New England preparationism consisted of the devotional acts of preparation for conversion, preparation for nightly sleep, preparation for the Sabbath and Sacrament, and preparation for death” (241). And while Hambrick-Stowe further recognizes the central role of repetitive preparation for “Worship” that “revolved around the Sabbath,” he also largely accepts the linear-progressive temporal model of Preparationism (96). “Preparation,” Hambrick-Stowe

¹³ No scholars directly agree about the specifics of Puritan Preparationism, arguably because each Puritan practitioner of the method—whether clergy or layperson—applied their own twist to the method. Regardless, it’s fair to say with Rachel Trocchio, that “In Puritan New England the doctrine became considerably more nuanced with some theologians subscribing only to a loose program for discerning one’s election and others to preparationism as a rigorously iterated process” (“Memory’s Ends” 700).

contends, did not lead to futility, but commonly to progress toward the ‘heavenly city’ and ‘that house not made with hands’” (22). In such a linear-progressive model of preparation,

“Conversion was not an end in itself but the first major stage of the pilgrimage” (85).

Furthermore, Hambrick-Stowe asserts that “Conversion” after preparation for salvation “was but the point of departure for a life of devotional practice and spiritual progress” (199).

As some of the analysis above shows, seminal scholarship on New England Preparationism generally assumes that New England Preparationist salvation looked a lot like salvation in the temporally linear and progressive narrative of John Bunyan’s *Christian in The Pilgrim’s Progress* (1678):

Now I saw in my Dream, that the high way up which *Christian* was to go, was fenced on either side with a Wall, and that Wall is called *Salvation*. Up this way therefore did burdened *Christian* run, but not without great difficulty, because of the load on his back. He ran thus till he came to a place somewhat ascending; and upon that place stood a *Cross*, and a little below in the bottom, a Sepulcher. So I saw in my Dream, that just as *Christian* came up with the *Cross*, his burden loosed from off his Shoulders, and fell from off his back; and began to tumble; and so continued to do, till it came to the mouth of the Sepulcher, where it fell in, and I saw it no more. (35)

The dream here is of a momentary and passing experience of salvation after which the burden of guilt and a personal sense of sinfulness is buried once and for all.

More recent scholarship on Preparationism, while innovating Puritan studies in various ways, continues to either assume the linear temporal model that earlier scholarship proposed or leave the question of temporality in Preparationism unexplored. Michael Colacurcio labels the preparatory stages as part of a “continuous” as well as “complex and relentless process,” and

further advances important ideas about how arguments over the *ordo salutis* highlighted the internal fragmentation of New England Puritanism, which was “anything but a monolith” and “generated sharp and interesting differences in religious doctrine, philosophical premise and implication,” as well as “genre of visionary expression” (*Godly Letters* 222, 136, 106). Janice Knight also illuminates the internal differences over the right practice of Preparationism within the supposed hegemony of New England Puritanism; however, she continues to largely assume that preparation in New England was essentially a “conditional” state prior to permanent assurance of saving grace and subsequent “sanctification” (Knight 206, 208). Sarah Rivett has uncovered ways in which the work of New England Preparationist confession was “as much a part of seventeenth and eighteenth-century philosophy, metaphysics, and empiricism as it was a part of an evolving post-Reformation theological tradition,” and by applying so much attention to how the New England Puritan way contributed to an “epistemology of spiritual knowledge,” she proposes that Preparationism was a “quasi-empirical” process (*The Science of the Soul in Colonial New England* 5, 50, 69). Rivett’s analysis of Preparationist methods asserts that the its inflation of a personal sense of doubt is not resolved until Jonathan Edwards (281).

All of the recent scholarship’s innovative readings share one thing: a continued assumption that Preparationism remains throughout its history in Puritan New England a linear temporal model of stages oriented towards the moment of conversion—or “the moment of salvation by faith” that will “‘convert’ the will” (Colacurcio 199, 225). As Michael Winship characterizes it, New England Preparationism was obsessed with identifying the when and where of conversion in its emphasis on “forensic” or legal justification—a model of conversion that assumes forensic time: chronological, linear, and progressing towards its teleology, which in this case is the moment of conversion (*Making Heretics*). Although self-examination never ends, and

can always find a previously undiscovered sin in the recesses of the heart, the Christian life is assumed to be, after conversion, a progressive linear narrative of sanctification.

Against characterizations of Preparationism as exclusively a linear temporal model of chronological progression in the Christian life to conversion and then progressive sanctification, this chapter contends that Preparationism as it develops in New England is more complex. While this chapter's reading of Thomas Hooker's writings on Preparationism agrees that he does produce and endorse a linear temporal model of conversion and sanctification, the development of Preparationism after him could be understood in its temporal orientation as focussing on a temporality of recurrence, sacramentalism, and depravity that Hooker also gestures toward in a muted way, but which Thomas Shepard and Michael Wigglesworth after him develop in more amplified ways. Preparationism after Hooker is the temporal sacramentalizing of the problem of personal sinfulness as it illustrates the Calvinist doctrine of human depravity and engages with a problem that, as Derrida notes, has been from Christianity's inception both its *raison d'être* and its ultimate threat: how to write evil: "The possibility of radical evil both destroys and institutes the religious" (*Acts of Religion* 100). Preparationist theology and practice tends to sacramentalize the preparatory experience of abject personal depravity by visualizing—and ultimately implementing—preparation not as a single period of time on a linear chronological route to the saving experience of free grace, but as an occasional moment of temporal return, or sacrament.

Scholars past and present are not mistaken to take up assumptions about the linear process of the Preparationist *ordo salutis*, because the stated intention of Preparationism was indeed to mark off the process of salvation according to a linear and sequential morphology of conversion. This linear temporal aspiration is especially evident in Thomas Hooker's treatises on the subject of preparation, *The Soules Humiliation* (1637) and *The Unbelievers Preparing for*

Christ (a more sophisticated 1638 update of a document first published in 1632 and entitled *The Soules Preparation for Christ*) (Neuman 42). However, my focus here is to explore how a counter-temporality of sacramental piety, ritual recurrence, and return revolving around the experience of personal depravity—or sinful feeling—emerges within the larger linear structure driven by the goal of conversion and sanctification as increasing worldly holiness. Traces of this sacramental counter-temporality centred on the experience of depravity that emerges within the linear structure of Preparationist doctrine are already present in Hooker’s theorizing of the process. Ultimately, moving from Hooker to the homiletic and devotional writings of Thomas Shepard, then to the diary of Michael Wigglesworth, Preparationism morphs into a temporally recurrent experience of personal depravity as a necessary part of repetitive preparation for participation in the Lord’s Supper. The experience of personal depravity eventually eclipses the Lord’s Supper as both site and sight of sacramental piety by the exclusive sacramentalizing of the temporally recurring sensational experience of personal depravity.¹⁴

¹⁴ In reading essential elements of Puritan piety as “sacramental,” I am departing largely from a dominant tradition of Puritan scholarship that has focused primarily on the “covenantal” theme in New England Puritan theology (Miller, Morgan, Petit, Bercovitch, Bellah). Of course, I do not deny the Puritan obsession with theories of covenant. I also do not propose that I am the first to note the intricate relationship of Puritan sacramental theology to covenantal theology. E. Brooks Holifield’s masterful study of Puritan theologies of sacrament noted in 1974 that “From the beginning, Puritans spoke in the same breath of sacraments and covenants” (*The Covenant Sealed* 41). Holifield’s taxonomy of Puritan sacramental theology from the beginning of Puritanism in Henry VII’s England, to its conclusion in Northampton, Connecticut with Jonathan Edwards is particularly valuable to this study, because from Holifield I take the concept of a Puritan “piety of sensation,” the idea that the Puritans valued a certain kind of embodied liturgical religious experience alongside their obsession with abstract propositional systematic theology (135).

When I discuss the sacramentalizing of “sin,” “evil,” and “depravity,” (terms I use interchangeably) I do not make a personal moral or religious value statement about the practices Puritans gave these labels to. But the Puritans saw their acts of “sin” as visible instances of their ontological spiritual state of “depravity,” a condition explained this way in Calvinist terms: “Man, since he was corrupted by the fall, sins not forced or unwilling, but voluntarily, by a most forward bias of the mind; not by violent compulsion, or external force, but by the movement of his own passion; and yet such is the depravity of his nature, that he cannot move and act except in the direction of evil.” (Calvin, *Institutes* 2.3.5)

Hooker and the Beginnings of New England Preparationism¹⁵

Thomas Hooker's model of Preparation offers the process of the *ordo salutis* as a linear one of contrition, humiliation, and finally salvation as a state of permanent—if occasionally turbulent—personal assurance. Hooker emphasizes the sequential and linear logic of the stages of preparation, and argues that the believer will experience progressive linear sanctification after the moment of conversion experience. Hooker's model of preparation is based on two sequential stages of experience (although he often breaks the stages up into smaller sub-categories).¹⁶ First, the sinner must experience the abject “humiliation” of his or her sinfulness in order to be prepared for the conversion moment of Christ's indwelling within the believer. Second, in the conversion moment and thereafter, the Preparationist experiences a state of lasting euphoric assurance, a permanent state of opioid intoxication with grace.

From the very beginning of *The Soules Humiliation*, Hooker makes it clear that the *ordo salutis* is a sequence of discrete stages that are linear and chronological, all undergone with the end goal of earthly Christian perfection. Initially, the prospective believer undergoes the period of preparation, which, as Hooker describes it, is a stage of renovation of the soul as the Holy Spirit prepares it for the indwelling of Christ: “First,” there is “a fitting and enabling of the soule for Christ. Secondly, an implantation of the Soule into Christ.” (1). Salvation is a final state of this renovation, the moment in which the indwelling of Christ is achieved, and a private covenant

¹⁵ Pettit, Knight, and Rivett have all shown how New England Preparationism had transatlantic origins in the writings of English Puritans such as John Preston, Richard Sibbes, and William Ames. Nevertheless, I follow most scholars in the field by taking Hooker as the first self-consciously “New England” articulator of Preparationism.

¹⁶Scholars such as Morgan and Petit have articulated a precise number of stages in what they see as the linear process of preparation, but this approach seems to me to be misleading. I don't see any consistency across New England Puritan writers regarding a commitment to a rigid process of conversion with a strictly prescribed and numbered order of stages. In fact, there appears to be as many competing models articulating various stages to preparation as there are treatises written on the subject. It seems, therefore, most helpful to characterize Preparationism as broadly based on a two part structure, with the first stage humiliation, contrition, and compunction for sin, and the second stage emphasizing conversion and sanctification.

of salvation between the individual and God is sealed. Thus Hooker tells his readers, “be humbled and finde mercy, and so be comforted and saved for ever.” (205). The end of the stage of preparation for Christ’s indwelling is the permanent residence of Christ along with the permanent reassurance that his residence brings: “if you but open the doore, hee will come into your hearts, and he will bring his own provision with him, even the sweet cordials of his grace and comfort, and hee will refresh you with those consolations which the eye of man hath not seene, and the eare of man hath not heard (217).” The period of renovation of the soul is really a stage in which the believer, after recognizing the need for Christ through the Holy Spirit’s promptings, is motivated of his or her own accord to invite Christ into the soul. The final words of *The Soules Humiliation* as homiletic literature imply a finality to the renovating stage of preparation ending with a static soteriological position of peace, as Hooker, in incantational language, offers a blessing: “the Lord prevaile with you, the Lord emptie you, that Christ may fille you, the Lord humble you, that you may enjoy happinesse, and peace for ever” (224). The stages of preparation before the moment of conversion and Christ’s indwelling can be tortuous and fraught with cognitive and affective distress for the person seeking salvation. But no matter how difficult the stages of preparation may be, containing the sub-stages of humiliation before Christ and contrition for sin, the conclusion of the preparatory stage is, according to Hooker, one of permanent comfort and satisfaction in the assurance of salvation.

In Hooker’s second treatise on Preparation, *The Unbeleivers Preparing for Christ*, his elaboration of the sequential, linear, and chronological nature of preparation is simultaneously an early articulation in religious terms of the temporal trajectory of developmental psychology. Hooker is adamant that the moment of conversion almost always happens—if it is going to happen—on the threshold between youth and “middle age” (1.193, 1.202). Hooker believes that

this threshold of middle age is between 20 and 40: “then is the fittest time that God should bestow his graces upon a man” (1.199), because once a person is too old it may be too late for the necessary cognitive alterations of salvation to take effect and perform their internal work: “it is marvelous hard to drive a naile into an old knotty snarly post” (1.201). Hooker’s elaboration of the stages of youth, middle age, and old age as they relate to the stages of conversion is remarkable, and reads like a proto-Lockean piece of psychology: “it is observed by Philosophers that a man in his tender infancie lives the life of a tree onely, he onely eats and growes, and so it is with little children in their swaddling clothes” (1.199). After the “tree” phase of infancy, adolescence appears as the “beast” phase of human development: “when he comes to be ten or twelve yeares old, then hee lives the life of a beast, he is taken away with those objects that are most sutable to him; for a child to consider the mysteries of life & salvation is almost impossible, he is not yet come to that ripenesse of judgement” (1.199). Generally, Hooker believes, a person only becomes fit for Preparation in the stage of middle age, a period in which, paradoxically, the individual is capable of spiritual reflection while also being a spiritual tabula rasa:

When he comes to the ripenesse of his yeares, from 20. yeares untill he come to be 40. or thereabouts, then the works of reason put forth themselves, then his apprehension is quick to conceive a thing, and his memory is strong and pregnant to retaine a thing apprehended, and his heart is somewhat plyable, and his heart is somewhat frameable to receive that impression that is put upon him. (1.199-1.200)

The fully developed capabilities of cognitive reflection coincide with the emergence of the human from tree, to beast, to spiritual tabula rasa, ready for the completion of preparation and the moment of conversion: “now because in a mans middle yeares abilitie of nature comes on, and reason comes on, insomuch that a man is able to conceive and partake of the things of grace,

and fadom them, and the power of understanding comes on whereby he is able to embrace them, therefore then is the fittest time that God should bestow his graces upon a man” (1.200). For Hooker’s model of preparation, the temporally linear developmental life of human cognition, or the “understanding” and “reason” is inseparable from the linear developmental progression of the spiritual life from preparation to conversion and assurance.

Hooker’s treatise concerning the unbeliever’s linear temporal trajectory in the process of preparation is simultaneously a psychological essay on the chronological development of human understanding; indeed, neither discourse can appear without the other. For Hooker, the emerging discourse of developmental psychology helps explain his own nascent discourse of Puritan Preparationism. And they both feed into an ideal portrayal of spiritual life as temporally linear and progressive. In Hooker’s imagination, the separate discourses of the *ordo salutis* and of developmental psychology—one religious and one secular—supplement and expand, but do not challenge each other. And both discourses tie back into a predominant way of marking secular, this-worldly time through discrete stages ordered according to a linear and progressive logic of development.

Hooker’s logic of linear, progressive, and discrete stages of individual psychological, affective, and spiritual development in the *ordo salutis* continues after the moment of conversion experience. Progressive sanctification happens, theoretically, to the possible point of worldly purity on earth: “preparing” is the expunging of “lusts” from the “heart” (*The Soules Humiliation* 2). The movement from preparation to sanctification is explained in terms that are both progressive and incremental, and immediate, as “the Soule” is “cut off from sinne” while also looking forward to continued development in the practice of holiness and moral purity: “the Lord Jesus Christ” will “purge these filthy hearts of ours” (5, 16). After the marked “time,” of

salvation as a single period of conversion replacing the “stony” depraved heart with the “fleshy” believing heart, Hooker tells his faithful, “yee shall be cleane from all your filthinesse” (*Preparing for Christ* 1.132). The true believer will truly repent once for all, turning away from sin permanently, as “mercy” will “sanctifie him, and correct him, and teach him...to rule in all things.” (*The Soules Humiliation* 120). In Hooker’s believer’s post-preparatory converted life, one experiences the bliss of perfect holiness, “able to keep the law” as truly converted and actually sanctified (121). And the life of perfect law-abidance is anything but boring, as the indwelling of Christ “puts a kinde of abilitie, and cheerfulness, in attending upon God in any service” (188). For Hooker, preparation fits into an idea of the *ordo salutis*—and the development of individual personality more generally—as a life that, if properly lived, is a progressive chronological process of perfection even as it is the immediate enjoyment of actualized perfection.

In addition to the concept of time as linear progression, Hooker’s model of preparation keys off an emphasis on the importance of personal experience. Two fundamental experiences mark the progress of the believer. First, the sinner must come to understand her ontological state of depravity through the personal and psychologically anguished experience of sinfulness. This anguished experience of sinfulness is the part of humiliation-contrition in the preparatory stage of salvation that leads to confession.¹⁷ For Hooker—and, as we will see, for Hooker only—this preparatory experience of sinfulness is a discrete and passing stage in the linear soteriological development of the Christian, not a recurrent ritual or sacrament. The second important experience marking the progress of the believer is the blissful experience of a final state of salvific euphoria from the moment of conversion forward.

¹⁷ Hooker’s subject of preparation is ideally female, as his famous counselling of Joan Drake makes clear, a key point of Amanda Porterfield’s in her articulation of Puritan piety as female (*Female Piety in Puritan New England*).

The importance of the doctrine of sin is central in Hooker's preparation, and the true believer must pass through a stage of the affective-sensational experience of personal depravity, not simply assent to the idea of human sinfulness as an abstract theological proposition. The experience of the anguish of personal depravity drives the would-be believer to Christ in confession, as it is "his own experience that forceth him to confess" utter sinfulness (21). Because this experience of personal sinfulness is so important in the stage of preparation, Hooker exhorts his seeking readers and listeners to cultivate as much as possible a rich experiential sense of depravity: "labour to see the depth of thine own misery because of thy sin" (32).

As he elaborates it, Hooker's emphasis on the preparatory experience of sinfulness as a temporal stage contains a tension between a Calvinistic model of depravity as an interior ontological state of the individual, and an external model of evil as satanic temptation and possession in which Satan thoroughly corrupts a soul. In Hooker's imagining of depravity, Satan does not possess the sinful individual, but manages, with the individual's consent, to exacerbate an already present state of personal depravity. Although this devilish depravity is most visible in the behaviour of exceptionally depraved people in sacred history, it is hardly exceptionally theirs. A hybrid state of interior depravity and external possession is the default position of every person. Hooker prefers to use the imagery of sensational exemplarity to describe this hybrid, and therefore turns to a meditation on the life of Judas as a harrowing picture of depravity-possession:

the Divell entered in to Judas, not by a coporall possession, but by a spiritual kind of rule, which the divell did exercise over Judas, that is, when the divels counsel, and advice tooke place with Judas to betray his Master: this is not Judas his condition alone, but is the condition of all men by nature...he rules in the hearts of the children of disobedience: The

divell casts wicked thoughts into their hearts, and carries them into the commission of those evils, which formerly he had suggested: The divell rules in them; he speakes by their tongues, and works by their hands, and desires by their minds, and walks by their feet. (35)

Hooker's imagination here of a monstrous evil that is both a wilful eruption of internal evil and a coercive force of external evil is not gratuitous, but intended as a sensational image to scare the sinner to salvation: "a living Christian, that seeth his own evill, and sinne; cannot be fild not contented without a Christ" (67).

The experiential recognition of sin that Hooker sparks through the example of Judas is important not simply because of that fact that he sketches it as a stage in the temporal process of Preparationism, but because it connects this temporality of experience to a complication of the distinction Charles Taylor makes in his secularization narrative between the pre-secular "porous self" and secular "buffered self." While the porous self is "vulnerable" to "spirits, demons," and "cosmic forces" as the external source of evil in the world, the secular buffered self is "invulnerable" and "master of the meanings of things for it" (*A Secular Age* 38). With Hooker, the experience of evil on the model of Judas is intended to be a passing temporal experience that enables the subject of Preparationism to understand itself as simultaneously buffered and porous: the self comes to a crucial stage in the progressive narrative of conversion, and can choose whether or not to entertain the Devil. If the prospective convert chooses rightly and rejects the devil, she paradoxically continues the religious process of conversion by adopting the model of the buffered self. If she chooses wrongly, her entire temporal narrative breaks down along with her buffered selfhood. This necessary preparatory dilemma as a passing temporal episode is important because it allows the preparing believer to understand both sin and grace as choices that are made in a liminal stage between the buffered and porous selves. Furthermore, it enables

the converting buffered self, if it makes the right choice in this stage, to understand itself simultaneously as buffered and vulnerable to depravity—buffered because it chooses to reject its own potential to be overrun by the Devil. A true believer, just prior to the moment of conversion, needs to be able to say with Hooker, “I am as vile a sinfull poore creature as ever any was” (127). Only once individuals have experienced the depth of personal depravity and chosen to reject it can they “yield” themselves “to the hammer of God” (*Preparing for Christ* 1.151). The experience of preparation thus contains a crucial temporal stage in which the subject takes a measurement of its own depravity as porous vulnerability to the Devil and then, in passing through the stage to the next one, rejects that porous depravity on the way to a linear narrative of conversion that reinforces a burgeoning notion of buffered selfhood, which then paradoxically *chooses* to be spiritually malleable.

For Hooker, when an individual finds this experience of depravity upon personal reflection, the discovery is cause for rejoicing, because the next step should be the permanent temporal bliss experienced after conversion. Perhaps this is the most unique characteristic of Hooker’s model of Preparation: his insistence that the preparatory work which involves a serious and harrowing encounter with one’s own porous and depraved nature should lead progressively in time to the completed work of salvation and an experiential state of buffered and euphoric assurance. Preparation leads, eventually, to a calm state of spiritual equanimity. Humiliation may be abasement at first, but in time it becomes an orienting sense of assurance: “this worke of humiliation is the Anchor of the soule” (*The Soules Humiliation* 138). And humiliation for the saved individual who receives a conversion experience is more than just a spiritual mooring. Hooker goes so far as to compare it to a drug: “this humiliation of heart is like Opium” (138). The salvation that a person experiences during the work of humiliation ends in a kind of

assurance that is so comforting as to induce an opioid state of euphoria. Hooker may be the initiator of a New England Preparationist tradition of doctrine much larger than himself, but his idea that there is a post-preparatory Christian life that is comparable, spiritually speaking, to a state of opiate intoxication is his idea alone, and does not come up again in New England until Jonathan Edwards's articulation of the "Divine and Supernatural Light". However original, and however much the idea that there is a permanent state of euphoria after conversion is Hooker's idea alone (that is to say, Shepard does not take it up after Hooker), he does insist on the point, exhorting his readers and listeners after the salvation experience to "then live quietly, and comfortably forever" (144). The spiritual high of post-conversion life in Hooker's doctrine, though it stands out as idiosyncratic in the general 17th-century Preparationist program of sacramental abjection, looks a lot like the indwelling principle of Jonathan Edwards's 18th-century adaptation of Preparationist soteriology: "if the heart be prepared, Christ comes immediately into his temple" (*The Soules Humiliation* 170). As he closes his articulation of the sequential phases of Preparationism, Hooker again emphasizes the immediate spiritual uplift of post-conversion life, and again compares the peace and assurance of salvation to a drug: "Humiliation leaves the Soule more calme," and the satisfactions that this calm brings exceed sensory experience even as they drug the senses, for they are "the sweet cordials of his grace and comfort" that "will refresh you with those consolations which the eye of man hath not seene, and the eare of man hath not heard" (187, 217). It is no surprise that, with conversion being such a spiritual panacea in his model of Preparation, Hooker tells believers at the end of his second treatise on preparation to "blesse God for his glorious comfort" (*Preparing for Christ* 2.119). Whatever experiences of abjection and spiritual abasement the individual must undergo in the preparatory stages of humiliation and contrition, Hooker makes it clear that they are worth going

through for the temporal payoff of a subsequent and permanent spiritual high available to the buffered self after conversion.

Hooker and the Possibility of Non-Linear Temporality in Preparationist Conversion and Devotion

It seems clear that both original Puritans and subsequent scholars who have gathered their understanding of Preparationism as a linear, sequential process of salvation ending in a permanent state of assurance and progressive sanctification receive their model from Hooker's original articulation of Preparationism. But there are two characteristics within Hooker's model of Preparationism that, respectively, challenge (1) its emphasis on a state of permanent internal assurance regarding one's salvation, and (2) its structuring on a temporality that assumes a linear sequence of chronologically progressive spiritual steps for the buffered self. The first potentially self-defeating characteristic internal to Hooker's linear model of the *ordo salutis* is his reference to a personal spiritual power of internal depravity articulated in a close structural and temporal association with the Lord's Supper. The second challenging characteristic is Hooker's hinting at a darkness of depravity that never leaves even the most sanctified person, therefore necessitating a devotional program of recurring humiliation even after the moment of conversion.

In Hooker's vision of the need for preparatory convulsions of humiliation and contrition before the sweetness and light of the conversion experience and post-conversion life, a personal and emotional sense of evil is both contrasted to and associated with the theological emptiness of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Although the consequences of this emptying the sacrament of any effectiveness for the troubled believer are not drastic in Hooker's writings, they are important to note now because of how they develop later in Thomas Shepard's and Michael Wigglesworth's sacramental models of Preparationism. To describe the emptiness of the Lord's

Supper with respect to any spiritual edification, Hooker turns to his favourite biblical example of the life of Judas. Hooker notes that Judas had access to all the means of grace, and yet he was damned for not having a timely experience of his own personal depravity: “Judas prayed, and preached, and heard, and received the Sacraments too, and yet he is a divell in hell this day” (*The Soules Humiliation* 30). Judas is an example for Hooker of how, if an individual does not experience the emotional agony of humiliation and contrition for sinfulness as progressive temporal stages prior to the comfort of a conversion experience, that person will experience the eternal agony of contrition and humiliation in hell. No sacraments can save a person. The important affective and sensory experience for a would-be believer is not participation in the Lord’s Supper as a means of grace. Rather, one who would like to have saving assurance should instead first cultivate the affective and sensory experience of anguish for personal depravity, as this is the embodied part of sacramental piety that prepares a believer for Christ’s indwelling. Hooker prioritizes the passing experience of personal depravity over the temporally recurrent experience of grace in the sacrament. While Hooker is not explicitly calling for believers to perform a recurring meditation on their sinfulness every time they partake of the sacrament, the fact that, in his discussion of Judas, he associates the need to experience depravity with the theological emptiness of the sacrament means that he opens up the possibility for the sacrament to eventually be associated with a temporally recurrent experience of personal sinfulness. This is a possibility that Shepard and Wigglesworth will take up.

The second challenge to Hooker’s linear-experiential model of preparation, conversion, and sanctification that arises from within that very model is Hooker’s own contradictory hints of a darkness inside the believer that never leaves, resulting in the consequent need to cultivate humiliation on a regular basis even after a conversion experience. Hooker uses a metaphor

towards the end of *The Soules Humiliation* implying that the internal depravity of the saved individual that is supposed to be purged after conversion can remain as an internal quality of the believer that continues to erupt from within. In other words, for Hooker, there is the real possibility of a sin that never leaves the believer and therefore challenges the ideal progressive sanctification that he endorses elsewhere. Even a very good saved individual “sometimes finds bubblings of heart against the Word of God” (195). The antidote for an internal quality of sin within the believer that never leaves is a devotional program of repetitive humiliation as a ritual—even sacramental—practice: “be contented, yet forever humbled” (190). Thus, Even as Hooker overwhelmingly promotes a program of preparation that advances an idea of humiliation about the personal experience of depravity as a discrete and passing stage in the progressive linear temporal narrative of conversion, he occasionally makes contradicting references through cryptic asides to a ritual or recurrent experience of humiliation that the believer must cultivate to battle the resistance of a depravity that will not wash away: “make it a chiefe part of thy daily taske to get it” (208). It is just possible, then, to imagine that the temporally progressive sanctification Hooker proposes as normative for the Preparationist believer could be complicated for some by the recurring experience of an internal depravity erupting from within that necessitates a devotional program of repeated humiliation to combat it, even as that very devotional program intensifies one’s personal sense of depravity.

Hooker’s model of Preparationism supports the general thrust of scholarship on Preparationism insofar as Hooker offers a linear, sequential, and chronological model of the stages of conversion that lead into a program of incremental sanctification emphasizing worldly holiness. But Hooker’s idea of Preparation contains a contradictory formulation that challenges from within the model of progressive linear temporality of conversion and sanctification: the

occasional eruptions, or “bubblings” of internal sin, even in the most sincerely converted believer mean that one must be reminded of depravity through a process of temporal repetition of the preparatory stage of humiliation. When Hooker articulates his model of the experience of depravity using Judas as an object lesson, noting that Judas was damned even though he received the sacraments, this means that Hooker’s elevation of the need for an experience of personal depravity—whether in a linear model as a discrete temporal stage or in his less clear and quite contradictory model of temporal repetition and recurrence—comes with a simultaneous association with, and devaluation of, the sacraments. This problem of the ambiguous temporality of depraved experience and its association with the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper is one that Thomas Shepard’s development of Preparationism takes up and continues to adapt.

Chapter 2

The Double-Time of Progress and Depravity: Shepard's *The Sincere Convert*, *The Sound Believer*, and *The Parable of the Ten Virgins*

This chapter analyses Thomas Shepard's three main theological treatises on the subject of Preparationism. These three texts disclose an orientation toward the temporal experience of conversion that, on one hand, endorses and continues Thomas Hooker's linear model of Christian progress through time. However, Thomas Shepard more strongly amplifies the Preparationist emphasis on the need to repeatedly experience one's own personal depravity. The injunction to repeatedly experience one's own depravity becomes the principal part of religious experience for Thomas Shepard, and this obsession ultimately frames this important experience as temporally recurring. Eventually, Shepard emphasizes the recurring experience of personal depravity to such a degree, and in association with the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, that the experience of personal depravity becomes not a discrete temporal stage of Preparationist experience, but a temporally recurring and sacramental part of Puritan piety that undercuts the linear and progressive temporal aspirations of Preparationism as seen in Hooker. This chapter's identification of a sacramental depraved temporality in Puritanism challenges Charles Taylor's characterization of the relationship of religions of "Reform" to secularity based on their shared homogenization of time, since the sacramental and recurrent temporality of Shepard's Preparationist emphasis on the repeated experience of personal depravity undercuts homogenous, empty time. Furthermore, the fact that this sacramental temporality is oriented around the repeated experience of personal sinfulness means that this religious program resists recruitment into or resonance with a secular industrial model of the self in which "time has become a precious resource, not to be 'wasted'" in the quest to achieve optimally disciplined selfhood (Taylor 59).

Thomas Shepard is commonly characterized in New England Puritan scholarship as the Preparationist divine who carried on the transatlantic legacy of Thomas Hooker, who was his father in law, and, in New England, his close mentor and associate in the clerical leadership of the Massachusetts Bay colony. But in his earlier writings on the Preparationist morphology of conversion, Thomas Shepard struggles to articulate a theory of salvation that complicates and even contradicts the model of linear progression laid out by Thomas Hooker. Shepard takes up Hooker's ideas about the repeated "bubblings" of sin in the converted and sanctified believer along with the need for a believer to repeatedly humble herself and turns them against the linear and progressive model of preparation, conversion, and sanctification that Hooker espouses. In the tortured and internally contradictory temporality of *The Sincere Convert* and *The Sound Believer*, Shepard insists on the need for constant self-abasement in the face of continual sinfulness while still maintaining an allegiance to a progressive and chronological morphology of conversion that assumes a linear temporality of incrementally increasing sanctification. The conflict between 1) an emphasis on the continual personal experience of sinfulness (depraved temporality) and need for self-abasement, and 2) an emphasis on the inevitable chronological progression of the believer from preparation, to conversion, to increasing sanctification defines Shepard's earliest two treatises on Preparationism.

The Sincere Convert was an unauthorized publication of a collection of sermons Shepard preached while still in England, but despite Shepard's own complaints about its unauthorized status and subsequent "typographical" errors, it gives helpful insight into Shepard's early work on the concept and practice of Preparationism (Neuman 36). The first theme Shepard emphasizes in the *The Sincere Convert* is the need to give intellectual assent to the concept of a depravity that is simultaneously inherited and personal. He further emphasizes the need to actually

experience sinfulness on a renewable basis in order to give assent to one's personal state of depravity. For Shepard, the concept of inherited depravity is a difficult one to express, and can only be described in the paradoxical terms of a person being born dead: "Every man is born stark dead in sin" (*Sincere Convert* 26).¹⁸ Shepard seems to recognize that universal depravity is a difficult theological dogma for many believers to comprehend, and he suggests that the way to understand it best is by constant meditation on it: "O that men would consider this sin, and that the consideration of it could humble people's hearts!" (25). Shepard is also aware that examples work more forcibly on the mind than precepts, so he is inclined to use startling metaphorical descriptions of innate depravity as a state of interior evil: "Every natural man and woman is born full of all sin, as full as a toad is of poison" (28). Probably the most important characteristic of Shepard's preaching of the concept of depravity is this idea of it as a force and fluid ("poison") interior to the self—an active internal and positive force of sin.¹⁹

One of the important achievements of this metaphor of the toad full of poison is that it manages to express the theological principle of universal human depravity in terms of the individual person full of evil as an interior principle. This idea of evil as both universal and intensely personal as an interior power is something that Shepard fondly intensifies through repetition: "O, thou art fill of rottenness, of sin, within" (*SC* 29). A person seeking salvation according to the Preparationist articulation of the *ordo salutis* would have to accept a particularly chastening conclusion based on the principle of personal interior depravity, understanding that even one's most pious behaviours count as sin, since they are merely a compelling of the self

¹⁸ Shepard's further elaboration of the concept of inherited total depravity comes in terms of democratic political theory: "We are all in Adam, as a whole country in a parliament man" (*Sincere Convert* 24). This suggestive comparison choice by association intimates that the universal principle of federal depravity is a democratic common denominator of equality, even as it implies that democracy is a depraved affair.

¹⁹ In *The Puritan Ordeal*, Andrew Delbanco has extensively documented the shift in Puritan characterizations of sin and evil from a vision of privation to positive presence (248).

against the self's positive internal inclination to ceaseless depravity. As Shepard states, even the most pious "praying and hearing" are "sin" (29). In the face of Shepard's preaching, a person seeking a salvation experience is paralyzed by the double recognition of the intense positive power of personal depravity and the inability to counter that depravity through pious habits.

Shepard inclines himself to propose repeatedly that all are guilty to the greatest degree of shameful personal acts of sinfulness, and he does not refrain from writing out the litany of particular kinds of sins that the depraved New England heart is guilty of:

There is never a wicked man almost in the world, as fair a face as he carries, but he hath, at some time or other, committed some such secret villainy, that he would be ready to hang himself for shame if others did know of it; as secret whoredom, self-pollution, speculative wantonness, men with men, women with women, as the apostle speaks. (41)

This is an important moment in *The Sincere Convert* in which the individual in the church pew understands that the particular sins he or she has committed are in fact known not only by God, but the pastor. Importantly, the sins Shepard lists have a queer sexual element to them, and thanks to the exposure of Shepard's preaching, each individual in the pew is able to recognize each other individual in the pew not only by the abstract principle of federal depravity, but by the particular and queerly sexual sins that individual has committed. According to Shepard's method, then, both private recognition of oneself as a person, and mutual recognition of other individuals as persons, is based on identification of personality with depravity as expressed in particular kinds of sexual transgressions that are mostly queer in nature.

As Preparationists come to see themselves and each other as fundamentally and queerly depraved, and then are able to use their imaginations to visualize the particular sins of their pew-mates, they all come to a realization that sin defines them as subjects. And as shameful as that

definition may be, each person must hold on to it as the principle enabling both private and social recognition of oneself as a self: “Thou mayest hang down thy head like a bulrush for sin, but thou canst not repent of sin” (35). Understanding and imagining sin is not primarily supposed to lead a person to repent and believe. The point is to make a person see that s/he is incorrigibly an unbeliever, to the point that preparation for belief is actually the realization that all s/he can do is not believe: “thy heart is a foul sink of all atheism, sodomy, blasphemy, murder, whoredom, adultery, witchcraft, buggery; so that, if thou hast any good thing in thee, it is but as a drop of rosewater in a bowl of poison” (28). In this long list of particular kinds of sin—again containing an emphasis on queer sexual desire—Shepard includes “atheism.” The implied double-bind here seems to be that the Preparationist is only prepared for belief when s/he realizes s/he cannot have faith because s/he is a queer atheist at heart. Atheism and depravity are reciprocal and recognized at the same moment. In Thomas Shepard’s writing, Puritan personality is not only based on the principle of absolute interior depravity, but also on the principle of religious belief as recognition of one’s (and everyone else’s) personal inability to believe based on the persistent presence of a queer form of depravity.

In *The Sincere Convert*, the first stage in preparation of humiliation is remarkably intense compared to Hooker. The individual seeking a conversion experience must recognize a state of total depravity as a positive and fluid force arising from within, a force that tends even to the extreme of “atheism,” which is the default position of everyone. Most people do not reach this state of humiliation as preparation for faith, because they fail to see through the repeated experiences of personal depravity to the fact that they are incapable of faith and goodwill: “Because they feel no misery...therefore they fear none” (71). Failing to make the federal condition of depravity personal through the daily experience of personal sinfulness is a failure of

preparation: “he doth know his misery, but by reason of the sleepy, secure, senseless spirit of slumber, he never feels it, nor mourns under it” (89). If a Puritan seeking assurance of conversion cannot affectively experience (“feel” and “mourn”), and therefore cannot recognize, the intense power of personal sin and subsequent judgement, then that Puritan cannot be saved: “men consider not of God’s wrath daily, nor the horrible nature of sin” (93). So if an aspiring Preparationist does not experience personal sinful feeling regularly and intensely enough to know its power, that Preparationist is bound to feel an empty assurance not rooted in the power of the personal experience of sin. This is why reassurance about salvation is dangerous—it distracts from the focus Shepard wants the believer to have on experiencing sinful feeling: “the false spirit, having given a man comfort and peace, suffers a man to rest in that state” (87). The only way Shepard’s congregant can know s/he is on the right path in preparation for conversion and sanctification is if s/he is capable of self-expression in the most abject terms of personal experience of sinfulness:

Now, didst thou never feel thyself in this manner poor, viz., I am as ignorant as any beast, as vile as any devil. O Lord, what a nest and litter of sin and rebellion lurk in my heart! I once thought at least my heart and desires were good, but now I feel no spiritual life. O dead heart! I am the poorest, vilest, basest, and blindest creature that ever lived. If thou dost not thus feel thyself poor, thou never camest out of thy duties. (SC 102)

The only way to be constantly in this abased state is to be constantly aware of present sinfulness, so the only sure sign you are progressing in preparation is, perversely, the pious mastery of sinful feeling.

There is an ambiguity here in the idea of the mastery of sinfulness; it implies a control over sin even as it implies an ability to sin artfully. But in his preaching, Shepard clearly favours

one side of this ambiguity over the other: if the Puritan succeeds in eliminating sinfulness from daily life, that Puritan is practicing Preparationism incorrectly: “If they get these sins subdued and removed, and if they find power to do better, then they hope they shall be saved: whereas thou mayest be damned, and go to the devil at last, although thou dost escape all the pollutions of the world” (*SC* 99). Mastery of sin means the ability to both feel and perform sinfulness more than it means the ability to accomplish the removal of sin from pious living. Perfect piety in this world could mean eternal damnation in the next. Thus the constant performance and mourning of sinfulness gives hope that the would-be convert is on the right temporal track. For Shepard’s Puritan, it is the renewed performance, experience, and contemplation of personal depravity rather than the measured calculation of temporal progression in holiness that stands as an indicator of elect status.

The fundamental message of *The Sincere Convert* is this contradictory imperative: although you are supposed to seek linear temporal progress from preparation to conversion to sanctification (as with Hooker), the path you are supposed to seek is self-defeating, because perfect sanctification is most likely a sign of damnation. A lack of experience of the power of sin is a lack of the power of salvation. Therefore, the only way you can have any assurance that you are on the right path of temporal increments of progressive conversion and sanctification is the fact that you are not progressing along that path. Repentance, understood as a progressive temporal habit of turning away from sin in the experience of conversion before moving on to a life of increasing holiness is, for Shepard, very possibly a sign of damnation. In what I find to be one of the most startling and profound lines in *The Sincere Convert*, Shepard goes so far as to say that turning away from sin is worse than sin itself: “repentance dammeth more than sin” because to “rest” in a Hooker-like way in one’s turning away from sin is actually to have left the

power of sin, which, for Shepard, increasingly appears to be the orienting centre of religious experience (97).

In *The Sincere Convert*, Shepard leaves his Preparationist faithful in a double bind: they are supposed to progress in the morphology of conversion laid out by Hooker as a sequential and chronological process of preparation and conversion followed by incremental sanctification, but at the same time, repentance, progressive sanctification, and the increasing purgation of sin are likely a sign of damnation, not salvation. Shepard both assumes and demurs the normative temporality of Hooker's model of Preparationism, the latter which advances an idea of linear chronological progression from preparation (humiliation), to conversion, to increasing sanctification. The "rocks and dangers of your passage to another world" that Thomas Shepard warns his congregants of in *The Sincere Convert* appear increasingly to be the assumptions of his mentor Thomas Hooker about the linear and progressive temporality of Preparationist conversion, devotion, and sanctification (109). More than the sweetness of post-conversion life, Shepard wants his Preparationist adherents, through the process of temporal repetition, to continually experience their own sinfulness—not repentance, forgiveness, or sanctification.

The Sound Believer

In *The Sound Believer*, Thomas Shepard continues to develop his theory of Preparationism under significant internal conflict in Hooker's shadow. Again following Hooker, he assumes a temporality to the Christian life of linear progression. In fact, he very clearly lays out four stages to his morphology of conversion "distinctly put forth: "conviction of sin," "compunction for sin," "humiliation or self-abasement," and finally "faith" (116-117). But as Shepard continues to

emphasize the need in Preparationist devotional life for a recurrent personal experience of sin, he begins to show a frustration with the linear progressive assumptions of Hooker.

Not surprisingly, Shepard emphasizes the first preparatory stage of “conviction of sin” over the others. He is particularly interested in emphasizing how an individual’s particular sins are the personal realization of the Calvinist doctrine of universal human depravity. Shepard emphasizes the individuality of personal sinfulness to the point that he seems to indicate sin as the origin not simply of the individual’s alienation from God, but even of the individual’s personality itself. Sin must be visible and palpable “there can be no sense of sin without a precedent sight or conviction of sin; no man can feel sin, unless he doth first see it; what the eye sees not, the heart rues not” (118). A person’s conviction of general sinfulness begins with the identification of individual sins: “the Lord begins with the remembrance and consideration of some one great, if not a man’s special and most beloved sin” (120). The individuality, and the individual evil of personal sinfulness is important, and the sense of personal depravity must continue to grow in the preparing believer: “The Lord Jesus by his Spirit doth not only convince the soul of its sin in particular, but also of the evil, even the exceeding great evil, of those particular sins.” (122). But, as in all of Shepard’s writing, the experience and conviction of personal depravity eventually becomes a kind of spiritual enlightenment: “There is a clear, certain, and manifest light, so that the soul sees its sin, and death due to it, clearly and certainly” (126). The experience of the darkness of personal depravity and the experience of spiritual enlightenment are one and the same. Certainty, for the preparing believer, is the certainty of personal depravity, a “death” that is “presented” paradoxically as “alive” (128). Whereas Hooker emphasizes the “comfort” of post-conversion sanctified life, Shepard continues to emphasize the experience of personal sinfulness, and pushes comfort to the horizon of eternal life: “Yes, it shall one day be a matter of

unspeakable comfort to you that ever you saw sin; that ever he showed thee that mystery of iniquity in thy heart and life” (135). As with *The Sincere Convert*, one of the most important parts of the personal experience of depravity is that it prepares a person for belief by helping the person recognize, paradoxically, an “inability to believe” (195). The inability to believe is the condition that must be met before the believer can make any claim to “some assurance” (193).

The particularity of sins is important for Shepard, and the preparing believer must note each sin in its unique individuality. Preparing believers must document the individual character of particular sins because these sins actually constitute personal identity. The individuality of personal sins is what makes up the individual: “In variety of men there is much variety of special sins, as there is of dispositions, tempers, and temptations; and therefore the Lord doth not convince one man at first of the same sins of which he doth another man” (119-120). It appears that Shepard’s intent here is to observe that different people sin in different ways, so the doctrine of federal depravity does not mean that each person sins identically; it merely means that each person is identically sinful ontologically speaking. But the upshot of the statement, whether Shepard intends it or not, is that individuals become unique *qua* individuals in the ways that they sin. In other words, personal depravity *is* personality through and through. The implication seems to be that if a person stops sinning (“converted” or not), personality is erased. The motivation to hold on to a psychological, affective, and spiritual sense of personal identity, both pre-conversion and post-conversion, is closely bound to the injunction to hold on to personal depravity. In Shepard, sound believers must hold on to their identities as uniquely and queerly sinful in order to have any identity at all. The experience of sinfulness is a creative source of the self.

At a key point in *The Sound Believer*, Shepard reveals his frustration with the linear temporal model of Hooker’s morphology of conversion, because the latter’s assumptions about the

progressive sanctification and pure bliss of the post-conversion life challenge Shepard's overwhelming emphasis on the need for a recurrent experience of personal sinfulness in "conviction" and "compunction." While discussing the need for the temporally recurrent experience of sin in a converted believer's life in order to generate humiliation for personal depravity, Shepard recognizes that his doctrine appears to reject Hooker's post-conversion characterization of blissful sanctification. The issue regards the relation of temporal sequence to experience, but Shepard dismisses allegations that he is preaching a Preparationist doctrine of continual misery: "Trouble me no more, therefore, in asking whether a Christian is in a state of happiness or misery in this condition. I answer, He is preparatively happy; he is now passing from death to life, though not as yet wholly passed" (170). It is at this moment of apparent frustration on Shepard's part that his conflict with Hooker's linear temporality of Preparationist life becomes most clear²⁰. Whoever Shepard is replying to in answering this objection to his devotional project of repeated humiliation, they seem to see that his program of piety could be a radical reworking of Hooker to the point of incompatibility. How can you mark religious progress in repentance, salvation, and sanctification if you are constantly having to measure, mark, and *celebrate* your own depravity by returning to the recurrent experience of it?

Perhaps it is because Shepard senses opposition to his model of the recurrent experience of personal depravity that he moderates his position with token indications of the possibility of progressive sanctification near the end of *The Sound Believer*. He tells preparing believers: "our sanctification can be nothing else but the removal of this pollution, by the contrary habits and dispositions to be like unto God again; our sanctification is to be holy" (257). Indeed, if this is not enough, Shepard repeats the point, perhaps to comfort believers who are too startled and

²⁰ Michael Colacurcio's reading of *The Sound Believer* as laying out "the various stages along the Saint's way" makes the least sense at this point in Shepard's text (*Godly Letters* 218).

disturbed by the “atheism,” “inability to believe,” and “foul sink” of queer sexual urges that they have discovered thanks to his preaching: “A little holiness is eminently all, springing up to eternal life; this little spring shall never cease running” (262). Shepard seems, then, to be encouraging the very listeners and readers he has just discouraged. Even as he exhorts preparing believers to look for experiences of personal sinfulness that reflect the broader doctrine of federal depravity, he also tells them to look for the smallest signs of holiness as indications of their eventual perfection in “a life of love” (284).

Shepard’s adherents might well be excused for feeling confused about how to practice the preaching they hear and read in order to achieve some level of assurance about their eternal states. It certainly appears in *The Sound Believer* that Shepard himself is uncertain to some degree about how his Preparationist method that emphasizes the temporally recurrent experience of depravity squares with the incremental, linear, and chronological temporal aspirations of the Puritan’s worldly but holy progress. At some point, something has to give, and Shepard has to modify the overarching structure of Preparationism to better accommodate his emphasis on the recurrent experience of personal depravity. This is what he does in *The Parable of the Ten Virgins*.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins

In contrast to Hooker, Thomas Shepard’s homiletic literature discloses the nature of the preparatory experience as temporally recurrent, rather than momentary and part of a larger self-resolving chronological and progressive process of salvation. This disclosure of a recurrent model of preparatory devotional life reaches its rhetorical height in *The Parable of the Ten Virgins* in spite of its avowed espousal of a linear and chronological model of preparation as the

correct model of the *ordo salutis*. *The Parable of the Ten Virgins*, a series of sermons preached from 1636-40, was published as a single collection, running over 600 pages, in 1659 by Jonathan Mitchell, Shepard's successor after his death to the Cambridge pulpit in New England (Neuman 2, 104-105). It is in this text that Shepard's model of preparation reaches a creative breakthrough by articulating the temporally recurrent experience of personal depravity as part of sacramental experience, contrasted to but also associated with communion. The perpetually preparing believer continually returns to moments of abjection as sacramental (or recurrent) experiences that set off a process resulting in the infusion of grace in the believer.²¹ However, the sacramental and recurrent nature of the devotional experience of sin as Shepard describes it in *The Parable of the Ten Virgins* continues to be at odds with the sequential logic of the *ordo salutis* assumed by Hooker. Although the sequential logic of the *ordo salutis* is, on the surface, the logic Shepard continues to avow in his model of Preparationism, *The Parable of the Ten Virgins* discloses a new sacramental impulse, or repetitive drive to return that continually undercuts linear soteriological and sanctifying progression.²² The experience of personal sinfulness as a sacramental repetitive drive tends to co-opt itself as the pinnacle of devotional piety without reference to any larger and temporally progressive Puritan model of conversion, salvation, and sanctification involving free grace. Put another way, one cannot help but notice in *The Parable of the Ten Virgins* a tendency to emphasize the temporally recurrent experience of abject personal depravity in its clear association with communion as sacramental, at the expense

²¹ Abjection is the unquenchable search to attach language to something in the *res extensa* as an object that can then be either appropriated or avowed. But abjection is the embodied experience of something like milk, semen, or feces, that can be neither appropriated nor disavowed (Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* 1-31). Shepard and his first generation Preparationists struggle to find a language and an object that they can then use to either appropriate or disavow personal evil.

While the experience of personal evil is one of abjection, it is also one of sacrament. As Ricoeur comments: "evil is supremely the crucial experience of the sacred" (*The Symbolism of Evil* 6).

²² The "return" of sacramental confession is a return to both "personal" and "human" "archaism" understood as an original sense of "defilement" which is the basic mode of human "discovery" and "pardon" (Ricoeur 80, 13, 9)

of the larger process of the chronologically progressive spiritual regeneration it is supposed to be a part of. The larger linear process of Preparationism is at odds with Shepard's strangely sacramental temporality because the former orders time as a pure linear chronology of discrete stages, not a recurring cycle patterned around preparation for communion. So even as the sacramentalizing of the individual's experience of personal depravity is Shepard's resolution to the problem that dogs *The Sincere Convert* and *The Sound Believer*, the constant challenge that the recurrent experience of personal sinfulness poses to preparationist theology's central assumption of chronological progression in the sanctified life of the believer remains, as in Shepard's earlier treatises on preparation. By making the experience of personal depravity part of sacramental and devotional life, Shepard assimilates a temporality of sinful feeling into the linear model—although very uncomfortably, and ultimately untenably.

As in *The Sincere Convert* and *The Sound Believer*, the preparatory experience of abjection is, for Shepard, an intense moment of confrontation with one's individual sinfulness.²³ As Shepard describes it in *The Parable of the Ten Virgins*, this experience of personal sinfulness, or personal depravity, is set apart from the rest of the process of salvation—especially the experience of free grace in Christ. As a result, the experience of personal sin is intended to be a harrowing experience in and of itself, and although it is eventually meant to be linked through repentance to the forgiveness of sin through the free grace offered by Christ, the abjection of

²³ The individuality of the sacramental experience of personal sinfulness emerges in Preparationism, quite probably due to the coincidence of New England Preparationism with the emergence of a culture of print that encouraged the private reading of preparatory manuals, and indeed, as David D. Hall notes, gave those manuals "sacramental significance" in their publication (*Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgement* 30). Many Puritans in spiritual distress read preparatory manuals in order to feel ready for participation in the Lord's Supper, and they shared a common assumption about the "kinship between reading, devotion, and the sacraments" (42). Hall also notes that "When people in New England talked about their reading, as they sometimes did in speaking of their progress out of sin and into grace, their descriptions were in keeping with this ideology of print" (39). Indeed, one invisible effect of the ideology of print and the culture of private reading as devotional practice was probably the intensification in Preparationism of the personal element of depravity as a private spiritual experience.

personal depravity only performs its preparatory work *qua* abjection if it functions in some way as an end in itself. Shepard insists in the opening of *The Parable* that “Those that never were in bitterness and sorrow of heart” about the insurmountable nature of their sins to such a degree that “nothing can comfort them” cannot have experienced the relief and joy of salvation from sin (33-34). In other words, the faithful subject of preparatory methods of salvation must experience the hopelessness of his or her individual sinfulness as completely separate from that sinfulness’s resolution in the confidence of free grace offered in Christ, for “nothing can comfort” the preparatory subject in the abject contemplation of individual depravity. The most important thing to note about Shepard’s initial description of the preparatory experience of personal sinfulness as the text attempts to move forward temporally is Shepard’s tendency to focus on the experience of sinfulness as a self-contained or self-referential personal adventure. In an important respect, Shepard is uninterested in the momentary experience of personal sin as it is supposed to be linked to the subsequent experience of salvation from sin in the Preparationist sequence of salvation. The resolution of preparatory abjection thus appears very early in the text to be somehow disconnected from any saving dividend as it was in *The Sincere Convert* and *The Sound Believer*, and is instead an experience the preparatory faithful undergoes for the experience’s own intrinsic value.

To be sure, the stalling or recurrence of the process of salvation at the preparatory stage of the experience of abject personal depravity is not the stated intention of Preparationism as mapped out by Thomas Shepard in *The Parable of the Ten Virgins*. The experience of personal sin is intended to function as a means of grace only insofar as it leads to the next step, which is eventually one of relief as the believer comes to experience free grace. For Shepard “the horror and smart of sin” drives the individual to redemption in Christ, since the main lesson learned

from personal depravity is one's personal inability to cleanse oneself of sinfulness. Thus, after undergoing the harrowing process of preparatory abjection, the believer should ultimately be able to look back with Shepard and state with relief: "where sin, there Grace hath abounded" (90).²⁴ In other words, only insofar as the individual realizes the depth and scope of personal depravity can the individual understand the greatness of the work of grace in overcoming such depravity. The experience of saving grace is proportional to the experience of sin. It is in this sense of understanding the experience of sin as cultivating the believer's heart for the experience of grace that preparatory abjection is avowedly supposed to work as a temporal stage in Preparationist theology, as "most vexing sins and pricking distempers...advance Grace" (103). And if employed correctly, preparatory abjection in the face of personal sinfulness not only drives the believer to Christ, but also helps the believer to realize that sin's scope has implications beyond the personal. The realization that sinfulness not only corrupts the individual, but also his or her surroundings, keeps the believer's eyes on eternity, not the "present evil world" of the New England settlement (112). So ultimately, if functioning properly in the *ordo salutis*, the preparatory experience of sin leads first through abjection and horror to the sweet experience of grace and contemplation of eternal life: "Thus a man is grievously troubled with the sight of Gods anger...[and] at last he sees only Christ can [save]...for as horror may be [the believer's] greatest evil, so love to ease him, may be his greatest good" (133).

There is thus an inherent tension between the theoretical purpose of preparatory abjection as part of a larger process of discrete temporal stages, and its practical experience as a devotional method set on repeat. The grander purpose of an individual's preparatory confrontation with personal sinfulness is to drive the individual to Christ and the free grace offered through him, as

²⁴ The adjective "harrowing" should carry with it associations of personal identification with Christ's "harrowing of hell"—his confrontation with sin, death, and hell during his three days in the grave.

“sorrows” for sin “smoak” the believer out of the “Hive” of self-righteousness (162). But the horrifying nature of confrontation with personal sinfulness is only horrific if the seeking soul temporally dissociates it in experience from its resolution in the subsequent experience of free grace. In order to experience personal sinfulness “as the greatest evil” it cannot be experienced in the context of final resolution in a salvation experience or other experience of grace, as it was, at least in a cursory manner, in *The Sound Believer*. Once the believer reaches the apex of the *ordo salutis* in the sweet experience of free grace, Shepard, ever on the lookout for such things, is worried that antinomian confidence will sink in, and the believer will no longer strive for sanctification.²⁵ Shepard anticipates that a believer who has experienced grace will soon take that “easie” yoke for granted, a sin Michael Wigglesworth later describes as “Being too bold” to take “hold” of salvation unworthily (224; Wigglesworth, *Day of Doom* 681). But Shepard is also worried that the believer will never really understand the gravity of his or her sin, and therefore never really understand the value of salvation: “Be sure your wound at first for sin be deep enough; for all the error in a mans Faith and Sanctification it springs from that first error of his Humiliation; if a mans humiliation be false and weak, and little, his Faith is light, and his sanctification counterfeit” (482).

The Sacramental Temporality of Depravity in *The Parable of the Ten Virgins*

In order to ensure that the Preparationist believer experiences enough of sin, Shepard cultivates a sacramental temporal element to the experience of personal depravity: although self-loathing and abjection are theoretically supposed to be momentary steps on the way to salvation, they become

²⁵ David D. Hall’s *The Antinomian Controversy, 1636-1638: A Documentary History*, is still the definitive documentary collection on the antinomian movement in John Cotton’s Boston congregation that shook the New England establishment to the core—an establishment whose mantle Shepard most zealously took up on the prosecution of the antinomians.

practically prescribed as temporally recurrent sacramental moments of preparation in the devotional rhythm of Puritan life. Shepard enjoins even the most comfortable believer to regularly revisit her own private and individual sinfulness: “remember to be humble and vile in thine own eyes, worthy never to be beloved” (228-229). No believer should get too carried away with the sweetness and light of Christ’s saving grace, for the sign of a true believer is not the relief of sins forgiven. Instead, Shepard states, “there is answerably in every Saint...fulness of humiliation under Sin” (302). This “fulness of humiliation” becomes the principal, if not exclusive, stage of a Preparationism that Shepard is developing as a devotional cycle rather than linear sequence.

In *The Parable of the Ten Virgins*, the sacramental certainty of the abject experience of personal evil comes to replace the symbolic uncertainty surrounding Calvinist execution of The Lord’s Supper, or communion, in which Christ’s body and blood are not physically present in the elements of communion, but are “sacramental” instruments that are part of the fit participant’s spiritual union with Christ’s humanity (Holifield, *The Covenant Sealed* 20).²⁶ Focussing on the sacramental certainty of personal depravity paradoxically calms anxieties about divine absence associated with the Puritan practice of communion, because the temporal cyclicity of the experience of depravity becomes itself a kind of sacrament. The doctrine of Preparationsim is sacramental in spite of its Puritan urge to dispense with sacramental theology and temporality in favour of covenantal theology and its accompanying forensic linear time. As E. Brooks Holifield remarks, “The study of the Puritans is...a story of their resistance to their own antisacramental

²⁶ I owe my understanding of Puritan sacramental practice and theology in both Old and New England to E. Brooks Holifield, who masterfully describes their anxieties and arguments regarding the pastoral implementation of Calvinist theories about the Lord’s Supper.

impulse” (*The Covenant Sealed* 28). The Puritans, both transatlantically and particularly in New England, demonstrate a complex and self-contradictory anti-antisacramental impulse.

Furthering Holifield’s and Gregory S. Jackson’s assessments about Puritan sacramentalism, or “Puritan medievalism,” this chapter is arguing that Shepard’s writings on Christian discipline are not merely sacramental, but intent on sacramentalizing the experience of personal depravity by making it the principal focus of the sacramental temporal cycle rather than the actual right consumption of the elements (Jackson 56). The Preparationist encounter with personal depravity becomes a temporally repetitive part of devotional and sacramental life rather than a momentary and passing stage in the larger *ordo salutis*. This drive toward a repetitive experience of personal sinfulness is sacramental insofar as it is a temporally recurrent part of devotional life for a Preparationist Puritan in New England. Time begins to circle around the personal experience of depravity, rather than flatten into the linear progressive chronology of the pilgrim’s progress. A deep and abject sense of sin for the Preparationist Puritan is meant to be a repetitive encounter—even if it is officially avowed as a single stage in a linear salvation experience—because it is in such moments that affective and spiritual intensity is fully experienced. The sacramental nature of the Preparationist experience of personal depravity becomes most explicit in the ways in which it becomes a repetitive certainty unto itself of spiritual experience that replaces the repetitive uncertainty about divine absence associated with communion.

It is not just the repetitive and recurrent nature of the devotional experience of personal sinfulness that makes this stage in the Preparationist *ordo salutis* sacramental in nature for Shepard: the sacramental nature of the temporally recurrent experience of personal sinfulness becomes most explicit in New England Puritan practice when it becomes associated directly with

the practice of communion and then eclipses communion as the true sacramental centre of Preparationist experience. In *The Parable of the Ten Virgins*, Shepard prescribes one's abject encounter with one's personal sinfulness as, counter-intuitively enough, the source of sacramental reassurance. Shepard goes so far as to elevate the sorrow of abject personal sinfulness above any comfort associated with participation in communion. If the Preparationist participant in communion leaves the table with a sense of depression over sinfulness, this response would probably be better than walking away from the table with a sense of spiritual reassurance: "Thou mayst it may be wait on the Lord in his Ordinances, and go away with a sad heart"²⁷ (156). In *The Parable of the Ten Virgins*, the devotional experience of personal sinfulness comes to be the defining characteristic associated with actual communion itself, as Shepard tells his followers to practice Puritan medievalism as a Protestant continuation of the tradition of the Catholic *ars moriendi*: "a Christian ought to prepare for a Sacrament as he would prepare to die" (*Ten Virgins* 168). Shepard relates that he learned this dictum from an older believer, and declares that the deathly sense of personal sinfulness should not only be the primary part of sacramental experience in communion, but should be the primary part of experience in the execution "of every Ordinance" (168)²⁸. For Shepard as primary proponent of the Preparationist model of the *ordo salutis*, a sense of the affective and spiritual power of personal sinfulness becomes the privileged mode of religious experience.

²⁷ References to "ordinances" and the "sacrament" abound in *The Parable of the Ten Virgins*, whereas they are virtually non-existent in *The Sincere Convert* and *The Sound Believer*. This is why I am intent on proposing *The Parable of the Ten Virgins* as the focus of Shepard's shift to describing the preparatory experience of personal depravity as inherently sacramental.

²⁸ In their general attempt to distance themselves from Catholic sacramental theology, Puritans began to refer to sacraments increasingly as "ordinances" (Holifield 28). Ordinances included the sacraments of baptism and communion, but also referred to other devotional principles of Puritan piety, such as hearing the word preached. The concept of "ordinance" is a halfhearted Reformational replacement for Catholic "sacrament" in Puritan discourse: "A practice or usage authoritatively enjoined or prescribed; *esp.* a religious or ceremonial observance, as the sacraments, etc" (*OED* "Ordinance" 4.a).

It is well known that the many Reformed adaptations of sacramental practice in church order generally tend to expunge the actual sense of any sacramental experience of the divine “in the host itself” (Rubin, *Corpus Christi* 148). Importantly, Charles Taylor’s argument about the connection of “Reform” religion to the production of a secularized homogenous, empty time depends on this consensus about Protestantism as doing away with a sacramental model of time that reproduces Christ’s sacrifice in the present moment (*A Secular Age* 55). When the sacrament becomes a symbolic representation of Incarnation rather than a “real reconstruction of the historic event” of Christ’s Incarnation and Passion at the moment of consecration, the meaning of communion changes fundamentally, and it very importantly leads to Taylor’s homogenizing of time (Rubin 205). The move from Catholic Eucharist to Reformed Communion is a shift from the sensory experience (eating and drinking) of divine presence to the sensory experience of anxiety over a theologically prescribed representational and memorial model which marks divine absence—or distance on a time line.

The assessment of this chapter, however, is proposing that a peculiar reconstitution of sacramental temporality oriented around the repetition of sinful experience occurs in Preparationism as Shepard articulates it. The problem posed to competing models of Protestant piety is sacramental. Religion abhors a vacuum, and the sacramental is not so much expunged in Reformed practice as it is displaced from the sacramental elements of bread and wine to other areas of devotional life. For Shepard and the Preparationists, a sense of absence in the practice of communion is a problem that ends up becoming a condition for the shift of sacramentality from the external table of communion to a sense of the interior, internal, or “inward” power of personal sinfulness (243). Shepard orders the Preparationist to “mourn bitterly for the Lord’s absence” in the observation of the Lord’s Supper, and this mourning, paradoxically, is what

enables the believer to “feel a power” in the sacrament (172-173). The power felt in communion is not a sense of divine power in the bread and the wine. The power felt in communion is in fact the result of a complicated process of association, in which a sense of the power of personal sinfulness comes to replace a sense of the power of the divine through a recreation of Incarnation. In the moment of communion, a felt sense of “the want of Christ” sparks a chain of “fears” which should cause the preparing believer to “remember to be humble and vile in thine own eyes, worthy never to be beloved” (137, 228-229). A successful instance of Preparationist communion would be that it ends by reminding individual participants of the power of their own personal sinfulness. A sense of sin becomes, increasingly, a temporally recurrent sacramental sense of the divine.

In comparison to the previous Shepardian texts *Duration and Depravity* discusses, *The Parable of the Ten Virgins* is the most abstract and conceptual Preparationist document. In *The Parable of the Ten Virgins* Thomas Shepard lays out, as well as he can, the ideal temporal blueprint for the Preparationist *ordo salutis*. Before turning to the more practical devotional documents of Preparationism, it is worth pointing out the movement’s two defining characteristics as they emerge in a conceptual manner in *The Parable of the Ten Virgins*. These two defining characteristics emerge in *The Parable*, and come into clearer focus moving forward in the more practical documents. The first distinguishing characteristic of Preparationism for the purposes of this analysis is its sacramental nature. The preparatory experience of abject personal depravity is a repetitive—or recurrent—part of devotional life. Although a Preparationist would probably technically identify the abject experience of personal evil as a momentary stage in the linear *ordo salutis*, one sees again and again in *The Parable of the Ten Virgins* that this abjection is part of a sacramental temporal cycle. This is why even near the end of *The Parable* Shepard

reminds his readers and listeners to take careful note of “temptations, and corruptions” in order to “be always converting” (581, 632). This intense experience of personal sinfulness is the beginning and end of the Preparationist cycle of devotional life. The Preparationist encounter with an abject sense of personal sinfulness—or personal depravity—is most explicitly sacramental when it comes to be the principal affective and spiritual sensation of the practice of communion. The Preparationist communicant tastes in communion a symbolic and theological absence of the divine that leads through a chain of association to a sense of “power” in the sacrament that actually depends on the sustained sinfulness of the communicant rather than the body and blood of Christ. The second and related distinguishing characteristic of the Preparationist encounter with personal sinfulness is its appeal to interiority: the Preparationist is enjoined to taste the bread and wine, note the absence of divine presence in that food and drink, and then look inside to an experience of personal depravity. For the Preparationist Puritan, it is a sense of the festering of “evil” underneath the skin that gives the external practice of communion “power” (463; 173).

One might well ask how Shepard’s blueprint cooperates with the secularizing work of linear temporality described in the previous chapter and advanced by Hooker’s early model of Preparationism. From one point of view, this chapter advances the idea that the Puritans often resisted their own secularizing impulse, and that resistance is especially visible not in the grander, large-scale Puritan theology of history, but in the practical pastoral piety of Puritan Preparationism. There is no doubt that Preparationism as a movement subscribes in some way to the secularizing program of reform described by Charles Taylor; indeed, the whole project of Preparationism as a method to demonstrate one’s Christian spiritual state supports Taylor’s contention that “Reformed Christianity” homogenized time in a disciplinary, or “proto-

totalitarian” manner when it “demanded that everyone be a real, 100 percent Christian” (772-774). But if the disciplinary impulses of Preparationism resonate with Taylor’s thesis, it is also true that the Preparationist sacramental practice of the recurrent experience of personal depravity emerges both within and against a broader secular and disciplinary assumption of the linearity of chronological time and incremental Christian progress as the normative domain of experience. Time is not so much a homogenous, empty medium for Shepard in which the believer must demonstrate progressively improved religious and moral industry as worldly evidence of salvation. Rather, time is circular, sacramental, and recurring, oriented around the religious art of depraved moral failure.

Chapter 3

The Sacramental Temporality of Depravity in Shepard's Cambridge Confessions, *Autobiography*, and *Journal*

The sacramental temporality of the preparatory experience of abject personal depravity as a replacement for the uncertainty of the theological emptiness of Puritan communion becomes clearer in the practical pastoral documents of Preparationism—first in Shepard's transcriptions of his Cambridge congregants' conversion narratives known as "The Cambridge Confessions." The confessors describe the preparatory experience of abject personal depravity not as a passing interval or linear stage prior to conversion, a state of rest or invulnerability from the restlessness of personal sinfulness, but rather as a repetitive or temporally cyclical experience permeating the devotional life of faithful New England Puritanism. In "The Cambridge Confessions," the certain sacramental experience of personal depravity both associates itself with and replaces the uncertain symbolic experience of the Lord's Supper for the confessors. In the Cambridge confessions, sacramental theology and a cyclical temporality of depravity merge spectacularly; the Cambridge confessions thus further demonstrate that Preparationism as a method of worldly piety refuses the homogenous temporality that Charles Taylor ascribes to "Reform" religion. The recurrent, sacramental temporality emphasizing the repeated experience of personal depravity emerges in the Cambridge confessions through polyphonic expressions of multi-voicedness that break down the boundaries of the autonomous religious subject. Thus, as the Cambridge confessions perform, through polyphonic voicing, a sacramental temporality of personal depravity, they do not merely complicate Taylor's claims that reformed religion rejects "sacramental" theology and time; the confessions also complicate Taylor's claims that reformed religion's anti-sacramentality and institution of homogenous, empty time leads to the production of an "invulnerable" buffered self (*A Secular Age* 45, 38).

In Shepard's own *Autobiography and Journal*, his pastoral program of developing Preparationism as a method of personal piety that emphasizes the sacramental temporal recurrence of experiences of depravity comes even more clearly into focus, as in his own devotional life Shepard constantly connects his experiences of personal sinfulness to the temporal cycle of preparation for the Sabbath and Lord's Supper. Shepard's *Autobiography and Journal* disclose the development of his sacramental temporality of depraved experience even as they present their own failure to adequately represent depravity, both through the documentation of specific sinfulness (concreteness) and through symbolic representations of sinfulness. Thus, while Shepard succeeds in developing a Preparationist program that configures time around the recurrent and sacramentalized experience of personal depravity, his discourse in these texts is also driven by a failed ambition to adequately represent his depravity to himself and others—a problem which I argue Wigglesworth “solves” in the following chapter.

This chapter concludes *Duration and Depravity's* treatment of Thomas Shepard with a reading of his *Theses Sabbaticae*, in which he enjoins the use of the Sabbath as a recurring interval of sacramental time in which the believer should produce, experience, and mourn feelings of depravity. I propose that the *Theses* illustrate Shepard's articulation of the sacramental temporality of personal depravity as a Heideggerian temporal projection of the self oriented towards both the repeated and gradual discovery of one's own guilt as the original affect, or “mood” for Heidegger. This temporal projection of the self in Shepard towards the recurrent experience and mood of personal guilt is a proto-gothic structure. This reading revises Weber's and Taylor's characterization of “Reform” religion as connected to the secular age by a shared emphasis on morally disciplinary time as a homogenous, empty medium, or “precious

resource” used to project the buffered self as morally and economically disciplined and industrious in a proto-Franklinian manner.

The Cambridge Confessions

It is important to show how the sacramental temporality of personal depravity emerges in the Cambridge confessions, because there is a double-sacramentality here: first, the confessors often associate their experiences of personal sinfulness with the temporal cycle of preparation for communion; second, the act of confession itself as a ritual of becomes invested with sacramental—or at least quasi-sacramental—significance. William James has remarked on the decline of confessional discourse in Protestant American culture, and lamented its loss as well:

For him who confesses, shams are over and realities have begun; he has exteriorized his rottenness. If he has not actually got rid of it, he at least no longer smears it over with a hypocritical show of virtue—he lives at least upon a basis of veracity. The complete decay of the practice of confession in Anglo-Saxon communities is a little hard to account for. (*Varieties of Religious Experience* 364-365)

The Cambridge Confessions, along with many other Puritan spiritual autobiographies, journals, diaries, and conversion narratives are just such an example of the confessional discourse that James lauds in history, and assumes is lost in his Protestant-secular American world. Although these texts may not fit a restrictive taxonomy that takes something canonical like Augustine’s *Confessions* as its model—or the Roman Catholic sacrament of confession—they are nevertheless confessional, and perform, generally speaking, the same kind of spiritual work of connection to divinity as the Augustinian confessional text. Paul Ricoeur adeptly states the spiritual work of confession in *The Symbolism of Evil* this way: “In the movement of invocation

the sinner becomes fully the subject of sin, at the same time as the terrible God of destruction becomes the supreme Thou” (Ricoeur 69). In the double-sacrament of Preparationist confession, the distinction between the “subject of sin” and “the supreme Thou” tends to disintegrate. The “supreme Thou” that the confessing Cambridge congregant addresses tends also to be an interior “subject of sin.” The Cambridge confessions are a sacramental form that allow its subjects to feel the power of the divine as the expression of their own sinfulness.

To merge James’s and Ricoeur’s points another way and apply them to the sacramental temporality of the Cambridge confessions: Puritan confession is the verbalization of personal depravity as a sacrament or ritual, that, in its very expression of personal depravity, brings the confessing person closer to the divine, which tends in fact to be that very feeling of depravity. While the confessions are a one-time event, a rite of passage for the prospective congregant of Thomas Shepard’s Cambridge church, their expressions of a repeating affective apprehension of personal depravity, often associated with the sacrament of communion, produce a recurrent sacramental temporality of depravity paradoxically enunciated in confessions ostensibly expected to perform or confirm a rite of passage from spiritual death to the converted state of acceptance of free grace. A Cambridge confession is successful, then, if it manages to express what Patricia Caldwell has identified as the “bad feelings” of personal depravity that haunt New England Puritans, recruiting those feelings and fitting them into a sacramental temporal economy of recurrence and repetition associated with communion. (161)

The Cambridge Confessions comprise a remarkable document that, through its Bakhtinian textual polyphony, drives the cyclically oriented temporality of the narratives. In these confession narratives, the reader comes across an example of polyphonic discourse, and it is impossible to untangle the legitimacy and priority of the various voices in each congregant’s

confession. Lisa M. Gordis has made some important remarks on the “pronominal confusion” in the Cambridge Confessions, and suggests that while it “can be explained by the challenge of [Shepard’s] rapid-fire notetaking, it is tempting to read it as suggestive as well of the fluidity built into the Puritan sense of the regenerate reader’s subjectivity” in which “both preacher and reader were connected by the interpretive agency of the Holy Spirit” (*Opening Scripture* 105). Meredith Neuman further suggests that the confessions constitute an intricate dialogue, or “palimpsest,” containing the inscriptions of both the transcriber and his confessors (*Jeremiah’s Scribes* 104).²⁹ This recognition of the collapse in distinction in the confessions between the identity of the confessor and the transcriber links this breakdown to a redemptive indication of the Holy Spirit’s fluid movement between, and connection of, two regenerate people.

To further read the Cambridge Confessions as not merely “pronominal confusion” or “palimpsest,” but as an outstanding instance of Bakhtinian polyphony, is to push the analysis further here as the confessions illustrate a recurrent sacramental temporality; the link between polyphonic discourses and endless “confession *without* repentance” is an insidious connection that Bakhtin makes in his original theory of polyphony (*Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics* 144 emphasis added). The Cambridge Confessions are truly an example of polyphonic “confession without repentance,” if repentance is understood as “*metanoia*,” the Koine Greek term in New Testament Scripture signifying a critical temporal point of conversion—the individual’s turning away from sin due to an essential change of heart. What Gordis identifies as pronominal confusion and Neuman as palimpsest, one can further understand as an important formal, rhetorical, and temporal quality of the Cambridge text: the polyphonic blending of voices

²⁹ More recently, Andy Dorsey has written on the complex ways in which Shepard’s “sermon discourse” collected as the *Ten Virgins* sermons “shaped” the conversion narratives to the point of producing in the confessions the hypocrisy the sermons ostensibly denounce (“The Rhetoric of American Experience 640)

(pastor-transcriber and congregant-confessor) that, in its suggestion of “confession without repentance” both represents and propels the cyclical temporality of Shepard’s model of Preparationist piety as the pastor-confessor voices continue to place a high spiritual value on the repeated performance of bad feelings of personal depravity. The narratives illustrate in their Bakhtinian polyphony a repetitive sacramental temporality of the experience of personal depravity instead of the neat subjection of religious experience to the linear temporality of a Puritan *ordo salutis*, or morphology of conversion. A major contributing factor in the temporal circularity and incompleteness of the confessions is their dialogic nature. As Bakhtin notes, the literary characteristic of polyphony presents characters as “on the threshold of a final decision...at an unfinalizable turning point” of the “soul” (Bakhtin 61). It is the temporal recurrence, the “unfinalizable” nature of the confessions’ multi-voiced articulation of depraved temporality that the identification of Bakhtinian polyphony here exposes.

In the polyphonic expression of a circular sacramental temporality of depravity, the confessions make both time and self unfinalizable, and they illustrate how this polyphonic, recurrent, sacramental temporality of depravity, in its rejection of either homogenous or proto-homogenous empty time, is also a literary and religious complication of Charles Taylor’s notion of the “buffered self” as a secular product of reformed religion. The buffered self is supposed to be autonomous, “invulnerable” and “master of meanings of things for it” in its narration of itself and its world (*A Secular Age* 38). But when the subject of confession’s voice blends polyphonically with Shepard’s own in an elaborate act of confession without repentance that forms a circular temporality, time refuses homogenization as does the split self. The Cambridge confessions thus pose a double challenge to Taylor’s genealogy of secularity insofar as they are

an instance of “Reform” that resists both homogenous, empty time, and homogenous buffered selfhood.

The Confessions

In the very first confession from Edward Hall, the narrative leaves off without any sense of personal temporal resolution to the problem of salvation. Edward Hall intimates in the opening of his confession that he has learned from Thomas Shepard of “the new birth” as necessary for conversion (34). But, if Hall has experienced any kind of new birth, it can hardly be considered as a sweeping experience of any kind of sweetness and light of the gospel. Instead, Hall states that he found upon earnest introspection that “his heart was not deep enough” and “the Lord had made him loathe himself” because “he hath found more enmity of his heart against the Lord than ever before” (34). These identifications of a personal lack of spiritual depth, and a presence of venomous loathing of Christ are the final notes Shepard makes of Edward Hall’s state, and these notes come in the penultimate sentence of his confession. Hall’s confession concludes with what could be avowed as his sense of comfort in free grace—“But hearing that the Lord was willing to take away enmity, he...was brought nearer to the Lord” (34). Although this final statement could be read as comfort in the divine as a turning from a personal sense not only of spiritual inadequacy, but also of personal active sin, to free grace, Hall does not leave off with any affirmation that his enmity has indeed been taken away. So although the final sentence is not a token gesture toward the rote prescription that the believer rest in free grace rather than the strength of personal righteousness, it comes near to being so. An unresolved sense of personal depravity drives the whole power of Hall’s confession. And it is this sense of personal depravity,

insofar as it remains unresolved, from which the confessional power of Hall's narrative is derived.

Francis Moore's confession is important because it illustrates the cyclical, sacramental temporality of depravity that structures Preparationism as it connects the repeated experience of personal depravity with sacraments—or "ordinances." Francis Moore, the second confessor in Shepard's confession transcriptions, states that the fundamental requisite for salvation is "sorrow for and hatred of sin" (36). But when he looks inside himself, he finds that he has not adequately cultivated a sense of personal sinfulness: "here arose that question whether he did mourn his misery truly or no" (36). To cultivate the necessary sense of personal sinfulness, he performs a close examination of himself, and finds he tends occasionally to "drunkenness" (36). He also notes that he has a proclivity to "profane the Sabbath" (37). Once he notices his own tendency to disregard the Lord's Day, his personal sense of depravity comes to the forefront: "Other relapses he finds as security and sloth and sleepiness, and contenting himself in ordinances" (37). Here we see very clearly that the success of Moore's confession depends upon an articulation of his sense of sinfulness as a temporal cycle that is juxtaposed against and associated with the sacramental cycle of the Lord's Supper: his sinfulness is a sense of "security" that comes from faith, or "contenting himself" with "ordinances." Once Moore opens up these instances of venality as demonstrating his ontological state of personal sinfulness, his narrative moves quickly to a sense that he has satisfied Shepard as interviewer. As with Edward Hall, once personal sinfulness has been examined and tagged, the confession moves abruptly to a close—but importantly not to a resolution. The confession can leave off at the point of its unresolved sense of abject sinfulness because that is the goal of the confession itself, as noted in the final sentence: "he said he knew his mourning after his relapse to be genuine because it did more

endear his heart to the Lord and to walk more humbly” (37). The lack of a resolution of personal depravity is evident. To be sure, Moore can state that he is endeared to the Lord, but at no point is there any statement that a conversion experience has purged him of his sinful habits. It is not the purging of a sense of sinfulness Moore requires in the confession, but a recognition of a permanent yet temporally cyclical state of personal depravity repetitively surfacing in “relapses” as he associates them with sinful participation in sacramental ordinances (37).

In Elizabeth Olbon’s confession, the importance of an unresolved sense of the repetition of personal depravity continues. Olbon notes at the beginning of her confession the presence in herself of “the sin of pride” (39). Essentially, this is an admission to the state of original sin as her default position. As she begins the process of searching for comfort, she finds instead “what she never found before, which was the bitterness of sin we brought into this world” (40). After a period of crisis over her sense of both personal and federal (inherited) depravity, Olbon is comforted enough to “come” to a “naked Christ” for salvation (41). But, in keeping with the pattern in the confessions, her movement toward a deeper piety or conversion by no means comes with a sense of purification from her default position of sinfulness. Instead, her movement to a more sober walk of piety comes with a deeper sense of her permanent depravity: “Since she came hither she hath found her heart more dead and dull etc. and, being in much sickness when she first came into the land, she saw how vain a thing it was to put confidence in any creature” (41). Yet again, a confession leaves off not with a linear resolution of chronological progress, but an amplification of personal depravity in the temporal repetition of its felt experience.

Edward Collins’s confession demonstrates the way in which an individual’s discovery of personal sinfulness is sacramental not simply because this discovery process is cyclical, and collapses devotional life into a temporality that refuses linear progression, but also because the

discovery of interior personal evil comes to be directly associated with the temporal cycle of doubt about the external efficacy of the sacrament to “sustain,” “strengthen,” and “increase” faith (Rubin, *Corpus Christi* 148). Indeed, the certainty of an individual’s depravity becomes an interior sacramental experience that directly replaces a lack of confidence in Christian “ordinances.” While still in England, after a lengthy period of seeking assurance, Collins eventually puts his finger on the problem that tortures him:

in searching my heart, seeing sin die and growing in grace...I thought God would carry on his own work. And all this time I thought God would be worshipped, I could not find God’s presence in ordinances, being full of mixtures. Hence I sought Lord to bring me to enjoy these liberties because I had some little light as not to join in those ordinances. (84)

Collins finds himself unable to resolve the problem of how the divine presence operates in the administration of the Lord’s Supper. The problem for him is not just Puritan scepticism about the legitimacy of a sacrament taken in a corrupt Church of England (“mixtures”); it is also a problem that he cannot manage to sustain the tension of a Calvinist model of the sacrament in which the external sacrament administers a state of grace by spiritually uniting the believer to the body and blood of Christ³⁰. If there is no divine presence in the external sacrament itself, and the sacrament depends entirely on the devotee’s inner fitness, Collins feels he is not fit to participate. Collins’s problem is solved by an inner epiphany of his personal depravity, which comes when he reaches the shores of New England. Yet again, the efficacy of the sacrament depends in the end not on the sacrament itself, but on the devotional cultivation of an inner sense of personal sinful feeling: “And then I saw and was convinced of unthankfulness and discontent and so by a servant of his I was brought upon my knees. And I blessed God that He would not let me lie still

³⁰ A general theme of Puritan sacramentality is its desire to sustain a Calvinist theology of the Lord’s Supper, combined with its tendency to “collapse” the weight of Calvinistic mystery (Holifield 61).

but to show me my unthankfulness” (84). As Collins paradoxically thanks God for this personal revelation of his unthankfulness, he is now armed with the confidence derived from his sense of personal depravity to participate in “God’s ordinances” (84). In Collins’s confession, the performance of a sacramental temporality of depravity clearly comes into focus.

John Stansby’s confession also depends for its resolution not so much on the narration of a temporally marked conversion, as on the narration of an ability to measure his own sinfulness in a cycle of preparation that replaces his concern for effective sacramental participation even as this temporality of depravity comes to be associated with those “ordinances.” Stansby relates that his reason for coming to New England is a common one—the pseudo-separatist dissatisfaction with the purity of the Church of England: “And in old England, seeing ordinances polluted, my soul desired to be where Christ is feeding of his flock in this place” (87). Like so many of his fellow New England Puritans, Stansby sees himself as one of the few elect, destined for the utopia in New England of a church comprised purely of saints—or at least as purely comprised of saints as would be possible. But when Stansby arrives in New England and falls under the Preparationist preaching of Thomas Shepard, he finds himself assaulted anew by a sense of the depth of his personal depravity: “God shot arrows into my heart, for though I found the word greatly working upon my heart Lord’s Day and week day, yet other days my heart was carried [away]” (87). Stansby’s sense of his personal sinfulness becomes truly tortuous to him, as he loses his confidence in “ordinances,” and finds himself incapable of staying focussed on the life of the spirit for even a short “two hours” of preaching. Stansby even finds himself unable to “pray at all” (88). Fortunately, he comes to see this sense of sinfulness as a privileged revelation from God: “the Lord let me see I sought myself and so I have seen hellish frame of my heart...then I found no life but dead and sluggish and found Lord as a wayfaring man and

chariot's wheels off" (88). Stansby's crisis of faith under Preparationist introspection leads him to see not only the depth of an abysmal personal depravity, but also the horror of an absent "wayfaring" God. Stansby is so affected by this faith crisis that he finds himself subject to "faintings, droppings, and unbelief" to the point that he considers the merit of "cast[ing] away faith" (88). Finally, Stansby comes to see that the sense of his personal depravity, combined with the sense of God's absence from the world in "ordinances" is exactly the formula that gives the temporal cycle of devotional life its sacramental power: "Yet the Lord hath brought me to judge myself and loathe myself" (88). Stansby's crisis is resolved with a sense of "the boundless mercy of the Lord" thanks to a newfound cultivation of the sense of his intractable personal depravity, which is actually the qualifying condition privileging him to access ordinances, preaching of the word, and fellowship with other believers. For Stansby, the divine power of devotional living is not in an external presence of effective sacrament, but in an internal presence of boundless depravity associated with that sacrament. Stansby "could not go to Christ" were it not for the recurrent rediscovery of personal sinfulness (88). The only regress in the devotional life of Stansby would be to revert to measuring his spiritual health by how much sin is increasingly "cut off" (87). Sacramental confidence for the Preparationist depends not on how much one measures sanctification in progressive chronological increments. It depends on how much, in the repetitive temporal cycle of devotional life, one measures one's "many devilish ends" (88).

Barbary Cutter's confession is of special interest because it points directly to the loss of confidence in any kind of external sacramental presence of the elements, instead leading the reader to identify personal relief about fears of damnation in paradoxical proportion to one's repetitive recognition of personal sinfulness. Cutter begins to question her elect state when she hears of the "sin of unbelief." As she identifies this unbelief in herself after performing the work

of introspection, she begins to see that she lacks conventional religious sensibilities: “Sweetness lost and on sacrament day...some affection” (91). Cutter’s lack of sweetness and affection is here associated with sacramental doubts. But the fears arising upon the process of introspection begin to be relieved by the “hopes” of Preparationist “doctrines”: “there was faith when [I] saw nothing but vileness” (91). After Preparationism introduces the idea that the sight of personal depravity is actually the privileged mode of devotional experience, Cutter sees her sinfulness everywhere, as the “Lord let me see my unbelief and where never such unbelief” (92). What is important to note here is that Cutter does not pray the classic doubter’s prayer: “Lord, I believe: help my unbelief” (Mark 9.24 *Geneva Translation*). Rather, Cutter rejoices at the discovery of her unbelief, for she comes to see that doubts stemming from her identification of personal depravity on “sacrament day” are the highest form of revelation “And since, Lord hath let me see more of himself as in doubtings” (92). The Lord has helped Barbary Cutter’s unbelief by intensifying it—not by removing it. The more the Preparationist believer finds interior depravity and subsequently begins to have general spiritual doubts, and specific doubts about “sacrament day,” the more the Preparationist believer sees herself in the hands of the Lord, who “leave[s] saints doubting as to remove lightness and frothiness, hence doubtings, and to cause for fresh evidence” (92). The temporally repetitive discovery of doubt on “sacrament day,” emerging from a cultivated sense of personal sinfulness, becomes for Barbary Cutter the sacramental certainty—“fresh evidence”—of spiritual vitality. The sacramental religious experience becomes the cyclical temporality of the constant rediscovery of personal depravity.

Henry Dunster’s confession is of special interest because it elaborates the sacramental orientation in Preparationism’s depraved temporality through an exposition of the sacrament of

the Lord's Supper that is in fact a key part of the confession.³¹ In Dunster's elaboration of the Calvinist meaning of the sacrament, one reads what would be expected. Although it seems clear that Shepard transcribed Dunster's recapitulation of the Calvinist definition of the Lord's Supper in a hurry, one gets the sense that Dunster has a full grasp of the practice, as would be expected from someone with pastoral aspirations in Puritan New England: "'tis not the quantity of the elements which our souls need but faith in which we receive. Outward elements may be given when Christ is not and grace may be given when sacraments are not. For though we have not sacrament every day, yet we have communion with Christ" (159). The principal part of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper elaborated here is the idea that faith is what gives the sacrament efficacy, not any divine presence in the elements of bread and wine themselves: "here let me protest against the wickedness of the papists who think Christ is bodily present. Faith only makes present" (159). Thus far, Dunster presents a standard Calvinist interpretation of sacramental practice in which the believer's recognition of adequate faith discovered after the preparatory process of devotional introspection leads to confidence in the spiritual efficacy of the sacrament insofar as that sacrament depends upon an interior state of faith (Holifield 19).

When Dunster begins to deliver the narrative part of his personal confession, this Calvinist sacramental theology undergoes a shift in emphasis that constitutes a very important alteration, and points to the New England Preparationist sacramental temporality of personal depravity. When Dunster begins to examine himself, he speaks vaguely of a number of sins that plague him, such as "stealing from parents" and "dissolute living." Ever the scholar, he also notes an "inordinate love of human learning" (162). Dunster begins to see himself as "more vile"

³¹ Henry Dunster is interesting for other reasons as well: he was the second president of Harvard College, and replaced Thomas Shepard himself on an interim basis as the pastor at the Cambridge church immediately after Shepard's death.

than ever, and notes that his “Memory could retain no good,” making him intractably depraved, “in affections and heart unthinkably and inconceivably hard” (162). All of these personal discoveries of inner and personal depravity thus far fit the Calvinist *ordo salutis* in which a person comes to see personal sinfulness through “horror in conscience” in order to understand that “righteousness” according to the Mosaic “law” cannot save a person who is constitutionally depraved. But what this process of terror before the law leads to in New England Preparationism is illustrated best by how Dunster resolves his crisis of conscience: “I bid adieu to all self-righteousness” (163). In New England practice, preparatory doctrine, as it emphasizes the importance of a personal sense of intractable depravity, comes to elevate this sensibility above any other religious affection, such as love of God, love of the saints, or assurance in the sacrament. What we see in Dunster’s confession, then, is that rather than a kind of Calvinist “faith” becoming the empowering principle of the sacrament, a temporally recurring discovery of personal depravity oriented around preparation for the Lord’s Supper is what gives the life of the believer sacramental power.

The sacramental power of discovering the spiritual dynamism of an internal quality of personal sinfulness is fundamental to Preparationism, and Dunster knew this well enough to literally kill off other embodiments of sinfulness that endorsed—in jest or not—a model of sin and evil as external to the self. When, under his presidential watch, a troublemaker pranced through Harvard Yard, impersonating the devil, Dunster shot the “prankster” because he rightly saw it as simultaneously the embodied performance of sinfulness and the exteriorizing and displacement of sinfulness to an elsewhere, a “Satan” outside of the individual—something his Preparationist sacramentality of personal depravity could not abide (Delbanco, *Death of Satan* 53).

This chapter's reading of Shepard's transcriptions of the Cambridge confessions has not been an exhaustive close reading of each confession in its individuality. I have mainly pointed out what I believe is a theme that runs through many of the confession narratives, namely the idea that the discovery of depthless personal sinfulness is the sacramental principle that governs the temporal cyclicity of New England Preparationism's devotional life. I do not say that, as in the individual confessions on which I have focussed my attention above, all the confessions Shepard transcribes lead to an equally dominant elevation of this temporally recurrent sense of personal depravity. In some of the confessions, the discovery of sin leads to a comparatively moderate understanding of depravity as a mitigatable entity, as best illustrated in John Fessenden's declaration in his confession: "I saw sin was it which did oppress and have found some mercy and strength against sin" (177). For Fessenden, sin is never something that can be annihilated, but he does give the impression that sin is something that can be moderated by grace. It is this understanding of sin that stands in contrast to what I propose is the much more dominant theme in the confessions of a personal sense of boundless and unconquerable internal depravity that defines the temporal structure of sacramental cyclicity in Preparationist devotional life.

Shepard's Autobiography and Journal

An important requirement in the devotional life of the Preparationist is the ability to split personhood up in order to examine the self. Shepard enjoins this requirement in his treatises on Preparationist conversion (*The Sincere Convert*, *The Sound Believer*, and *The Parable of the Ten Virgins*), and it is illustrated practically in the Cambridge Confessions, where the subject of confession consists simultaneously and polyphonically of the multiple voices and personalities of

the confessing, the examining, the documenting, the pre-conversion, and the post-conversion selves. Occasionally these stand out as discrete personalities, yet they usually blend together indistinguishably. The blurring and blending of personalities in the confessions accords with and propels their temporal fluidity and cyclicity, in which narratives of chronological temporal progress from compunction and humiliation to conversion and progressive sanctification are eschewed. This splitting of personality is not only a requirement of Preparationist devotional doctrine, but is a defining—if varying—feature of Christian confessional life going back to Augustine: “Lord, you turned my attention back to myself. You took me up from behind my own back where I had placed myself because I did not wish to observe myself (Ps. 20.13), and you set me before my face” (*Confessions* 8.16). But the split personhood of Preparationism has its own specific historical and literary characteristics, some of which have emerged already in the Cambridge confessions. Henry Dunster was both master and subject of Preparationism in the Cambridge confessions, but Thomas Shepard himself was also a subject of his own Preparationist methods even as he was the transcribing and examining master. In Thomas Shepard’s own *Autobiography* and journal, one comes across what is simultaneously the practice and development of Preparationist self-scrutinizing introspection, a process which Shepard describes in *The Parable of the Ten Virgins* as a method to “separate thy self from thy self” to make a sense of elect status “manifest” (118). In Shepard’s *Autobiography*, the Preparationist requirement that the true believer come to a full intellectual and affective sense of unrelenting personal sinfulness is put into action in stark clarity, as personal depravity becomes, paradoxically, the fundamental condition for a sacramental feeling of salvific peace. In Shepard’s journal, the link between cultivation of a sense of personal sinfulness and the temporal cycle of self-examination in preparation for the Lord’s Supper becomes very clear, to the point where the

recurrent and cyclical marking of a sense of personal depravity emerges as the defining temporal and affective feature of Preparationist sacramental practice.

In Shepard's *Autobiography*, the author narrates the process of his conversion in terms similar to those used by his congregants in Cambridge, New England. Initially, while at Cambridge University in Old England, Shepard begins to believe that he is saved by finding interior "good affections" (Shepard 40). But the "blind and unconstant" nature of Shepard's positive thinking about himself quickly undercuts the temporary salvific relief that he feels, and leads him on a tortuous path to the necessary discovery—or feeling—of his own personal depravity (40). As Shepard comes to "awaken" to the "terror" of the "wrath" of God to sinners, the rigors of pious living demand his efforts even as sinful distractions intensify, and compel him to find a new sense of interior sinfulness:

But then by loose company I came to dispute in the schools and there to join to loose scholars of other colleges and was fearfully left of God and fell to drink with them. And I drank so much one day that I was dead drunk, and that upon a Saturday night, and so was carried from the place I had drink at and did feast at unto another scholar's chamber, one Basset of Christ's College [Cambridge], and knew not where I was until I awakened late on that Sabbath and sick with my beastly carriage. And when I awakened I went from him in shame and confusion, and went out into the fields and there spent that Sabbath lying hid in the cornfields where the Lord, who might justly have cut me off in the midst of my sin, did meet me with much sadness of heart and troubled my soul for this and other my sins which then I had cause and leisure to think of. And now when I was worst he began to be best unto me and made me resolve to set upon a course of daily meditation about the evil of sin and my own ways. (41)

Shepard's description of his own sinful behaviour could easily be shrugged off as the narration of trivial transgressions. Shepard's debauchery appears harmless, and is very similar to how university students today often cope with the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual stresses of academic life. In short, Shepard has let loose for a day with his university friends and consumed too much alcohol. The next day, he battles a day-long hangover.

In comparison with Shepard's confessing members of his congregation in Cambridge, New England, the mastery of the Preparationist devotional discovery of personal depravity is remarkable at this moment in Shepard's *Autobiography*, particularly in the way its devotional qualities feed subtly into a sacramental quality as well. The first thing to note is that Shepard's day of debauchery is a Saturday. Shepard's day of "drink" and "feast" is excessive to the point that it unfits him for participation in Sunday worship the following day. Shepard drinks himself unconscious, awakes on Sunday "in shame and confusion" and stumbles out of town into a cornfield where he spends the rest of his Sabbath meditating on his own sinfulness. Indeed, Shepard's hangover leaves him lying in the cornfield with all the "leisure" of the Sabbath he needs to contemplate his abject personal sinfulness. Instead of eating and drinking the elements of communion at a Sunday service, Shepard drinks and feasts the night before at a college party, and the next day he meditates on his own depravity. Evidently, Shepard finds that this Sabbath of hung-over contemplation of his own sinfulness nurses his anxieties about elect status so well that he decides to adapt the experience into a devotional method of "daily meditation." This epiphany is, as Michael Warner notes, the "turning point" for Shepard's spiritual life ("New English Sodom" 37), and the Old-World inception of Cambridge, New England Preparationism.

Here some key elements of Preparationist doctrine emerge very clearly. First, from the moment of its hung-over conception in a cornfield in Cambridge, England, the New England

Preparationist cultivation of a sense of personal depravity is proffered by its developer as a replacement for the standard Sabbath devotional and sacramental practices of partaking in the bread and wine (to a Puritan an impure ordinance in England anyway) and hearing the word preached (inadequately, in a Puritan's opinion, in an English church anyway).³² In a way that Shepard himself would certainly disavow, the rhetorical configuration of his debauched contemplation of personal sinfulness in a cornfield implies itself as more spiritually effective than participation in a mundane Sunday worship service, and the excesses of drink and feast on Saturday night are probably more effective to this end of abjection as a means of grace than the wafer and wine on Sunday morning. To be sure, Shepard, the same Puritan pastor who wrote a voluminous treatise on the "morality" of keeping the "Sabbath" would likely be displeased to notice that his Preparationist emphasis on the value of a recurring "daily" visceral experience of abject personal depravity is in fact offered subversively in his own text as a replacement of conventional Sunday piety (*Theses Sabbaticae* 25, *Autobiography* 41). But it is through this intense and sensational—if not sensationalized (after all, is it not just one night of student revelry?)—experience of personal depravity that Shepard eventually states in his *Autobiography* that "the Lord gave me peace" (46). Hungover contemplation of one's sinfulness while missing church lying in a cornfield becomes a sacramental supplement (in the Derridean sense of both an addition and a replacement) for the sacrament taken in church on a Sunday.

Shepard's experience in the cornfield related in his *Autobiography*, the supposed beginning of his conversion and repentance, actually feeds into a cultivation of recurrent,

³² Of course, as, among others, Miller, Pettit, Winship, Knight, and Rivett have amply demonstrated, Preparationism has a long transatlantic history that precedes and influences Shepard. William Perkins, William Ames, John Preston, and, of course, Thomas Hooker, are all important in this regard. But I am tracing a specific angle to the movement through the life of Shepard that I am proposing as particular to New England, even as it depends, as we have seen in the Cambridge Confessions, on a spatial and temporal relationship to England.

sacramental discovery of personal depravity seen in his journal. Ostensibly, Shepard's experience of his own personal depravity is a singular period on the way to the "peace" he claims soon after, an interpretation such a distinguished reader as Michael Colacurcio supports in his reading of the *Autobiography* as reinforcing the linear-temporal "morphology of conversion" (Colacurcio 132). However, keeping in mind that he plans to channel this experience into a "daily" cultivation of a sense of "the evil and sin" of his "ways," it is to Shepard's personal journal that one must turn to observe how this devotional strategy becomes the basis of a cyclical sacramental temporality of personal depravity. It is sacramental for three reasons: first, it is recurrent in temporality, refusing linear devotional progression (Gregory S. Jackson's "moral incrementalism"); second, its recurrence is directly associated with devotional preparation for participation in the Lord's Supper; third, it is through the experience and writing of personal depravity that Shepard finds contact with the sacred in a sacramental way.

In multiple instances in his journal, Shepard's many musings on the nature and meaning of the Lord's Supper appear merely as conventional Calvinistic meditations and preparations for anxious participation in the sacrament, but they actually disclose an emphasis in the temporal cycle of sacramental preparation on the experience of personal depravity over effective participation in the sacrament itself. For example, early in the journal (July 8, 1641) Shepard considers to himself extensively "the nature of the sacrament" (112). Shepard seems, after contemplation, to arrive at a traditionally Reformed understanding of the sacrament: "I saw Christ did command his ministers to do this in remembrance of him, and if for Christ's sake that he might be remembered and loved they do bless it, then he is faithful to make his body and blood present there and so to make the elements seals" (112). The spiritual act of remembrance and love of the sacrament within the believer is the effective principle making Christ's actual

body and blood present. Shepard is so assured by this reflection on the meaning of the sacrament that he experiences an almost Eucharistic confidence in the efficacy and presence of Christ in the meal: “I saw...that Christ by sacramental union was given to me” (112). But as the progression of this sacramental meditation continues, Shepard’s thoughts move from spiritual confidence experienced in the sacrament to an intense experience of his private inadequacy, even to the point that he intimates to himself his personal state of affective—“heart”—depravity: “I saw also that my heart did say and conclude I shall fall from Christ after this sacrament and have no more strength against my sins or weaknesses to live to him” (112). In a quite uncomplicated manner, Shepard moves from theoretical assurance about how Christ’s body and blood are united to him by faithful participation in the sacrament, to a practical reminder of his personal depravity in his actual participation. As it becomes a part of personal self-fashioning routed through the journalistic practice of writing oneself, Shepard’s sacramental understanding of the Lord’s Supper is determined by a sense of his complete sinfulness, not the adequacy of the sacrament itself. His meditation moves from theoretical euphoria about the possible presence of Christ in the table to an actual reminder of his own depraved state. The temporal cycle of sacramental preparation for Shepard thus culminates at the point in which he focusses entirely on his interior state of sinfulness (112).

Shepard intends the temporally cyclical process of preparation for participation in the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper to lead the sound believer from a mediated understanding of Christian life through discursive propositions to an unmediated ecstatic experience of absolute spiritual union to Christ, but the actual achievement of his method of preparation is the repeated sensational experience of inner depravity. In this respect, Shepard is the grandfather of Edwards’s concept of saving experience as a mysterious penetration of “The Divine and

Supernatural Light” that pierces the veil of religious discourse through to the unspeakable. But Shepard hasn’t managed, as Edwards will, to separate the pastoral experience of the divine and supernatural light from the gothic experience of the sinner in the hands of an angry God. As Shepard prepares on a “Saturday night” (December 4, 1641) for Sabbath worship the following morning (he doesn’t say if the Lord’s Supper will be distributed) he finds “a wonderful cloud of darkness and atheism over my head, and unbelief, and my weakness to see or believe God” (135). Shepard’s experience of darkness leads him, remarkably, to consider a theoretical opposition between assent to a linguistically mediated proposition, and the actual personal experience of such a proposition:

I also saw a vast difference between knowing things by reason and discourse, and by faith or the spirit of faith. For by discourse (1) I saw that a thing was so; (2) by light of faith I saw that a thing was so. A man’s discourse about spiritual things is like philosophical discourse about the inward forms of things which they see not, yet see that they be. But by the light of the spirit of faith I see the thing presented as it is. (135-136)

The pure spiritual experience of faith is supposed to lead to an actual “ravish[ing]” experience of “God,” but the most notable thing about the December 4, 1641 meditation is that it is prompted not by a spiritual experience of God, but by a very clear and ecstatic (“wonderful”) affective (“felt”) sense of gothic (“darkness”) unbelief and sinfulness (“atheism”). Shepard’s desire for a pure spiritual experience in his journal seems repeatedly to take him through a temporal cycle to a direct and intense experience of inner depravity, rather than along a progressive linear temporal path in spiritual experiences of the sweetness and light of a saving gospel and progressive sanctification.

On March 7, 1642, Shepard begins a journal entry prompted again by a disturbing Sabbath sense of his personal sinfulness and inability to believe: “On Sabbath morning I saw God far from me and others wanting his consolations, and I hence did learn this, that God was far from me that I might look upon myself and mourn over myself for my sins which were always near to me” (164). A meditation two days later begins with, and is prompted by, an interior focus on personal depravity and a sense of Christ’s actual absence in which Shepard’s “unbelieving heart did question” (164). As Shepard works through his personal sense of sinfulness and doubt, he finds himself again considering the difference between mediated and spiritual experience: “Nothing reveals a thing so clearly as the spirit, more clearly than by all reason, which is but weak and dim in respect of the spirit. And though it sees a truth at first but by morning light, yet it ends in clearness, so that the spirit doth not leave the soul in conjectures” (166). True experiences of spirit are, for Shepard as for Edwards, like “the tasting of honey to the tongue” both completing and opposing simple assent to the mere proposition that honey is sweet. Although this March 9, 1642 meditation appears as an Edwards-like reverie on the nature of a spiritual experience in the mold of “A Divine and Supernatural Light,” Shepard is unable to end his entry that day with any sense of resolution through an adequate experience of “spirit” (167). But the following day, Shepard has a spiritual breakthrough to the “clearness” he seeks—though his experience is hardly the saccharine sweetness and light imagined the day before:

I saw the Lord let me see my sin and feel it in power that so I might be sensible of the power of Christ in subduing it and say, This is the Lord’s work, when this time came. For I saw a wonderful part of our blindness did lie there, viz., that we cannot feel the Lord’s power nor acknowledge it without feeling the contrary power first. (167)

Shepard's search for the experience of "God's consolations," begun three days earlier on the Sabbath, ends on a Wednesday with a rediscovery of personal sinfulness. To be sure, Shepard claims to prize this experience of his sinfulness "in power" simply because it then allows him to understand the "power of Christ in subduing it." But the fact remains in this March 10, 1642 journal entry that Shepard has experienced the "power" of sin as the devotional first cause in his spiritual life, and the only thing he describes as "wonderful" is his spiritual "blindness" to see Christ.

On April 10, 1642, Thomas Shepard again discloses the sacramental temporality of depravity that gives his model of Preparationism its structure. He experiences a lack of faith about the divinity of Christ as he prepares for the sacrament: "At a sacrament, in preparation the day before thereunto, I did consider (1) Is there a God in Christ?" (169). This suggestive question about the Trinitarian divinity of Christ prompts another chain of introspection for Shepard, and he finds, instead of immediate solace regarding his own faith in a revealed dogma, that although he is guilty of utter depravity, he has not cultivated a sense of his personal sinfulness to the necessary degree. Although Shepard is worried about the quality of his faith regarding the doctrine of Christ's divinity, he immediately moves from noting this lack of faith to a concern that he has not fully apprehended and cultivated a sense of his own sinfulness: "Sin was not my greatest evil and most bitter" (170). Shepard here takes note of two things: first, an inadequacy of faith concerning Christ's divinity; second, an incomplete apprehension of his sinfulness. As he prioritizes how to solve these shortcomings of Preparationist piety, Shepard decides to focus on the latter. Rather than attempting to build up his faith in preparation for the sacrament through logical scholastic or Ramist devotional thought processes that would satisfy his doubts about Christ as God, Shepard looks to inflate his sense of personal depravity: "I felt [sin] not as it was

in itself, and hence rushed boldly upon it” (170). The statement that one would rush boldly upon sin comes with a double and apparently contradictory insinuation: first, that Shepard would be actively seeking to experience his own sinfulness (the existential realization of an ontological reality); second, that he would be actively seeking to subdue his sinfulness. However, for Shepard, the double insinuation is neither contradictory nor resolvable. Seeking sin to experience it and own it as personal depravity is inseparable from Shepard’s conception of subduing sin. To subdue sin is simply to experience and own it as one’s supreme intellectual and affective condition. Shepard comes in the temporal cycles of the journal to see that he is governed exclusively by his own sinful “principles” (170).

But even after “rushing boldly” upon sin in his attempts to apprehend and experience it directly, as he continues to prepare for the sacrament, he finds that his sense of personal sinfulness remains inadequate, and he does not “feel the evil of sin” as he should (171). Shepard’s extended entry from April 10, 1642 is a lengthy ramble as he searches for a spiritual experience of his own sinfulness, but fails to find it. In short, Shepard is left with the sense that he only apprehends his personal sinfulness as an abstract discursive proposition, rather than as a direct intellectual and affective spiritual experience. This important direct and sacramental experience is still missing for him at the end of his Saturday preparation, leaving him with only a tentative sense of his fitness to participate in the table the following day: “In conclusion of this day I found some assurance but mixed with many misgivings and fears. When I looked to God’s seal and my coming to Christ, I was established the Lord would feed me” (172). Having failed at the end of his Saturday on March 10, 1642 to reach the same state of spiritual dysphoria regarding his personal depravity as he attained in the Cambridge, Old England cornfield, Shepard only grudgingly accepts his fitness to partake in the table, for he has failed to reach the

apex of the sacramental cycle of Preparationism: Shepard has not “seen the thing sin,” but only “the word sin”; therefore, sacramental presence remains partially deferred for him, because seeing the divine anywhere but in the felt “power” of his own sinfulness is preparatory failure (*Ten Virgins* 123).

Shepard’s Representational Failure of Sacramental Temporality

Although Shepard seems to have reached the pinnacle of Preparationist sacramental practice in the visceral and sensational experience of his own sinfulness in the cornfield of Old England, he notes even then his failure to experience his sinfulness in a completely sacramental manner in which the divine and the human meet in the interior experience of depravity: “I did not know my sinful nature all this while” (*Autobiography* 41). So although this experience inspires, for the rest of his life, the development of Preparationist sacramental temporality, which looks for the effectiveness of the Lord’s Supper in the recurrent and sensational discovery of personal depravity arising from the introspection needed in order to accept the external elements of the bread and wine, his unsatisfactory experience of his own depravity in preparation for the sacrament on March 10, 1642, is indicative of the partial failure of his project. Shepard and his Cambridge Preparationist congregants, though consoled by their individual realizations of their personal depravity, are satisfied neither with the intensive nor extensive quality of these experiences of depravity, and are thus left with a literary, affective, aesthetic, and empirical problem of having to use mostly vague and unsensational language to fathom the depth of their sin. Shepard and his followers continue to pursue the Preparationist method of sacramental piety, but the struggle to find adequate “feelings” of personal depravity is real and frustrating for both Shepard and his confessors (“Confessions” 78, *Journal* 196). Shepard resorts to describing his

personal depravity through the mediation of language that hedges a veil around the ideal sacramental experience of personal evil: he is “dark,” “dead,” “unbelieving,” “impenitent,” and “self-seeking” (*Journal* 198). But these words succeed in describing neither his nor his congregants’ “evil frame of heart,” and they do not allow for the construction of an adequate religious experience of that sinfulness.

The practice of Preparationism in this regard does not measure up to its theoretical aspirations as described in both *The Sound Believer* and *The Parable of the Ten Virgins*:

Rational conviction makes things appear notionally; but spiritual conviction, really. The Spirit, indeed, useth argumentation in conviction; but it goeth further, and causeth the soul not only to see sin and death discursively, but also intuitively and really...Discourse with many a man about his sin and misery, he will grant all that you say, and he is convinced, and his estate is most wretched, and yet still lives in all manner of sin. What is the reason of it? Truly, he sees his sin only by discourse, but he doth not, nay, can not, see the thing sin, death, wrath of God, untill the Spirit come, which convinceth or showeth that really...So men hear of sin, and talk of sin and death, and say they are most miserable in regard of both; yet their hearts tremble not, are amazed not at these evils, because sin is not seen alive, death is not presented alive before them...revealing these really to the soul. (*Sound Believer* 127-128)

Again in *The Parable of the Ten Virgins* Shepard expresses this sacramental Gnosticism of depraved experience. Shepard’s prescription of an experience and expression of evil that transcends abstract theological description is based on an opposition between discursive (linguistic) and sacramental (direct and spiritual) experience:

A man hears sin to be the greatest evil, and sometimes conceives by argument how, but sees not the thing sin, though he hears the word sin. So a man that never travelled into foreign parts may hear, and read, and speak of countries; or, as herbalists read of the nature of plants and trees, yet never saw the things, nay, trample upon them when they see them; so it is one thing to read of the sun in a book, or to know it by revelation, another thing to know it by sight. (*Ten Virgins* 123)

Spiritual enlightenment is the embodied and recurrent temporal experience and textual devotional expression of personal sin, not the abstract rational assent to it as a proposition. The idea of personal depravity as the empowering principle of a Preparationist piety of sensation that Shepard develops continues to look for the adequate form of mediation so that the Preparationist devotee can both experience and describe it. This is the search for an adequate “symbolic” experience that will achieve the “condensation” of an otherwise “infinite discourse” on the problem of representing a vaguely but heavily felt depravity (Ricoeur 11).³³ Certainly, the bread and wine are unable to perform such a symbolic and sacramental office, and neither does the vague confessional language of Shepard and his Cambridge congregants.

In Thomas Shepard’s own *Autobiography* and *Journal*, the sacramental nature of the experience of personal evil becomes clearer. However, as in *The Ten Virgins* and the Cambridge Confessions, one cannot help but note that, although the experience of personal depravity for the Preparationist takes on a sacramental role in devotional life, the oral description and inscribed documentation of particular experiences of depravity remain vague (a point of irresolvable frustration in journaling the experience of depravity) and necessitate the continued search for

³³ I follow Ricoeur in describing the symbolic as indirect and metaphorical discourse—the primary level of discourse when it comes to expressing the problem of evil. Ricoeur’s idea of symbolic discourse as 1) indirect and metonymical and 2) metaphorical (a “condensation”) also aligns closely with Kristeva’s description of symbolic discourse, which accomplishes the work of “displacement” and “condensation” (*Revolution in Poetic Language* 59).

adequate symbolic language of expression. Sins are not described in their particularity, and when specific sins are described, they often appear to be trivial, and not able to bear the symbolic weight of an ontological state of depravity. This vagueness to both confessional (*Cambridge Confessions, Autobiography, and Journal*) and abstract theological (*Parable of the Ten Virgins*) narratives of the Preparationist experience of sinfulness is a poverty of both linguistic concreteness and symbolism, and leaves the sacramental nature of personal depravity in the realm of the undefined, the partially defined, or even the mystical. The Preparationist development of a sacramental symbolism of personal depravity is not yet complete. As the culmination of first-generation New England Preparationism, Shepard's representations of personal sinfulness have solved neither the problem of the "paradoxical idea of sin as both obscure and intensely visible," nor "the difficult literary problem of representing evil" (Delbanco 45, 48). Patricia Caldwell speaks of the problem for New England Puritan confession as the "inexpressibility" of religious experience (*The Puritan Conversion Narrative* 139). Ultimately, the religious experience the New England Preparationists are trying to express is one of what Caldwell identifies as "bad feelings" (Caldwell 159). But through the career of Thomas Shepard, the Preparationist project, in its development of a devotional method that emphasizes the sacramental temporal recurrence of the experience of depravity, fails to find an "objective correlative" for the felt "sense of sin and evil" (Caldwell 161). The Preparationist emphasis on the experience of personal depravity fails to find an adequate symbol for its sacramental temporal expression until the diary of Michael Wigglesworth.

Full Circle: Sacramental Temporality and Personal Depravity in Shepard's *Theses Sabbaticae*

After Max Weber and Charles Taylor, it is immensely difficult to read Puritan temporality as anything other than the harbinger of modern secular capitalism—the kind of capitalism in which Benjamin Franklin, Weber's favourite Puritan descendant, states assuredly that “time is money” (Weber *The Protestant Work Ethic* 14). Weber's argument that Puritanism sanctifies “this-worldly work” by collapsing the distinction between sacred and secular time in order to create an economic and religious imperative of “systematic self-control...in every moment” makes a lot of sense to scholars interested in the “Puritan origins” of modern selfhood (69). Charles Taylor's identification (or blame) of the temporality of Protestant “Reform” as the emergence of modern secularity is largely an extension of Weber's thesis, which is why, in his articulation of the formative relationship of “Reform” religion to the homogenous, empty temporality of secular modernity Taylor explicitly cites Weber (Taylor 59). But in reading for the sacramental, circular, and anti-progressive impulse in the recurrent experience of personal depravity inherent in Preparationist temporality, I am proposing that the Puritans are not simply Ben Franklins dressed in more dour garments. Preparationism is an example of how Puritanism resists its own secularizing impulse to “saturate mundane, everyday life” (what Charles Taylor calls secular time) with a “methodicalness” that depends on seeing each unit of time as equal in value as a limited resource to be exhausted in service of personal religious progress (Weber 101).

Weber does note that rigid secularizing Protestantism maintains a token imperative that “Sundays exist for contemplation,” a carnivalesque dictum that merely reinforces the idea that all time is the same, linear, limited chronological resource (105). The opening lines of Thomas Shepard's monumental defense of rigid Sabbatarianism, *Theses Sabbaticae*, seems to reflect

Weber's position in a quite eloquent manner (for Puritan homiletic writing): "Time is one of the most precious blessings which worthless man in this world enjoys; a jewel of inestimable worth; a golden stream, dissolving, and, as it were, continually running down by us, out of one eternity into another, yet seldom taken notice of until it is quite passed away from us" (*Theses Sabbaticae* 25). The obvious thing to note about Shepard's comment is the assumption of time as linear chronology: all time is the same—each unit is the same, and "Time has become a precious resource, not to be 'wasted'" (Taylor 59). What we read here from Shepard we might easily ascribe to a contemplative Ben Franklin (or one of his personas) if we had to ID this passage on an American Literature exam. But if we look closer we see also that Shepard describes time as "running down by us." And though we "seldom" notice it, we are in control of configuring it. Although the expression sounds like a Franklinitian commodification of time, to say that "time is running down by us" comes with the double-insinuation that time is both helplessly passing by, and that the passing and configuring of time is not an empirical given, but is "by us," and depends on a particular human configuration of it.

Shepard's expostulation sounds, indeed, both neo-Augustinian and proto-Heideggerian. Contemplating the mystery of time, Augustine states that time—or temporality—is the marking of time itself; that is to say that time only exists in the form of its measurement, or what one might call its configuration: "When I measure periods of time, that is what I am actually measuring. Therefore, either this is what time is, or time is not what I am measuring" (*Confessions* 11.36). Both Augustine and Shepard imply that the human configuration of time by a particular manner of measurement is time itself, and their anxiety over a sense of limited control over the time that they have created appears as the ontological condition that eventually fascinates Heidegger in his earliest considerations of the temporality of *Dasein*: "Am I time?"

(*The Concept of Time*, 71). In light of this Augustinian, Shepardian, and Heideggerian clue about the configuration of time as temporality, Preparationism as a method of Weber's Puritan "methodicalness" should not be read teleologically as the beginning of secular "homogenous, empty time." Preparationism's sacramental impulse that emphasizes the temporal recurrence of the experience of personal depravity and a lack of holy incremental progress through secular time seems to indicate that the Puritans planted a proto-gothic virus—the recurrent temporality of the constant rediscovery of personal depravity—within their own circuit-board configuring modern secular capitalist temporality. And Shepard's exposition of Sabbatarianism in *Theses Sabbaticae* certainly bears this proposition out.

In the *Theses Sabbaticae*, Shepard does order a Sabbath of contemplation, but he orders it as a polemic against the homogenizing of time, not as a complement to it. In Heideggerian fashion, Shepard enjoins his Puritans to project themselves temporally in a sacramentally circular manner oriented around the recurrent discovery of their personal depravity. The constantly preparing Puritan is to be temporally "projecting oneself upon one's ownmost authentic potentiality for becoming guilty" (*Being and Time* 333-34). Shepard illustrates in his sacramental temporality of depravity the Heideggerian notion that authentic temporal self-projection orients around the original and repeating affective state, or "mood" of "Being-guilty" (335).

Common labour is not sacred for Shepard, and this is because he believes firmly that there needs to be a strict distinction between sacred and secular labour (27). To make all of time secular is just as egregious an error in Puritan ascetic method as to make all of time enthusiastically sacred: "making every day a Sabbath...is utterly unlawful and impossible," because Puritans need to keep their "own work" and the Lord's work distinctly separated (74). A very sharp distinction between sacred and secular labour is the assumption that Shepard relies on

to carve out his space for a strict Sabbath: “not only a solemn time, but more particularly a solemn day, a whole day of worship, is here also required by virtue of [the] fourth command.” God requires one full day of sacred labour as his fair recompense for granting six days of secular labour: “the Lord...gives us many whole days for our own work” (72). Shepard’s polemic against Sabbath-breaking clearly depends on a rejection of the homogenizing of time as secular.

After dispensing with his Weberian-Franklinian secular Sabbath-breaking Puritans, Shepard spends the duration of the *Theses Sabbaticae* describing the kind of sacred behaviour that should define, or “sanctify” the “solemn” Sabbath (173, 72); the defining characteristic of observing the Sabbath is, for Shepard, sacramental humiliation—the rediscovery of personal depravity. Sabbath, or “sacrament-day” contemplation of the elements is supposed to be a reminder of universal and personal depravity: “The blood of Christ was never shed to destroy all sense of sin and sight of sin in believers...but [Christ] died rather to make them sensible of sin” (83 emphasis added). Rest from secular, mundane, and homogenous time is, in keeping with Shepard’s larger devotional program, the recurrent weekly contemplation of personal sinfulness. There are many mistakes a person could make on a Sabbath in Puritan New England; but the egregious error for Shepard is an inability to recognize personal sinfulness: “to see no sin inherent...this is impious” (85).

Shepard’s model of Preparationism which emphasizes the necessity of recurrent Sabbath experiences of personal depravity always hovers dangerously close to the original form of antinomianism that St. Paul writes against in the Epistle to the Romans: the idea that one should “keep on sinning that grace may abound” (Romans 6.1).³⁴ But in his articulation of ritual

³⁴ With a long rebuttal, Paul answers the opening query of Romans 6.1, “Shall we keep on sinning that grace may abound?” The heresy he opposes in Romans 6 is known to most theologians as antinomianism. I refer to it as the original form of antinomianism to avoid it being mistaken as Hutchinsonian antinomianism (which Shepard obviously abhorred), because the two have little in common: I once attended a plenary conference paper in which

abasement as comprising the larger part of Sabbath duties, Shepard carefully denounces such a heresy while continuing to uphold the need for the sacramental experience of personal depravity: “if those be ministers of the New Testament who first preach to all the drunkards and whoremongers and villains in a parish that God loves them, and that they are reconciled by Christ’s death, and that they may know it because they are sinners, then let the heavens hear, and the earth know, that all such ministers are false prophets” (125). God does not intend the Sabbath as a kind of sinful carnival to bring men “in time purposely to sin the more freely, that so they may have the clearer evidence of the love of God” (127). Shepard’s insistence against sinful mirth on the Sabbath is so strong that it seems to count as evidence against his intentions for a devotional method of the sacramental experience of personal depravity altogether. But the problem with these Roman antinomians is not the fact that they sin; the problem might not even be the fact that they sin willfully. The problem is that they are not serious enough about their sin. They need to be sinners who experience their depravity in recurring bouts of personal sinfulness, and who care deeply about their personal sinfulness. The problem with sin for Shepard is not the presence of sin itself, but careless sin. Shepard wants the methodical temporal recurrence of sacramental sin, along with devotional contemplation of it. The Sabbath is for Shepard the recurring sacramental time in which Preparationists experience and contemplate their personal depravity in solemnity. The Sabbath is the recurring sacramental time of studied depravity.

This reading of Shepard’s *Theses Sabbaticae* as the articulation of a Preparationist sacramental temporality of personal depravity is a reading against the grain of his intended

Nancy Ruttenburg referred to the antinomianism of Anne Hutchinson and Roger Williams—their belief in a direct communication with Christ “Conscience Tolerable and Intolerable.” After the talk, an eighteenth-century scholar of British literature asked me what Ruttenburg meant by antinomianism, since he thought the term referred to those who believe they can sin without compunction thanks to unlimited grace. A brand new graduate student of early American literature, I struggled to explain that in our field, antinomianism meant something else entirely.

rhetoric. For all intents and purposes, Shepard avows on the surface a model of the Sabbath as a day of rest and sanctifying refreshment for the weary Puritan faithful: “those who are wearied with their sins in the week and wants of the Sabbath, and feel a need of rest and refreshing, shall certainly have the blessing, viz., the rest of these seasons of refreshing and rest, and the comforts of the Holy Ghost filling their hearts this day” (262). But in keeping with what I am proposing as Shepard’s sacramentalizing of the experience of personal depravity, I propose that the real imperative of the *Theses Sabbaticae* is to “mourn” over the studied experience of temporally recurring sin (268). When it comes to observing the Sabbath, true “preparation for it” is the serious experience of, the devotional description of, and the ritual mourning of, personal depravity. The *Theses Sabbaticae* is Shepard’s meditation on the Puritan configuration of time. In this text, his model of Preparationism which emphasizes the need for recurrent and sacramental experiences of personal depravity comes clearly together with his resistance to the absolute secularization of temporality into homogenous, empty, and progressive linear time. The Preparationist resistance to secular, linear, progressive time is a recurrent Sabbath time of sacred activity which emphasizes the experience, contemplation, and description of personal depravity. The return to personal depravity—the practice, the contemplation, the confession, the narrating of personal sinfulness—is the proto-gothic Preparationist resistance to secular temporality rather than a proto-Franklinian illustration of Weber’s and Taylor’s genealogies of the secular.

Chapter Four

The Queer Sacramental Temporality of Michael Wigglesworth's Preparationist Diary

In Michael Wigglesworth's diary, the author directly follows and intensifies Shepard's sacramental temporality of depravity in Preparationism and associates the recurrent temporality of preparation for the sacrament with his bodily experiences of sexual dissidence as "unnatural filthy lust" (3). As Wigglesworth writes himself in his diary, Shepard's model of preparation develops further as a sacramental temporality that works, through experiences of perceived sexual depravity associated with the Lord's Supper, both within and against assumptions of personal Christian progress in linear, progressive, and chronological time. This failure in the diary to stand down from its own challenge to a linear, sequential, and progressive chronological model of time, and this failure's association with sacramental recurrence and perceived sexual transgression including attraction to his male Harvard students, is a central structural-temporal characteristic that makes the Wigglesworth diary queer. This following identification of queer sacramental temporality in Wigglesworth's diary thus proposes that sexual dissidence in Puritan New England can be expressed in and through religious sacramental language and temporality.³⁵

This chapter enriches a post-secular understanding of Puritanism specifically by further identifying a queer sacramental temporality in Puritanism that continues *Duration and Depravity's* complication of Charles Taylor's argument in *A Secular Age* that protestant "Reform" is causally connected to secular modernity by a shared emphasis on time as a

³⁵ The scholarship this essay engages and works to advance takes Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's proposition that "the category *ideology* can be used as part of an analysis of *sexuality*," and further proposes, following the religious turn in Early American Studies, that religion, also, must be part of any analysis of formations of erotic desire in this period (*Between Men* 13). Indeed, a major intention of this essay is inspired by the idea that much of Sedgwick's project considering the long historical formation of heteronormative American culture on the premise of homosocial structures of knowledge and desire deserves an expansion of approach that accounts more for the historical contribution of specifically Calvinistic categories of knowledge (e.g., "depravity") to this formation (Sedgwick *Epistemology of the Closet* 95).

homogenous empty medium in which to enact chronologically progressive narratives of the self.³⁶ Queer sacramental temporalities in the Puritan New England archive, latent in the writings of Thomas Shepard and especially manifest in Michael Wigglesworth's diary, challenge characterizations of Puritanism as enforcing a strict temporality of personal and social chronological progress and reform that is for Taylor both cause and prototype of modern secular homogenous empty time. Rather than simply identifying a disciplinary culture of time in Puritan New England that eventually transposes into a secular register with less spiritualized teleologies (capital, the family, the nation, etc.), this examination identifies Wigglesworth's articulation of a recurrent and sacramental religious temporality oriented around the repeated experience of personal—often sexual—sinfulness. A genealogy of queer religious resistance to the formation of Protestant-secular disciplinary time also appears in the Puritan archive.

Reading queer sacramental temporality in Puritan New England to advance postsecular criticism in Puritan studies is particularly useful, because in studies of queer temporality scholars have been increasingly identifying religious forms of queer temporal management and experience that resist secular configuration. Jordan Alexander Stein has forcefully argued that “on theoretical as well as historical grounds, queer offers an apposite way to describe Puritan forms of affiliation, attachment, desire, and bodily sensation, as well as the representation of any of these, which do not mirror modern, more squarely heterosexual or homosexual versions of similar social norms” (“How to Undo the History of Sexuality” 753-54). And he has also noted the significant lack in American Studies of “connections between seventeenth-century devotional literature and the history of sexuality” (775). Elsewhere, Stein connects the queer to the temporal

³⁶ Charles Taylor's work in *A Secular Age* stands in an uncomfortable dual role of being both a work of secularization scholarship (albeit of a complex and nuanced kind) and a talisman for postsecular thought, though, as Fessenden has noted, he never “cit[es] the postsecular by name” (“The Problem of the Postsecular” 156).

when he claims that because of their “relative” or “recursive” configuration, certain types of “religious” temporalities, can work to challenge the assumption of sequential, chronological, and progressive time (“American Literary History and Queer Temporality” 856). When religious temporality becomes cyclical and recursive, rather than progressive and sequential, one observes a queering of chronological time. Theorists of queer temporality have also recently attended more extensively to the connection of queer temporality to religious performance, noting that the temporality of religious lives—both historical and contemporary—often “confound secular time’s forward march” (Moore, Brintnall, and Marchal 5). A postsecular assessment of temporality in the Puritan archive of personal devotional writing is thus primed to advance the current conversation in queer temporality studies that increasingly recognizes the importance of religion.

Queer sacramental temporality in New England Puritanism emerges within and against this archive’s formation of a modern temporality emphasizing personal spiritual progress and sexual discipline. In *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories*, Elizabeth Freeman notes that “sexual dissidents have in many ways been produced by, or at least emerged in tandem with, a sense of ‘modern’ temporality” (7). This modern temporality is the “secularized, progressive” time of “heterosexually gendered...intimacy and genealogy” (23). What one observes in the diary of Michael Wigglesworth (1653-57) is not exactly the completed formation of a heteronormative/heterosexist, modern, secular temporality against which a queer sacramental temporality emerges. Instead, one sees the pressure of expectations that one’s private temporal narrative adhere to a religious life of personal progress that is increasingly measured by the secular time of days, months, and years, and associated with marriage and fidelity to an ideal of

the family.³⁷ These expectations are a precursor of modern secular, heteronormative, and progressive linear temporality as it begins to take shape from early modern religious origins of what Charles Taylor has identified as secularizing “Reform,” but Shepard and Wigglesworth provide examples of how a queer sacramental temporality of sexual dissidence both emerges within and resists this process of formation. The identification of queer temporality in structures of Puritan piety thus further enriches postsecular understandings of Protestantism’s genealogical relationship to modern secular time-consciousness as one of empty homogeneity by contending for an alternative or parallel genealogy of queer time in Puritanism that is circular, recurrent, and sacramental, resisting instrumentalization into a temporally progressive religious narrative of spiritual and sexual industry.³⁸

With the exception of Stein’s 2018 study of Edward Taylor, queer and post-secular proposals of the relationship of time, sex, and religious performance in American literature have thus far been mostly limited to the study of American modernism’s connection to Catholicism. In an illuminating essay for *American Literature’s* 2014 special issue “After the Postsecular,” Freeman explores the concept of queer sacramentality in American Modernism, as she looks in Djuna Barnes’s *Nightwood* for how a combination of modernist aesthetics with Roman Catholic discourses and practices of sacramentality, with their focus on “bodies, desires, fantasies, and

³⁷ Edmund Morgan’s comment that “Paradoxically [Puritan] society failed in the end...partly because they succeeded too well in devoting themselves to their families” is more telling than probably even he meant (*The Puritan Family* 89). While Morgan means that the family “tribalism” in Puritanism he describes is what outdid Puritanism by its sectarian spirit of squabbling (think Jonathan Edwards’s famous feuds in Northampton with the Williams clan), I would contend further that family becomes the primary *structure* of social, political, and religious meaning, instead of theologies and liturgical practices oriented towards the unit of the congregation, based on bonds of covenant, conversion, and sacrament. That Wigglesworth’s diary discloses a resistance to this formation shows how his queer sacramental temporality is in an important respect a truly *religious* resistance to the secularizing family heteronormativity of New England Puritanism.

³⁸ If Taylor’s account of the relationship of reformed religion to modern secularity sounds suspiciously like a renovated version of the Weber thesis, that’s because in many ways it is. Taylor cites Weber explicitly (Taylor 59). For more on postsecular Puritan studies and the Weber thesis, see Michael W. Kaufmann’s “Post-Secular Puritans.”

affinities” could challenge the supposed Protestant “New England” origins of a “regime of modern sexuality” in America (“Sacra/mentality in Djuna Barnes’s *Nightwood*” 737). Freeman’s assessment that “*Nightwood* uses religion to reject the [modern heterosexist] regime of sexuality” is based on an assumption that “the monastic tradition of *exagoreusis*, or the verbal expression of sin” seen in the modernist novel runs counter to the Puritan “desacramentalizing” of “confession” (740, 738-39). Tracy Fessenden’s postsecular scholarship has also explored the American modernist connection between Roman Catholic religious sensibilities and coded expressions of queer sexual desire. In “F. Scott Fitzgerald’s Catholic Closet,” Fessenden notes the ways in which “Catholicism” and “queer sexuality”—or “Catholicism and other-than-heterosexual-desire”—often connect in Fitzgerald’s writing (31, 32). Fessenden finds two conflicting “registers” in Fitzgerald, one that is “WASP/heterosexual” and another that is “Catholic/queer” (33). Freeman and Fessenden identify a queer, modernist, and Catholic paradigm of American literary production that is opposed to a heteronormative, secular, and residually Protestant disciplinary norm.³⁹

As an expansion of the illuminating contribution scholars such as Freeman and Fessenden offer to the link of sacramentality and queerness in American literature that privileges modernism and Catholicism, this chapter’s postsecular examination of Wigglesworth shows how, even within an early modern and Protestant proto-formation of heterosexist discourse and temporality, there emerges a kind of queer sacramental temporality that resists it. The cyclicity of Wigglesworth’s Shepardian style of preparation for communion, as he associates it in the *exagoreusis* of his diary with the dissident erotics of his body and its desires, creates a queer

³⁹ Postsecular scholarship continues in 2018 to muse on the intersection of queer and transgressive temporal possibilities with medieval, modern, and contemporary productions of a specifically Catholic piety. For example, see Dayan Elliott’s article “Time, gender-bending, and the medieval church” on the *Immanent Frame* website.

sacramental temporality of recurrence, return, and repetition that is also confessional and even Eucharistic in its close temporal association with the rhythm of the Lord's Supper.

Wigglesworth's queer sacramental temporality, which develops out of Thomas Shepard's theology and practice of Puritan Preparationism, is not a high/experimental modernist Catholic critique of Protestant American secular heteronormativity, but it is an early modern Protestant resistance to that formation as it is in the process of forming. Queer sacramentality is not only something present in modernist explorations and adaptations of Roman Catholic sacramentalism, as Freeman and Fessenden have so convincingly shown. Occasions of queer sacramental temporality exist within the Protestant archive of early American literature as well. To look in the Puritan New England archive for dissident sexual expressions associated with, rather than simply against, sacramental methods of temporal religious devotion is to suggest that the complex organizational relation of desire, religion, and time in New England Puritanism produces forms of expression commonly supposed to be inimical to the Puritan discipline of the self as a highly sexually controlled and progressive chronological project of Taylor's secularizing "Reform." And by identifying a queer sacramental temporality in New England Puritanism, one advances calls in the study of early American literature to expand and redefine understandings of Puritan "religion," in this case as a conceptual, critical, and historical term which contains—in the both the restrictive and inclusive senses of the verb—queer affects, spiritualities, and temporalities. (Stein, "Religion and Method" 2).⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Scholars of mediaeval and early-modern religion have, of course already, noticed ways in which religion can contain queer desire and time, but, as with Freeman and Fessenden, this scholarship has usually been limited to Catholicism. Caroline Bynum's seminal work. *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* is a clear example of this.

The Queer Sacramental Temporality of Michael Wigglesworth's Preparationist Diary

Michael Wigglesworth was heavily influenced by Shepardian Preparationism, and in his diary he adapts Shepard's sacramental temporality oriented around the recurrent experience of personal sinfulness to include an explicit emphasis on the temporal queerness of this process. In his diary, on 5 March 1654, Wigglesworth enters into a meditation on his sinfulness prompted by reading "Mr shepard's sound Beleever" (68). Earlier in the diary on 19 June 1653, he describes a harrowing pastoral conversation with Jonathan Mitchell, Shepard's Preparationist successor to the pulpit in Cambridge, Massachusetts: "Mr. Mitchel shew'd me the danger and the vile sin of a careless spirit that hath little or no appetite unto Christ and communion with him such frustrate the very end of the ordinance which is communion" (24). As his documentation of the conversation with Mitchell indicates, Wigglesworth's experience of personal depravity is explicitly recursive in its temporality as Wigglesworth associates it with repeated preparation for the Lord's Supper.

The most specific and clear symbol of depravity for Wigglesworth in his diary is the recurrent discovery of personal sexual dissidence as a sacramental temporal rhythm of his diary, because that very sexual sin—the sexual dissidence of his body and its desires in spite of himself—verifies his religious practice. In Michael Wigglesworth's diary, a queer temporality configured around the recurrent experience of perceived sexual sin, and associated with recurrent preparation for the sacrament of communion, emerges within and against the author's efforts to achieve and recognize in himself a state of incremental Christian temporal progress from depravity, to conversion, to increasing sanctification in which his personal depravity diminishes in proportion to increased holiness and salvific assurance.⁴¹ Wigglesworth's sacramental

⁴¹ Nicholas Radel states that "Wigglesworth must produce himself in sin, see himself as a sinner, in order to purify himself of sin" ("A Sodom Within" 45). This analysis supports his proposal the New England Puritanism *produces*

rediscovery of personal sinfulness from Sabbath to Sabbath, associated in his diary with the “filthiness” of recurring wet dreams, masturbation, and homoerotic attraction to his Harvard students, becomes a queer cyclical temporal principle of return encoded within the diary’s secular temporality of linear chronology that assumes time as human progress in months and years.

The opening sentence of Michael Wigglesworth’s diary, penned in early February 1653, moves immediately to its primary obsession of expressing a felt sense of erotic depravity, as the author reflects on his “unnatural filthy lust that are so oft and even this day in some measure stirring in me” (3). Within the first paragraph, Wigglesworth expands the primary obsession of personal sexual depravity (“lust”) to its association with sacramental temporality: “The enmity and contrariety of my heart to seeking thee in earnest, with my want of dear affection to thee, these make me afraid. but thou did give thy self in the Lords supper” (3).⁴² One thus gets the sense from the first paragraph of his diary, that, for Wigglesworth, the devotional act of preparation for participation in the sacrament—Wigglesworth’s following of the principles of Preparationism as “Mr shepard’s” writings lay them out—is associated closely with a devotional experience and expression of perceived sexual sin (68). Eventually, Michael Wigglesworth fuses the temporal rhythm of the experience of his sexual dissidence with the temporal rhythm of preparation for participation in the Lord’s Supper into one queer sacramental temporality in which the sin and the sacrament are virtually indistinguishable.

sodomy in order to then repress it. Rather than seeing the purgation of his dissident sexual desires and functions, my analysis proposes the self-perceived depravity of Wigglesworth’s erotic life as actually built into his religious life of sacramental piety, rather than ritually purified from that life.

⁴² According to Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, a large part of the sexual panic that Wigglesworth expresses in his diary arises from the cognitive dissonance created by imagining his “feminine piety” as a relationship to God in terms of a “feminized body” that forces him to admit “unacceptable images of homosexuality” (“The Feminized Body of the Puritan Convert”).

Wigglesworth's diary sets itself apart from the rest of Preparationist devotional literature immediately in the way in which the author often has no trouble at all in finding the necessary language of external experience—or, to take the term Patricia Caldwell uses in the context of New England Puritan confession, “objective correlative”—to describe his sense of personal depravity (Caldwell, *The Puritan Conversion Narrative* 159). Wigglesworth knows, feels, and expresses his own personal sinfulness quite adequately in the documentation of his masturbation and wet dreams: “I find such unresistable torments of carnal lusts or provocation to the ejection of seed that I find myself unable to read any thing to inform me about my distemper because of the prevailing or rising of my lusts” (4). Wigglesworth's description of onanistic behaviour as an adequate documentation of personal sinfulness functions as a temporal marker of recurrence and resonates as an external objective correlative with John Calvin's internal description of human depravity as the state of a soul that is “teeming with the seeds of vice” (*Institutes* 2.3.2). In the sins of his sexual life, Wigglesworth finds both the concrete and symbolic language that, as discussed in the previous chapter, Shepard found missing in his practice of Preparationism.

Wigglesworth's masturbation and nocturnal emissions, connected to homoerotic desire for his Harvard pupils, are clearly the most notable temporal markers in the diary that allow him to remember his personal depravity. The entire diary reads as a Shepardian catalogue of personal sinfulness, and besides his auto-erotic sexual sins he notes too much “doting affection” for his students of Hebrew at Harvard College along with “filthy lust also flowing from my fond affection of my pupils” (9, 31). As early as Wigglesworth notes his “unnatural filthy lust,” he connects it to his state of personal depravity as “the enmity and contrariety of my heart to seeking thee in earnest” (3). Wigglesworth's recurrent moments of reflection on his state of personal depravity after experiences of masturbation and nocturnal emission comprise the most

notable part of a more comprehensive course of discipline “seriously to meditate, and call over the sins of my whole life by catalogue” (58).⁴³ Wigglesworth’s cataloguing of his personal and sexual depravity follows Shepard’s conception of this devotional method, described in the latter’s *Autobiography* and concluding a scene which, as Michael Warner astutely notes, comes as a resolution the day after a drunken revelry at Christ’s College, Cambridge, that might well have led to an erotic dalliance with a fellow male student (Warner 37):

And I drank so much one day that I was dead drunk, and that upon a Saturday night, and so was carried from the place I had drink at and did feast at unto another scholar’s chamber, one Basset of Christ’s College, and knew not where I was until I awakened late on that Sabbath and sick with my beastly carriage. And when I awakened I went from him in shame and confusion, and... resolve[d] to set upon a course of daily meditation about the evil of sin and my own ways. (Shepard, *Autobiography* 41)

The indication of the diary’s inclusion of an explicit confession of homoeroticism, in keeping with the intimations of Shepard’s own autobiography, is that there is a homoerotic and sexually dissident element to all the items on Wigglesworth’s catalogue of sexual sins stemming from the original one of masturbation.⁴⁴ Wigglesworth amplifies this queerness seen in Shepard to an unconcealed confession of homoeroticism.

Wigglesworth intensifies Thomas Shepard’s preparatory method, in which a deep sense of abject personal depravity is what fits a believer for participation in the sacrament and seems to

⁴³ Daniel B. Shea Jr. astutely identifies a purpose of the Puritan diary as a catalogue of personal sinfulness (what I would argue is its fundamental purpose): “the diary would fail of its purpose if the writer could not bring himself to view his most abhorrent self” (*Spiritual Autobiography in Early America* 142).

⁴⁴ As Michael Warner notes in his exposition of Samuel Danforth’s execution sermon *Cry of Sodom*, masturbation was the most insidious form of sexual dissidence for a Puritan, as the perverse gateway to “‘impure thoughts and fancies in the day-time,’ ‘whoredome,’ adultery, incest, sodomy, and ‘Besitality, or Buggery’” (“New-English Sodom” 23). Richard Godbeer also points out the extreme attention New England clerics paid to masturbation as both a symptom of, and gateway to, much more serious forms of perversion (*Sexual Revolution in Early America* 68-69).

give that sacrament its effective spiritual power; but Wigglesworth's intensification of this method turns it into a double-bind in which a sense of abject personal sinfulness is a requirement of participation in communion even as it is an obstacle to worthy participation. Like Thomas Shepard, Wigglesworth works very hard to cultivate a sense of his depthless personal sinfulness in order to make himself fit for the sacrament. First, he finds in self-examination "a stupid heart that cannot feel the sting of sin" (43). This inability to feel his sin leads to the desire that through sharper spiritual discipline he may find "sin bitter (my own sin)" (29). It is neither the absence of sin nor the sense of sin that prepares Wigglesworth for the Lord's table, but rather an adequate personal experience and expression of his sin—usually sexual. Yet when Wigglesworth finds that he has adequately prepared himself by fully experiencing the depth of his personal depravity, he believes that this very experience of sin he has worked so hard to have has in fact unfit him for the sacrament: "I find sometimes such a monster of iniquity in my self that I can see nor tast no excellency in communion with god" (64). The devotional discipline of preparing himself for the sacrament by an adequate spiritual experience and expression of his personal sinfulness both prepares Wigglesworth for, and excludes him from, the actualization of a full sacramental experience of the Lord's Supper in which he feels himself, after "careful self-examination," to be a worthy participant because of an interior state of "true repentance" bearing fruit in the passing of time by increased holiness (Holifield 19).⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Wigglesworth's obvious but conflicted emphasis on the need to experience his sexual sinfulness as a part of his fraught religious life challenges characterizations of him as attempting simply to suppress his sinfulness; while Richard Godbeer describes Wigglesworth as having "internalized the moral imperatives" bound up with his religious commitments to resist his dissident sexuality, one might more accurately say that Wigglesworth has internalized a religious imperative, or repetition drive, to continually experience and express his auto- and homoeroticism as temporal marker and symbol *par excellence* of his felt sense of total depravity (*Sexual Revolution in Early America* 88). Godbeer's very helpful characterization of how Puritan authority attempted to suppress sexual dissidence nevertheless refrains from considering that religious authorization in Puritan devotional life itself depends on the performance of prohibited behaviours. Thus when, after discussing masturbatory tendencies in the diaries of Wigglesworth, Cotton Mather, and Joseph Moody, he laments that "it is unfortunate that most of the confessional diaries extant from seventeenth-century New England were written by ministers," he assumes that the sexual

It is not simply Wigglesworth's sin that makes him feel unworthy for communion, but also its associative connection with his intellectual inability to understand how it efficaciously ministers grace through the work of signification:

I was exercis'd with strong strugglings in my spirit to make out to my self that God has instituted this ordinance as a seal that he gives christ to every believing receiver as really as bread and wine: I can see that 'tis a representation of what christ has done for us, I cannot see so clearly that it sealeth the present gift of christ, as that it puts us in remembrance that christ has thus giv'n himself to us if upon examination we find that we belong to him. I longed to hear some means to help me over this simple, and because I could not therefore I was afraid I should partake unworthily" (43).

Wigglesworth never finds a permanent resolution to the intellectual problem, even though he knows the answer: "I am to believe that christ hath after this manner giv'n himself to me heretofore, which believing, I discern the Lords body and am ergo a worthy receiver" (44). But later, the same intellectual problem dogs him as he struggles to see "How it appear's [sic] that the Lords supper is a seal as wel as a sign" (54).⁴⁶ Wigglesworth's recording of his own inability to understand how the Lord's Supper signifies connects to his cataloguing of queer sexual life, as these intellectual preparations for the Lord's Supper often accompany his deliberate preparative articulations of personal depravity; and these connected intellectual and sexual failures together help to produce the temporal recursiveness of the diary.

documentation in layperson diaries will contain, *a fortiori*, descriptions of even more profound lasciviousness (88). In fact, it makes at least as much sense to suggest that the clergy are the ones who are much more in tune with their acts of dissident sexuality because they see these acts to be, in spite of their ostensible sinfulness, integral parts of their devotional lives.

⁴⁶ Wigglesworth associates his doubts about communion with what he considers his "Atheistic thoughts" (45). As Jonathan Goldberg points out, following Alan Bray, atheism in New England was closely associated with prohibited sexual desires and practices such as sodomy (*Sodomotries* 234).

The rhythm of Wigglesworth's auto-erotic activities and his subsequent documentation of them as they connect to the temporal cycle of unsatisfying spiritual and intellectual preparation for the Sabbath comprises the structural backbone of the diary.⁴⁷ Eventually, his sense of personal sinfulness, signified primarily by his sexual sins, becomes the elemental location of sacramental experience, rather than the act of participating in communion. Early in the keeping of his diary, Wigglesworth gauges his success—or, more accurately speaking, lack of success—in progressive sanctification according to the measure of the “approaching sabbath” (10). And although Wigglesworth measures time in his diary according to the secular yardsticks of months and years from 1653 to 1657, he also marks time much more closely according to the cycle of the Sabbath. He often measures days by their distance between Sabbaths—i.e. “the 2d day” (34).⁴⁸ Therefore, within a default assumption of time as the secular empty chronology of months and years, Wigglesworth also marks time in a religious and sacramental manner, since his preparation for Sabbaths is often also “preparation to the sacrament” (24).⁴⁹

Because Wigglesworth's experience and expression of personal depravity as sexual dissidence both enables sacramental participation and eclipses the actual experience of participation in communion, the experience and writing of sexual dissidence, although it remains throughout the diary associated in temporal cyclicity with preparation for the sacrament,

⁴⁷ The combination of Wigglesworth's sexual dissidence and his obsession with the technical doctrinal difficulties built into the Puritan practice of communion make him an interesting figure to consider in comparison to Robert Wringhim in James Hogg's *The Private Memiors and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, the paranoid gothic character—and Calvinist—Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick analyses in *Between Men*. Wringhim is “fond of writing essays on controverted points of theology,” and internalizes “the double bind of the structures of repression” primarily through a theology obsessed with total depravity (98, 116).

⁴⁸ The second day would be a Monday. First days are Sabbaths in the diary (Wigglesworth 32).

⁴⁹ This phenomenon of both assuming and marking secular time by involvement in a religious narrative is not only sacramental, but hermeneutical, for Puritans in New England. As Lisa Gordis has pointed out in her description of Puritan Bible-reading aspirations, many a New Englander sought to fulfill an annual “schedule,” proposed by Lewis Bayly in *The Practice of Piety*, “according to which, by reading three chapters a day,” “morning, noon, and night,” “and six on the last day of the year, he could read the Bible through each year” (*Opening Scripture* 33, 99). Those Puritans who take Bayly up on this proposal thus mark secular time—days, weeks, months, and years—by their progress through the sacred texts, and their identification with the sacred narrative they tell.

becomes its own sacramental assurance, disconnected from the actual theological and physical content of the Sabbath Lord's Supper.⁵⁰ In this way, the progressive stages of conviction of sin and repentance from sin that Daniel B. Shea Jr. recognizes as working together to effect conversion in the Puritan journal become separated from each other, and conviction of sin becomes a repetitive end to itself (*Spiritual Autobiography in Early America* 96). As a result, near the end of the diary one of Wigglesworth's brightest Sabbaths is not one in which he gains assurance of his progressive sanctification in secular time as a Puritan, but one in which he comes to realize his personal depravity even more: "I receiv'd the Lord's Supper here on the Sabbath. Before and att which the Lord came in sweetly to discover and affect my heart with sin" (91). The initial clash and subsequent mingling of two contradictory temporal imperatives of Puritanism come clearly into focus in this remark: 1) to experience sanctification as what Gregory S. Jackson calls the "incrementalism of moral change" in Christian progress through secular time, and 2) to experience personal depravity in Preparationist practice ever more profoundly and express it ever more clearly as a principle of sacramental temporal recurrence that undoes progressive sanctification even as it verifies authentic religious experience (Jackson 140). Ultimately, the whole point of Preparationist sacramental practice for Wigglesworth is in preparation for the Sabbath, or on the Sabbath, "sweetly to discover" the depth of personal "sin"—specifically for Wigglesworth in his diary the sin of his body and its dissident pleasures (91). The sacramental temporality of Wigglesworth's recurrent experience of personal depravity ultimately makes impossible the progressive goals of disciplinary Puritan sequential temporality that his diary also attempts to take up.

⁵⁰ Andrew Delbanco also notes this break of the Puritan obsession with personal depravity from its connection to a larger process of redemption: "The true sight of sin has become less a means to grace than an end in itself. Sin, not grace, has become the minister's consuming subject" (*The Puritan Ordeal* 182).

Wigglesworth practices a form of Preparationist sacramental piety that emphasizes the spiritual experience of personal depravity, and this kind of piety of depravity, associated with the rhythm of the Lord's Supper, creates a sacramental temporality because it is a way of marking time that is recurrent in structure, and associated inextricably with communion itself.

Wigglesworth's spiritual narrative refuses forward linear temporal movement, as he is stuck in a queer Preparatory cycle. Wigglesworth kept his diary from February 1653 to May 1657.

Towards the end of the diary, on January 25, 1657, Wigglesworth notes a lack of progression to righteous and sanctified living, as his attempt to accomplish sanctification through moral incrementalism has failed: "yet I find my heart as carnal as some years since for ought I can tell" (Wigglesworth 98). Theoretically as Preparationist discipline, the recognition of sinfulness should simply be an empowering outlet into which the actual sacrament of the Lord's Supper is plugged, so that grace is experienced in proportion to sinfulness. Indeed, Wigglesworth himself even claims this kind of rote sin-grace dialectic earlier in his diary at a point where he feels no evidence of grace in his "carnal and whoarish" heart: "the grace of god superabound's [sic] where sin abounded" (75). But Wigglesworth has intensified and crystalized the problem of personal sinfulness to the point that it is now a substance that explodes the spiritual economy of Preparationism. The "poison" that Wigglesworth feels "working" in his "soul" erupts as the "ejection" and "filthy pollution" of sexually dissident "seed" (30, 4, 5). The poison seed of oneiric, onanistic, and homo-erotic semen comes to "overshadow the seed of the word" (11).⁵¹

And not merely the homiletic word of Puritan exegesis, but also the sacramental word that allows

⁵¹ Compare the sacramentalism of personal depravity as Wigglesworth expresses it in his diary to Augustine's treatment of his nocturnal emissions after commitment to Christian celibacy, in which Augustine confidently asserts that the process of sanctification will eventually dry up his wet dreams: "You will more and more increase your gifts in me, Lord, so that my soul, rid of the glue of lust, may follow me to you, so that it is not in rebellion against itself, and so that even in dreams it does not commit those disgraceful and corrupt acts in which sensual images provoke carnal emissions, but also does not even consent to them" (*Confessions* 10.41).

for participation in the divine “glory of god” (11). When Wigglesworth hears in a sermon that “The pure in heart shall see God” he finds instead in himself a “sensual frame” which seems increasingly to actually comprise the most important temporal part of his religious experience, separated from resolution or redemption in an experience of sanctification (20-21).⁵²

Brooks Holifield calls the Puritan obsession with the Lord’s Supper the Protestant articulation of a “sacramental” theology and “piety of sensation” oriented around the consumption of the elements; but in his diary, the content of Wigglesworth’s ejaculations becomes the abject element of a sacramental and embodied piety of sensation that replaces the elements of bread and wine at the Lord’s table (Holifield 135). Wigglesworth’s cultivation of queer abjection through the writing of his wet dreams, masturbation, and homo-erotic desire is the willed expression of a sacrament of dissident desire in which religious experience and sexual sinfulness are, for all intents and purposes, one and the same. Wigglesworth’s semen is his sacramental-sensational element, and the clearest mark of the sacramental temporality and piety of sensation that ultimately controls the diary, rather than the event and sensation of actual consumption of the Lord’s Supper.

The Queer Temporality of Wigglesworth’s Refusal of Filiopieté and Family Time

Besides the recurrent sacramental temporality of Wigglesworth’s dissident sexuality, there are two important non-sacramental episodes to note in the diary, both connected to that sexuality by his auto-erotic ejaculations, that indicate the way in which the text’s queer temporality refuses a narrative of linear and progressive Christian life. The first moment is on October 15, 1653, when

⁵² Wigglesworth’s “sexual life authenticates and makes possible the drama of his own salvific narrative”—indeed, to a degree that takes his private salvific narrative as written in his diary into a region unauthorized by what we would assume as viable models of a Puritan’s public piety (Traister, *Female Piety and the Invention of American Puritanism* 159).

he learns of his father's death, and notes that he does not feel the appropriate love and respect for him: "And the very next morning news is brought me of my fathers [sic] death, whereupon I set my self to confess before the Lord my sins against him in want of naturall affections to, and sympathy with my afflicted parents" (50). Besides the fact that Wigglesworth himself seems to associate this moment with "some filthiness in a vile dream" three days later, one must note how Wigglesworth's self-confessed lack of affection for his father demonstrates a personal temporality that refuses an obligatory filio piety, which, as Mitchell Breitwieser has demonstrated, is a temporality of New England Puritan historical consciousness based on both Christian progress and deep respect for the name of the father (Wigglesworth 50; Breitwieser, *Cotton Mather and Benjamin Franklin*).

The second non-sacramental episode that illustrates the queer temporality of his diary is Wigglesworth's documentation of his consideration and eventual decision in favour of marriage. In February 1654, he considers marriage as a progressive way out of exposure to "sin and temptations" such as "dreams and self pollution by night" (79). Besides the way in which singleness leaves him stuck in the temporal cycle of masturbation and nocturnal emission, Wigglesworth, a Harvard tutor and aspiring divine, also notes that remaining unmarried leaves him "lyable to the harsh sensure of the world that expecteth the quite contrary" (79). A monogamous marriage to a woman, if not explicitly a sacramental expectation in this Protestant context, is clearly a societal, religious, and temporal expectation that Wigglesworth, heading into his mid-twenties, believes he needs to meet.⁵³ After the continued torment of "carnal concupiscence" and "lust" make him finally admit to himself that "marriage wil be necessary," (80-81), he consummates marriage on 18 May 1655 (87). But, remarkably, in the same entry as

⁵³ Godbeer confirms the fact the Puritans both expected and venerated loving sexual partnerships comprised of one man and one woman in marriage (58).

the one in which he records his marriage, Wigglesworth notes the fact that, in its insistence on continued “stirrings” of his “former distemper even after the use of marriage,” his body and its desires refuse the temporality of marriage (87). The temporal recurrence of Wigglesworth’s “carnal lusts also exceeding” continue to configure the narrative of his diary even after his attempt to assimilate marriage, family, and religious time into a temporality of progress (88). One might propose that Wigglesworth’s guilt after marriage is due to perceived sexual hyperactivity with his new spouse, but as Richard Godbeer points out, “According to Puritan teachers, marital sex should be extolled as a necessary good, not conceded as a necessary evil” (*Sexual Revolution in Early America* 58). Godbeer goes on to observe that “within the context of marriage, chastity meant fidelity to one’s spouse (which was, of course, quite compatible with an active sex life)” (59). It would seem, then, that the “temptations of another nature” that plague Wigglesworth both before and after marriage are a combination of autoeroticism and homoeroticism that resists calming through a monogamous relationship with his wife.

Wigglesworth’s lack of appropriate filio piety, along with the failure of his marriage to temper his personal sense of sexual dissidence, is further evidence in the text of the way in which the sacramental temporality of his queer sexual dissidence defines him, even as it emerges both within and against conformity to public expectations that he comply with a temporality of generational, personal, and religious progress increasingly written and accomplished under the sign of the family. Indeed, Wigglesworth’s failures to cultivate appropriate affects of mourning over his father’s death and to achieve family “futurity” seem to offer themselves as early-modern illustrations *avant la lettre* of the importance of “sin” to Edelman’s concept of the “*sinthomosexual*” articulated in *No Future*, the queer, antifutural, antisocial figure whose queerness as “sin” makes him/her “into something of a s(a)in(t)” (38-9). Wigglesworth’s

projection in the diary of queer temporality that resists family time, and which he understands as sin—or the outward expression of internal depravity—is the very thing that enables his (tortured) religious identity as a s(a)in(t).⁵⁴

Queer Sacramental Temporality, New England Puritanism, and the Secular

Wigglesworth's diary is sexually and temporally queer; in the text, these characteristics are separate but mutually constitutive qualities. In the essay "American Literary History and Queer Temporality," Jordan Alexander Stein contends that "modernity arranges time and sex into normative relations: the rhythms of birth and death, the political and affective economies of publicity and privacy, the kinds of occurrences that count as life events, and the kinds of lives that are made by the counting" (866). Elizabeth Freeman has identified this disciplinary chronological time as "chrononormativity, the use of time to organize individual human bodies toward maximum productivity" (*Time Binds* 3). This chrononormativity is what Charles Taylor identifies as the primary mode of time-consciousness in secular modernity, a way of inhabiting and experiencing time that, in Taylor's account, emerges from "proto-totalitarian" early-modern religious movements of reform such as Puritanism (Taylor 772). But when temporality in these religions of reform becomes cyclical and recursive, rather than progressive and sequential, one observes in that temporality a queering of chrononormativity. The most notable events of Wigglesworth's diary stand out as being of two kinds: sacramental and queerly erotic; these two kinds of events are mutually constitutive (even indistinguishable at times), and their collusion

⁵⁴ For further reading on Edelman's articulation of the *sinthomosexual* as a concept available to the convergence of religious studies criticism and queer temporality, see the introduction to *Sexual Disorientations: Queer Temporalities, Affects, Theologies* (10). The collected essays in *Sexual Disorientations* take up the idea that queer temporality is often inherent within Christian theology and practice even as queerness is considered to be inimical to modern fundamentalist evangelicalism.

together makes the complete achievement of linear progressive chronological temporality impossible. Wigglesworth appears to want to mark his life temporally by linear progress in his religious and sexual life, according to the chrononormative relations of 1650s Puritan New England, but Preparationism for Wigglesworth instead facilitates a queerly sacramental temporality in his religious life that resists assimilation into these normative relations.

In his diary, Wigglesworth arranges time and identity according to sacramental and erotic events that refuse to make of the author's life a progressive chrononormative temporal narrative. Michael Wigglesworth articulates the self of the diary through a queer sacramental temporality organized around 1) the recurrent rhythm of preparation for the sacrament which depends on his habitual cultivation of a sense of personal depravity, 2) the recurrent experience of masturbation, wet dreams, and homoerotic "doting affections," and 3) the refusal of his body and its desires to conform to an obligatory narrative of progress in marriage and family life. Despite Wigglesworth's best efforts to both create and measure incremental personal religious and sexual progress in the diary by marking time according to days, months, and years, the constant interruption of this sequential chrononormative temporality by a queer sacramental temporality illustrates Stein's point that "modernity's alignment of sex and time generates a queer counterdiscourse that continues to hold time and sex together, even as it challengingly reimagines their interarticulation" (866). In Wigglesworth's case, sacramental temporality and queer temporality connect in a single religious re-fusal emerging within and against "contrary" chrononormative expectations of a societally dominant chronological, sequential, and progressive religious ordering of one's self through sex, family, and time (Wigglesworth 79).⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Puritan New England was obviously not heteronormative in any post-Victorian, postsexological sense of the term; but the ordering of bodies and desires in Puritan New England demonstrates a disciplinary investment in "natural order, hierarchy, the family, and reproduction," troubled as it was on occasions by "the male erotics of Christian charity" (Warner, "New-English Sodom" 35). See also Annamarie Jagose's comments in the *GLQ* rountable

Since Valerie Traub's 2013 *PMLA* essay on "The New Unhistoricism in Queer Studies," studies of queer temporality have become increasingly known for their more than occasional rejection of historicist method because the latter is a form of "straight temporality" (22). I nevertheless think it would be a mistake to characterize Wigglesworth's diary, queer as it is in temporality, as standing out against an already solidly-congealed heteronormative temporality of the Early Modern New England context. However, it is not too much to say that the diary never stands down from its challenge to a linear, sequential, progressive chronological and chrononormative time that appears to be the public standard Wigglesworth strives for, the standard of reform Charles Taylor sees as instigating the secular age; and as Stein remarks, "To assume a stance that challenges the perceived naturalness or neutrality of the sequential movement of time is already to make a queer argument—and that argument will be queer regardless of whether the person making it self-ascribes as queer or purports to speak about or for queer people" (867). In a similar vein, although his utopian theorization of queer temporality may seem in many ways to have a dissonant relationship with the queer negativity that is so obvious in Wigglesworth's diary, José Esteban Muñoz has contended that "Queerness's time is a stepping out of the linearity" of normative "self-naturalizing temporality" (*Cruising Utopia* 25). There is no question that the desires of "another nature" that connect with sacramental time in Wigglesworth's diary comprise a constant challenge in the text to the sequential and progressive movement of linear time, the latter of which is a chrononormative, self-naturalized concatenation of family, religious, and progressive time (Wigglesworth 80). The diary's sacramental

"Theorizing Queer Temporality" on how heteronormative "postsexological culture" demands that personal temporal projections achieve appropriate "chronological progression" (186). Although not heteronormative in a postsexological sense, this same imperative of chronological progression (chrononormativity) characterizes the controlling temporality of New England Puritanism, focussed as it is on religious progress, with the family as a primary social unit through which to produce this progress.

temporality repeatedly queers progressive and increasingly heteronormative temporal aspirations to personal progress in religious life.

The nexus between queer erotic desires and queer sacramental temporality need not be explicit in every Puritan text in order for the identification of the latter to be valid; queer sacramental temporality often operates in the development of New England Puritanism apart from any clear expression of queer erotic desire. As Lee Edelman has put it, queerness understood in terms of temporality might best be understood not as “the positive assertion of a marginalized identity, but as the universal condition of a subject caught up in structural repetition” (“Theorizing Queer Temporalities” 195). In the search for queer sacramental temporality in the New England Puritan archive, a distinction between queer erotic desire and queer temporality is worthwhile. The two categories obviously work together in Wigglesworth’s diary, and to a certain extent in Shephard’s *Autobiography*—at least in the passage discussed in which Shepard recounts his drunken revelry and possible sexual dalliance with a fellow Cambridge student. But queer sacramental temporality operating apart from any obviously queer erotic desire is present in later Puritan texts. For example, Michael Wigglesworth’s own attempt at epic Puritan poetry, *The Day of Doom* (1662), contains an emphasis on apocalypticism, sin, and doom that is arguably a form of queer temporality. This queer temporality indulging a fantasy of the “Day of Doom” and “annihilat[ion]” at the returning judgement of Christ and the end of time is clearly connected in the poem to a rejection by the elect of normative family intimacy and affect, in those famous moments when brothers revel in brothers’ damnation, husbands in their wives’, and mothers and fathers in their children’s (*Day of Doom* 130, 1466, 1571-1592).⁵⁶ Indeed, Wigglesworth’s queer temporal rejection of family time and affection in

⁵⁶To be sure, the queer sacramental temporality this essay has identified in Wigglesworth’s diary and in *The Day of Doom* is at odds with his later public persona as New England’s devotional poet of spiritual progress—the figure

the diary and *Day of Doom* commands a powerful afterlife in inaugural American gothic fiction. For example, Russell Reising has connected this passage from *The Day of Doom* to *Wieland*'s critique of the notion of secular temporal progress, which contains the narration of a father who murders his wife and children in a fit of religious inspiration (*Loose Ends* 67).

Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards provide two other examples of queer temporality in Puritan religious life separated from obvious queer sexuality, and are worth briefly discussing, as they chart ways in which scholars can identify this process as developing in Puritanism after Wigglesworth. At the beginning of his extant diary entries in 1681, Cotton Mather cites a list of personal resolutions, one of which is to "lead a life of heavenly Ejaculations" (4). Here the obvious meaning of ejaculations is the OED's confirmation of the use of the term to signify "the putting up of short earnest prayers in moments of emergency." But even with this definition, the primary one referencing "the discharging of the male sperm" lingers metonymically and metaphorically: seminal discharge and prayer are associated with each other through a common signifier, even as the former can be thought of as a metaphor for the latter. Mather, unlike the Wigglesworth of the diary, manages to sublimate his sexual life into religious temporality in which ejaculations function simply as prayerful interruptions to everyday secular time. But as interruptions to the flow of chrononormative homogenous empty time, these ejaculations are instances of queer temporality divorced from explicitly queer sexual transgression. Mather's ejaculations are instances of queer religious temporality that are performed, at least ostensibly, without the interruption of actual queer sexual desire. In Jonathan Edwards's list of life "Resolutions" written down while he was a teenager, one stands out as illustrating a valuation of

Adrian Chastain Weimer has recently analyzed. Weimer notes that in poems such as *Meat Out of the Eater* (published 1670) "Wigglesworth assisted [Puritans'] performance of the difficult work of representing the condition of their hearts in order to see change over time" ("From Human Suffering to Divine Friendship" 9).

queer temporality that is a part of Edwards's spiritual rigor: "Resolved, to enquire every night, as I am going to bed, wherein I have been negligent, what sin I have committed, and wherein I have denied my self: Also at the end of every week, month, and year" (757). By assuming the repeated performance of both sin and self-denial, and by positing their recognition in a cyclical temporal process of self-examination (nightly, weekly, monthly, annually) Edwards initiates for himself a method of spiritual discipline that builds the temporally recurrent expression and structural repetition of personal sinfulness into it—a recurrence of sinfulness and its recognition that is an instance of queer temporality in late Puritanism.

Perhaps the great "success" of Puritan devotional temporality in making itself available for appropriation into later evangelical genealogies of heteronormativity is its eventual ability, through figures such as Mather and Edwards, to separate queer erotic desires from queer sacramental temporality by obscuring their initial connection in the practice of Preparationism as seen in Shepard and Wigglesworth. In late-Puritan writers such as Mather and Edwards, scholars can observe the persistence of a queer religious temporality in American secular modernity that effaces its own genealogical relationship to queer erotic life as seen in these early Puritan devotional writings.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Others have noted the similarities between queer and evangelical temporalities, including various contributors to *GLQ*'s round table "Theorizing Queer Temporalities." More extensively, Joanna Tice Jen and John McMahon have proposed that, "while the *temporal form* of [queer and evangelical] theories of time as well as *the form of their political-temporal relation* resonate deeply with one another, their *political content* can and often does diverge" ("Timely Politics" 926)

Part II

The previous chapters of *Duration and Depravity* have explored the temporality of New England Preparationism in order to show how a sacramental, cyclical, and sometimes queer relationship to time, centred on the recurrent experience of sin and theological uncertainty regarding the meaning of the Lord's Supper, undercuts Preparationism's own model of progress in linear secular time from compunction and humiliation to conversion and then progressive sanctification. Rather than marking progress in incremental sanctification using secular time as a linear yardstick to measure that progress, Preparationist piety as it develops from Thomas Hooker to Thomas Shepard often finds itself tied to a sacramental temporality that works against this notion of linear temporal progress.

Part II is a three-chapter study of Jonathan Edwards with a concluding fourth chapter on lessons of Edwardsean Gothicism in Charles Brockden Brown's *Wieland*. Part II of *Duration and Depravity* shows how Edwards, who deliberately updates the depraved temporality of a specifically Shepardian preparationism for a Lockean eighteenth-century, succeeds in articulating a program of personal religious piety that persists precisely because of the way in which it uses a cognitive and affective assumption of time as a secular, linear and chronological resource for the ideal believer to use in an industrious projection of the religious self. But Edwards does not propose this industry of temporal self-projection as the Weberian articulation of the self as capitalistically controlled and anti-aesthetic. Instead, Edwards proposes the use of time as a precious resource for quasi-religious projections of aesthetically deprived selfhood.⁵⁸ In his "Resolutions," "Diary," early sermons, and his own "Personal Narrative" conversion

⁵⁸ In his *Treatise on Religious Affections*, Edwards "quoted more from Shepard than from any other writer, depending chiefly upon *The Parable of the Ten Virgins*" (Ramsey, Editor's Introduction to *Religious Affections* 54)

testimony, Jonathan Edwards proposes a model of the methodically converted self, carefully marking personal progress in the management of secular time through the incrementally increasing ability to feel and express a mood of personal depravity. Part II argues that the temporality and aesthetics in Edwards's update of Preparationism emphasizing the gradually increasing intensity of feelings and expressions of personal depravity comprise an aesthetic-affective challenge to his own self-positioning as an orthodox innovator of Puritan religion. Edwards rightly stands in most genealogies of American religion as a transitional figure between Puritanism and the 1730s and 1740s explosion of Evangelicalism. However, the emphasis of these following chapters places the Edwardsean methodical life-project emphasizing depraved temporality in a liminal position between religion and the secular that both challenges and makes itself available for the burgeoning assumptions of both categories as they emerge in an American eighteenth century in which there is a distinct development in the colonies of an ostensibly "secular" American enlightenment and an ostensibly religious transatlantic evangelical public sphere (Jennifer Snead). In many ways, the Edwardsean emphasis on the industrious evangelical use of time persists into early American evangelical culture. But Edwards's intense focus on temporal self-projection as a way of gradually increasing one's ability to experience and express one's feelings of depravity also persists as an ideal of the early American Gothic, as this section demonstrates in the final chapter on Charles Brockden Brown's *Wieland*.

Chapter 5

Jonathan Edwards and the Evangelical Aesthetics of Sinful Selfhood

“[T]ime will operate the necessary change, and the experience of evil will teach the people its true interests.”
 -Alexis De Tocqueville (*Democracy in America* 1.250)

In the 2010 special issue of *Early American Literature*, “Methodologies for the Study of Religion in Early American Literature,” Michael W. Kaufmann notes the persisting importance of Max Weber’s thesis regarding the link between Protestant religion and modern secular capitalism: “As delineated by Max Weber and others, the secularization narrative undergirds the rise of modern liberalism, capitalism, individualism, and much more” (“Post-Secular Puritans” 33). However, Kaufmann’s position on the Weber thesis, representative of many Early American scholars today, is one marked by qualified scepticism in which “Weber’s thesis still functions,” but “weakly” (43). Whatever the skepticism on the part of current scholars working in the field of Early American literature, the continuing function of the Weber thesis is largely due to its compelling sociological account of the seeds of an emergent secular capitalism as already present in Protestant religion, even as a dominant secular capitalism retains its residue of the Protestant ethic (51-52).

By interpreting devotional temporality in Jonathan Edwards in light of recent post-secular insights regarding time-consciousness in secular modernity, this chapter proposes a revision to Charles Taylor’s and Max Weber’s characterization of Puritanism’s relationship to American secularity as entirely ethical and anti-aesthetic in its inventive promotion of godly industry intended to fill every moment of secular time. Like Weber’s Benjamin Franklin, Jonathan Edwards invents the evangelical Puritan out of an imperative to fill every secular moment of pure duration with methodical behaviour; but that methodical behaviour for Edwards is the

cultivation of religious sensitivity to, and incremental discovery of, a dark internal aesthetic of personal sinfulness rather than Franklin's methodical, progressive, ethical, and non-religious self. This means that the Puritan time that Weber identifies in Franklin, and Charles Taylor elaborates as the secular time-consciousness of modern "Reform," is not exclusively ethical in its rational method, but is also particularly aesthetic in a way that it works, in many ways, against the pure ethicality and morality of the Franklinian secular capitalism with the same Calvinist origins.

Edwards's aesthetic secular consciousness of time as the experience of pure linear duration emerges in his "Resolutions" and Diary and becomes even clearer in his early homiletic rhetoric. In these texts, Edwards invents the evangelical self as filling the experience of secular duration with constant incremental improvements in the aesthetic ability to both feel and express a sense of personal—even creative—sinfulness or depravity. Edwards's injunction to a temporality of incremental progression in a sublime feeling of sin not only revises Weber's (and to a degree Taylor's) argument about secularizing reform as anti-aesthetic, but also challenges conventional assessments of Edwardsean aesthetics as oriented around beauty. The temporally secular and aesthetic nature of Edwards's articulation of depravity as the affective foundation of a personal life-project ultimately forms a decidedly secular kind of agency. Incrementally apprehended in a temporally secular framework of daily discipline, the religious concept of depravity becomes understood not as an explanatory cause of action, but as an aesthetic kind of action itself. The feeling of depravity in Edwards's writings becomes an aesthetic origin of personal agency as it progressively fills secular time for the Edwardsean convert; sin becomes a painful subjective-agentive temporal state of creative expression in Edwards, rather than the condition of "bad feelings" that Patricia Caldwell's earlier Puritans in New England attribute in their conversion narratives to the explanatory cause of original sin in the vain search for an

“objective correlative”—or particular vice to be eradicated (Caldwell, *The Puritan Conversion Narrative* 159-161).⁵⁹ The internal state of the bad feeling of sinfulness in Edwards becomes, in its gradual apprehension in secular time, its own sublime internal source of agency.

Max Weber, Charles Taylor, and Secular Time-Consciousness

Weber’s thesis about the link of Protestantism to secular capitalism is, at its core, an argument about temporality, an argument that Charles Taylor takes up largely unchanged in his articulation of the temporality of secularity in *A Secular Age*. Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* opens famously not with a reading of Protestantism, and not even with the Puritanism that Weber takes as the emblem par excellence of Protestantism; instead, Weber begins his thesis about the Protestant ethic with a reading of Benjamin Franklin—especially his famous maxim: “Remember, that time is money” (14). From this maxim, Weber notes that the life of the capitalist is based on the strict valuation and ordering of mundane, everyday time, and the “organized life” of the capitalist “often carries a certain ascetic aspect” based on this value of time (31). Protestantism in its Puritan form ultimately enables this secular asceticism by its transfer of pietism imagined as an escape from the concerns of everyday life to pietism practiced as “the routine morality of daily life” (40). This Puritan pietism gives a religiosity to everyday secular life that saturates the ethical imperative to personal moral regulation in every moment of mundane time, as Calvinist Puritanism demands a moral behaviour “comprised” totally of “systematic self-control necessary, in every moment” (69). This Puritan “motivation to

⁵⁹ Talal Asad notes that the movement of cultural understanding of pain from a “cause” of action to a “kind” of action is formative of secular agency (Asad 69). In the same way, I would propose that Edwards’s transition of the religious concept of depravity from a cause of action to a kind of action is a secularizing religious activity. It is also worth noting that Edwards’s transition of the problem of sin in the narration of Puritan devotional life is an almost Nietzschean innovation, in which “the feeling of ‘sin,’ of sinfulness” is no longer attributed to a theological concept of original sin, but is recognized and affirmed as an original aesthetic “state of consciousness” (*Twilight of the Idols*, 30-31).

methodically supervise” every area of personal life means that the Puritan imperative to control oneself religiously in secular engagement with life is a form of “asceticism” (101). Weber describes the secularity of Puritan piety quite confidently: “now Christian asceticism slammed the gates of the cloister, entered into the hustle and bustle of life, and undertook a new task: to saturate mundane, everyday life with its methodicalness” (101). Secular, mundane time, is saturated with an ethical-religious imperative for the Puritan—and then the capitalist—of complete industrious self-regulation.

Recent accounts of the secularization thesis in Western culture maintain a major debt to Weber insofar as they assume, adapt, and reconfigure Weber’s original implicit argument about the link between time-consciousness in Protestantism and capitalism. Charles Taylor’s thesis about the temporality of the secular age is, in many ways, a recasting of the Weber thesis to emphasize the importance of its default cognitive assumption of secular temporality, or time-consciousness. For Taylor, Puritanism is the movement that originally collapses the relational dichotomy of secular and sacred into “one relentless order of right thought and action, which must occupy all social and personal space” (*A Secular Age* 542, 266).⁶⁰ Reforming Christianity—or Puritan Christianity, eventually leads for Taylor’s secular individual to a cognition of time that emphasizes secularity not only in personal life, but also in world-historical time-consciousness: “Modern secularization can be seen from one angle as the rejection of higher times, and the positing of time as purely profane. Events only exist in one dimension, in which they stand at greater and lesser temporal distance, and in relations of causality with other events of the same kind” (195). A person experiences linear this-worldly time in the secular age as a controlling, or “order[ing]” motive and resource: life is lived “exclusively within the

⁶⁰ Taylor directly cites Weber when he attributes the rise of secular time to Puritanism in *A Secular Age* (542n5).

horizontal flow of secular time,” and “Time has become a precious resource, not to be ‘wasted’” (59). Charles Taylor thus recasts the Weberian thesis about secularizing Protestantism not simply to explain the personal ethical imperative of secular capitalism, but also to demonstrate how Protestant Reform—or Puritanism—eventually yields a “homogenized” universal time of a single dimension that collapses any distinction between sacred and secular time into one order of secularity (271). Taylor explicitly follows Weber, quoting him to describe this anti-aesthetic, or “proto-totalitarian,” modern secular temporality as a “*stahlhartes Gehäuse*”—an iron cage (719-20, 772, 59).

The Weber thesis and its contemporary re-manifestations continue to “function”—to take Kaufmann’s term—both because of and in spite of Weber’s original reading of Protestantism as Puritanism, and Puritanism as Benjamin Franklin, a reading that depends upon a long intuitive leap in analysis. In what must be one of the most un-interrogated parts of *The Protestant Ethic*, Weber both acknowledges and dismisses the fragility in his method of reading Puritanism by its Franklinian yield of deistic, capitalistic, inventive valuation of secular time when he states that the maxim “Time is money” is nowhere present in Puritanism itself (105). At this crucial point in *The Protestant Ethic*, Weber implicitly admits that his thesis stands or falls on the validity of reading Puritanism as Benjamin Franklin. In *The Sociology of Religion*, Weber later associates Puritanism with religions of reform in which “an alert, rationally controlled patterning of life” according to absolute ethical imperatives means “the avoidance of all surrender to the beauty of the world, to art, or to one’s own moods and emotions” (183). Weber importantly argues here that moods and emotions are part of personal aesthetic life, and they are eliminated from the Protestant-secular-capitalist paradigm of which Benjamin Franklin is both the supreme creator and supreme product. The assumed Puritan “rejection of all distinctively esthetic devices” for its

configuration is a concluding point of Weber's *Sociology of Religion*, and a major part of his broader thesis about Protestant-secular-capitalism depending on the completely ethical regulation of capitalist personhood (245). Benjamin Franklin is famous for his capitalistic valuation of time and money, and for his practical inventions, or "devices," to save more time and money. And the importance of those devices as they are both the source and emanation of Franklin's Puritan secular ethical self-configuration and time-consciousness, his "Scheme of Employment for the Twenty-four Hours of a natural Day," is their anti-aesthetic character (*Autobiography* 530). Franklin the secular Puritan invents himself, his personas, and his society practically according to an exclusively ethical and anti-aesthetic valuation of himself and his prostheses as time and money. It is not difficult to see why Charles Taylor's account, which rehearses the Weberian analysis, generally finds both "Reform" and the secularity arising from Reform to be "proto-totalitarian" because of a relentless rejection of aesthetic life and compulsion to fill every moment of homogenous, empty time with industrious and self-scrutinizing productivity.

Franklin and Ethical Secular Time, Edwards and Aesthetic Secular Time

Insofar as one accepts Benjamin Franklin as the secular Puritan par excellence through which to read both "religious" 17th-Century Puritanism and "secularizing" 18th-Century American culture, Weber's thesis retains not only its "function," but also its persuasive power. And no matter how one takes it, the Weber thesis—a thesis about temporality—continues to hold up academically as, at the very least, a starting point from which to consider the relationship of religion and religious structures of self-configuration to modern secular ways of knowing and being. But perhaps contemporary scholarship in early American literature, much of which is so intent recently on questioning secularization narratives in the field, could make an intervention to—or

expansion of—the Weber thesis by reading for the diachronic implications of Puritanism through Jonathan Edwards, the contemporary of Benjamin Franklin who, despite his important intellectual and practical departures from 17th-century Puritanism, nevertheless remained explicitly under the sign of Puritan religious doctrine and practice, both conserving and transforming the original aspirations of New England Puritanism.⁶¹ This chapter does not intend to make an evaluative statement on (or another cultural production of) Edwards as he relates comparatively to Franklin in secularization narratives, but merely contends that both Franklin and Edwards demand their due consideration in American secularization narratives as inheritors, adaptors, and themselves *post facto* cultural producers of the 17th-century legacy of Puritanism. Edwards's inclusion in this genealogy has immense implications in a neo-Weberian argument for a Puritan aesthetic temporal imperative in modern America alongside Franklin's Puritan ethical imperative. Rethinking the trajectory of Puritanism to secularity through what Sarah Rivett calls Jonathan Edwards's "evangelical Enlightenment" allows for an account of American Puritanism as it relates to temporalities of modern American secularity and its cultural sub-category of modern American evangelicalism that advances an argument for not just a temporality of Puritan ethics, but also a Puritan aesthetics of personal configuration—what Roland Delattre calls "Edwards' aesthetic-affectational model of the self"—that can manifest in modern American culture under signs of both religious and non-religious practice (Rivett, *The Science of the Soul*

⁶¹ Many scholars have previously compared Franklin and Edwards when considering the genealogy of American culture to and from the 18th-century. Philip F. Gura's 2005 biography of Edwards ends by implicitly calling for a decision between Edwards and Franklin as to which of the two is the legitimate moral figure for modern America (*Jonathan Edwards: America's Evangelical* 238). And earlier in his assessment of his cultural legacy, he notes that Edwards's resurrection of popularity in the 1840s, part of what Joseph A. Conforti calls Edwards's *post facto* "continuing cultural production," was the prevailing of an alternative "example" to "a nation tired of (and perhaps disenchanted with) Benjamin Franklin's ubiquitous version of self-fashioning" (Conforti 194, Gura 225). In 1988, David Levin argued that both Edwards and Franklin "shared values and qualities of character that mark them as fellow American Puritans" ("Edwards, Franklin, and Cotton Mather" 47). In 1920, Carl Van Doren published a selections from Edwards and Franklin together in one volume, and in the introduction noted both "resemblance" and differences (*Benjamin Franklin and Jonathan Edwards* xiii).

in Colonial New England 281; Weber, *The Sociology of Religion* 1; Delattre, *Beauty and Sensibility in the Thought of Jonathan Edwards* 6).⁶²

This chapter's understanding of aesthetics in Edwards (as opposed to morals or ethics in Franklin) has two parts to it, informed by Kant. But when I refer to aesthetic apprehension in this chapter I am also quite close to Elizabeth Maddock Dillon's recent articulation of *aesthesis* in early American communities as "an activity (of judgement, of shared sensation and meaning making)" ("Atlantic Aesthesis" 367). Important for Maddock Dillon as for me, this process of aesthesis—or aesthetic perception and sensation—both depends on and produces the work of "community formation," in the case of Edwards the formation of a Puritan-evangelical community of believers (367). First, I emphasize an aesthetic configuration of time-consciousness according to Kant's articulation of time conceived simply as infinite linear duration originally in *The Critique of Pure Reason's* explanation of the transcendental aesthetic (75-77). (Although we might find Kantian transcendentalism to be at odds with Edwards's empiricism, both share an aesthetic assumption of time as secular duration with Franklin.) Kant makes explicit that this aesthetic intuition of secular time as "sequence by a line progressing to infinity" is outside—or at least before—the synthetic cognitive work of "moral" thinking (77, 83). Second, I emphasize the aesthetic "mood" (Weber's term) of sin as saturating this secular time by following Kant's exposition of the sublime in *The Critique of Judgement*, where the sublime object both attracts and repels the mind in an engagement of "negative pleasure" (76). In the case of Edwards's aesthetic configuration of the evangelical self, the progressive temporal disciplining of attention to focus on the sublime interior, or "internal...affect," of personal

sinfulness “evoke[s]” what Kant calls an aesthetic “attunement of the spirit” (102, 81).⁶³ This negatively pleasurable mood, internal affect, attunement, or “disposition of mind” is for Kant as for Edwards in service of a theological end: “the sublime is a theological propaedeutic, raising man to sublimity in which he can better contemplate God and the divine will” (86, 94).

Alongside the Franklinian-Puritan ethical capitalist self, one can consider another mode of modern secular American temporality: the Edwardsean-Puritan aesthetic self, privileging a sublime affect of depraved temporality.

Besides Kant, Heidegger is helpful as well, because he demonstrates how the temporality of Edwards’s projection of the self is indissolubly linked to its affect, or “mood” of guilt. This Edwardsean aesthetic-affective temporality of depravity is an illustration of the Heideggerian “projection” of the self—always “temporal”—upon the “mood” of ‘conscience’ as a “call” of “Guilt,” or “Being-guilty” (emphasis original 243, 315, 325, 326, 334).⁶⁴ For Heidegger, self-projection’s obedience to the call of “Conscience” is a form of aesthetic-affective authenticity as the “potentiality for being-guilty” which produces temporal “resoluteness,” which is a “reticent self-projection upon” the state of “Being-guilty” (335, 343). This is for Heidegger as for Edwards a “futural” temporal “projection”—the realizing of the self through the gradual temporal apprehension of guilt, and this is what I call Edwards’s aesthetic-affective model of

⁶³ Of course, my attention to the emotional and aesthetic life of Puritanism is not new; Charles Cohen pointed out long ago the weaknesses in “Weber’s unwillingness to consider Puritans as emotional beings” (*God’s Caress* 118).

⁶⁴ In their introduction to the conference proceedings of a 1990 conference at Yale held on Franklin and Edwards, Barbara B. Oberg and Harry S. Stout commented on the similarities of Franklin and Edwards in thinking about “ethics” (5). This essay contends, in opposition to that characterization, that although Franklin and Edwards share important cognitive assumptions about the secular world they live in, the difference between them is one of ethics and aesthetics, respectively.

David Levin has argued that Edwards eschews the deliberate configuration of a personality by creating an effect of personal detachment, “describing phenomena in his soul or psyche without calling great attention to his personality” (“Edwards, Franklin, and Cotton Mather” 35). One can nevertheless hold that there is a clear construction of personality in Edwards’s writing, and an empirical sense of detachment is a part of that personality, not a restriction of its expression. Indeed, detachment is probably a major part of the apparatus of “invention” Edwards speaks of in his resolutions.

depraved temporality. Importantly, Edwards's reflection of a Heideggerian insight about the link between temporality and guilty affect, "mood," or sinful feeling is such a fundamental intensification and valorization of the experience of depravity that it takes the Edwardsean subject of conversion far out of the realm of Calvinistic valuation of the knowledge of depravity as necessary in order for one to properly understand the gravity of God's grace. Rather, for Edwards as for Heidegger, the realization of one's depravity through methodical temporal self-projection is a valuation of depravity as itself the source of individual authenticity—not a theological concept of grace that should dialectically resolve sinful feeling in a narrative of forgiveness.

The Edwardsean aesthetic self, like the Franklinian ethical self, both assumes and creates a consciousness of time as a secular, linear, chronological resource not to be wasted; but insofar as Edwards's "alert, rationally controlled patterning of life" advances the obligation of an increasingly more attuned and eloquent "mood" associated with the experience and self-documentation of "sin" rather than Franklin's ethical imperative to do good, Edwards installs within his own valuation of supremely secular time (the same as Weber's, Taylor's, and Franklin's) the aesthetic-affective imperative to progress temporally in the experience of sinful feeling that both compels and refuses the configuration of personality as progressive and achieving increasingly greater levels of self-control, self-emancipation, and self-knowledge over the linear trajectory of life as secular duration.⁶⁵ This aesthetic imperative of the sublime experience of sin in the Edwardsean life does not negate his invention of the "pleasant, bright,

⁶⁵ By exploring in Jonathan Edwards the possibilities for an aesthetic and religious configuration of the self in secular time, I am very close in my concerns to Jennifer Snead's exploration of the confluence of religious and enlightenment interests in the public sphere of the transatlantic Great Awakening that created an "evangelical public" existing in what she identifies as Charles Taylor's secular time ("Print, Predestination, and the Public Sphere: Transatlantic Evangelical Periodicals," 93, 103, 106). I also take as axiomatic Sarah Rivett's assertion that Edwards's writings mark what is both a fault-line and a "connection" in modern America between postures of evangelical belief and skeptical unbelief ("What We Can Learn from Jonathan Edwards" 432).

and sweet” part of evangelical experience and testimony that is almost exclusively the focus of aesthetic considerations in Edwards scholarship—what Abram Van Engen has identified as his aesthetics of “Christian liberty” (Edwards, “Personal Narrative” 793, Van Engen “Eliza’s Disposition: Freedom, Pleasure, and Sentimental Fiction” 305); nor does it neutralize the evangelical devotee’s “thirsting after progress” and desire for “an increase of grace and holiness” (“Personal Narrative” 796). But in his articulation of enlightenment evangelicalism, the aesthetic-affective experience and contemplation, or “mourning and lamenting” of sin as lost “time” is at least as fundamental and, arguably, more dominant and personally determining as a temporal inclination, than the fleeting “sweet and gentle” part of pastoral conversion experience (“Personal Narrative” 794).⁶⁶ In fact, it is not so much the mourning of sin as lost time that determines Edwards’s own narrative of his methodical projection of piety, as it is the carefully and temporally measured achievement of an aesthetic-affective performance of sinful feeling. The Edwardsean goal of methodical piety in the projection of the self through secular time is to better achieve an aesthetic-affective feeling and expression of one’s personal sinfulness.

The Aesthetics of Edwards’s “Resolutions”: Time as Duration and the Experience of Sin

In his 1764 biography on Jonathan Edwards, Samuel Hopkins begins to explain the life of Edwards according to a document that is arguably understudied today: Edwards’s “Resolutions,” written in 1722 and 1723. Hopkins introduces them this way: “Between the time of his going to New York and his settlement at Northampton, Mr. Edwards formed a number of Resolutions,

⁶⁶ Van Engen’s illuminating study of an Edwardsean aesthetics of Christian liberty based on a rightly inclined will in Hannah Foster’s *The Coquette* notes Eliza’s inability to choose the right (Boyer) because her dispositions are not inclined, or pleased that way; so, notwithstanding Eliza’s token deathbed conversion, it would seem that the larger aesthetic at work in the novel is not so much the Edwardsean aesthetic of Christian liberty, but the novelistic contemplation of a continual inability to choose right—sin.

which are still preserved” (*The Life of President Edwards* 12). Hopkins believes that these resolutions are the blueprint of the life Edwards lived after their writing: “these private writings may be justly considered the basis of his conduct, or the plan according to which his whole life was governed”—almost exactly like Franklin’s “Precepts” for “arriving at moral Perfection” (Hopkins 12, Franklin 526). The young Edwards’s first resolution moves straight to a valuation of time that indicates a secular time-consciousness of personal methodical reform: “I will do whatsoever I think to be most to God’s glory, and my own good, profit and pleasure, in the whole of my duration, without any consideration of the time, whether now, or never so many myriads of ages hence” (Edwards, “Resolutions” 754). In this resolution, Edwards clearly states his ambition to live a righteous, methodical life, in which each second is as important as any other, and he himself is nothing but the experience of chronological “duration,” described elsewhere by his favourite philosopher Locke as “the fleeting and perpetually perishing parts of succession” (*Essay Concerning Human Understanding* 122). The paradox of secular temporality is especially clear here in Edwards’s first resolution, where time conceived as simple infinite duration is of inestimable value, even as the individual moments of empty time are, in and of themselves, of no special value (not worth “any consideration”) in relation to any other moment.

Resolution five is the clearest one regarding Edwards’s ambition to live a perfectly Christian life in secular time: “Resolved, never to lose one moment of time; but improve it the most profitable way I possibly can” (754). If resolution five were included on an early American literature examination as a passage for the undergraduate (or graduate for that matter) to identify, chances are high the student would label it as part of Franklin’s own moral precept number six in his *Autobiography*: “Lose no Time. Be always employ’d in something useful. Cut off all unnecessary Actions” (526). With respect to their almost identical assumptions of time in

Franklin's precepts and Edwards's resolutions, the proposition that "space and time for the two men seem to be charted on two totally different grids" is perfectly mistaken (Gaustad, "The Nature of True—and Useful—Virtue: From Edwards to Franklin" 49). In resolution forty-one, Edwards marks his own life according to secular time, with the goal of constant improvement to make himself "better": "Resolved, to ask my self at the end of every day, week, month and year, wherein I could possibly in any Respect have done better" ("Resolutions" 757). Edwards's program of the secular life well lived in a program of betterment involves the serious importance of progress in sanctification religiously conceived, as Edwards makes clear in resolution thirty: "Resolved, to strive to my utmost every week to be brought higher in religion, and to a higher exercise of grace, than I was the week before" (756). Indeed, Edwards views the program of self-improvement in secular time as religious sanctification by a personal warfare against his own human weakness: "Resolved, never to give over, nor in the least to slacken my fight with my corruptions, however unsuccessful I may be" (758). In Edwards's personal writings, we thus see an update of Puritan methods of piety from Shepard: Edwards rejects the circularity and sacramental temporality of the experience of depravity in favour of a progressive model of time, the self, and the self's ability to measure incremental improvements of religious industry and sanctification in this secular time.

As one might expect from the religiously oriented Edwards, his own program of resolutions contains an approach to secular, mundane, chronological time based extensively on an *ars moriendi* that is a consideration of death as a determining principle of judgement when deciding on a course of action. In resolution six, Edwards figures himself in a kind of split manner that allows him to imagine himself always as in the hour of his death, forensically appraising his own life choices as he makes them: "Resolved, never to do any thing, which I

should be afraid to do, if it were the last hour of my life” (754). Edwards reinforces this split positioning of himself as the dead or dying Edwards determining the living Edwards’s choices: “I will live so as I shall wish I had done when I come to die” (755). He repeats this attitude further on in resolution fifty-two: “I frequently hear persons in old age say how they would live, if they were to live their lives over again: resolved, that I will live just so as I can think I shall wish I had done, supposing I live to old age” (758). Moving beyond George Mardsen’s blunt but true observation that “Edwards spent his whole life preparing to die,” the overwhelmingly obvious principle of time-consciousness that emerges in Jonathan Edwards’s “Resolutions,” is one that comes very close to Franklin’s own, as Edwards assumes the equal and precious (or, what amounts to the same thing, inconsiderable) value of each secular moment as a part of personal “duration” useful for the achievement of a religious life-project (Mardsen 491).

It is important to note that Edwards achieves a secular valuation of the preciousness of this-worldly time through his anticipatory relationship to his own death. In *This Life*, Martin Hägglund has noted that the paradoxical condition of secular freedom is a recognition that “My death is the horizon that renders intelligible all temporal relations of my life” (200). This being towards one’s death enables the secular person to value time in this life as precious: “I understand my time to be finite and appreciate the precious quality of my experience as something that cannot be taken for granted” (201). Edwards’s resolutions that make him view the use of his time through the fact of his death are thus ostensibly religious devotional exercises which in fact create for him a secular relationship to time. Edwards understands through the fact of his death the supreme value of his time in this world vis á vis eternity, and this is the source of what Hägglund identifies as secular spiritual freedom.

Unlike Franklin, who values each moment before death as a resource in which to achieve a personality that Mitchell Breitwieser identifies as “the life-project” which is ultimately a “construction of self as abstract blankness,” Edwards seems to have a more explicit intention of achieving the life-project as a life lived with increasing holiness in every moment (*Cotton Mather and Benjamin Franklin* 226, 258). Edwards’s “Resolutions” illustrate how the secular time-consciousness in Franklin works in a similar fashion, but with Edwards for a life lived religiously in the most Weberian way: “never to lose one moment of time” (754). Thus far, Edwards and Franklin appear to live their lives in almost identical ways according to identical principles of secular time-consciousness. The only difference would be that where Franklin measures moral improvement and ethical performance in his life according to non-religious moral-ethical principles of “Good,” “duty,” and personal and social “benefit,” Edwards uses different and overtly religious words for the same goal of moral and ethical good: “grace,” “peace,” and the defeat of “corruptions” (Franklin, *Autobiography* 526-27; Edwards, “Resolutions” 756-57). Edwards and Franklin are thus merely using different words to describe the same moral life lived in secular time as pure duration.

Whatever the similarities might be between the temporally secular Puritanism of the non-religious Franklin and the temporally secular Puritanism of the religious Edwards, the ostensible aspiration to a life lived ethically in secular time becomes in the latter figure a life lived aesthetically according to what appears as a temporally progressive principle of personality, or mood, that is foreign to Franklinian Puritanism: “sin.”⁶⁷ In resolution thirty-seven, Edwards articulates a principle for living in which, as in many of the resolutions, he measures himself

⁶⁷ There are important resonances of the notion of a Weberian aesthetic “mood” of sin with Heidegger’s notion of original mood as “Being-guilty,” a mood that Heidegger uses to replace the Kantian conception of “Conscience” as originally a moral-ethical apparatus (*Being and Time* 341).

according to increments of secular time: “Resolved, to enquire every night, as I am going to bed, wherein I have been negligent, what sin I have committed, and wherein I have denied my self: Also at the end of every week, month, and year” (757.) In this resolution, Edwards continues to write a program for self-configuration, self-regulation, and the life of everyday method described by Weber. But in this resolution, the imperative by which he organizes himself is not the ethical Franklinian-Puritan obligation to do good, but rather a regular enquiry after his own sinfulness. The difference in this one respect between the non-religious Puritan asceticism that Benjamin Franklin develops and practices and the devout religious Puritanism of Edwards is stark.

The aesthetic or mood of sin that both emerges within and configures secular time for Edwards while indicating a difference between Franklinian Puritanism and Edwardsian religious experience is much more than the use of different words to describe the same kind of ethical life lived and regulated in a methodical manner in secular time.⁶⁸ In his day-planner, Franklin asks himself this final question before going to bed each night: “What Good have I done this day?” (*Autobiography* 531). The question is of enormous importance for Franklin’s ethical life because it assumes that he will have done “Good” each day measured according to his moral precepts of “Resolution,” “Sincerity,” “Justice,” and “Chastity” (526-527). In asking himself this question each night Franklin begs the question of whether or not he has even done any “Good” in the first place. But far more than both demanding and assuming the inherent goodness of Franklin’s

⁶⁸ One can throw around the term “religious experience” without defining the use far too easily when speaking of Edwards. Louis J. Mitchell, following John E. Smith, has noted that Edwards never spoke directly and explicitly in terms of “religious experience” (*Jonathan Edwards and the Experience of Beauty* 17). The easy use of the idea of religion in Edwards as really based in experience comes, initially, from William James’s citation of Edwards in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. It is from Edwards that James takes his definition of religion as primarily emanating from experience rather than institution, doctrine, or morality (25). However, one must keep in mind that the range of valid religious experiences for Edwards is much, much narrower than for James. The idea of religious experience in Edwards is not the same one of pragmatic openness seen in James. In Weberian terms, religion as consisting in “rules of experience” is much more limited in Edwards than in James, and this point needs to be emphasized so that scholars do not assume Edwards as somehow an early but restrained articulation of liberal American pragmatic spirituality.

ethical life, the question “What Good have I done this day?” demands not only the daily assumption of a virtuous and ethical life, but also a daily inquiry into the very nature of virtue—of the ethical life well lived and completely lived. Franklin performs a virtue, or ethical “Good” that he also constructs in the life-long process of daily self-examination, self-regulation, and the “systematic self-control necessary, in every moment” of the Puritan secular capitalist (Weber, *Sociology of Religion* 69). Franklin lives an ethical life by constantly both doing and re-configuring his concept of what “Good” is. To ask himself what “Good” he has done in the hours, minutes, and seconds of each day is also to each day reconsider and revise his idea of what “Good” is.⁶⁹ In the same way that Franklin both assumes and demands his own inherent ethical goodness each day, while also constructing his notion of what “Good” is, Edwards’s resolution to “enquire every night...what sin I have committed” both assumes and demands his own inherent sinfulness, while also implying a daily, weekly, and monthly enquiry into and adjustment of a rule about what the experience of sin actually is.

In the same way that Franklin both assumes and demands his own inherent ethical goodness each day, while simultaneously constructing his notion of what “Good” is, Edwards’s resolution to “enquire every night...what sin I have committed” both assumes and demands his own inherent sinfulness, while also implying a daily, weekly, and monthly enquiry into and adjustment of an aesthetic-experiential rule about what the experience of sin actually is.

When Edwards asks himself each night before bed what sin he has committed, he begs the question of whether or not he has committed sin in the same way that Franklin begs the question

⁶⁹ To say that Franklin bases his rational and moral configuration of secular personality on the ethical principle of doing good is not to reduce his view of human nature simply to one of “optimism”—any more than to say that Edwards’s principle of sin is simple “pessimism.” Daniel Walker Howe has remarked on how Franklin expressed in his correspondence to Joseph Priestley a very negative view of humanity in general as “more disposed to do mischief to each other than to make reparation”; but Franklin believed that the general depravity of humanity could be overcome by a “science of human nature” focused on “morality”—ultimately his daily resolution to do good (“Franklin, Edwards, and The Problem of Human Nature” 77).

of whether or not he has even done any “Good” in a day. And Edwards’s question also implies that he must consider the nature of “Sin” as a personal experience, just as Franklin considers the same thing with respect to “Good.” As Franklin organizes his secular time around the inquiry into and performance of ethical good, Edwards organizes secular time religiously around a daily, weekly, and monthly performance of and reflection on “Sin.” It is in this one contrast between Franklin and Edwards as separate 18th-century figures through which to consider Puritanism that their fundamental difference consists, showing a difference that is not just one in which they use different words—Franklin moral and optimistic, and Edwards religious and pessimistic—to describe the same methodically organized ethical life. Franklin’s life is configured on the secular-temporal performance of ethical “Good,” while Edwards’s life is configured on the secular-temporal experience, or in Mitchell Breitwieser’s turn of phrase “a gradual and incremental encounter with,” the aesthetically apprehended and expressed religious concept of “Sin” (Breitwieser, *National Melancholy: Mourning and Opportunity in Classic American Literature* 38)⁷⁰

Besides depending on and being closely associated with what Kant calls the “transcendental aesthetic” apprehension of time as infinite duration, what is it that makes Edwards’s personal imperative of the experience of and reflection on sin aesthetic rather than ethical? Sin could, after all, just be Edwards ostensibly religious term for a moral-ethical enlightenment concept of “wrong.” Such an analysis would simply make Edwards and Franklin two sides to the same secular, ethical, capitalist coin. But there is no doubt that Edwards

⁷⁰ Breitwieser does not specifically speak of melancholy as an encounter with sin, but rather with loss and death more generally, and he does not mention Edwards. But Edwards’s aesthetic project of sin fits well into Breitwieser’s schematic of American literature as the exploration of loss and opportunity

determines and promotes his concept of sin through an aesthetic program.⁷¹ What Perry Miller got right in his biography of Edwards, as subsequent readings of Edwards reaffirm, is that his articulation of Puritanism's rules of experience depended through and through on Lockean empiricism. Edwards was an "empiricist...passionately interested in experience, his own, his wife's, his people's—or the universe's—because in experience was to be detected the subtle working of the pattern" (Miller, *Jonathan Edwards* 46; Gura, *Jonathan Edwards: America's Evangelical* 39; Rivett, *The Science of the Soul* 282). The important part of Edwards's enlightened Lockean empirical approach to articulating the rules of Puritan experience is the way in which it informed this articulation in aesthetic forms as an aesthetic experience. The rules of experience for Locke, and subsequently Edwards, were understood as originating in aesthetic "sensation" (Miller 55). Edwards is not retrofitting Puritanism to make it compatible first and foremost with an enlightenment language and experience of morality and ethics, but of sensation and aesthetics.⁷²

In *Original Sin* Jonathan Edwards articulates the sin-object as an "inward temper and exercise of the mind" (139). Importantly, this inward and original state is not mere venality or vice. It is an original and creative inclination. This state turns out in Edwards to be properly apprehended not in the first instance by the philosophical contemplation of his Stockbridge treatises, but by temporally oriented structures of aesthetic sensation in devotional and autobiographical writings that curate raw experience, giving the negative pleasure that a sublime object (in this case an "internal" sublime) elicits (*Critique of Judgement* 76, 81, 86, 102). For Edwards's aesthetic temporality of depravity, as for Kant's sublime, the aesthetic contemplation

⁷¹ Perhaps the concept of sin, as opposed to the ethical concept of "right" or "wrong," always contains an element of the aesthetic and affective that the latter terms do not.

⁷² Alan Heimert calls Edwards's homiletic style a "rhetoric of sensation" (*Religion and the American Mind* 223)

of inward sinfulness does not work against, but in step with, human knowledge of God—or religious enlightenment—as Edwards states after defining an original sin that, with respect to the knowledge of God indicates, or is at least associable with, a “capacity of the human understanding [that] is very great, and may be extended far.” (Kant 86, 94; Edwards, *Original Sin* 141). Edwards’s resolutions show that their author’s concept of sin is an aesthetic one not only in the phenomenological sense of its relationship to the perception of time as duration, but in its filling of that time with the progressive exploration and expression of sin as an internal and personal sublime. Mark J. Miller has suggested that Edwards locates the sublime in God’s “fundamentally unrepresentable” and “terrible power,” but my reading suggests that Edwards actually locates the sublime as a creative source of self-knowledge in the internal feeling of personal sinfulness (*Cast Down* 46). The power of the theological sublime is thus, in a very modern, secular, and even gothic manner, located in the individual, rather than in an uncontrollable and unspeakable “Calvinist” concept of God (Miller 46).

Edwards’s Diary, The Improvement of Time and an Aesthetics of Sin

One location in which Edwards clearly links the aesthetic apprehension of time as the experience of pure duration to the aesthetic feeling and expression of personal sin is in his diary, and his writing here on the subject is important, because he kept the diary at the same time that he was writing and revising his resolutions. Edwards’s diary bases its goals of self-configuration on the same conception of time as duration, divided only by death, and Edwards notes in the diary as in his resolutions the desire to appraise every life goal in light of the forensic ability to imagine himself at the moment of death, about to go into duration as eternity but still looking back on the duration his life has covered as he judges his choices: “Let every Thing have the Value now, that

it will have on a sick Bed: and frequently in my Pursuits of whatever Kind, let this come into my Mind; ‘How much shall I value this on my Death Bed?’” (February 3, 1724). The impulse to fill every moment of time with the best possible action defines Edwards’s diary as it does his resolutions.

But this desire to fill time rightly in the configuration of godly selfhood for Edwards clearly links to the desire expressed in the resolutions to increase in the aesthetic capacity to feel and express sinfulness. On January 6, 1723, Edwards writes: “Much concerned about the improvement of precious Time.” In the very next sentence, he resolves how best to improve time: “Intend to live in continual Mortification, without ceasing, as long as in this World.” A Calvinist would understand “Mortification” as the increasingly sanctified believer’s relentless battle against sin in continuing repentance from it, which entails the forsaking of lusts, as Calvin does describe mortification in the *Institutes* as the “arduous achievement to renounce ourselves, and lay aside our natural disposition” (Calvin, *Institutes* 3.3.8). Unlike Calvin, however, Edwards’s “Diary” contains some subtle turns of phrase regarding this practice of mortification as impossible self-repentance that indicates it more as a temporally progressive aesthetic-affectual apprehension of feelings and expressions of sin, rather than increasing holiness in the defeat of sin, as on January 8, 1723, when he refers to repentance as repentance “of” sin, rather than repentance “from” sin. Two days later on January 10, when he speaks of writing a resolution about avoiding sin, he does so in a way that exposes this double bind of sanctification and an aesthetics of sin implicit in a daily repentance: “I think it would be advantageous every Morning to consider my Business and Temptations; and what Sins I shall be exposed to that Day: and to make a Resolution how to improve the Day, and to avoid those Sins. And so at the

beginning of every Week, Month and Year.” Progress in sanctification implies a finer ability to sense the amplified presence and temptation of sin.

The idea of avoiding sin with a daily resolution implies that sin cannot ever be defeated completely—a proposition which, in and of itself is quite mundane for a Calvinist, since full sanctification and mortification as completed self-renunciation in earthly life is an impossibility. But the interesting part of the diary in this regard is the way it implies that rather than getting better at fighting sin and renouncing the self in the progress of secular duration, repentance and mortification for Edwards is an aesthetic exercise—an invention of the self rather than a renunciation of the self. In other words, for Edwards, the classic Puritan “urge for self-denial...coextensive with personal assertion” involves the effort better to apprehend and take a negative pleasure in the personal sin that remains, and even grows itself (Bercovitch, *Puritan Origins of the American Self* 18).

A remarkable characteristic of the diary is the way it implies that rather than getting better at fighting sin and renouncing the self in the progress of secular duration, repentance, or mortification, for Edwards is a positive aesthetic exercise—an invention of the agentive self rather than a renunciation of the self (an instance of what Bercovitch sees as the classic Puritan “urge for self-denial...coextensive with personal assertion”)—that involves the effort better to apprehend and take a negative pleasure in the personal sin that remains, and even intensifies itself (*Puritan Origins of the American Self* 18). For example, on May 22, 1723, Edwards resolves in the diary “To take special Care of these following Things; Evil Speaking, Fretting, Eating, Drinking and Sleeping, speaking simple Verity, joining in Prayer, slightness in secret Prayer, Listlessness and Negligence, and Thoughts that cherish Sin.” The list clearly includes a number of behaviours that Edwards considers sinful: gossip, worry, gluttony, drinking too much,

sloth, lying, neglect of private prayer, and spiritual despondency. As with his earlier resolve in the diary to repentance “of” rather than “from” sin, there is an identical subtle slip of language here in which Edwards ambiguously resolves to “take special care of” the sins listed. The ambition here could turn out to be as much a nurture of these sins (or at least nurture of feelings of these sins) as an all-out war against them. This strange attention to sin that seems to be more nurture of than opposition to is clearest in the final vice in the list: “Thoughts that cherish Sin.” It seems, at this moment, that Edwards is especially nurturing the negative pleasure he takes in the inner mental life of sinfulness rather than in repentance understood simply as turning away from sin. Edwards is inventing this negatively pleasurable affect as an aesthetic imperative for the progressive temporal configuration of his personality according to his second resolution, “to find out some new invention or contrivance” to promote the fullest saturation of the “duration” of the first resolution. In Edwards’s diary, then, one observes the invention of an aesthetic temporality as the source of an ambiguously oriented creative piety intending to both eradicate and intensify, through habit, an original state of personal sinfulness.

To be clear: Edwards is not deliberately articulating a program in his resolutions and diary to grow in sinful behaviour. Edwards does indeed desire to actually achieve incremental sanctification according to conventional Calvinist standards of mortification by “fruits produced” that indicate progressive “renovation” of the sinful this-worldly self (*Institutes* 3.3.8). And, indeed, Edwards does note in his diary the occasional partial achievement of such goals, as on July 1, 1723, when he notes “Experience of the happy Effects of strict Temperance, with respect both to Body and Mind.” But the dominant affective state of the diary is one of the aesthetic apprehension and expression of sin in relation to the ritual marking of secular time as duration, as on January 5, 1723, when he notes in an act of temporal self-examination: “It used to appear

to me, that I had not much sin remaining; but now, I perceive that there are great remainders of sin." This consideration registers in the diary as Edwards's progress in his ability to apprehend and take negative pleasure in his sinfulness. Edwards grows as an active agent managing secular time in his ability to express and intensify his religious sense of personal depravity

Edwards revels in his sinfulness in the same way that Talal Asad's secular agent can embrace pain in an "agentive" manner as an "active, practical relationship inhabiting time" (*Formations of the Secular* 79, 83). Neither Edwards nor Asad's secular subject ostensibly wishes to have the problem of sinfulness or pain; but, as Asad's observation so succinctly illustrates, one can embrace these things in acts of positive temporal self-projection. Indeed, as Sarah Rivett and Abram Van Engen have recently recognized, "suffering" in Puritan New England was conceived not as "bodily torture" but as located in "the suffering mind and faith" ("Postexceptionalist Puritanism" 677). Edwards's negative pleasure of both grief for and nurturance of a suffering sense of internal sinfulness developed in his diary accords well with an early miscellany, which deserves quotation at length not only because of what it says about the internal aesthetics of personal sinfulness, but also about Edwards's early interest in how the aesthetic-affectual self can manipulate itself in the embodied yet abstracted performance of sensational pieties later associated with the awakenings: "It is not argument against the pleasantness of religion, that it has no tendency to raise to laughter, but rather to remove it. For that pleasure which raises laughter is never great...it is flashy, external, and not lasting." Edwards goes on to say that "almost all our religious thoughts are unavoidably attended with repentance and a sense of our own misery... 'tis this abstraction of the soul, in its height, leaves the body dead; and then the soul in a trance" (Miscellany X, 175-176). Considering the diary in light of this comment in the miscellanies shows how repentance for Edwards is an affective,

aesthetic, and ascetic exercise that involves not the turning away from sin, but the continued nurturance of an experience and expression of sinfulness as an “abstraction of the soul.”

The Early Sermons and Time As Secular Duration

Elizabeth Maddock Dillon has referred to “Atlantic Aesthesis” as “an activity (of judgement, of shared sensation and meaning making, [and] of community formation)” which produces a “shared terrain of aesthetic value” that “creates community” (“Atlantic Aesthesis” 367). While Maddock Dillon is referring to cross-cultural material exchanges of the book in the French and Indian War, the concept of aesthesis as creating a community through a shared ground of cultural assumptions applies just as well to the New England culture built around the aesthetic performance of the sermon and the assumptions it engenders. The most important thing to emphasize here about Edwards’s sermons is their assumption of an aesthetic perception of time as pure linear duration. Edwards later takes this temporal assumption up, in his “Personal Narrative,” as closely related to an incrementally progressive internal aesthetic-affective experience of personal sinfulness. The initial form through which Edwards casts his aesthetic perception of time as infinite linear duration is what Miller identified as “a type of sermon designed for communal response” (*Jonathan Edwards* 135). It is in the sermon—initially at least—that Edwards articulates and incites an aesthetic “sensory experience among his listeners” as the appropriate expression of Puritanism (Rivett, *Science of the Soul* 282). The aesthetic configuration (or sensory experience) of time as infinite chronological duration is quite clear in the early sermons, where Edwards emphasizes the basic apprehension of time as simple duration, an act of cognition assuming a listener or reader who, like Edwards in the “Resolutions,” can separate herself from herself in order to observe herself forensically as a subject of raw infinite

duration. In this secular cognition of time, there is no divide between secular time and eternity as “gathered time,” an imagined divide whose loss Charles Taylor describes as the fundamental shift to a secular age (*A Secular Age* 56). Rather, the fundamental divide is one that both marks and reinforces two sides of what always remains infinite secular duration: death.⁷³

Edwards’s early sermons’ use aesthetic techniques to inculcate painful sensations of time as infinite linear duration—or homogenous, empty time; in his sermons, secular assumptions about pain and time are intimately connected, illustrating Asad’s point that “pain” in secular modernity is not just a “passive state,” but can also be “itself agentive” as a form of meaning-making through suffering as “an active, practical relationship inhabiting time” (79, 83). In the 1720 sermon titled “Christian Happiness,” Edwards produces a homiletic experience of time as the infinite linear duration of homogenous empty time, but uses this assumption of homogenous secular time to present a religious argument about two opposing models of suffering pain between which the converting subject must choose:

Is there any man here present that would be at all afraid of the pain of the prick of a pin for a minute, if he knew that after it he should enjoy a life of—suppose—seventy years of the greatest prosperity imaginable, without the least molestation? No more reason to fear a short life of seventy years filled up with trouble and affliction, when he knows that, at the end of it, he shall enjoy an eternity of the highest happiness. For there is infinitely more difference between an eternity and seventy years, than between seventy years and a minute; and vastly a greater difference between heavenly happiness and the greatest

⁷³ Elisa New describes the temporality of Edwards’s sermons as “those metaphorical days when God’s time bisects ours in a text” (*The Regenerate Lyric* 15). And Sarah Rivett sees in Edwards’s redemptive thinking a temporality of an “immanently realizable...Christian eschatological frame” (*The Science of the Soul* 294). It seems that these assessments are correct regarding the world-historical redemptive writing of Edwards; but in his sermons that focus on the individual’s private experience of time in relation to personal soteriological concerns, the only time in the text is infinite—or eternal—secular duration, and the only division of this time is between life and death.

torments of this world, than between the greatest worldly prosperity and the pain of the prick of a pin. (301-302)

The homiletic thrust of Edwards's preaching here is not based on theological propositions; rather, it obtains its rhetorical strength entirely through producing an aesthetic apprehension—or sensation—of duration closely bound up with the experience, or sensation, of pain. The listener conceives of Edwards's concept of duration through a process of sensation that begins with the feeling of pain (“the prick of a pin”) in relationship to an increment of time (“a minute”), and leads through a subsequent extrapolation of the senses to a feeling of eternity as infinite linear duration. Here Edwards's listeners must, like Edwards himself in the “Resolutions” imagine themselves as living to “old age,” and indeed through old age to the infinite duration beyond death, which is all that eternity is for Edwards as a Lockean “simple mode” of duration.⁷⁴

Edwards produces time-consciousness as duration through a homiletic aesthetic technique that creates a relationship of the self to time through the sensation of pain. This new aesthetic perception of time should inculcate in the auditor, in old-time New-England Puritan fashion, the proper “affective response” in the listener: a conversion process, which, as we will see, is itself an aesthetic and methodical fashioning of the self through the management and experience of secular duration as it relates to the religious suffering of pain in that duration. (Van Engen, “Puritanism and the Power of Sympathy” 543)⁷⁵: Edwards's converting religious subject chooses

⁷⁴ The influence Locke's thought on time has on Edwards is obvious as early as the Resolutions' figuring of the self as “duration,” but is nowhere more obvious than in the sermons: “Duration is...the fleeting and perpetually perishing parts of succession: this we call ‘duration,’ the simple modes whereof are many different lengths of it whereof we have distinct ideas, as hours, days, years, &c., time, and eternity” (Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* 122). Elsewhere in the *Essay* Locke describes “the idea of eternity” as simply “the future eternal duration of our souls” (131).

⁷⁵ Van Engen's work on the affective dimension and emphasis in the earliest New England Puritan preaching about “sympathy” is important here especially in the way that it indicates Edwards's Puritan and Lockean considerations of correct religious affections as based in the earliest Puritan concerns about pious affect in the preacher's homiletic delivery and listener's response (Van Engen 533). Thus Edwards's emphasis on aesthetic and affective qualities in his preaching is not so much an invention, as an innovation of the New England Puritan homiletic tradition.

to inhabit secular time by appropriately suffering religiously in order to avoid later inhabiting the same secular time as eternal infinite duration in a continual state of unwanted and unchosen pain.

In another early sermon, “The Value of Salvation” preached in 1722, Edwards continues to advance a homiletic approach that depends on the aesthetic imagination and experience of time as infinite duration; but in “The Value of Salvation” Edwards flips the script to imagine, with aesthetic craftsmanship unsurpassed even in “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” infinite duration through an unending poetic experience of hell rather than an unending experience of heaven and Christian happiness.⁷⁶ First, Edwards states out of hand that “eternity is infinitely more longer [sic] than the life of man, than a thousand years is a minute” (317).⁷⁷ After thus inviting his listeners to imagine the unconceivable nature of infinite personal duration, he layers the experience of hell onto that duration: “After the soul and body have roasted millions of ages in hellfire, it [sic] will not be at all nearer to the end of its misery” (321).⁷⁸ The dilemma for the unconverted sinner in Edwards’s pew is a choice between two kinds of infinite secular duration: one of infinite happiness, and the other of infinite misery. Edwards clearly sets the template of oscillation between the aesthetic exploration of these two options as early as his

⁷⁶ Many of us would have a hard time discerning the difference between Edwards’s eternal heaven and his eternal hell, his heaven being described in *Thoughts Concerning the Revival* through Sarah Pierpont’s disguised revival fantasy as a collective hymn-sing for the faithful lasting for “eternity” (339).

⁷⁷ Hazel Motes, Flannery O’Connor’s nihilist “Protestant” evangelist, perfectly understands and eloquently preaches on the importance of secular time-consciousness as infinite personal duration for the modern American project of evangelical conversion: “You can’t go neither forwards nor backwards into your daddy’s time nor your children’s if you have them. In yourself right now is all the place you’ve got. If there was any Fall, look there, and if you expect any judgement, look there, because they all three will have to be in your time and your body” (*Wise Blood* 106, 166).

⁷⁸ In the “Miscellanies” Edwards acknowledges at one point that the aesthetic apprehension of eternal suffering in hell that he seeks to inculcate homiletically is actually faulty logically, since the sinful soul is incapable of apprehending the idea of eternity and infinity, even when in them. Edwards actually implies in this note that sin is precisely what saves the sinner from the experience of infinite suffering, since it is sin that keeps the sinner from apprehending infinity: “Indeed, if the soul was capable of having at once a full and complete idea of the eternity of misery, then it would properly be infinite suffering. But the soul is no more capable of having a full idea of that, than of the infinite greatness and excellency of God; and we should have as full and as strong an idea of God’s infinite perfection as the damned have of the eternity of their torment, if it were not for sin” (Miscellany 44).

preaching begins, and well before either “Divine and Supernatural Light” or “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.”⁷⁹

The aesthetic experience of time as infinite secular duration in Edwards’s preaching depends on a temporally secular Puritan renovation of the late-Medieval tradition of the *ars moriendi*; In Edwards’s model, death is simply the divide marking two sides of simple linear duration—and the simplicity of this model is what gives it its potency. In an early 1720s sermon entitled “The Importance of a Future State,” Edwards states the case of a simple divide on the line of duration: “after death the eternal state of men shall be everlastingly decided” (355). The impending and unavoidable moment of death gives the unconverted sinner’s dilemma its urgency:

Death hastens on towards us and we hasten towards that, and it cannot be long before we shall meet: every breath we draw and every step we take, brings us nearer to eternity; we are carried toward eternity irresistibly, and cannot stop one moment if we never so much desire it. We cannot cause the glass of time to stop, do whatever we can, but it will continue to run. (372)

The sinner’s foot slides in due time not randomly or accidentally, but methodically and rhythmically, toward eternity on the other side of death. Edwards puts the problem in a similar manner to that of Levinas in *God, Death, and Time*: “Death: a mortality as demanded by the

⁷⁹ The earliest aesthetic imaginations of eternal hell in Edwards are pre-cursors to his maximum achievement in “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”: “When you look forward, you shall see a long forever, a boundless duration before you, which will swallow up your thoughts, and amaze your soul; and you will absolutely despair of ever having any deliverance, any end, any mitigation, any rest at all. You will know certainly that you must wear out long ages, millions of millions of ages, in wrestling and conflicting with this almighty merciless vengeance; and then when you have so done, when so many ages have actually been spent by you in this manner, you will know that all is but a point to what remains. So that your punishment will indeed be infinite” (434). Edwards manages to achieve both a distancing of Hell in duration further down the line even as he achieves an aesthetics of what J.A. Leo Lemay calls “immediacy” based, in my reasoning, on an aesthetic assumption of time as infinite duration internal to the subject (“Rhetorical Strategies in *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*” 189).

duration of time” (15).⁸⁰ It is on this anxious reflection based on an aesthetic perception of time as duration that Edwards’s program of evangelical conversion depends; it is an aesthetic—that is sensationally based—perception of time, and it intentionally inculcates an emotional response of personal panic.

Paul Hurh has recently pointed out that the thinking of time as eternity in Edwards’s sermons is the preacher’s attempt to get his parishioners to think about the actual impossibility of comprehending time as eternity, “not to make eternity more comprehensible but rather to emphasize its incomprehensibility” (*American Terror* 52). Hurh perhaps goes too far, though, when he argues that Edwards wants his listeners to experience terror as they come to understand the thorny incomprehensibility of time, eternity, and timelessness: “The very problem of comprehending eternity, Edwards, suggests, is that we think of it as a very long time, when the truth is that it is no time at all” (53). Based on the passages presented above, it seems more accurate to say that, in the sermons, Edwards wants his listeners to think and feel eternity as much as they possibly can as an infinite duration that, while it may not be cognitively comprehensible, is definitely aesthetically sensible.

The Early Sermons and the Mood of Sin

Edwards saturates the axiomatic temporality—or time-consciousness—of infinite secular duration with a mood defined by the experience of personal sin. Thus in a fragment from his early 1720s sermon entitled “An Application on Seeking God,” Edwards invites, if not compels,

⁸⁰ The point here is certainly not to present Edward’s writing on the interconnection of time, duration, death, divinity, and eternity as somehow proto-Levinasian. But the comparisons are fascinating nonetheless. Death marks duration in Levinas in remarkably similar fashion to the role it plays in Edwards: “Death is not annihilation but the question that is necessary for this relationship with infinity, or time, to be produced” (*God, Death, and Time* 19). The biggest difference is Levinas’s articulation of the individual’s response to the knowledge of death: “The point that death seems to mark in our time (i.e., our relationship to the infinite) is a pure question mark: the opening onto that which provides no possibility of a response” (21).

his listeners to consider the principle of sin in themselves: “there are many that hoot and shout as loud as anybody, that have hell begun within them for all that” (384). Although Edwards delivered this sermon well before the earliest stirrings of the awakenings he later proclaimed in New York, New Jersey, and the Connecticut River Valley, the idea that there are people who “hoot and shout” as ways of evidencing their faith implies that the intense emotional response to the evangelical sermon was already a recognizable cultural form of what was both a personal and communal religious conversion or revival experience for the listener in the pews with others, hearing a call to individual conversion. And Edwards, already in the 1720s while considering and expressing his thoughts in this sermon on the distinguishing marks of the true work of spirit, notes that the embodied theatrics of the emotional response to evangelical preaching of hooting and shouting means nothing in and of itself, and in fact could be purely misleading if the evangelizing scientist of the soul takes it *prima facie* as a positive indicator of salvation. Edwards does not demand of his congregants that they shake or writhe, or hoot and shout to express their experience of the work of the spirit in a proto-charismatic fashion. The distinguishing mark of salvation that emerges in response to the evangelical sermon is rather the listener’s intense and private affective-aesthetic imagination of “hell” as an internal determining principle of personality in response to the consideration of hell-eternity as infinite secular duration.

To be sure, Edwards probably intends his preaching of an aesthetic apprehension of personal sinfulness, as he associates it with the principle of time as nothing but infinite duration, to effect a conversion experience. But regardless of intention an important part of this statement about “hell begun within” is that it is clearly a criterion of assurance for the converted believer as well. Put another way, for a religious experience of conversion to be valid, it must come with the reflective experience of interior hell, or sinfulness, and the hooting and shouting of an

uncontrolled and externalized emotionalism is a distractor in this regard. Indeed, even the congregant in the pew who has already had a prior conversion experience must adhere to the recognition of this internal principle of sinfulness as the most important stage in conversion, and maybe even an experience of assurance that continues after conversion. Franklinian assurance would be the identification of “good” done in a lifetime, but the Edwardsean principle of assurance, even if it involves the sweetness of a divine and supernatural light, must always come with the experience of and reflection on an internal mood of personal sinfulness as an organizing rule of life. Although the sermon does not offer any concrete examples of this experience of hell within, Sarah Pierpont’s anonymous testimony in *Some Thoughts Concerning the Recent Revival* demonstrates this need expressed in the sermons for the aesthetic-affective mood of sin to accompany a revival conversion, as the “brightest light and highest flights” of her awakening experience always come with an equal portion of sinful sensibility, “at such times especially, seeing how loathsome and polluted the soul is, soul and body and every act and word appearing like rottenness and corruption” (342).⁸¹

Edwards’s closely connected aesthetic principles of the experience of time as infinite duration and the experience of personality according to the gradual apprehension of sinful feeling becomes especially clear in his early 1720s sermon fittingly titled “The Duty of Self-Examination”; the connection of these aesthetic principles are important in order to enable the idea of the possibility of personal progress for the convert through the methodical management of time and sinfulness. In this sermon, Edwards tells his listeners that the greater part of self-examination is the personal scrutinizing of sinful mistakes. When consulting the voice of

⁸¹ Sandra Gustafson has shown how Edwards’s making Sarah’s testimony anonymous and removing of the gender is a reaction against his earlier recruitment of feminine speech in “Thoughts Concerning the Revival” and an attempt to “stabilize feminine voice by textualizing it” (“Jonathan Edwards and the Reconstruction of ‘Feminine’ Speech” 188)

conscience, the pious individual should find a voice of accusation: “Don’t conscience tell us, there you ought not to have, seeing you have done foolishly; herein you did basely and unworthily?” (485). Here one sees clearly that the examination of self is an examination of sin, not of good. Indeed, Edwards goes on to reiterate the imperative of self-examination as the consideration of sin by stating that the more critical one is of oneself, the more successful the work of self-examination is: “We ought frequently to consider whether our ways have been in all respects as they ought to be, whether they could not have been better, and to be nice and critical in searching for faults in our behaviour” (485). The work of self-criticism is never complete, and the finding of internal sinfulness never ceases for Edwards’s sincere convert. In “The Duty of Self-Examination,” Edwards appears to be making a strong plea to his congregants never to dismiss the internal critical voice as overly censorious, since the phrase “nice and critical” here contains only positive connotation. Further on, Edwards tells his listeners that the work of conscience is best when it is harshest: “conscience is our best friend in the world when its rebukes are severest” (485). In the final analysis, the believer should properly use the harshest self-criticism of conscience to achieve a daily personal realization of total sinfulness, and this is not the failure, but the achievement of self-examination: “Without us we have enemies everywhere lying in ambush for us, and within our own breasts we have enemies armed with poison arrows and deadly weapons. They are all conspiring our hurt...the enemies within are assistants to our enemies without” (489). In this interpretation of sin as a principle of personal religious experience, Edwards emphasizes the fact that an internal fact of sinfulness is the thing that makes external “enemies”—or social factors that tempt to sin—successful in their assaults on the believer’s holiness. But more importantly for Edwards, it is the experience and examination of personal sin in regular increments of secular time that enables both the

experience of time as the progressive succession of increments of duration, and the idea that the converted individual can be “better.”

As harsh as Edwards principles for religious experience based on daily, relentless, and criticizing self-examination seem, none of his prescriptions for pious living are harsher than his own personal “Resolutions” for his own religious life. Edwards himself marks secular time each evening with a consideration of his sin, and he demands the same of his congregants, as self-examination with the goal of recognizing personal sinfulness should “be constant, lying down and rising up, on visit or home and as we walk by the way, when we labor and when we rest, and in all circumstances. By this means our minds will by degrees grow better and better, and we shall get a habit of consideration, and prudent acting and living” (“The Duty of Self-Examination” 492). Interestingly, it appears here that Edwards does believe in the possibility of self-improvement as a result of self-examination, as his listeners “minds will by degrees grow better and better.” Edwards’s implication here of the possibility of temporal self-improvement, or sanctification, points to a foundational paradox built into his principles of right religious experience. The right practice of evangelical religion as Edwards develops it in his earliest sermons should lead to the recognition of more and more sin even as it leads to self-improvement “by degrees.” Whether one reads this as a crippling double bind or a productive paradox, it is on this contradiction that Edwards builds the evangelical rules of religious experience. The more she experiences herself in the marking of time as defined by sinful acts and desires, the more the pious evangelical devotee becomes holy, sanctified, and prudent. The intensity of faith grows in proportional relation to temporal progress in sinful feeling. No matter how holy it may be, the sound believer’s life always configures itself according to an increasingly intense mood, experience, and expression of personal sinfulness.

By the early 1720s—near the time he writes the “Resolutions”, and during the period in which he wrote the sermons discussed here—Edwards had already developed his evangelical indwelling principle regarding the Holy Spirit. He declares in another early sermon, “Dedication to God,” that the spirit “dwells [in the believer] as his life...vital heart and enlivening spirit seated therein” (567). This doctrine, or rule of experience, seems then to be in contrast with, and contradiction to, the spirit of self-criticism and the aesthetic mood of sin that is also so clearly present in Edwards as a personal imperative for the methodical organization of a converted lifetime. Because Edwards never wrote a systematic theology, scholars can read this seeming opposition as an oversight in his thinking, but it seems more likely that Edwards never saw a contradiction here because there was no contradiction. The indwelling spirit in the believer, or the supernatural light, is at once the spirit of sweet religious experience and the spirit of criticism aiming at a rigorous and temporally progressive aesthetic-affective apprehension of personal sinfulness.

Conclusion

In his “Resolutions,” diary, and early sermons, Jonathan Edwards’s articulation of time as a purely secular homogenous line of infinite duration is clear. And for Edwards, this assumption of time undergirds his model of religious self-discipline. However, Edwards is not articulating a model of disciplined selfhood that fits easily with Weber’s and Taylor’s assumptions about “Reform” religion as producing modern secular discipline, since Edwards demands that the ideally converting believer fill this homogenous empty time with the progressive experience of personal sinfulness—not worldly industry. In this regard, Edwards contrasts with Weber’s Ben Franklin, and with Charles Taylor’s notions that the temporality of religious reform is “proto-

totalitarian” in its disciplinary demands. While it is true that Edwards places extensive demands upon would-be converting subjects based on a secular assumption of time, this temporality of reform that is at once both secular and religious is not the elimination of aesthetic dimensions of selfhood as Weber and Taylor indicate; rather, Edwards’s inculcation of time as infinite linear duration—or homogenous, empty time—actually depends on the use of this time in aesthetic-affective disciplines of the self that involve the continually progressive ability to painfully experience and express feelings of personal sinfulness. Moving forward, *Duration and Depravity* shows that this double imperative of the experience of time as a homogenous empty medium through which one must demonstrate ongoing progress in the ability to feel and express one’s sense of sinfulness is a simultaneously secular and religious proto-gothic cultural form through which to narrate an ideal aesthetic selfhood.

Chapter 6

The Aesthetic Temporality of Sinful Feeling in Jonathan Edwards's "Personal Narrative"

Jonathan Edwards's "Resolutions," "Diary," and early sermons demonstrate Edwards's emphasis on the use of secular time to achieve an increasing sense of personal sinfulness as the primary sign of the converting evangelical self. Conversion as seen in those texts is in fact the evangelical subject's continual intentional progress in an ability to articulate one's personal sinful feeling. Every moment of secular time is used methodically for Edwards in religious progress; but temporal progress and religious industry here are not articulations of religious selfhood that, as Weber and Taylor would have it, lend themselves easily to secularization narratives that presume that the demands of "Reform" religion produce a secular subjectivity of capitalist or "proto-totalitarian" self-control. Instead, the converting subject methodically uses secular time to articulate a narrative of progress towards the increasing ability to feel and express personal sinfulness. Temporal progress and personal industry here are thus, paradoxically, anti-progressive and anti-industrial: the converting subject closely manages time to cultivate an aesthetic-affective dimension of the self that indulges sinful feeling.

Most scholarly accounts of Edwards's own conversion narrative—his "Personal Narrative"—follow the formula of such recent commentary as Michael Schuldiner's, which reads the text as emphasising "spiritual joy" and "sweetness" as the primary sign of conversion (65).⁸² But this chapter continues the analysis of the previous by reading Edwards's "Personal Narrative" as the

⁸² Schuldiner's excellent essay, "Benjamin Colman, Laughter, and Church Membership" provides an important account of Colman's use of enlightened religious laughter and the affect of "mirth" to attract young congregants to his Brattle Street Church in Boston, founded in 1699. I only disagree with Schuldiner when the conclusion of his essay reads Edwards's "Personal Narrative" as an illustration of the emergence of this kind of Puritan "mirth." In fact, I think it would be worthwhile to consider Edwards's emphasis on sinful feeling as, at least in part, a response to the mirthful Puritanism of Colman.

articulation of his own evangelical conversion not as a temporally discrete moment of passage from sin to grace, but rather as the continual, ongoing use of time to progress in an ability to feel and express one's sinful feeling—feelings of being sinful and feelings that are sinful.⁸³ This chapter challenges conventional assessments of aesthetics in Edwards scholarship, which often point to the “Personal Narrative” as their proof text, by contending that Edwards's emphasis on the ability to experience and express affects of sinful feeling is a more fundamental concern in his work than his supposed preeminent focus on the experience of beauty as a mark of conversion. I call on the affect theory of Charles Altieri to contend that Edwards temporally projects the self towards the goal of an intensification and enlargement of the aesthetic-affective capacity to apprehend and express sinful feeling. This temporal projection of the self towards sinful feeling resists recruitment into a larger understanding of Edwards's pastoral goal as one of religious, social, or moral control that would allow us to subsume it into a Weber or Taylor-style narrative of secularization.

After summarizing the consensus scholarship on the aesthetics of beauty in Edwards, led by Roland Delattre and Sang Hyun Lee, I also identify key analysis that has noted the importance of negative affects and desires in Edwards's writings (Mark J. Miller and Paul Hurh). I then further explore the importance of sinful feeling in Edwards's “Personal Narrative” as the production of an affect that, in its gradually increasing intensity in the duration of converted life, marks both the moment of conversion and the ongoing work of continued conversion as temporal progress in an evangelical career. I suggest that Edwards's exemplary use of duration in his own conversion narrative to achieve an increasingly enlarged capacity for the apprehension and expression of

⁸³ The “Personal Narrative” was probably initially “part of a letter to Aaron Burr” from December 1740, which, never published, came to circulate unofficially among evangelical communities in New England (George Claghorn, “Introduction” 4)

sinful feeling is his articulation of an evangelical temporality and subjectivity that is neither religious nor secular. Rather, Edwards's aesthetic-affective model of the use of time in evangelical conversion produces a cultural form maintaining a critical distance from both religious and secular categories of social coherence.

The History of Edwards Scholarship on Aesthetics

Roland Delattre's seminal study on aesthetics in Edwards's writings is a towering achievement as a study of the role that beauty plays in Edwards's articulation of what Delattre calls Edwards's "aesthetic-affectual model of the self," a term that I have adapted for my own use as what I call Edwards's articulation of aesthetic-affective selfhood (*Beauty and Sensibility in the Thought of Jonathan Edwards* 6). Almost all—if not all—scholarship on Edwards and aesthetics (including genealogical considerations of the influence of Edwards's aesthetics in modern literature) has followed Delattre's original analysis in its attention to and formulation of the converted aesthetic-affectual self as consisting of attraction to beauty. The emphasis on beauty in Edwards is certainly present in many of his works, but the use of time to produce an aesthetic of spiritual and emotional pain based on the experience and expression of sinful feeling is more dominant in Edwards's model of conversion. Furthermore, this sublime internal affect—or mood—of sinful feeling in Edwardsean aesthetics is actually an internal aesthetic-affective resistance to dogmatic religion as a source of moral orthodoxy and social control. This is what the affective self does: it operates at arm's length from moral meaning; as Charles Altieri puts it in *The Particulars of Rapture: an Aesthetics of the Affects*, "An aesthetic approach to the emotions can clarify different kinds of intensity, for example, but it cannot easily attach these states to moral terms" (5). The intensity of sinful feeling as the governing goal for the use of

converted duration in Edwards's own testimony, while it can be turned towards either religious or secular moral, ethical, and social projects, is, in its affective rawness as we see it in the "Personal Narrative," something that works outside of—and even against this moral project.

In the introduction to *Is Critique Secular?*, co-written with Talal Asad, Judith Butler, and Saba Mahmood, Wendy Brown proposes that post-secular scholars might do well to "loosen critique's identity with secularism as well as surrender its reliance on a notion of secularism itself insulated from critique" (13). This loosening of "critique" as a privileged form of cultural production from its association with secular modes of cognition and feeling is exactly what this chapter's assessment of Edwards proposes. But it does not do so in order to locate the critical or gothic cultural dynamic of Edwards's emphasis on sinful feeling under the heading of "religion" as a concept to be preferred over the secular either. The affect and temporality of sinful feeling in Edwards poses a challenge to both the austere religious discipline of Connecticut River Valley late Puritanism and the secularized, confident, and socially controlling Puritanism of a Benjamin Franklin (Weber's and Taylor's "*stahlhartes Gehäuse*") (Taylor 49). As Altieri further explains, "affect threatens belief frameworks and the forms of self-assurance on which they rely and which they also sustain" (44). The self-assurance of both elite New England Puritanism and a burgeoning secular American Enlightenment are threatened by Edwards's relentless emphasis on the production and management of sinful feeling as the fundamental object for the use of time in evangelical life, and this emphasis throws into relief the fact that Edwards's own life-project refuses to fit easily under either the sign of the "religious" or the sign of the "secular." To be sure, Edwards was a New England Puritan clergyman, and he would always have seen himself as a religious leader, but his emphasis on the use of time to perfect the affective performance of sinful feeling is something in his work that challenges—or at least operates at arm's length

from—his own dogmatic commitments, and, as Altieri states, “we can express emotions without committing ourselves to beliefs” (122). As the final chapter of *Duration and Depravity* shows, this emphasis on sinful feeling as an optimal mood of active temporal projection is a construction situated between religion and secularity that fundamentally informs the message of American gothic literature from its inception with Charles Brockden Brown. If it is correct to propose a link in Edwards between 1) a late-Puritan evangelical use of time to methodically improve an aesthetic-affective internal life of sinful feeling and 2) a gothic critique of both American religion and American enlightenment, then it would be right to say that what Altieri calls the “emotion-based value” of the experience of depravity that we see so often in the American gothic is at once a religious and secular form of cultural self-critique.

The aesthetic life of affects is inextricably linked to an individual’s temporal self-projection—which in Edwards means that the affect of sinful feeling is irreducibly connected to the subject’s use of time to achieve optimal intensity and expression of this affect. Altieri explains the different affects in terms of the levels of intensity and the control they maintain over life, moving through several states from feeling to passion; and he ultimately illuminates the Heideggerian connection between affect and temporality:

“Feelings are elemental affective states characterized by an imaginative engagement in the immediate processes of sensation. Moods are modes of feeling where the sense of subjectivity becomes diffuse and sensation merges into something close to atmosphere, something that seems to pervade an entire scene or situation. Emotions are affects that involve the construction of attitudes that typically establish a particular cause and so situate the agent within a narrative. As a result, emotions typically generate some type of action or

identification. Finally, the passions are emotions within which we project significant stakes for the identity that they make possible” (48).

The Edwardsean affect of sinful feeling explored in the previous chapter and this one is somewhere in the levels of emotion and passion, since the whole point of the affect is to “situate the agent within” a temporal “narrative” and make the formation of converting identity possible as Edwards does. But elsewhere Altieri explains the affect of mood in Heideggerian terms which leads me to contend that mood is the right term for Edwards’s project here: “Heidegger helps us keep the concept of mood more general, more phenomenologically oriented, and less reducible to serotonin levels. And he explains how troubling mood can be for certain kinds of ethical consciousness” (56). In other words, the emotion, passion, or mood of sinful feeling is in Edwards an affective and phenomenological orientation towards being-in-the-world that resists reduction to the moral and ethical (whether secular or religious). And, of course, for Heidegger a phenomenological inclination—or mood—is a temporal orientation: “Moods temporalize themselves” (*Being and Time* 390). The emotion-passion-mood of personal sinful feeling is in Edwards the aesthetic-affective state that both produces and manages the modern self as projected time-duration.

If I am correct, in this chapter and the previous one, in identifying an aesthetic-affective axis that emphasizes the use of time to achieve sinful feeling in Jonathan Edwards, then most scholars, who have followed Roland Delattre to contend that “Beauty was, for Edwards, the structure of genuine religious experience,” are in need of revision (Mitchell, “Jonathan Edwards on the Experience of Beauty” 105).⁸⁴ The principle of beauty is the core of the evangelically

⁸⁴ Elsewhere Mitchell declares that “For Edwards, genuine religious experience involves such a reception of God’s beauty” (“The Theological Aesthetics of Jonathan Edwards” 42). Susan Howe connects Edwards to Wallace Stevens by their shared aesthetic commitment to “beauty, harmony, and order” (“Choir Answers to Choir: Notes on Jonathan Edwards and Wallace Stevens” 52).

enlightened “aesthetic-affectional” self in Edwards, and underwrites his moral, epistemological, and psychological perspectives on the good: “[Edwards] begins with beauty, finding in it not an hypothesis for the resolution of his doubts but rather the foundation of his certainties.” (Delattre 3). The “knowledge of beauty provides Edwards with the model for all real knowledge” (50). My exploration of the temporality of an internal mood of sin in Edwards’s writing implies itself as a revision to the prevailing scholarship by identifying an aesthetic use of time for personal religious experience in Edwards that tends to resist recruitment into his larger moral-ethical, epistemological, and psychological program of enlightened evangelical personality and certainty.

Primarily for Edwards scholars, beauty as an aesthetic orientation underwrites the moral, ethical, and sanctified life of the holy believer in Edwards.⁸⁵ The enlightened convert develops a new aesthetic sensibility that allows for a “taste of the moral beauty of divine things” as “beauty and sensibility may be said to be the objective and subjective components of the moral or spiritual life.” (Delattre 3). For these scholars, the whole conversion experience is about beauty in relation to morality: “It is an apprehension of God’s moral beauty which sovereignly draws a person to God” (Mitchell, “Jonathan Edwards on the Experience of Beauty” 66). “Spiritual beauty” functions as “Edwards’ model of the intrinsic good” and “is the attractive power of the good” (Delattre 75, 85). The evangelical convert “knows whether a suggested action is holy or not by the presence or absence of beauty in it” (Erdt 34).⁸⁶ Conversion affords the enlightened

⁸⁵ With respect to the direct relationship of aesthetics to morality, Alan Heimert may have influenced Delattre’s theory of Edwards’s aesthetics. Although Heimert’s *Religion and the American Mind* is not specifically concerned with aesthetics, his understanding of Edwardsean soteriology sounds a lot like Delattre’s Edwardsean aesthetics when he states the core of Edwards’s theory of conversion as the convert’s attraction to “the moral beauty of the Godhead” (Heimert 103). Heimert also speaks more generally of Edwards’s articulation of evangelical enlightenment as showing “how and where happiness was to be found in the American setting” (43).

⁸⁶ Such recent analyses of Edwards’s aesthetics follow or derive from Delattre in seeing this aesthetics as one inclined to “God-intoxicated, redemption-manifesting, and virtue-imparting” as it is oriented exclusively to “the supreme good, evocative occasionally of ecstatic experiences” (Piggin and Cook, “The Aesthetics of Edwards and Coleridge” 391)

evangelical believer with a new ability to identify, desire, and promote beauty as the aesthetic basis of religious personality existing for moral good in social engagement: “Beauty provides Edwards with a model of the structure and dynamics of the moral life and of its proper objective foundation, which yet makes the [aesthetic and affective] categories of vision and perception, of imagination and discernment, fundamental to the moral and religious life” (Delattre 113). Most importantly, the articulation of an aesthetic sensibility for beauty in religious life is Edwards’s beginning and end of morality in his broader thinking, as beauty is “the beauty of human morality” (Mitchell 106). The Edwardsean aesthetics of beauty is thus only barely distinguishable from an Edwardsean moral-ethical self. In fact, the aesthetic-affective and moral-ethical selves are just distinguishable enough so that the critic can see aesthetics in Edwards as supporting morality and ethics and not supplanting it: “[Edwards] employs...beauty as a structural analytic concept for the interpretation of the full range of the moral life rather than simply as a term of praise for only the highest form of virtue” (Delattre 191). Scholarship on Edwards subsumes aesthetics into what is presumed to be a larger moral-ethical program of evangelical enlightenment. Edwardsean aesthetics is subordinated to religious ethics: “the centrality of beauty” emerges in an observation of how it supports Edwards’s “theological ethics” (Delattre, “Jonathan Edwards and the Recovery of Aesthetics for Religious Ethics” 278, emphasis added).⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Some remarkable more recent efforts in Edwardsean aesthetics have followed the original assessment from Delattre of beauty linked to morality and ethics and taken it in interesting directions, such as Belden C. Lane’s assertion that Edwards’s high valuation of “beauty and ecology” could “contribute to a Christian environmental ethic” and an aesthetic “moral practice” in Christian environmentalism that depends on the ability to “extol beauty and nurture relationship” (“Jonathan Edwards on Beauty, Desire, and the Sensory World” 44, 70). Some have even considered the implications of Edwardsean aesthetics for bioethics as a “theology of medicine that directly weds ethics to aesthetics,” though the idea that “bodily” healing figures into Edwards’s aesthetics would seem strange indeed to Abigail Hutchinson who Edwards describes as “having pined away with famine and thirst, so that her flesh seemed to be dried upon her bones” before dying “without any struggling” (Kornu, “The Beauty of Healing” 45, 52; Edwards, “A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God” 199)

An aesthetics of beauty in Edwards underwrites, for the prevailing Edwards scholarship, a psychology of temporal sanctification that proposes the enlightened evangelical self as defined by moral integrity. Through incremental progress in time, the self is progressively enlarged, enriched, enhanced, and deepened by an increasing apprehension of beauty that corresponds with increasing holiness in sanctification: “the common and corresponding relation of greatness and excellence to the enlargement or diminution of being, that is, to the extensity or privation of being, consists essentially in [converts’] relation to and their participation in beauty” (Delattre. *Beauty and Sensibility* 38). In this scholarly assessment of the enlightened and converted evangelical self, the believer is to progressively use time to feel, appreciate, and express beauty; this capacity is proposed as defining Edwards’s ideal evangelical personality:

If God undertakes to fulfill his purpose of redeeming the creation through the attractive and creative power of His own beauty, then those who love Him will respond in kind and according to the measure of their capacities, not only to delight in the beauty of God and all things in Him but also to enlarge by their own cordial response the dominion of that beauty, constituting even wider communities in which a like beauty is embodied and from which it might shine forth to other men.” (Delattre 213)

The aesthetic-affective Edwardsean self progresses in time in the pastoral aesthetic capacity for the experience of beauty. This fact is, supposedly, most clearly illustrated for Edwards scholarship in Edwards’s own “Personal Narrative”: “The vocabulary of the language of beauty was clearly present in the account of [Edwards’s] own conversion experience in the ‘Personal Narrative,’ and by Edwards’s offering of his own testimony as a model, “beauty was described as the content and foundation of genuine religious experience” for the evangelical convert (Mitchell, *Edwards and the Experience of Beauty* 106). Joan Richardson has recently described

Edwardsean conversion as “the disposition of individuals to ascend toward God’s eternal ‘excellence’” (*A Natural History of Pragmatism* 45). Richardson also describes, in her commentary on Edwards’s “Personal Narrative,” an aesthetic-affective psychology of conversion—“a fact of feeling” to have realized “oneness with the universe or God” (56). Scholars from Delattre to Richardson have found almost exclusively an aesthetics of beauty in Edwards, even—or especially—when examining texts like the “Personal Narrative” in which I contend there is an obvious aesthetic-affective presence of a mood or feeling of personal sinfulness that, at the narrative’s conclusion, overshadows the aesthetics of beauty.

In the prevailing scholarly accounts, the post-conversion Edwardsean aesthetic-affectual self is exclusively inclined to experience, express, and spread enthusiasm for the beautiful and the good as part of a larger project of social engagement. This is a mode of analysis anxious to ensure the close pragmatic link in Edwards of aesthetic interest to moral outcome so as to avoid the charge of aestheticism. Whatever their claims to the contrary, these analyses take pains to teleologically link aesthetics to morality in order to figure Edwardsean religious life as fundamentally a form of moral life. In this analysis, then, the aesthetics of religious personality can be easily reduced to the Weberian religious life of the Puritan as moral and ethical in self-configuration and behaviour. In these accounts, Edwards produces Charles Taylor’s reformed “proto-totalitarian” secular self, in which “time has become a precious resource, not to be wasted,” but rather used in service of the projection of disciplined ethical citizenship (Taylor 772, 59). But if one pays attention to the aesthetics of sinful feeling in Edwards, one sees a project that gestures towards a different kind of interior life: the pursuit of a temporally progressive and deeper experience, understanding, and expression of a mood of personal sinfulness that actually seems to reject any link to a larger register of moral or social outcomes.

There is thus a personal aestheticism of the temporally progressive experience and expression of sinful feeling that, precisely in its aestheticism, is religiously inflected. But this personal project that emphasises the use of duration to achieve enlarged capacity for sinful feeling is a formation of the aesthetic-affective Edwardsean self that, in contrast to scholarly consensus, does not have the same link to morality or social control and cohesion.

I do not mean to say here that Edwards's valuation of personal sinfulness as the determining mood by which to organize and use time is purely anti-social. As I discuss shortly, we do see in the conclusion of the "Personal Narrative" that Edwards dismisses would be converts because of their inability to feel and express feelings of personal sinfulness to the degree Edwards can. But Edwards's self-isolation and dismissal of these others can be read as his effort to offer an exemplary articulation of a social program in which the individual demonstrates adequate self-control as a part of an evangelical community that does not overcome, but produces and regulates its individuals' capacity for depravity by cultivating and expressing it through aesthetic forms of narrative rather than repressing or ignoring it through either religious or secular moral opposition.

On the cosmic historical scale of "redemption" of the "moral or spiritual world" in Edwards's thought, it may be true that "beauty" is the determining aesthetic-affectual principle (Delattre 201, Gibson 65); but there is also, on the more personal temporal scale of the methodically self-curated experience of personal conversion, an aesthetic-affectual objective of the progressive experience and expression of an interior mood of sin that defines the use of time for evangelical personality and rejects any larger connection to a social, moral, or ethical concept of the good. True, there is a redemptive Edwardsean moral-ethical and social self inclined to the apprehension of an external object of divine beauty that progresses in time in its ability to discern

and appreciate beauty in general. But there is also more importantly a temporally progressive enlarging in the evangelical convert of an aesthetic-affectional capacity to experience and express a sublime sinful feeling.

One of the most recent and influential updates in scholarship on Edwards's aesthetics as it relates specifically to the temporality of personal devotional life is the work of Sang Hyun Lee. Lee has identified that, at the core of Edwards's theology and philosophy is the notion of "habit," which is "at once" the ontological "principle of being" and the epistemological "principle of knowing." Through habit," Lee contends, "knowing is connected with being and becoming" (*The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* 8). Habit in Edwards is for Lee synonymous with other Edwardsean terms such as "disposition, tendency, propensity, principle, temper, and frame of mind," and plays an "epistemic" role in the latter's thought, as evangelical life lived according to proper habit leads to steady progressive increase in spiritual knowledge (15, 29). Importantly, Lee proposes that the interior habit of the heart for Edwards's ideal believer is an aesthetic cultivation of appreciation for personal inward beauty, and the outward beauty of the creation, which is an image of divine beauty: "The natural world, when rightly perceived by the regenerate imagination of the saints, is the corporeal repetition of God's own beauty" (89). Lee's main text for demonstrating how personal cultivation of the aesthetic habit for beauty works in Edwards is the "Personal Narrative": "when Edwards saw in everything, as he says in his 'Personal Narrative,' 'a calm, sweet cast, or appearance of divine glory,' his perception was the arena in which a portion of nature was achieving its true being" (93). Lee, like all the scholars discussed above, makes no mention of Edwards's aesthetic exposition of an interior life of sinful feeling at the end of the "Personal Narrative," and instead goes on to propose Edwards's writings as articulating an extension and intensification in time, through careful habit, in the spiritual

capacity to see aesthetic beauty: “The multiplication of relationships that brings about an increase of being is both a repetition of the original experience [of conversion] as well as an intensification that takes time and is spread out in duration. In this limited but real sense, temporality does matter in the increase of being” (113 emphasis added). Thus for Lee, temporality in Edwards is the progressive ability in duration, through “the mind’s habit as aesthetic sense,” to experience and express internal and external “beauty” as a reflection of God’s beauty (153): “So as the saints know and delight in new beauties (different emanations of the divine beauty), they increase in beauty themselves thereby repeating their true actuality already achieved in their first acts of knowing and loving God” (234-5). Lee understands the importance of aesthetics in Edwards as the linking of the use of “duration” to increased affective capacity, but Lee continues to assume that Edwards privileges this use of time for the achievement of an aesthetic-affective dimension of beauty rather than sinful feeling.

Mark J. Miller’s recent work is one assessment that has noticed the resonances of Edwards’s abjection at the conclusion of his “Personal Narrative” with a masochistic aesthetics of sinful feeling, and specifically Kant’s articulation of the sublime; but perhaps the most extended and fascinating analysis that comes closest to identifying what I see as Edwards’s privileged temporality of depravity comes in Paul Hurh’s study of it in *American Terror* (“Jonathan Edwards, Affective Conversion, and the Problem of Masochism” 580). In line with the analysis here, and in direct contradiction to the history of aesthetic scholarship on Edwards, Hurh bluntly points out that “For Edwards, [terror] is the content of a true experience of God” (8). Hurh also notes that terror in Edwardsean religious experience is not merely a preparatory stage in the conversion process; rather, “with Edwards, terror itself is an aspiration; one aspires to religious terror, for such an experience is vital and truthful in a way that would shrug off the

mediated relations of self to world” (19). Terror is not the sign of a need for conversion, but is the assurance of conversion as a “constant psychological experience” (43). The aesthetics of terror that Hurh finds in Edwards is also not tied to any larger pragmatic morality of religion: “it is not to open positive potentialities of a space for a new ethics but to hollow out once and for all the negative lack at the center of original sin” (36).

The link between affect and temporal projection is important for Hurh, as he focusses on the way Edwards’s homiletics aims at the inculcation of terror through the preaching of eternal hellfire “not to make eternity more comprehensible but rather to emphasize its incomprehensibility” (52). The terror of eternal hellfire for the person listening to Edwards emerges from the attempt to comprehend incomprehensible eternal suffering. This initial terror resolves for Hurh in Edwards’s “Personal Narrative” when the convert can “learn to love the terror itself” as it becomes “more intrinsically conjoined with religious delight” (69, 58). Hurh’s work recognizes the negative aestheticism in Edwards as overshadowing the aesthetics of beauty that so many scholars have over-privileged, and Hurh also nicely connects Edwardsean terror to the individual’s secular time-consciousness of eternity as infinite linear duration.

Despite agreements, the analysis of this chapter on Edwards’s “Personal Narrative” differs from Hurh where it finds in this text the author’s continuation of time-consciousness—developed in the “Resolutions,” diary, and early sermons—as infinite personal duration; Edwards promotes a rational and disciplined self subsisting solely in this secular time. The methodically converted Edwardsean personality is supposed to use duration to enhance the aesthetic-affective ability to experience and express a mood or feeling of personal sinfulness, methodically marking duration according to this mood and thereby making time available for a progressive self-narrative. So where Hurh finds part of the terror in Edwards with respect to time

to be the incomprehensibility of eternal suffering, one might instead suggest that everyday time is made comprehensible and controllable through the marking of time by progress in the aesthetic-affective capacity for sinful feeling (itself a kind of agentive suffering). This is Edwards's temporal projection of the self through a mood of sinful feeling as the performance of his thirty-seventh resolution to mark each day, week, month, and year according to recognition of that sinfulness. This aesthetic emphasis on the use of time to achieve increased personal sinful feeling emerges in the "Resolutions," diary, and early sermons, and most distinctly appears as a model of temporal projection for personal evangelical conversion and post-conversion religious life in the testimony of Edwards's "Personal Narrative."⁸⁸

The Triumph of Sinful Feeling in Edwards's "Personal Narrative"

Most students of Edwards are familiar with his narration in his "Personal Narrative" of his conversion experience as a "delightful conviction" and "exceeding pleasant" (793). The Christian life of "Holiness" that the converted Edwards contemplates after his conversion seems to him "to be of a sweet, pleasant, charming, serene, calm nature" (797). Edwards continues to refer to his converted "soul" as "a field or garden of God, with all manner of pleasant flowers"—or a single "white flower"—receiving "gentle vivifying beams of the sun" ("Personal Narrative" 797). When thinking of the "Personal Narrative" one may well think of passages such as these that indicate the sweetness and light of the Edwardsean evangelical life. Or one may point in the "Personal Narrative" to the Edwardsean convert as the believer who, with the Edwards of the

⁸⁸ Andrea Knutson argues that "The idea of evangelical humiliation is central to both Shepard's and Edwards's descriptions of the conveyance of grace and resulting conversion" (*American Spaces of Conversion* 84). She adds that, only later, "Conversion finds a conceptual home in modern philosophy as James's pragmatic hermeneutic, a habit of mind tying conversion overtly to the *process* that drives consciousness" (135 emphasis added). I argue that humiliation as a method, or process of evangelical habit and method continues after conversion as an important principle of temporal progression even in Edwards (and, as my chapter on Shepard indicates, in Shepard as well).

“Resolutions,” decides to fill every moment of secular time with pure effort to attain higher levels of holiness and grace, an enlightened believer “thirsting after progress” and striving to achieve “an increase of grace and holiness,” all while lamenting that, if conversion had only happened earlier in life s/he “might have had more time to grow in grace” (796). This is the Puritan striving after what Gregory S. Jackson calls the temporal “incrementalism of moral change” (*The Word and its Witness* 140).

The anxiety in the early sermons about wasting no time in achieving conversion and then moving on to increasing sanctification makes sense and accords well with passages such as these from Edwards’s own testimony in the “Personal Narrative.” In a short document in which the word “pleasant” appears fifteen times, and some form of “sweet” appears fifty-seven times, it is not surprising that the aesthetics of the Edwardsean conversion experience as the pinnacle of evangelical personality is still compared to the pastoral transcendentalism of the Emersonian eyeball. And when the comparison is still made—which shows the continuing power, in one form or another, of Miller’s aged and often assaulted “Edwards to Emerson” thesis—the evidence for its justification is Edwards’s use of pastoral writing: “whimsical—even sentimental—images from nature that produce a benevolent, comforting, and seductive description of the workings of grace” (Rivett, *Science of the Soul* 295). Scholars continue to produce illuminating work on Edwards’s place in American literary history, but have a difficult time showing Edwards’s connection to the tradition of American letters beyond such figures as the transcendentalist Emerson or the sentimentalist novels of the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth.

Edwards’ investments in sentimental and transcendentalist aesthetics, and their relation to modern evangelical salvific certainty, have been well established; so it might seem

counterintuitive to say that Edwards organizes his conception of time to achieve a sublime internal experience rooted in sinful feeling. Nevertheless, when we turn our attention to Edwards “Personal Narrative,” this sublime sense of sin is what we discover.

For Edwards, the daily contemplation and mood of sin that organizes time in the “Resolutions” and diary of the early 1720s does not end with the sticky sweetness and blinding light of conversion recounted in the “Personal Narrative.” In fact, Edwards does not complete his narrative in the sweet comparisons of the soul to a field or flower receiving the gentle sunbeams of grace, nor in what Brian Jackson calls the “scare-for-salvation” and “terror revivalism” rhetorical model of such famous sermons as “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” (“Jonathan Edwards Goes to Hell (House)” (43, 45). Rather, Edwards signals a clear turn from both preparatory terrors and sweet conversion to a post-conversion aesthetic vision of personal sinfulness that bears out the connection of Edwards’s assumption of homogenous secular time to an aesthetics of the internal apprehension and pleasure that comes from the regarding of personal sinfulness (Kant’s sublime).⁸⁹ In the “Personal Narrative,” after recounting his conversion experience and his removal from New York to Northampton, Edwards relates with satisfaction his persisting cultivation and experience of sinful feeling:

I have often since I lived in this town, had very affecting views of my own sinfulness and vileness; very frequently so as to hold me in a kind of loud weeping, sometimes for a considerable time together: so that I have often been forced to shut myself up. I have had

⁸⁹ Besides not following the narrative of such conversion experiences as Edwards’s own testimony, in which the dark internal sublime of personal sinfulness operates post-conversion as an object of interminable attraction, Brian Jackson’s connection of Edwards directly to modern fundamentalist simulacrum-style hell houses is a quantum leap in argument. When he invites scholars to “imagine Edwards’ delight” at the theatrical innovations of the Falwell-style fundamentalist hell house, Jackson ignores such obvious snares in his argument as the simple fact that Edwards famously eschewed homiletic theatricality himself; Edwards’s style was, in the words of Sandra Gustafson “rigorously untheatrical” (Jackson 54; Gustafson, “Jonathan Edwards and the Reconstruction of ‘Feminine’ Speech” 199). Alan Heimert notes that Edwards’s sermonic delivery gave “evidence that men’s hearts could be touched by the most quiet of addresses” (*Religion and the American Mind* 230).

a vastly greater sense of my own wickedness, and the badness of my heart, since my conversion, than ever I had before. (802-802)

Here Edwards figures himself as a man not emotionally soothed, but increasingly troubled by his conversion insofar as it opens him up to an even greater personal capacity for the aesthetic-affective apprehension of his sinfulness and depravity.⁹⁰

An aesthetic mood of sin certainly seems to dominate this turn towards the conclusion of the “Personal Narrative,” and it is also what gives Edwards as the self-proposed model of an evangelical conversion experience his sense of private, personal, and creative individuality. The more he shuts himself up from social and moral-ethical life to consider and mourn his sinfulness, the more he realizes himself in his conversion. His aesthetic-affective capacity for feeling negative pleasure grows in proportion to his temporally incremental realization of himself as sinful: “It has often appeared to me, that if God should mark iniquity against me, I should appear the very worst of all mankind; of all that have been since the beginning of the world to this time: and that I should have by far the lowest place in hell” (803). Edwards realizes himself more and more as an individual in proportion to his increasing discovery of personal sinfulness—certainly not any kind of assurance based on the realization of successful social, economic, and ethical industry. Also, one might note, Edwards does not find assurance or individual self-realization in the aesthetic apprehension of the “sweetness” he mused on earlier in the narrative, but in the emotionally charged apprehension of his sin. It is in this use of converted duration to achieve and

⁹⁰ As David Laurence has put it, Edwards believed that “The feeling of certainty that sometimes accompanied illumination had no more spirituality in it than the feeling of despair that sometimes accompanied humiliation” (Jonathan Edwards, Solomon Stoddard, and the Preparationist Model of Conversion” 283). I do not think that “despair” is exactly the correct term here, since I think the temporally progressive aesthetic-affective experience and expression of personal sinfulness is part of a larger devotional program of self-assurance regarding the enlightened convert’s state of soul. But Laurence’s understanding of place of darker shades of affect in Edwardsean devotional life is nevertheless near the mark.

express sinful feeling that Edwards takes the most (negative) pleasure, and through which he gains assurance that he is an enlightened convert.

Edwards's regular and increasing realization of sin makes him able not only to appraise himself according to the resolutions he made to order time around the experience of sin, but also to appraise those who would come to him for pastoral comfort regarding their soul-states. But these seekers after assurance often disclose their own aesthetic (and, Edwards seems to imply, perhaps salvific) incapacities to experience and express ardent feelings of personal sinfulness: "When others that have come to talk with me about their soul concerns, have expressed the sense they have had of their own wickedness, by saying that it seemed to them, that they were as bad as the devil himself; I thought their expressions seemed exceeding faint and feeble, to represent my wickedness" (803). At this point it appears more clearly than anywhere else in the narrative that Edwards views himself as above his Northampton flock in spiritual capacity. And this spiritual capacity is, at its root, mostly an aesthetic-affective capacity: the ability to adequately feel and express one's sense of personal sinfulness. Those who come to Edwards for comfort often find that their souls are inadequate aesthetic vessels for the apprehension and expression of feelings of personal sin; or at least that is what Edwards thinks of them. What those who come to Edwards for assurance need to do is work harder, and strive, not for the sweetness of pleasant conversion, but for a temporal progression beyond that moment in religious life to a deeper, fuller, and more affecting experience and expression of personal sinfulness: "I thought I should wonder, that they should content themselves with such expressions as these, if I had any reason to imagine, that their sin bore any proportion to mine. It seemed to me, I should wonder at myself, if I should express my wickedness in such feeble terms as they did" (803). The thing needed for those looking for the enlightened evangelical assurance of Edwards is not more sweet

affections, but a temporally progressive “greater conviction of sin” combined with continual dissatisfaction with the personal depth, clarity, and ability to express that experience.

The only way for converts to gain control over their depravity as buffered selves is to see themselves as more depraved than “the devil himself”; they also need to be continually dissatisfied with their progress in their ability to plumb the depths of this sinful feeling. Edwards, though he feels and expresses his sin as an internal “abyss infinitely deeper than hell,” is still quite unsatisfied with his apprehensions and expressions of the internal aesthetic of personal sinfulness: “And yet, I ben't in the least inclined to think, that I have a greater conviction of sin than ordinary. It seems to me, my conviction of sin is exceeding small, and faint. It appears to me enough to amaze me, that I have no more sense of my sin. I know certainly, that I have very little sense of my sinfulness.” (803-804). Edwards’s temporal progress in evangelical enlightenment is only just beginning with his still novice understanding of his personal sinfulness. Even though, in comparison to others, he feels that he has developed the greatest aesthetic-affective capacity for experiencing and expressing his own sin, he believes he has much further to go.

A major unanswered question the “Personal Narrative” raises regarding Edwards’s aesthetic rule of the use of time to achieve progressive enlargement in the ability to apprehend and express sinful feeling is this: is the rule democratic in the sense that any believer could cultivate this personal experience through the proper use of converted duration? Or is the example of Edwards’s own conversion in the “Personal Narrative” his assertion of what Sandra Gustafson has called his “aristocratic authority over his parishioners,” an aesthetic enlightenment elitism of taste insofar as Edwards seems to imply himself as gifted with a greater capacity and desire for experiencing and expressing his sin?⁹¹ On one hand, it would seem that Edwards’s rule

⁹¹ Gustafson has noted the assertion of authority in the performativity not only of Edwards’s conversion narratives (his own, Sarah’s and his parishioners), but in his performance of sermons, in which he textualized himself even as

for the enlightened religious experience of a sinful internal sublime is an aesthetic elitism, as he believes that he has not only greater capacity for experience and expression, but, perversely, also a greater actual level of sinfulness in him: “That my sins appear to me so great, don't seem to me to be, because I have so much more conviction of sin than other Christians, but because I am so much worse, and have so much more wickedness to be convinced of” (803-804). If one reads the “Personal Narrative” as Edwards’s expression of his elite individuality through his enlarged capacity for sinful feeling, then it would seem that his evangelical enlightenment is not for the masses. But if one takes this narrative as Edwards’s “invention and contrivance” (Resolution #2) of a representative type of personality in service of his program of evangelical enlightenment, then it would seem to be the expression of a more democratic and widely accessible evangelical enlightenment. As Mark J. Miller has also noted, the imperative to imitation in Edwardsean conversion narratives is strong. If others would strive—or if they could creatively invent and contrive—to order time towards the end of experiencing religious life the way Edwards does, they, too, could be a part of this aesthetic-affective evangelical enlightenment: “For Edwards, sympathy encourages the spectator’s imitation and repetition of conversion, including the convert’s sensational experience of suffering, humiliation, and intense, sometimes unbearable, awareness of abjection” (“Jonathan Edwards, Affective Conversion, and the Problem of Masochism” 567).⁹² The tension between the two choices regarding Edwards’s testimony in the fashioning of a pre-revolutionary colonial-national identity (elite aestheticism or democratic representative personality) is carefully built in, and the tension produces the paradoxical

he deliberately embodied both femininity and aristocracy by donning a wig. (“Jonathan Edwards and the Reconstruction of ‘Feminine’ Speech” 200).

⁹² Commenting on Edwards’s “Personal Narrative,” Mark J. Miller states that “Edwards’s narrative seems so modern” because of its “descriptions of highly individuated psychic interiority and eroticized affect”; Miller also notes that “his embrace of abjection appears psychologically, and sexually, perverse” (574).

imperative that each individual seeking conversion contrive to achieve an increasingly heightened ability to experience and express oneself as, in one's spiritual individuality, the most piously deprived of any of one's peers.

This tension between an aesthetically aristocratic and an aesthetically democratic value regarding the personal ability to use time for the gradual apprehension and expression of feelings of personal sinfulness is borne out by the strange (non)publication history of the "Personal Narrative." Since Edwards allowed for the document to circulate in the Connecticut River Valley but never published it, it served as a kind of half-purloined letter in the transatlantic evangelical public sphere that Jennifer Snead has identified ("Print, Predestination, and the Public Sphere"). On one hand, it was available to many as a model of the methodical conversion life; on the other hand, it was never published, and the reason isn't known. The narrative was circulated in New England to people who were thus privileged to its access. Perhaps Edwards wanted to hold himself up as the supreme conversion example—perhaps as too supreme: unreachable in his level of aesthetic capacity by his parishioners and other awakening converts. In order to reinforce this figuration of himself simultaneously as both evangelical leader and romantic outcast, the non-publication of a circulating testimony would work well: he allows the narrative to become public knowledge, but only in a partially available manner, as if he alone is worthy of holding his narrative back because he alone is capable of inhabiting the dangerous heights of the evangelical Parnassus. But even as this aristocratic and romantic sensibility is built into the non-publication of the document, there is a remarkably democratic implication here as well; the non-publication could simply mean that Edwards sees no value in promoting his own conversion narrative as having any special value, because he is just another equal member in the awakening community.

Perhaps it would be best to interpret the non-publication history of the “Personal Narrative” as exploiting the undecidable question here: the “Personal Narrative” posits itself as the aristocratic and romantically isolating model of the conversion narrative, even as it posits itself as the most humble and democratic model of the methodical converted self. In *Democratic Personality: Popular Voice and the Trial of American Authorship*, Nancy Ruttenburg focusses on George Whitefield’s model of “spectacular conversion” as an early democratic model of personality in the American colonies (85). But the content and strange circulation history of Edwards’s “Personal Narrative” gives us another model of what I propose as the “methodical conversion” that exploits its own internal conflict between the aristocratic tendency of Edwards’s leadership of the Great Awakening that Gustafson has noted, and the democratic tendency that Ruttenburg, following Heimert, has explored. In Edwards we see the democratic model of the “methodical conversion” that is based on the carefully regulated use of duration to achieve incremental progress in an aesthetic capacity for apprehending and expressing personal sinful feeling, even as this same model implies itself as singularly noble, aristocratic, and isolating.

Regardless of how we interpret the “Personal Narrative” in light of the potential debate regarding its place more broadly in the formation of an American tradition of democratic feeling, the most important part of this self-portrait in the “Personal Narrative” is that Edwards crafts the imperative to experience and express personal sinfulness as an aesthetic calling by which to organize the time of secular life, rather than an ethical or moral “vocation.” Each individual is called to improve incrementally, through the progress of evangelical life, in the experience and expression of personal sinfulness:

I can't bear the thoughts of being no more humble, than other Christians. It seems to me, that though their degrees of humility may be suitable for them; yet it would be a vile self-

exaltation in me, not to be the lowest in humility of all mankind. Others speak of their longing to be humbled to the dust. Though that may be a proper expression for them, I always think for myself, that I ought to be humbled down below hell. (804).

The goal of evangelical enlightenment is not just to get into the dust of abjection; rather, the goal is, in time, to get to a place even more profound than hell itself (“below hell”). The task of feeling here is both more mundane (in its implication as a model for all the faithful of the Connecticut River Valley) and more heroic (in its depraved out-fathoming) than the Miltonic Satan’s attractive self-fashioning of himself as hell (*Paradise Lost* 4.75).⁹³ The gradual temporal apprehension of this internal sinful feeling is the aesthetic calling of Edwards and his followers, at least as much as, if not more than, the calling to describe a spectacularly momentary and pivotal conversion experience as sweet.

The assurance Edwards gains in self-examination is not marked temporal progression to more and more holiness—despite intimations in his resolutions and diary that he desires such a thing; rather, the assurance Edwards gains is in retrospective self-examination that finds he is progressing in his ability as he passes through secular “duration” (Resolution #1) to experience and express sinful feeling: “It is affecting to me to think, how ignorant I was, when I was a young Christian, of the bottomless, infinite depths of wickedness, pride, hypocrisy and deceit left in my heart” (“Personal Narrative” 804). One would think that an Edwards who desires a life project of incremental temporal increase in holiness would express at the end of his “Personal Narrative” that he is affected to look back and see God’s grace in his life as he becomes holier and holier. But here he closes his narrative by expressing his approval with himself based on his

⁹³ In his “Catalogues of Books,” Jonathan Edwards twice listed *Paradise Lost* as a reading priority (Theusen). Although it is not known if he ever obtained and read it, I would like to assume he did, since, if a person of Edwards’s resolve made this resolution *twice*, it would be harder to imagine him not reading it.

increasing temporal ability to feel, understand, and express the personal feeling of sinfulness that remains in him and separates him from the moral-ethical life of his religious society even as it impresses him to that society as the representative model of enlightened evangelical aesthetic-affective personality.

Conclusion

Jonathan Edwards challenges Weber's assertion at the end of *The Sociology of Religion* in which he states: "the one important fact for us is the significance of the marked rejection of all distinctively esthetic devices by those religions which are rational, in our special sense" (245). In the program of self-discipline that Edwards develops based on the rigorous search for personal sinfulness, Edwards permeates the life of his ideal evangelical believer with an aesthetic imperative, or aesthetic vocation, to experience and express oneself as sinful.⁹⁴ This methodical program of the self is Edwards's aesthetic "Invention and Contrivance" he refers to in his second resolution used to fill the "whole" of his "Duration" with "whatsoever I think to be most to God's Glory, and my own Good, Profit and Pleasure." In the Edwardsean program of the self as sinful, one sees an aesthetic possibility for religious life in secular duration that nevertheless maintains itself as "rational" in the highest degree according to Weber's strictest criteria, as well as the criteria for Edwards of valid Lockean reason and experience. While accepting the validity of Weber's methodology of inquiry that assumes religion as the rational articulation of "rules of experience" and applying it to a reading of Edwards rather than Franklin, one can conclude that

⁹⁴ While much scholarship has followed Perry Miller's connection of Jonathan Edwards's notion of the divine and supernatural light, or "delight and ecstasy in the doctrines of regeneration and providence," to Ralph Waldo Emerson's doctrine of unity with the Over-Soul and transparent eyeball, my focus in a similar "continuity project" (Brissett) on the persisting emphasis on a religious experience of sin in Edwards connects him as much to the aesthetic of secular American gothic critique as to romantic American transcendentalism (Miller, "Edwards to Emerson" 600; Brissett, "Jonathan Edwards, Continuity, Secularism" 172).

in the “rational ethical religion” of ascetic Protestantism there is the possibility for an aesthetic life of self-examination and self-configuration that Weber denies. And this assessment of Edwards’s evangelical and rational rules of the aesthetic experience and expression of depravity is thus a revision to, rather than a rejection of, the Weber thesis, proposing that alongside the ethical life of Benjamin Franklin as the secular-unbelieving Puritan, scholars can read for early-American aesthetics in Jonathan Edwards as the secular-evangelical Puritan.⁹⁵ Edwards is not a simple illustration of Weber’s or Taylor’s arguments about the link of reform religion to the iron cage of secular temporality. Puritanism may ultimately be, to some degree, Benjamin Franklin; but to an at least equal degree one must concur with Perry Miller that in its enlightened eighteenth-century form “Puritanism is what Edwards is” (194).

In his 2006 essay “Enlightenment! Which Enlightenment?” Jonathan Israel complains about the credit some scholars afford “that theological reactionary of Yale, Jonathan Edwards” as a legitimate enlightenment intellectual (15, 20). Others, such as A. Owen Aldridge, have more diplomatically stated that “Edwards was touched by the Enlightenment without fully embracing it” (“Enlightenment and Awakening in Edwards and Franklin” 29). If one considers Edwards as a purveyor of evangelical enthusiasm in the vein of James Davenport, Israel’s complaint holds up (if one grants that the most radical forms of affect and expression seen in the Great Awakening from those of Davenport’s ilk were opposed to, and not the product of, enlightenment aesthetics, morality, and epistemology). But if we consider—as I think we should—Edwards as articulating a program of methodical religious experience based on rigorous

⁹⁵ To be sure, Edwards valued moral behaviour, as Edwin S. Gaustad demonstrates in his comparative reading of Franklin’s and Edwards’s moral thinking (“The Nature of True—And Useful—Virtue” 53). But for Edwards, failures in the moral and ethical lives of his evangelical converts—such as those documented in the famous “bad books” controversy that marked the beginning of the end of his time in Northampton—were first and foremost aesthetic shortcomings with respect to the enlightened apprehension of personal sin in the Northampton congregation.

Calvinist-Lockean self-critique as the foundation of all legitimate religious self-knowledge, then it seems more than fair to accept his work as legitimate and committed Enlightenment thought, and certainly not reactionary fundamentalism. Moreover, as I have argued in this chapter, the aesthetic temporality of sinful feeling in Edwards appears to operate as an affective presence that refuses to fit under the sign of either the “religious” or the “secular.” Edwards’s aesthetic project of the use of duration to achieve a sense of sinful selfhood seems to be neither religious nor secular, and certainly not “reactionary.” Instead, we might view Edwards the late Puritan New England clergyman as working in a hybrid laboratory that includes both religious-theological and secular-philosophical conceptual and affective instruments in which he develops a singular invention: the proto-gothic American self obsessed with using time conceived as secular “duration” to achieve an aesthetic-affective production and regulation of sinful feeling.

Chapter 7

The Flawed Example of Religious Industry: Edwards's Curation of *The Life of Brainerd*

Man, the bravest of animals and the one most accustomed to suffering, does not repudiate suffering as such; he desires it, he even seeks it out, provided he is shown a meaning for it, a purpose of suffering.

-Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals* 598

Along with Abigail Hutchinson and Phebe Bartlett in the *Faithful Narrative*, the heavily edited conversion narrative of his wife Sara, and his own “Personal Narrative,” one of the most famous of Edwards’s crafting of an evangelical example is his *Life of Brainerd*. Edwards’s *Life of Brainerd* was “the most popular” of his writings, “Published in countless editions throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, translated into several languages, and presented as an inspiration for evangelical Christians” (Stevens, *The Poor Indians* 139). Most scholarship on *The Life of Brainerd* focusses on how the text is an inaugural work of evangelical missionary literature in which Brainerd figures as the biographical exemplar of Christian sacrifice to a life of missions. In this chapter, however, I contend that Edwards offers Brainerd as a highly flawed example of evangelical time-management which the reader is supposed to improve upon. In the story Edwards tells of David Brainerd—his experience of hell-terrors prior to conversion, his vaguely euphoric and almost accidental conversion experience, and his subsequent paralyzing experiences of sinful feeling, the reader sees an example of evangelical sainthood that is highly flawed with respect to temporal self-management in comparison to the example of Edwards himself, and even in comparison to Hutchinson, Bartlett, and Pierpont.⁹⁶

⁹⁶ The publication history of *The Life of Brainerd* is important here, as Edwards’s own hands are all over the production of the narrative. According to Norman Pettit, the narrative is “largely Brainerd’s,” and Edwards “let the author speak for himself,” but “the volume as Edwards conceived it belongs to him” (“Introduction” 1). For a recent scholarly biography of David Brainerd that uses *The Life of Brainerd* as one source among others, see John A. Grigg’s *The Lives of Brainerd: The Making of an Evangelical Icon*. New York: Oxford UP, 2009.

This chapter contends that Edwards uses Brainerd as a flawed example of evangelical industry because Brainerd's inability to manage his sinful feeling leads to an inability to maximize secular time for religious pursuits. The temporalities of (1) Brainerd's conversion experience, and (2) his post-conversion management of psychological and affective pain manifest as disordered and unmethodical. His conversion appears as a supernatural temporal intervention rather than the dutiful cultivation of an appropriate religious conversion experience according to the rigorous and methodical ordering of his secular time. And his inability to manage and express his feelings of personal sinfulness as part of a method of evangelical industry leads to these feelings devolving into crippling self-loathing that makes everyday secular time unusable for Brainerd, rather than—as with Edwards himself—available for a controllable personal narrative of religious progress. The mood of sinful feeling for Brainerd is so uncontrollable that it figures in *The Life of Brainerd* as a recurrent debilitating temporal interruption. I contend, then, that this text contrasts to Edwards's own conversion narrative's example of the use of sinful feeling as a source for positive temporal self-projection through the methodical use of duration to both produce and regulate increased sinful feeling. Brainerd is Edwards's cautionary tale.

After his conversion experience, Brainerd demonstrates a failure to both measure and order his evangelical life through secular time according to Edwards's criteria of an aesthetic-affective apprehension of sinful feeling. Instead, Brainerd's experiences and feelings regarding his own sinfulness manifest in his life in a similar manner to the appearance of his pre-conversion terrors. The converted Brainerd is restricted in his attempts to lead an industrious evangelical life by his failure to recruit his sinful feeling into a larger devotional method of Christian progress in secular time. Brainerd's experiences and feelings of his own sinfulness

always appear in his narrative as detractors from his own evangelical life-project, rather than as raw biographical material that can be processed affectively and aesthetically to fit into that narrative temporal project.

Ultimately, Brainerd achieves some relief from the crippling nature of his own experiences of personal sinfulness on the mission field, as he preaches to the Housatonic community west of Edwards's exilic frontier outpost in Stockbridge. In documenting the Housatonic converts' experiences and affective apprehensions of their own personal depravity, Brainerd manages to apply these experiences to an evangelical methodology of missions. Where Brainerd fails with himself to organize time progressively and industriously through the managed experience of his own depravity, he has some limited success with an indigenous population by displacing the Edwardsean criteria of the affective experience and aesthetic expression of personal sinfulness onto the Indian body. Brainerd's partial success in this displacement of what Patricia Caldwell calls the New England Puritans' "bad feelings" is accompanied in the narrative by the relief he experiences from the hobbling bouts he has with his own sinful feeling (*The Puritan Conversion Narrative* 161). But in the end, on his deathbed, Brainerd laments his inability to have better managed his secular time by using sinful feeling as a part of his personal temporal progress in evangelical industry.

Following (1) Elaine Scarry's assessment of how physical pain's temporally interruptive nature can undo personal agency and (2) Talal Asad's contrasting description of how both physical and mental pain can provide the opportunity for agentive self-fashioning through the temporal management of pain, this chapter proposes that Brainerd's bad feelings of personal sinfulness contrast to Edwards's own in the "Personal Narrative." Brainerd's sinful feelings are

so uncontrollable that they constitute a world-unmaking experience of mental and spiritual anguish that refuses linear temporal progress through the work of narrative production.

Scholars have recognized that David Brainerd's documentation of his own frequent feelings of failure are at odds with Edwards's own imperative of evangelical industry. In an essay on the problem of Edwards's Brainerd as evangelical model, David L. Weddle has proposed that the figure in the biography is "at best, an ambiguous example of Edwards's theology of religious experience," as the effects of Brainerd's unmanageable feelings of sinfulness "are out of harmony with Edwards's own analysis of religious experience" ("The Melancholy Saint" 298). Jennifer Snead has further noted the conflicted nature of Brainerd's legacy, not only for Edwards himself but for the continued life of this biography in contemporary evangelical discourse: *The Life of Brainerd* is about a man who is at once "tragic figure; epic failure; tuberculosis victim; Protestant saint; missionary folk hero of the Great Awakening" ("The Life of *The Life of David Brainerd*" 1). Edwards discloses his own uncomfortable and conflicted feelings about Brainerd's example in the preface, where he describes him as an "excellent person" of "distinguished natural abilities" even as he notes the "imperfection" of "melancholy and dejection of spirit" (90-91).⁹⁷ Nevertheless, Edwards declares, "notwithstanding all these imperfections," Brainerd's narrative is an example "most worthy of imitation, and many ways tending to the spiritual benefit of the careful observer" (96). One could read Edwards's *Life of Brainerd* as an example of evangelical hagiography in which the author invites the devoted reader to follow—but probably not achieve—Brainerd's example of the pious life. The biography's symbolic place as just this kind of hagiography for nineteenth-century missionaries is well documented by Joseph Conforti ("David Brainerd and the Nineteenth

⁹⁷ For an extensive treatment of Edwards's theory of melancholy, articulated in dialogue with the transatlantic medical discourse of the eighteenth century, see Gail Parker's essay "Jonathan Edwards and Melancholy."

Century Missionary Movement”). But the argument of the following reading is that Edwards compiles his *Life of Brainerd* as a cautionary tale in comparison to the author’s own “Personal Narrative” analysed in the previous chapter. *The Life of Brainerd* appears in the early evangelical canon as the tragic story of a convert (and missionary converter) who never quite manages to use every moment of time in a perfectly profitable way as Edwards himself does. Brainerd’s “bad feelings”—the experience of his own sinfulness—detracts from his evangelical industry rather than serving as its temporally progressive and industrious mechanism. Brainerd does not manage and maximize his use of time by controlling these experiences of sinfulness; rather, on his deathbed, he regrets and laments the way that these crippling experiences waste his time. Brainerd’s failures to adequately manage secular time by marking and ordering that time according to a controlled apprehension and positive expression of his own sinful feeling, and his own lamentations regarding these failures, means that *The Life of Brainerd* offers itself as an example of an evangelical life to be surpassed—even perfected—in the proper imitation of the reader.

The anxiety inculcated by the paradoxically exemplary failure of Brainerd seems designed to stimulate in the reading members of the evangelical public sphere an impulse to do better, “never to lose one moment of time; but improve it in the most profitable way,” ordering and measuring that time by the progressive aesthetic and affective “enquiry” into the mystery of personal sinful feeling (Edwards, Resolution #5, Resolution #37). The reading of *The Life of Brainerd* as reaching neither the heights of hagiography nor the forensic analysis of modern biography thus fits well with Sacvan Bercovitch’s proposition of the function of biography in Cotton Mather’s *Magnalia Christi Americana* as conforming to the context of late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century biography: “Exceptions may be found, but by and large the art of

biography from Roper through Walton to Johnson forms a transitional mode between hagiography and modern biography” (*Puritan Origins of the American Self* 4). Brainerd is, all at once, an object of hagiographic reverence, a subject of the modern evangelical reader’s critical examination, and a source of edifying narrative entertainment.

The Life of Brainerd both initiates and appeals to a sense of time that is at once intensely secular and evangelically oriented. Edwards’s *Life of Brainerd* appears as both the further secularization of American biography by its emphasis on the need for industrious personal use of time, even as it presents an emergence and intensification of the evangelical impulse to waste none of that secular time in service of the religious life-project. Edwards’s David Brainerd is less an “exemplar of radical submission to divine will” and more an example and cautionary tale of how the unmanaged interior life of sinful feeling for a burgeoning evangelical leads to the wasting of precious time that could have been better used for evangelical ends (Snead 10).⁹⁸

Brainerd’s Pre-Conversion Terrors and the Accidental Conversion

Around February of 1739, at the height of the Great Awakening, David Brainerd recognizes that a major sign of his unconverted state is his inability to look upon, examine, apprehend, and feel his sin without shying away from that work of self-examination: “I daily longed for greater conviction of sin, supposing that I must see more of my dreadful state in order to a remedy, yet when the discoveries of my vile hellish heart were made to me, the sight was so dreadful and showed me so plainly my exposedness to damnation, that I could not endure it” (*Life of Brainerd* 109). The sign of conversion that Brainerd seeks is not the absence of sinful feeling, but the

⁹⁸ Although I read *The Life of Brainerd* as biography, Jennifer Snead rightfully points out its generic amorphousness as simultaneously “bestseller; memoir; hagiography; exploitation; romance” (“The Life of *The Life of Brainerd*” 1).

ability to experience and express his sinful feeling in methodical acts of devotion without cowing back in terror.⁹⁹

The double-bind of his pre-conversion state is thus that, in his unconverted state, he wants to be convicted of his sinfulness—to experience, feel, and express it—even as he cannot bear this work. Still in 1739, Brainerd expresses the problem thus:

Sometimes I grew very remiss and sluggish, without any great conviction of sin, for a considerable time together; but after such a season convictions sometimes seized me more violently. One night I remember in particular, when I was walking solitarily abroad, I had opened to me such a view of my sin, that I feared the ground would cleave asunder under my feet, and become my grave, and send my soul quick into hell before I could get home. And though I was forced to go to bed, lest my distress should be discovered by others, which I much feared; yet I scarce durst sleep at all, for I thought it would be a great wonder if I should be out of hell in the morning. And though my distress was sometimes thus great, yet I greatly dreaded the loss of convictions, and returning back to a state of carnal security, and to my former insensibility of impending wrath; which made me exceeding exact in my behaviour, lest I should stifle the motions of God's spirit.

(111-12)

Brainerd's pre-conversion terrors isolate him from righteous society, confining him to bed, rendering him literally motionless, unable to move either forward in progress toward salvation, or in another direction away from the terrors of such intense religious convictions about his own

⁹⁹ This is another reason why I think Paul Hurh's explanation of Edwards's writing as toned with the affect of "terror" is misguided. By definition terror is unmanageable, and while we see certain subjects of conversion come up against the limit of terror, we never see terror itself as an affective goal for the methodical convert. Edwards is primarily interested in the positive management of negative affect, not the overwhelming nature of a negative affect itself.

sinfulness. The bad feelings Brainerd has when he experiences a sense of his own sinfulness are disruptive; they interrupt the time and the progress of Brainerd's religious life, even as they are the religious experiences he seeks. The religious experience of "humiliation," here present in a form greatly intensified from that of Hooker and Shepard, keeps Brainerd from the religious experience of a temporal "closing" with Christ in a conversion experience, rather than directing him to it (114).

Again, later in 1739, the sign of Brainerd's unconverted state continues to be his failure to synthesize pre-conversion terrors and humiliation into an outcome of conversion. Brainerd continues to buckle emotionally under the weight of his personal depravity, when he notes that God, "giving me a sight of the badness of my heart, threw me again into distress, and I wished against God's dealing with me, and I even wished I had not pleaded for mercy on account of my humiliation, because thereby I had lost all my seeming goodness. Thus, scores of times, I vainly imagined myself humbled and prepared for mercy" (115). Here Brainerd expresses his wish that, rather than experience these consuming terrors and humiliations, he would simply never feel the call to conversion at all. Again, a little later in 1739, the sign of Brainerd's unconverted state is the way in which the work of humiliation continues to be unbearable, diminishing Brainerd rather than enlarging his personal capacity to experience, know, and express his sinful feeling by the incremental progressive ordering of his time through the discovery of personal sinfulness:

I came to reflect on my inward enmity and blasphemy...[and] I was the more afraid of God, and driven further from reconciliation with him; and it gave me such a dreadful view of myself, that I dreaded more than ever to see myself in God's hands, at his sovereign disposal, and it made me more opposite than ever to submit to his sovereignty; for I thought God designed my damnation. (125)

Brainerd is unable to control his bad feelings of personal depravity, to recruit them into a larger religious system, or method in which he can order his time progressively. In fact, Brainerd finds himself committing one of the cardinal sins for a Calvinist evangelical: knowing the sovereignty of God, but resisting it nonetheless.

Still in 1739, the sign for Brainerd that he is finally moving towards conversion is that he gains the capacity for preparatory humiliation as an ability to look on, experience, express, and feel his sin without buckling intellectually and affectively under its weight in terror: “The tumult that had been before in my mind was now quieted; and I was something eased of that distress which I felt while struggling against a sight of myself, and of the divine sovereignty. I had the greatest certainty that my state was forever miserable, for all that I could do; and wondered, and was astonished, that I had never been sensible of it before” (131-2). Here the work of humiliation and terror as Brainerd becomes increasingly aware of his own depravity and sinfulness no longer disrupts Brainerd’s industry—his marking and management of time. Here Brainerd is instead able to look on his own sinfulness with a sense of both affective attachment and detachment. He experiences and expresses an appropriate sense of his depravity, but he does not buckle affectively under the weight of this realization. This new affective-aesthetic durability of the soul in Brainerd is a sign of the renovation of his spirit on the way to a conversion experience.

Although there is thus a faint sense in Brainerd’s account of his pre-conversion experiences of humiliation that he is able increasingly to manage the feelings of his sinfulness and order them in an appropriate manner, one largely gets the sense that Brainerd is unable to do so consistently and in a methodical fashion. Brainerd’s methodical inconsistency thus contributes to a sense that his conversion is somehow accidental when it finally does happen, rather than part of an ordered temporal process of religious method. On a “Sabbath evening,” “July 12, 1739,”

the conversion experience happens suddenly, unexpectedly and in the midst of Brainerd's meditation on his unproductive spiritual state:

I was brought to see myself lost and helpless (as was before mentioned) and here, in a mournful melancholy state, was attempting to pray; but found no heart to engage in that, or any other duty: my former concern and exercise and religious affections were now gone. I thought the Spirit of God had quite left me; but still was not distressed, yet disconsolate as if there was nothing in heaven or earth could make me happy. (137)

Under such circumstances, one would not expect the abrupt—almost accidental—divine intervention of a conversion experience such as the one Brainerd subsequently describes:

And having been thus endeavoring to pray (though being, as I thought, very stupid and senseless) for near half an hour (and by this time the sun was about half an hour high, as I remember) then, as I was walking in a dark, thick grove, 'unspeakable glory' seemed to open to the view and apprehension of my soul: I don't mean any external brightness, for I saw no such thing, nor do I intend any imagination of a body of light, somewhere away in the third heavens, or anything of that nature; but it was a new inward apprehension or view that I had of God, such as I never had before, nor anything which had the least resemblance of it. I stood still and wondered and admired! (138)

What Brainerd experiences here is a moment of spiritual euphoria that tends to an erotic energy of self-annihilation so commonly noted in the ecstasies of Edwardsean conversion:

I knew that I never had seen before anything comparable to it for excellency and beauty: it was widely different from all the conceptions that ever I had had of God, or things divine...it appeared to be divine glory that I then beheld...My soul was so captivated and

delighted with the excellency, loveliness, greatness, and other perfections of God that I was even swallowed up in him. (138-139)

Edwards ensures that the reader of *The Life of Brainerd* can make no mistake, as he presents this experience clearly as the temporally identifiable conversion moment for Brainerd: “At this time the way of salvation opened to me with such infinite wisdom, suitableness, and excellency, that I wondered I should ever think of any other way of salvation” (140).

In comparison to Edwards’s own account of his conversion in his “Personal Narrative”—and even in comparison to the conversion accounts of the awakening that Edwards gives in the *Faithful Narrative*—there is something about Brainerd’s account that is decidedly unmethodical. He seems, in his pre-conversion state, unable to take control of the experience of his own personal depravity in order to make it work as part of a methodical conversion narrative. Brainerd’s sensational accounts of his incapacitating depression while grappling with the bad feelings of his sinfulness seem to be just that: a bad case of depression rather than the achievement of conversion according to a temporal method of devotion. This means that Brainerd’s conversion experience appears in the narrative of *The Life of Brainerd* as a sudden, unexpected, uncontrollable phenomenon, not the result of a commanding religious methodicalness in the practice of humiliation. Although the awakening devotee should not dismiss Brainerd’s curated account outright as failing entirely to adhere to the rules of evangelical religious experience, there is undoubtedly something implicit in the whole account of Brainerd’s conversion that invites the reader to improve upon it, rather than merely to imitate it. The implication is that the sincere Edwardsean evangelical convert can do better than Brainerd by making conversion part of a more methodical religious life in which the bad feelings of personal depravity are mobilized in service of an aesthetic program of devotion: the convert can

mark, organize, and regulate time by progress in the ability to experience and express feelings of personal sinfulness without buckling under the weight of that experience.

Brainerd's Humiliation: the Obstacle to Evangelical Industry

Following conversion it seems as though David Brainerd's conversion experience, appearing accidental and unmethodical as it may have, has set him up for a life of successful religious method in which he can mark and order time according to the increasing ability to experience and express personal depravity as Edwards does in his "Personal Narrative." In the near aftermath of his conversion experience, during the Fall of 1739, it does indeed appear that Brainerd has penetrated the fog of his unsystematic pre-conversion terrors to a level of clarity, as well as affective and descriptive control over subsequent experiences of his depravity. In one post-conversion description of humiliation, Brainerd appears to have fallen back into the lack of control he demonstrated pre-conversion: "In my morning devotions, my soul was exceedingly melted for and bitterly mourned over my exceeding sinfulness and vileness. I never before had felt so pungent and deep a sense of the odious nature of sin, as at this time" (147.) But there is after this description a turn toward consolation: "My soul was then unusually carried forth in love to God, and had a lovely sense of God's love to me. And this love and hope, at that time, cast out fear. Both morning and evening I spent some time in self-examination, to find the truth of grace, as also my fitness to approach God at his table the next day" (147). As long as Brainerd has consolation like this, it seems as though he is able to manage his sinful feeling.

Brainerd may have found some relief from the immobilizing depression over sinful feeling that he experienced before his conversion, but his experience here also departs from Edwards's own description of his experience and expression of personal depravity at the

conclusion of the “Personal Narrative.” Brainerd ends this episode with a turning away from his own bad feelings to “the truth of grace.” This is not what Edwards describes as a measured, controlled, and methodical aesthetic embrace of sinful feeling and its expression at the end of the “Personal Narrative”. Brainerd’s humiliation resolves with an escape from himself into “the truth of grace,” whereas Edwards’s description of his private, aesthetic, and negative devotional pleasure in the experience of his own personal sinful feeling resolves precisely in the intensification and expression of those feelings. Edwards is able to separate himself from his own aesthetic experience of his personal sinfulness in order to describe it and then go further into it. But it feels as if the Edwards who is doing the describing is always in control of his own feelings and descriptions of his state of depravity, and feels no need to turn away from his devotional “enquiry” into those feelings (Resolution #37). Edwards can stare at his own ontological state of depravity interminably, methodically, and, from a temporal perspective, progressively; but Brainerd has to blink and turn away to the comfort of the “truth of grace.”

This need that Brainerd has to escape the intensity of his sinful feeling means that he is not able to control and use his time as Edwards is. The descriptions that Brainerd offers of his experiences of his own depravity emerge in *The Life of Brainerd* as interruptions and obstacles to the temporal progress and industry of evangelical Christian life, rather than as a conduit for that progress. For example, on May 13, 1742—almost three years after his conversion—Brainerd describes an experience of his own personal depravity in terms of a desire to escape his bad feelings, rather than channel them into a devotional method of temporal industry: “Saw so much of the wickedness of my heart that I longed to get away from myself. I never before thought there was so much spiritual pride in my soul: I felt almost pressed to death with my own vileness” (167). Instead of going further into himself to gain more experience of and control over

his feelings of profound sinfulness, Brainerd is driven by a desire to escape himself so that he can get back to methodical and righteous living—or at least righteous feeling.

Unlike Edwards, Brainerd explicitly laments his inability to control and use his time because he cannot manage his sinful feeling. On May 15, 1742, the problem continues: “appeared exceeding vile in my own eyes, saw much pride and stubbornness in my heart. Indeed I never saw such a week before, as this; for I have been almost ready to die with the view of the wickedness of my heart” (168). Brainerd does indeed measure time according to the felt sense of his personal depravity (“I never saw such a week before”), but the measurements are interruptions to personal progress rather than markers of that progress. The true “horror,” as Brainerd describes it on May 19, 1742, is that temporal progress is made impossible by these uncontrollable bouts with bad feelings of personal sinfulness (168).

Whereas Edwards appears to present his own experience and expression of sinful feeling as a mark worthy of respect, Brainerd’s eventual post-conversion inability to control his feelings of personal depravity leads him to deep and isolating shame over his feelings. On August 18, 1742, he states: “I see so much of my own extreme vileness that I feel ashamed and guilty before God and man: I look, to myself, like the vilest fellow in the land: I wonder that God stirs up his people to be so kind to me” (167). A few days later, on August 21, he describes this problem further: “I saw myself exceeding vile and unworthy; so that I was guilty, and ashamed that anybody should bestow any favor on me or show me any respect” (167). The problem Brainerd has is that he cannot handle the work of self-examination. Self-examination ends up unfitting him for Christian society, as on October 24, 1742, he states: “Felt so vile and unworthy that I scarce knew how to converse with human creatures” (184). While Edwards presents his own aesthetic program of a devotional method of based on feelings of sinfulness as a sort of threshold

for legitimate membership in evangelical society, Brainerd experiences this depravity as an interruption to temporal progress that is also a barrier to his genuine membership in evangelical society.

Brainerd also begins to write his regular bouts of bad feelings about his depravity explicitly as interruptions and obstacles to the industrious temporality of evangelical devotion when he describes how they incapacitate him for the work of godliness. On April 12, 1743, Brainerd complains: “Was greatly oppressed with grief and shame, reflecting on my past conduct, my bitterness and party zeal: I was ashamed to think that such a wretch as I had ever preached! Longed to be excused from that work” (203). Brainerd longs not only to escape himself and his Christian society, but also to escape the work of evangelical religion altogether, since his experiences and feelings of personal sinfulness are interruptions that make his work feel impossible anyway.

The interruption to temporal religious progress that these sinful feelings bring tend at times even to “overwhelm” Brainerd. He cannot subsume them into a method, or a habit, of evangelical lifestyle; instead of being a part of it, they overwhelm that method. On April 13, 1742, Brainerd whimpers: “My heart was overwhelmed within me: I verily thought I was the meanest, vilest, most helpless, guilty, ignorant, benighted creature living...sometimes I was assaulted with damping doubts and fears whether it was possible for such as wretch as I to be in a state of grace” (203-4). Brainerd’s post-conversion experiences of felt depravity interrupt the temporal progress of his attempts to live evangelical life rightly. These experiences also cause him to desire escape from both himself and his felt calling to the life of evangelical devotion, and are so uncontrollable for Brainerd as to make him doubt his converted status altogether. We can conclude that Brainerd’s sinful feelings are not the measured and obligatory exploration of sinful

feeling that Edwards articulates. In fact, the feelings of sinfulness are so overwhelming in Brainerd's affective life that they go well beyond those of earlier Preparationists like Thomas Shepard and Michael Wigglesworth. These doubts are temporal interruptions, so incapacitating as to leave Brainerd "helpless."

The problem of unmethodical humiliation as the experience and expression of personal sinful feeling for Brainerd is not one in which he fails to know his depraved and sinful state. We might say that he is able to see as much of his own sinfulness as Jonathan Edwards is, but Brainerd is not only overwhelmed, but also confused by what he sees, experiences, feels, and expresses. And where Jonathan Edwards feels superior to other evangelicals in the way that he apprehends himself as sinful, David Brainerd feels anxious and ashamed. On May 1, 1743, a Lord's Day on which Brainerd is preparing to receive the sacrament, he describes his full apprehension of his depravity, along with the confusion it brings: "at the sacrament, my soul was filled with confusion and the utmost anguish that ever I endured, under the feeling of my inexpressible vileness and meanness: It was a most bitter and distressing season to me, by reason of the view I had of my own heart and the secret abominations that lurk there" (206). This intense affective awareness of sinfulness, certainly a kind of which Edwards would approve, leads him into a state of mind that works against his ability to be a successful evangelical leader because of the isolating shame that comes with it: "I thought the eyes of all in the house were upon me, and I dared not look anyone in the face; for it verily seemed as if they saw the vileness of my heart and all the sins I had ever been guilty of" (206). On one hand, Brainerd's description of his conviction, compunction, and humiliation in this moment of preparation for the Lord's Supper is a sign of Brainerd's practice of the old-time New England religion of Shepard and Wigglesworth. But in its affective intensity, it has a decidedly Edwardsean inflection. In the end,

though, Brainerd's experience does not quite fit with either Shepard's method of preparation, or with Edwards's updated and aestheticized version of the practice. Brainerd's experience is so intense as to obliterate the working of that experience into any larger temporal method of personal devotion. Yet again, the experience of personal depravity interrupts his time, rather than measures and orders it. Whereas in the "Personal Narrative" Edwards's outstanding aesthetic ability to experience and express his own personal sinfulness, and to order his temporal religious progress by such a devotional method, affords him with a level of credibility as an evangelical leader, Brainerd experiences his personal depravity as uncontrollable interruptions that call into question his right to evangelical community membership.

Such moments appear repeatedly in *The Life of Brainerd*. On January 1, 1744, Brainerd laments: "Saw myself so vile and unworthy that I could not look my people in the face when I came to preach" (232). Later, after commencing his mission to the Housatonic, Brainerd is still occasionally plagued by these experiences "My spirits were very low and flat, and I could not but think I was a burden to God's earth; and could scarcely look anybody in the face" (355). To be sure, none of these moments ultimately destroy Brainerd's evangelical credibility, but they do threaten and detract from it while tormenting Brainerd immensely. Ultimately, these experiences of personal depravity are uncontrollable in intensity and duration: they occur at irregular and unmanageable temporal intervals, and they isolate Brainerd from religious community, calling into question his credible leadership. The aesthetic-affective moments of humiliation in Brainerd's religious life impress themselves as experiences working against the religious project of a life Brainerd aspires to in which he controls and uses every moment of time industriously in service of a method of personal evangelical progress.

Brainerd's Missions: The Displacement of Humiliation

On Thursday, July 18, 1744, as he nears his move to the indigenous mission field, Brainerd offers a diary entry that is indicative of a slight shift in his daily mood. He no longer battles regular and uncontrolled bouts of humiliation to the same degree he has in most of his diary. This slight change means that Brainerd turns his longing from a desire to escape himself, to a desire for deeper spiritual communion with God, manifest in the completely religious use of all secular time: "Longed to spend the little inch of time I have in the world more for God" (302). The best way to spend each moment for God, it seems, is missions, and his melancholy seems to be dissipating in his transition to dedicating himself full-time to missions. It is in missions that he is able to order his secular time in a satisfactorily religious manner. Looking outward to the state of Housatonic souls calms the constant concerns he has over his own soul, and it helps him to manage his time in a rightly evangelical manner. If he cannot see progress in his ability to control and regulate his own self-examination to apprehend, feel, and understand his own sinfulness, he can instead measure his temporal progress in the increasing ability to see, feel, and understand this sinfulness in the converting subjects of his evangelism.

The first time that this new way of controlling his own bad feelings about his personal sinfulness by projecting and exploring it in the ostensible depravity of the Housatonic becomes clear in his depiction, on September 21, 1745, of a native reformer who is seeking to lead his society back to its original, pre-European contact religious purity:

of all the sights I ever saw among them, or indeed anywhere else, none appeared so frightful or so near akin to what is usually imagined of infernal powers; none ever excited such images of terror in my mind, as the appearance of one who was a devout and zealous reformer, or rather restorer, of what he supposed was the ancient religion of the

Indians. He made his appearance in his pontifical garb, which was a coat of bears' skins, dressed with the hair on, and hanging down to his toes, a pair of bearskin stockings, and a great wooden face, painted the one half black, the other tawny, about the color of an Indian's skin, with an extravagant mouth, cut very much awry; the face fastened to a bearskin cap which was drawn over his head. He advanced toward me with the instrument in his hand that he used for music in his idolatrous worship, which was a dry tortoiseshell, with some corn in it, and the neck of it drawn on to a piece of wood, which made a very convenient handle. As he came forward he beat his tune with the rattle, and danced with all his might, but did not suffer any part of his body, not so much as his fingers, to be seen: And no man would have guessed by his appearance and actions that he could have been a human creature, if they had not had some intimation of it otherways. When he came near me I could not but shrink away from him, although it was then noonday, and I knew who it was, his appearance and gestures were so prodigiously frightful! (329)

This is one of the rare moments in which Brainerd attends to the cultural life of the people he intends to convert.¹⁰⁰ Here the terrors of Brainerd's pre-conversion fears, along with the continual interruption of bad feelings over his personal depravity that have hampered his temporal religious progress in methodical living at every turn, are tentatively calmed at this moment, in which the terrors and horrors of Brainerd's own unmanageable devotional life project onto this Indian spiritual leader at odds with Brainerd's mission. It is in moments like

¹⁰⁰ Richard W. Pointer notes that Brainerd's "own emotional and spiritual life were apparently affected by the character of his contact with Indians" even though he most often "felt compelled to disrupt native ceremonies and to dare local powwows to inflict their worst spells upon him" (404, 414).

these that the reason for the temporary dissipation of Brainerd's unmanageable humiliations while on the mission field becomes clear.

As Brainerd's dedication to his project in missions grows, his own uncontrollable feelings of personal sinfulness are externalized onto the Indian body and thus regulated, and he gains a sense of methodical control over his own life. On October 30, 1745, Brainerd expresses a feeling that shows how missions work is cathartic for him: "My soul was refreshed with a view of the continuance of God's blessed work among the Indians" (336). Thus the following day, when Brainerd does have some of his bad feelings, they are quite manageable in comparison to former interruptions: "Spent most of the day in writing: Enjoyed not much spiritual comfort; but was not so much sunk with melancholy as at some other times" (336). Brainerd's temporal progress in his own method of evangelical religion is his ability to mitigate the bad feelings of personal depravity by channelling them into a missions project for Housatonic souls as he projects those feelings onto what Brainerd frames as the grotesque and devoutly unconverted Indian body.¹⁰¹

It is important to note that conversion successes were the rare exception in Brainerd's mission experience. Joseph Conforti has noted how Brainerd was a "largely ineffectual young missionary" who was only made useful for evangelical print culture by Edwards's biography. My analysis of Brainerd's documentation of the unconverted Indian body advances the idea that it was precisely in these documentations that Brainerd's success is found. It is not in the numerical calculation of converts that Brainerd finds his success, but rather in his ability to

¹⁰¹ Norman Pettit has noted that "Brainerd's failure in the field has rarely been stressed," and further muses that Edwards himself "skirted the issue" ("Introduction" 3). But if we read Brainerd's mission as in fact primarily a mission to displace his own unmanageable feelings of personal sinfulness onto the Indian body, then we can argue that conversion may never have been the primary goal of the mission.

displace his own sinful feeling onto the Indian body, thus making these feelings manageable in a process of forward temporal progress in his own evangelical life-project (310-311). Brainerd's missions project is as much a success when he narrates the unconverted, depraved, and grotesque Indian body as when he narrates the converting one. Conforti has noted the way that Brainerd's berating in his journal of the Housatonic for being "unspeakably indolent and slothful" illustrates his obvious "ethnocentrism," and this point is true (322); but one should add that this moment is of a piece with Brainerd's documentation of the unconverted Indian reformer. As Brainerd's displacement of sinful feeling onto the unconverted Indian body allows him to manage those feelings and thereby achieve a sense of forward temporal movement, so Brainerd's berating of indolence allows Brainerd to displace his own paralyzing feelings of "indolence" documented in *The Life of Brainerd* onto the Indian body in a successful bid to manage those feelings and thereby achieve a sense of his own industrious control over his time (*Life of Brainerd* 209, 229). Laura M. Stevens follows Pointer and Conforti in contending that "Brainerd replaced an external goal of converting Indians with an internal goal of exerting himself in an effort to convert them" (*The Poor Indians* 144). This replacement is so remarkable to scholars not because of the shift itself, but precisely because of the way it allows Brainerd to displace his failed internal life of the temporal management of bad feelings onto the Indian body. The unconverted, indolent, and grotesque Indian body is the image of Brainerd's success in missions insofar as it enables his own occasional self-projection as one of industrious evangelical temporality.

Brainerd measures the temporal progress of success in missions by his ability to make a number of the Indians aware of their ontological status of depravity. This is an aesthetic-affective negative pleasure that converting and converted individual Indians take in recognizing depravity as their original state. The ontological state of depravity that Indians learn to experience and

express is more fundamental than the delinquency of random acts of character that contravene specific biblical commandments. Brainerd's proselytizing emphasis is not on particular sins, but on an ontological state of sinfulness. On March 24, 1746, Brainerd writes: "In the evening, read and expounded to my people [converted Housatonic] (those of them who were yet at home, and the strangers newly come) the substance of the third chapter of the Acts. Numbers seemed to melt under the Word, especially while I was discoursing upon Verse Acts 3:19" (377). As Brainerd expounds St. Peter's exhortation to the Gentiles of Jerusalem to convert to Christ, some of the listeners apprehend for the first time their depravity:

Sundry of the strangers also were affected. When I asked them afterwards whether they did not now feel that their hearts were wicked, as I had taught them, one replied, yes, she felt it now, although before she came here (upon hearing that I taught the Indians their hearts were all bad by nature, and needed to be changed and made good by the power of God) she had said her heart was not wicked, and she never had done anything that was bad in her life. And this indeed seems to be the case with them, I think, universally in their pagan state. They seem to have no consciousness of sin and guilt, unless they can charge themselves with some gross acts of sin contrary to the commands of the second table (377).

What this Indian woman demonstrates to Brainerd is, finally, a satisfactory understanding of her ontological state of depravity, rather than the simple delinquency of some specific action or actions. Two weeks later, on April 6, Brainerd again has similar success in his mission preaching: "There was also one man brought under very great and pressing concern for his soul; which appeared more especially after his retirement from public worship. And that which, he says, gave him his great uneasiness, was, not so much any particular sin, as that he had never

done the will of God at all, but had sinned continually, and so had no claim to the kingdom of heaven” (380). As with the woman a fortnight earlier, this man comes to see his personal depravity as consisting in a constant spiritual and affective posture, rather than in the juridical conviction of some specific, or “particular,” sin. Brainerd, meanwhile, can now mark the incremental progress of his mission by the progress in the numbers of Housatonic who come to have their own feelings of personal sinfulness.

David Brainerd’s methodical religious project of evangelical industry repeatedly meets with failure in those moments when his feelings of his own depravity interrupt the temporal progress of his sanctified life. His experiences of his own depravity are so intense and unmanageable that he is unable, in the social context of an evangelical community, to mobilize them in service of personal progress by properly regulating and expressing them aesthetically as both methods for and indicators of temporal progress in religious devotion. Brainerd’s experiences of his depravity are instead debilitating, and when he has them he can do nothing but wait hopefully for them to pass, even as he expresses a strong desire in those moments to escape himself in order to escape the bad feelings. But Brainerd eventually manages to subordinate these unregulated experiences and feelings of personal depravity into the systematic industry of a methodical evangelical life. He does this by projecting these experiences and feelings through missions work onto Housatonic bodies that externalize and signify his depravity in manageable ways that fit into a larger evangelical method of conversion and post-conversion religious industry. Where Brainerd is unable to favourably measure his own affective experiences of personal depravity, he is able to find mitigated success by measuring and describing the sinful feeling of the converting Housatonic bodies instead.

Brainerd's Legacy of Wasted Time and the Injunction to Do Better

One might read Jonathan Edwards's *The Life of Brainerd* as an exercise in American protestant evangelical hagiography, in which David Brainerd represents an extreme dedication to the cause of global conversion and Christian piety that most converts cannot measure up to, but can admire nonetheless as they gain spiritual edification from reading his story. Alternatively, one might read *The Life of Brainerd* as intended to be a model of imitation, where evangelical believers are to read the biography as a manual on how to do likewise. Neither of these interpretations of *The Life of Brainerd*, either of hagiography or of manual for godly imitation, quite makes sense.

David Brainerd's life is defined by the uncontrollable, inconsistent, and unmanageable moments in which a sense of his personal sinfulness overwhelms him affectively, intellectually, and spiritually, interrupting his temporal progress in daily life as an evangelical saint as they leave him debilitated—often more debilitated than the most extreme and ultimately deadly episodes of his tuberculosis leave him. It seems that *The Life of Brainerd* is offered to the evangelical public sphere as a model on which individual believers can improve in the crafting of their own methods and projects of pious industry. Readers, it would seem, are implicitly urged to experience their sinful feelings by expressing them aesthetically in a community of evangelical saints and integrating the experience into a method of temporal progress in affective and spiritual capacity. Readers are encouraged to gain control over their bad feelings of depravity by appropriate experience and expression, rather than losing control of these experiences and expressions as Brainerd does. By improving upon the example of Brainerd, awakened converts can hit closer to the mark of Edwards's own evangelical ambitions “never to lose one moment of time” as they fashion themselves according to the Edwardsean criterion—or invention—of an

aesthetic expression and analysis of feelings of personal sinfulness described in his resolutions and displayed in the “Personal Narrative.”

David Brainerd’s narrative does not end happily for him on the field of missions in which he can displace his sinful feeling onto indigenous bodies. On November 28, 1743, Brainerd fusses about the loss of precious time as he is crippled by uncontrollable instances in which he feels his own sinfulness: “Nothing lies heavier upon me than the misimprovement of time” (228). This complaint turns out to be a refrain in the biography: Brainerd’s sense of depravity makes him desire to improve his time in methodical Christian living, even as the intensity of these feelings incapacitates him. On February 24, 1744, he states: “Was exceeding restless and perplexed under a sense of the misimprovement of time; mourned to see time pass away; felt in the greatest hurry; seemed to have everything to do” (240). Jonathan Edwards’s own method of self-examination both motivates and demonstrates his ability to methodically organize time according to a rigorous program of progress in his ability to experience, understand, and express his own sinful feeling; on the other hand, David Brainerd’s sense of sinfulness and worthlessness paralyzes him and makes him a victim of rapidly passing secular time, in the face of which he can do nothing.

These experiences of anxiety over the failure to industriously use every moment of time in service of the personal evangelical life-project reach their culmination for Brainerd on his deathbed, where he becomes for Edwards the living realization of the guiding fantasy in the latter’s “Resolution #17” of forensically examining his own life from his own deathbed in order to rightly scrutinize, value, and order his own precious resource of secular time: “Resolved, that I will live so as I shall wish I had done when I come to die.” On October 11, 1746, when he realizes he is nearing death, Brainerd thinks much about the wasting of time: “Oh, how precious

is time! And how guilty it makes me feel when I think I have trifled away and misimproved it, or neglected to fill up each part of it with duty to the utmost of my ability and capacity!” (433) By the lights of any fellow missionary, Brainerd’s work on the mission field west of Stockbridge has been a success. But ultimately, Brainerd’s life consists of too many moments in which bad feelings of sinfulness incapacitate him and render him unable properly to express those feelings and integrate them as devotional moments into a religious method of personal industry in secular time.

One cannot imagine Edwards on his own deathbed expressing remorse over wasted time. Insofar as Edwards himself lived his life according to the resolutions he wrote in his early life—and every biographical indicator confirms that he did live his life according to them—one can only assume that Edwards would have been content with his own industrious use of each moment of time. This method of industry is based, contrary to Brainerd, on the ability to manage his own bad feelings of personal sinfulness and make them work through an inverse (or perhaps perverse) function in appropriate stylized expression indicating temporal religious industry. Edwards’s curation of Brainerd’s diary into *The Life of Brainerd*, on the other hand, is the carefully proposed example of a religious life lived with a litany of failures to maximize evangelical industry in secular time.

No matter the ways *The Life of Brainerd* may valorize the sacrifice of David Brainerd’s life to missions projects and the associated erasure of non-European and non-Christian spiritualities (and Edwards certainly does this in the preface), I do not think that the text is offered by Edwards as a model to imitate. David Brainerd’s many failures and only partial successes with respect to the employment of secular time in service of religious industry mean that the reader is implicitly invited to improve upon Brainerd’s example, rather than imitate it

directly. Where Edwards most likely offers his own “Personal Narrative” as an extreme and probably unattainable example of the perfection of religious method based on the temporally progressive experience and expression of personal depravity, he likely offers *The Life of Brainerd* as, conversely, a tragic example of failures and limited successes upon which the sincere evangelical convert can improve.

Conclusion: The Convert in Pain and the Unmaking of Evangelical Progress

In *The Body in Pain*, Elaine Scarry, notes that “Whatever pain achieves, it achieves in part through its unsharability, and it ensures this unsharability through its resistance to language” (4). In *The Life of Brainerd*, Edwards shares Brainerd’s private, or unshared sense of anguish over the temporal interruption that his bad feelings of personal sinfulness bring. Scarry notes that “pain does not simply resist language but actively destroys it” (4). In *The Life of Brainerd*, the reader observes the way in which the unmanageability of Brainerd’s mental suffering with respect to his feelings of personal sinfulness destroys not his language, but his life-project of temporal evangelical progress. Indeed, to adapt Scarry’s exploration of the world-unmaking properties of physical pain to my own exploration of the temporally world-unmaking properties of Brainerd’s mental and spiritual anguish, I would argue that Brainerd’s uncontrollable episodes of sinful feeling work as interruptions and destructions of linear progressive time.¹⁰² As Scarry states, “pain often has a “rhythmic on-off sensation, and thus it is also clear that one coherent dimension of the felt-experience of pain is this ‘temporal dimension’” (7). The temporal

¹⁰² One might object to the use of Scarry’s work here to describe the temporal unmaking of Brainerd’s mental and spiritual anguish. Scarry herself states that her subject is limited to physical pain because “physical pain—unlike any other state of consciousness—has no referential content. It is not *of* or *for* anything” (5). But this does not quite make sense: as Patricia Caldwell has adequately demonstrated, and this dissertation has repeated, the main struggle of mental suffering for the New England Puritan is the inability to find referential content for internal “bad feelings” of sinfulness, and Caldwell frames this problem in terms of Hamlet’s problem, which T.S. Eliot famously identified as the inability to find an “objective correlative” for his mental and emotional malaise.

character of Brainerd's bouts with depression over his sinful feeling are too intense in affective pressure, and too uncontrollable in chronological duration to connect to any larger temporal method of evangelical industry and progress through the process of their narration.

The way in which Brainerd's spiritual and mental pain regarding his bad feelings of personal sinfulness unmake his world of temporal progress is an aesthetic problem. Scarry proposes that art is a primary medium through which people attempt to express and make shareable a sense of physical pain (10). Brainerd's diary is an aesthetic attempt to make his own anguish manageable and able to fit into a temporal narrative of progress—but it is ultimately a failed attempt in this regard, unlike Edwards's "Personal Narrative." The interior "torture" of Brainerd's suffering produces the journal as a private "confession" in much the same way as physical torture elicits confession in Scarry's analysis (29). And Brainerd's mental and spiritual pain, just like the physical pain Scarry is interested in, self-intensifies due to the way it effects a state of "acute privacy" through its unshareability.¹⁰³ Brainerd never resolves the aesthetic-affective problem he faces in the diary of making his internal bad feelings of personal sinfulness available for a narrative of temporal evangelical industry that he can share socially with a faithful public. Edwards's curation and eventual publication of the diary, then, seems to be his proposing of an example of evangelical life upon which the faithful reader can improve.

Talal Asad's post-secular engagement with Scarry's theories about the relationship of pain to creative agency are important here, because he opens up her line of inquiry to explicitly include mental pain. First, Asad expands Scarry's work on physical pain to include mental pain of the kind I have explored in *The Life of Brainerd*, as he rejects "the too-neat distinction

¹⁰³ Sara Ahmed further emphasizes but also complicates Scarry's point about the socially isolating nature of pain: "Pain may be solitary, but it is never private" (*The Cultural Politics of Emotion* 29). While pain is isolated to the sufferer, it always comes with a social element, the attempt to describe the suffering to another.

between physical pain and mental pain” (*Formations of the Secular* 83). Second, Asad declares that “pain is not simply a cause of action, but can also itself be a kind of action” (69). In other words, where Scarry sees physical pain as phenomenologically destructive and prompting attempts at an aesthetic response that relieves the pain by making it shareable, Asad believes that the experience and expression of both physical and mental pain is—or can be—the creative action itself. Pain, Asad proposes, might be understood not simply “as a passive state (although it can be just that) but as itself agentic” (79). Both mental and physical suffering for Asad can be a creative “active, practical relationship inhabiting time” (83, emphasis added). Edwards takes the suffering of his own intense feelings of personal sinfulness and transforms it into an aesthetic project of negative pleasure that does indeed allow him to maintain a “practical,” progressive, and industrious relationship to time. Brainerd, on the other hand, experiences the unmanageable suffering of his sinful feeling in a passive state that interrupts time and counteracts his attempts to live a temporally industrious evangelical life.

Asad demonstrates how religiously oriented suffering often intends paradoxically to expand its subject’s secular agency. Asad notes that in early Christianity, the focus on martyrdom as a privileged and socially productive experience of pain created “new spaces for secular action,” as the heroism of martyrdom opened secular society up to Christian involvement in it. I would contend that Edwards’s focus on the temporality of the suffering self as affording, through aesthetic transformation, the opportunity for personal incremental progress within a society of believers creates new secular spaces of intervention as well: Edwards’s religious project of producing and expressing sinful feeling is another way of making secular time—the personal experience of linear duration—available to a religious life project.¹⁰⁴ David Brainerd

¹⁰⁴ “How pain is felt is in some measure dependent on how it is expressed, and how it is expressed is dependent on social relationships” (Asad 88).

fails to make his own painful experiences of sinful feeling fit into this method of personal temporal industry that is at once religious and secular. In his portrayals of himself in his diary, Brainerd is on the outside of evangelical society, and he constantly regrets his inability to make use of his time for evangelical industry. In Edwards's larger evangelical project, then, we see an example of how, through his articulation of the relationship of suffering to the industrious and aesthetic use of time, some mental pain is an agentive action that is, as Asad points out, "virtuous" (95). And Brainerd's regrets over his inability to use the suffering of his feelings of personal sinfulness for a narrative of temporal yet religious progress simply emphasizes Edwards's larger method.

While *The Life of Brainerd* recounts Brainerd's regrets over the way his unmanageable sinful feeling interrupts his ambitions to achieve an evangelical project of the industrious use of secular time for religious ends, this text is more than simply a cautionary tale: *The Life of Brainerd* is at once a warning about the temporally destructive effects of uncontrolled sinful feeling, even as it is a narrative indulgence of that very excess. Jennifer Snead has described the biography as demonstrating, in spite of its curator Edwards's desired outcome, Brainerd's "tenacious subjectivity, which sufficiently resisted Edwards's editorial attempts to subjugate it to the divine will" (*The Life of The Life of David Brainerd* 18). Edwards posits himself in the "Personal Narrative" as an exemplar of how to maximize sinful feeling for useful temporal industry in religious life. We might consider how *The Life of Brainerd* is Edwards's gothic indulgence in the idea of how the excessive negative depth and intensity of sinful feeling, while failing to achieve the maximum industry of Edwards himself, can still stand as an example of interrupted but legitimate evangelical temporal projection through "tenacious subjectivity."

Brainerd is thus both a cautionary tale for Edwards, and a sympathetic character with which the evangelical reading public can identify and indulge—but probably not imitate.

Chapter 8

“If the Senses Be Depraved”: Temporal Habit and Gothic Self-Management in *Wieland*

In Charles Brockden Brown’s opening “Advertisement” for *Wieland; Or the Transformation, an American Tale*, Brown acknowledges the problem which will harry his novel-writing: plot points and character actions aren’t believable because they seem to be based on either spurious science or supernatural *deus ex machina* techniques. Brockden Brown himself is anxious to set aside the idea that any part of his narrative is enchanted claptrap, and acknowledges that “Some” of the plot points could “approach as nearly to the nature of miracles as can be done by that which is not truly miraculous” (3). Brown finely works around the problem of the supernatural here. None of the events of his novel, he says, are miracles, though he acknowledges that some events are so extraordinary as to be nearly miraculous. While admitting the near-supernatural qualities present in his novel, Brown leaves unanswered the question of whether supernatural events in general are possible. In this discussion of the miraculous, the Brown reader will of course first think of the episode of spontaneous combustion—what I prefer to call self-explosion—in the novel, but Brown himself doesn’t directly refer to that incident. He could be referring to any of the many strange events and character actions in the novel. Brown seems to be acknowledging, then, that his novel is full of events and actions that could seem supernatural but are not. Brown next does directly address what he worries will be the least believable part of his narrative. That a hitherto, sane, kind, and loving husband and father could, in a fit of religious madness, murder his entire family. Here Brown is firm in his two-pronged self-defense. First, he appeals to expert authority: “the Writer must appeal to Physicians and to men conversant with the latent springs and occasional perversions of the human mind” (3). Doctors will know that this kind of madness can occur, as

will other “men” who have a special insight into what drives people. The nature of this insight isn’t specified, but Brown seems to be referring to a kind of expert knowledge about the darker side of the human psyche. The second part of Brown’s defense is historical, referencing the fact that the younger Wieland’s murder of his entire family is based on a historical event that actually happened (James Yates’s 1781 murder of his Pennsylvania family in a fit of religious madness similar to Theodore Wieland’s). Brown’s most pressing concern in the advertisement is less to convince readers of the realism of the spontaneous combustion, and more to make the reader understand that breakdowns of the modern, secular self— according to Charles Taylor “the buffered” self-governing and rational self, can and do happen. And his novel purports to expose the “latent springs and occasional perversions of the human mind” to explain this breakdown (Taylor 38).

Two things happen at once in the opening of *Wieland* in this advertisement: the supernatural is put in parentheses, and the focus and energy of gothic plot action shifts to the potential depravity of the self’s interior life. Maybe there are wonders of the invisible world, and maybe there aren’t, but either way these wonders, Brown claims, are not part of the picture in this novel. The novel is disenchanted in the sense that its subject is human interiority itself, not supernatural factors that can oppress or control the human subject, or, in Taylor’s historical telling of the pre-secular age, the porous self (38). The focus of the novel clearly moves to the interior life of its subjects. Supernatural factors foreclosed, two privileged domains of knowledge in this novel are the intricacy of Lockean human psychology and the technicalities of criminal responsibility in 18th-century legal theory, knowledge categories which the narrative both relies upon and critically interrogates.¹⁰⁵ But this does not mean the assumption of a purely secular

¹⁰⁵ Scholars have long been noting the complicated Lockean theme that runs through Brown’s gothic novel phase, with Beverly Voloshin describing Brown’s Lockean interests most succinctly in a 1986 article, contending that as

structure of rhetoric and concern in the “Advertisement.” As this dissertation shows repeatedly, in the Puritans’ temporally obsessed documenting of their own interior lives, the vastly greater part of religious method and experience for them is focussed on interior human life, not on divine or supernatural external factors. It is hard to say directly that Brown’s parenthesizing of the supernatural and eminent focus on the “occasional perversions of the human mind” is, in and of itself, a secular turn away from religious concerns. These same characteristics are the calling cards of Puritan piety as well: in (mostly) abstract principle, they are invested in the idea of the supernatural as a part of the process of conversion, but they essentially preclude the supernatural from the very process of conversion by assuming that conversion is a part of a method controllable in everyday life by appropriate methods of managing and marking oneself in secular time. And like Brown’s novel-writing, the Puritan method of Preparationism turns out to be a religious method of devotion that links the marking of secular time (duration) with the experience of sinful feeling (depravity).

A key clue to how to read *Wieland* as inheriting a Puritan narrative impetus that is a cultural hybrid of religion and the secular is to look for the linked deficits of temporal discipline and awareness of personal depravity in its characters. Such a reading exposes, in Edwardsean fashion, an inability on the part of Clara and Theodore Wieland, as well as their father, to manage the self and time in an appropriate fashion: the Wielands don’t measure up to the Edwardsean standard of methodical self-control practiced as the marking of time by progress in their personal abilities to apprehend and manage their internal psychological-spiritual states of

Brown “Draw[s] on” the philosophy of “Locke’s *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690)” and “turns the Lockean paradigm upon itself” through narrative critique (341). Laura Korobkin has provided a fascinating reading of *Wieland*’s critique of 18th-century American legal discourse, noting that the novel is “obsessed with law, saturated with the vocabulary of evidence, testimony, proof, inference, corroboration, and judgment,” ultimately challenging, through its narrative of familicide by a religious fanatic, Blackstonian legal theory’s faith in “the rational capacities of man” (723, 745).

depravity. In her opening first-person address, the protagonist and narrator of *Wieland*, Clara Wieland, notes that her tale is worth sharing because “it will exemplify the force of early impressions, and show the immeasurable evils that flow from an erroneous or imperfect discipline” (5). Immediately, then, this novel sets itself up as a cautionary tale—a moral tale perhaps. But more importantly it sets itself up as a novel about discipline. This isn’t necessarily about religious discipline, at least not to Clara, for she notes that she will “address no supplication to the Deity” because “The power that governs the course of human affairs has chosen its path” (5). Clara’s fatalism sounds quite a bit like enlightenment Deism. But whatever title one might give it, the important thing to note is that the spiritual is not foreclosed from the scene of the novel in its opening; instead, divine and supernatural intervention is simply pushed outside the picture in terms of its imposition on human agency. The Deity has chosen its path, and all that humans can do is turn their attention to temporal “discipline” as the appropriate realm of action by which to live the best life.

The question of whether the text of *Wieland* itself is religious or secular is a false dilemma. Postsecular criticism that attempts to re-evaluate and then reverse a cultural object’s earlier labelling as either secular or religious merely reifies those critical categories without directing scholarship toward new ways of defining and understanding those categories, their imbrication with each other, and their appearance in texts together as they produce objects that, with respect to distinctions between the religious and secular, are both/and (or neither/nor if one prefers). As Michael Kaufmann has pointed out, any attempt in literary studies to reinforce “categorical distinctions” between the religious and the secular” fails because it ignores the fact that both the religious and the secular are “product[s] of historical contingency and change” (“The Religious, The Secular, and Literary Studies” 609). Rather than situating *Wieland* as a

“religious” or “secular” text, this chapter’s analysis of *Wieland* identifies an Edwardsean secular-religion operating in the novel, as the text ultimately signifies in the “Protestant-secular continuum” Tracy Fessenden speaks of. This secular-religion, as part of the Protestant-secular genealogy of temporality this dissertation traces, is *Wieland*’s interest in the failure of its characters to manage their time through appropriate rituals and disciplines that posit the individual as a successfully buffered self only if this time-management is practiced appropriately. This secular-religion of cognitive and affective self-management through temporal discipline, understood as the appropriate projection of the self in the marking and management of time implies a buffered self, defined by Charles Taylor as the state of modern personhood conceiving itself as “invulnerable” and “master of the meanings of things for it” (38). In Puritan piety, this buffered self manages itself temporally through Preparationist structures of ritual and discipline that are explicitly religious and focussed on the apprehension of personal depravity—or sinful feeling. In Brown’s novel the failure of the Wielands to take up these temporal structures of discipline by linking duration and depravity in their daily lives is what haunts them and ultimately explodes their buffered selves.

Wieland ultimately complicates its articulation of what I call its “secular-religion” much further by proposing how a lack of appropriate personal temporal discipline leads to a literal explosion of the buffered self from within. The gothic action of *Wieland* rejects supernatural explanations for all of the main events: the father’s spontaneous combustion, the son’s obedience to the voice of a God only he can hear, and the daughter’s descent into passive depression. The terrific action of the gothic in this novel does not depend on articulating what Taylor calls “the porous self” as a return of the repressed religious subject who is “vulnerable” to “spirits, demons,” and “cosmic forces” (38). Instead, the power of gothic terror in the text lies in its

narration of an Edwardsean Puritan lesson: passive relationships of the self to time as the source of self-projection lead to the explosion of the buffered self from within due to interior forces of psychological and spiritual depravity that have been unaccounted for.¹⁰⁶ The novel contends that, through inadequate temporal self-management, the buffered self projected in a passive state is liable to be overridden by “depraved” thoughts, desires, and behaviours that undo it, leading even to involuntary physiological responses such as self-explosion and the hearing of voices falsely supposed to be divine. In so many ways, then, the moral thrust of *Wieland* is both religious and secular—or, as I say, secular-religious. *Wieland* advances the idea of time as a homogenous empty medium in which a person can theoretically project oneself actively through rigorous self-discipline. But more concretely in the narrative, *Wieland* articulates a model of selfhood that, while not porous in a pre-secular or anti-secular sense, is vulnerable through a lack of adequate temporal self-discipline—or piety—to its own worst thoughts and impulses. The self is not liable to spontaneously combust in a supernatural moment of divine intervention, but is vulnerable through a lack of personal rigor in an uncontrolled self-projection that has failed to account for and understand its own depravity.

This chapter both builds on and departs from Russel Reising’s important reading of *Wieland* in relation to New England Puritanism. Resisting traditional historicist readings of *Wieland* in contextual relation to arguments about the American Enlightenment, the tumultuous first decade of the republic, letters of the republic, and transatlantic literary controversies about the gothic novel form, Russel Reising has provided a contextual reading of the novel in terms of its relationship to Puritanism. Proposing that Brown is early America’s literary historian, Reising contends that, in fictional form, “Brown completes, as it were, [Cotton] Mather’s project” of

¹⁰⁶ No one to my knowledge has commented on the passive state of the Theodore Wielands (Sr. and Jr.). Beverley Voloshin has noted Clara’s “Lockean consciousness” as “largely passive” (354).

history in the *Magnalia Christi Americana* and “develops what we understand...to be the Hawthornian historical genre” (*Loose Ends* 45). Although previous scholars such as Larzer Ziff, Michael T. Gilmore, Norman Grabo, and Jane Tompkins have all connected the events of *Wieland* to Puritan religious history, Reising has offered the most advanced reading of this relationship by arguing that Brown “align[s] the Wielands with a spectrum of American Puritan ideas” (50). He notes that the novel begins with an “Application,” much like a Puritan sermon, and further notes, as I do, that the moral application of the novel is about proper individual “discipline” (51). Reising contends that the novel critiques the imperfect moral and epistemological disciplines of Carwin, Pleyel, and especially the Puritan “Calvinism/antinomianism of the Wielands” (51). Thus, contrary to the reading of this chapter, Reising proposes that *Wieland* offers a “highly compressed critique of the violence inherent in the beliefs and practices of Puritan ‘founding fathers’”—especially Jonathan Edwards’s conversion rhetoric (69, 64).¹⁰⁷

Instead of reading *Wieland* as a secular literary critique of Puritan origins as Reising does, this chapter contends that *Wieland* transmits rather than rejects an approach to the linked concepts of temporal discipline and the apprehension of personal depravity that are formed by the history of New England Puritanism, reaching peak articulation in Jonathan Edwards, who

¹⁰⁷ Reising is, of course, not the only scholar to read *Wieland* as a critique of Puritan history; Although Jane Tompkins frames the novel primarily as an earnest political document which Brown sent to then Vice-President Jefferson as a Federalist moral tale to correct the latter’s confidence in limited government, she reads Clara and Theodore Jr. as “embody[ing] passage from Puritan narrowness to large-minded enlightenment views not only in their character and education, but in the setting and activities Brown assigns to them” (*Sensational Designs* 50). Tompkins further contends that part of this political argument of the novel contains a “critique of Calvinist theology” as it takes form in Theodore Jr.’s sudden religious passion (57). In reading the novel as primarily a political tract that relegates the novel’s religious themes to a secondary level of importance, Tompkins assumes a secularization narrative of knowledge divisions in which religion and politics are separate concerns, with religion subordinate to the political in the public sphere. Nancy Rutenburg has read *Wieland*’s obsession with the political authority and verification of voice as historically resonant with arguments about the same thing between the Old and New Lights in the Great Awakening (*Democratic Personality* 211-270).

Brown read and was familiar with.¹⁰⁸ This reading sees the moral tale *Wieland* tells as highly resonant and in continuity with the cumulation of gothic Puritan temporality in the writings of Jonathan Edwards. In reading *Wieland* as a cultural extension of Puritan ideas about duration and depravity, this chapter offers a postsecular approach that resists religious/secular dichotomies and instead connects those categories.

Although he does not explicitly say so, Reising seems to assume that *Wieland* as a novel is a secular form of fictional history that critiques the religious part of the origins of the American republic.¹⁰⁹ Instead, this chapter suggests that the novel illustrates rather than critiques lessons of Puritanism by advancing Edwards's emphasis on personal spiritual discipline as the active management of time through a progressive cognitive and affective grasp of one's own internal depravity. In doing so, this analysis proposes in post-secular fashion that the text resists categorizations of religious or secular. Just as Brockden Brown himself took up a complicated relationship to his religious origins, refusing to "condemn Christianity" but resisting assent to a "system of Christianity," so *Wieland* transmits and endorses a religious form of piety without assuming the need to practice it in institutional form (Brown, quoted in Verhoeven 25). *Wieland* does not perform a secular gothic critique of Puritan violence in the same way that Anne Radcliffe and Monk Lewis perform gothic indulgences and critiques of Roman Catholicism; rather, it recalls, through "references" and "echoes," Edwardsian temporal discipline's

¹⁰⁸ Although it is true that Brown was raised as a Quaker and later espoused a liberal rejection of institutional Christianity, Reising rightly notes that *Wieland*'s "narrative" can still most fruitfully "be read with reference to the culturally and socially more influential form of religious enthusiasm that we commonly call Puritan" (Kamrath 23; Reising 50). Brown was personally familiar with Edwards's writings, and owned a copy of his *Two Dissertations* (Kamrath 23).

¹⁰⁹ More recently, Renata R. Mautner Wasserman has suggested that the religion of the *Wielands* is not an allegory for Puritanism, but a direct narrative critique of "German-origin pietism and radical Protestantism that impels the characters to do their evil deeds" (202). It is certainly plausible to contend this, but it would be more helpful to continue noting the resonances of *Wieland* with narratives of Puritan religion. And Mautner Wasserman's characterization of the novel as a secular critique of religion cannot hold in a postsecular assessment of the novel.

progressive measurement of interior depravity and proposes it as a necessary part of individual temporal discipline in the ideal early-American citizen (Reising 59).¹¹⁰ Lack of this temporal discipline of oneself and one's depraved interior life leads to an explosion—or transformation—of the buffered self and responsible citizen into a either criminal threat to pacific republicanism (Theodore Wieland) or a passive—even complicit—observer of that threat (Clara Wieland). *Wieland* is a cautionary tale that displays the terror to which its victims become prey due to their inability to mark and manage their time according to an increasing ability to measure and control the fact and feeling of their internal depravity. Marshall Surratt has shown that Edwards's depiction of David Brainerd is a likely source for Brown's portrait of the elder Theodore Wieland. I further contend that the Wielands are to Brown in this chapter as Brainerd is to Edwards in the previous chapter: examples for the authors of the consequences of failure to embrace and affectively control feelings of depravity in a methodical management of one's time that resists uncontrollable fluctuations between "fear and ecstasy" (Surratt 318).¹¹¹

This chapter's postsecular reading of *Wieland* does not isolate its focus to concerns about the novel's religious genealogy, but connects the text's transmission of Puritan lessons about duration and depravity to the novel's clear concerns about the threat of insidious citizenship and continued revolutionary violence to the state of the new republic, concerns that dominate a historicist tradition of *Wieland* criticism first championed by Jane Tompkins (*Sensational Designs* 43). Brown famously sent a copy of *Wieland* to then vice-president Thomas Jefferson,

¹¹⁰ Like Reising, Galluzzo has more recently noted the way in which *Wieland* references American colonial history and its own transatlantic revolutionary context, not through direct citation, but through "echoes" (260). Indeed, *Wieland* resists any historicist reading that attempts to read the novel as making a clear and direct political or moral argument in its context; for example, Eric Wolfe's reading of the novel, through radical democratic theory, as proposing a "critique of identity" in the context of the Alien and Sedition Acts and XYZ affair, only proposes *Wieland* as offering "oblique commentary" on the political tumult—not direct comment (437, 434).

¹¹¹ Marshall N. Surratt has shown that Edwards's *Life of Brainerd* "probably would have been familiar" to Brown, and further contends that the Theodore Wieland Sr.'s "morbid introspection" and oscillation between "fear and ecstasy" make "Brainerd a compelling literary source for Brown" (316, 318).

whose democratic valorization of rural agrarianism as both vice-president and president Brown disapproved of. Frank Shuffleton has pointed out, in the context of the Brown-Jefferson connection, that Brown published *Wieland* at a time in which early citizens of the republic were engaged in legal arguments over where the location of “judgement” of criminality and innocence should be placed in the juridical system. Laura Korobkin notes that in *Wieland* “every reader and every character is cast as a juror at whose ‘bar’ evidence of crime is presented for judgment ” (723). Anthony Galluzzo has argued that *Wieland* offers “an aesthetic education of sorts for the Wieland family” that demonstrates the “interpenetration” of the optimal “political” and “aesthetic” knowledge for the new republican citizen (257). Jennifer Harris reads *Wieland* in part as a response to fears of continued revolutionary violence in the US following the perceived chaos of revolution in France after 1789 (200).

One thing these legal and republican readings of *Wieland* tend to share is their isolation of the novel’s political legal, and philosophical concerns from its religious ones. For example, Shuffleton contends that “Brown came to believe that [judgement] should be lodged” not primarily in a strictly legally conceived individual or collective body such as a judge or a jury, but “in ordinary citizen readers exercising a judgement at once political and aesthetic” (95).¹¹² Shuffleton claims that Clara, for example, functions in her role as arbiter of the claims to innocence of Carwin and Theodore as the location of legal judgement in the novel, but he also points out that the novel demonstrates the spectacular failure of “purely private judgements”—not only Clara’s judgements, but also Theodore’s judgement of himself as obedient to a divine

¹¹² Shuffleton is assessing in *Wieland* what Siân Silyn Roberts’s has more recently studied in *Arthur Mervyn*: Brown’s gothic vision and critique of Lockean “self-governing individuals” operating on a model of “rational individualism” (Roberts 308). In 1986, Beverly Voloshin already recognized that *Wieland* was both working within and critiquing Lockean thought as well as theories of nature and mind “derived” from Locke that were also popular in the 1790s (353).

order to murder his wife and children. Given Clara's closing injunction to the reader to "moralize" on the tale of the novel, Shuffleton claims that one of the lessons of the novel is a rejection of "the law in favor of standards of judgement that were aesthetic and moral rather than merely legal" (101). According to this reading, Brown frames judgement of innocence and guilt in the new republic as a "right" of the new republic's citizens, a right which depended for its continued proper use on resistance to the "division" of judgement into separate "realms" of morality, law, and aesthetics (101). As Shuffleton would have it, Brown's lesson in *Wieland* is that the individual citizen of the republic, rightly operating, is the moral, legal, and aesthetic judge of her fellow citizen's guilt or innocence. The tragic thrust of this lesson in *Wieland* for Shuffleton is simply due to characters such as Clara's and Theodore's failure to rightly use this judgement in due consultation with other citizens (102). Likewise, Korobkin points out that the novel "invites" the reader to fill the juridical vacuum produced by Clara, who "abdicates" the role of judge at the end of the novel (745).

This chapter advances and contends with what I see as a political tradition of *Wieland* criticism oriented around juridical problems of judgement and citizenship by proposing that the novel suggests judgement as at once a moral, legal, aesthetic-affective, *and* secular-religious duty which the ideal citizen should carry out methodically on oneself in an active relationship to the passage of one's time. While Shuffleton, Korobkin, and others correctly identify the novel's distinct emphasis on problems of criminal judgement, this reading further suggests that *Wieland* proposes judgement not as the responsibility of the individual to carry out on other individuals, but as an individual aesthetic-affective, moral, legal, and even religious responsibility one must properly perform on oneself. This responsibility is met by progressively recognizing and managing one's time (duration) to identify and manage sinful feeling (depravity), and is thus a

rejection of the passive temporality of “impressions” that define a secular Lockean self (Brown 5).¹¹³ The threats to the new secular republic of uncivility and depravity are mitigated not by the right separation or execution of powers (judge and jury) in a juridical system itself separated as a discursive silo from moral, aesthetic, and religious concerns, but by self-managing citizens who control themselves and achieve the status of “buffered” selves, not through enlightenment epistemologies (Locke or Jefferson) but through quasi-religious methods of discipline (Edwards): actively using time for a progressive and methodical recognition of their own depraved capacity as secular agents.

Brown sent a copy of *Wieland* to Jefferson because he opposed the latter’s agrarian anti-federalist confidence in the ability of “the chosen people of God,” understood as “Those who labour in the earth,” to rightfully govern themselves and execute their duties of citizenship and judgement thanks to their “peculiar deposit” of “substantial and genuine virtue” (Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* 664). Brown knew this vision would fail if it did not account for the possibility of profound depravity and temporal passivity in these very people. *Wieland* teaches that what Jefferson calls the “sacred fire” of these idealized agrarian citizens in actual fact ignites an explosion of the self from within if these citizens fail to produce Edwardsean habits of temporal self-management that account for, rather than deny the ontological, epistemological, juridical, and religious fact and feeling of internal depravity (Jefferson 664). The *Wielands* are not, as one critic contends, “engulfed by the fire” of over-indulged “Puritan habits of agonized introspection,” but by a confident Republican refusal of those very temporal habits (Judson 26).

¹¹³ From the beginning, Brown’s emphasis on the formative and often damaging nature of “impressions” in personal development signal both his dependence on and criticism of a secular Lockean conception of identity as foundational to citizenship (Brown 5)

The Elder Theodore Wieland

Brown's focus on temporal discipline, its potentials and inadequacies, is almost entirely the subject of Clara's summary of her father's life. His shortcomings are entirely due to his inability to discipline himself by managing himself and his time appropriately. This shortcoming begins while he is working as a mercantile apprentice in London, when, "One Sunday afternoon," he becomes accidentally religiously transformed—not methodically converted in Preparationist fashion—by "a book written by one of the teachers of the Albigenses, or French Protestants" that he "chanced to light upon" when "his eye was attracted by a page of this book, which, by some accident, had been opened and placed in his full view" (7-8).¹¹⁴ Sunday here is supposed to be no special day, besides the fact that it affords the young Wieland some time away from work and the opportunity to "retire for a few minutes" to "repair" a "rent in some part of his clothes" (7-8). Wieland hasn't given any particular attention to his Sunday as a special temporal interval in which to discipline himself religiously, but a religious "accident" happens nonetheless when he stumbles across this deeply flawed and unmethodical religious book, which contains "an exposition of the doctrine of the sect of the Camissards, and an historical account of its origin" (8). Wieland is taken with the text, and he spends all of his "nocturnal and Sunday hours in studying the book" (8). Every spare moment of his time, then, goes into this religious study, which is now an uncomfortable mix of equal parts accident and uncontrolled enthusiastic addiction.

Reading the book forces the young Wieland to "procure" a "Bible" as the religious document that will verify the spiritual claims of the Albigense/Camissard book, but Wieland

¹¹⁴ Reising proposes that Theodore Sr.'s "accidental" conversion is "like numerous Puritan converts" (52). But Preparationism as method for conversion, from Hooker to Shepard to Wigglesworth to Edwards, is always a highly disciplined, non-accidental form of temporal conversion.

makes a methodical failure when he only reads the Bible through the authority of the book he has already been studying: “Every fact and sentiment in this book [the Bible] were [sic] viewed through a medium which the writings of the Camissard apostle had suggested” (8). Uneducated and uncritical in his enthusiastic devotion, the young Wieland saturates his free time with the most unmethodical form of religious study in which “His constructions of the text were hasty, and formed on a narrow scale,” and further in which “Everything was viewed in a disconnected position” (8). There is no system or method here, neither in Wieland’s management of his time (he throws every spare moment into crazed and “hasty” study of this book), nor in his style of scriptural hermeneutics, in which “One action and one precept were not employed to illustrate and restrict the meaning of another” (8). The two lacks of temporal and expositional method are intimately connected with each other: every spare moment of Wieland’s free time goes to an addicted, hasty, and unsystematic religious interpretation.

Wieland’s lack of temporal and hermeneutical self-control in his enthusiastic religious devotion is connected to the affect of fearful confidence which dominates it. In his “morals” and general comportment (“looks, gestures, and phrases”), Wieland is “mournful and contemplative” (9). And above all, he “labour[s] to keep alive a sentiment of fear” which is connected to his unquestioned belief in a naturally and constantly intervening God, “a belief of the awe-creating presence of the Deity” (9). Fear leads to a peaking of doubt in his religious life, but it then declines into a kind of fearful confidence: “It was to be expected that the tide of his emotions would sometimes recede, that intervals of despondency and doubt would occur; but these gradually were more rare, and of shorter duration; and he, at last, arrived at a state considerably more uniform in this respect” (9). Fear is steady, and despondency and doubt tend to disappear. Uncontrolled religious fear for the young Wieland, then, paradoxically leads to confidence rather

than to healthy self “doubt.” Fear and pride are intimately bound up together in Wieland’s temporally and hermeneutically unmethodical religious enthusiasm.

One cannot help but read Wieland’s emigration to America as at least in part a fictional allegory for both the Puritan exodus to New England and the formation of the Weberian secular-protestant industrious personality. Wieland has become *persona non grata* in England due to his religious convictions and confidence—his combination of melancholy and pride: “Residence in England had, besides, become almost impossible, on account of his religious tenets” (9). This fact, combined with his newly acquired “opinion that it was his duty to disseminate the truths of the gospel among the unbelieving nations,” more specifically “The North American Indians,” leads Wieland to emigrate to Pennsylvania, where he settles the Mettingen estate, “a farm on the Schuylkill” river in the country “within a few miles of the city” (9-10). As easily as Wieland took up his accidental religion, he drops it, once “The cheapness of land, and the service of African slaves” gives him “all the advantages of wealth” (10). Dropping his unmethodical religious addiction, he picks up the methodical life of Weber’s secular-Protestant capitalist: “He passed fourteen years in a thrifty and laborious manner. In this time new objects, new employments, and new associates appeared to have nearly obliterated the devout impressions of his youth” (10). Wieland marries, has a family, runs his farm and business founded on slave-labour, and temporarily forgets his enthusiasm.¹¹⁵ In the loss of a temporally undisciplined and

¹¹⁵ Bridget Bennet has recently examined the Brown’s muted exploration of the spectre of slavery in *Wieland*, in which “dark secrets” are associated with “the silence surrounding the hut” which serves as slave-quarters at Mettingen (“The Silence Surrounding the Hut: Architecture and Absence in *Wieland*” 369). For a treatment of the problem of indigeneity in *Wieland*, see Stefan Schoberl in’s “Speaking in Tongues, Speaking Without Tongues: Transplanted Voices in Charles Brockden Brown’s *Wieland*”; Schoberl in contends that Brown “negotiate[es] the very limits and possibilities of white authorship in occupied, Native lands” (537). Both Bennet and Schoberlein’s attention to muted issues of slavery and indigeneity in the text respond to Sarah Rivett’s 2013 identification of the “spectral” presence of Indians in the novel (“The Spectral Indian Presence in Early American Literature”).

enthusiastic religion, Wieland gains the methodical life of the secular capitalist who manages himself and his time in “a thrifty and laborious manner” (10).

The tragedy for Wieland here is that he becomes wealthy enough to have leisure time, and in that leisure time he falls back into his unmethodical religious enthusiasm when he is “visited afresh by devotional contemplation” and “The reading of the scriptures, and other religious books” which revive his “ancient belief relative to the conversion of the savage tribes” (10). His attempts to convert the natives, though “revived with uncommon energy,” are “attended with no permanent success” (10). Instead, Wieland meets with “insult and derision...fatigues, sickness, hunger, and solitude” (10). He is hindered not only by “The licenses of savage passion” but also by unnamed “artifices of his depraved countrymen,” both groups “opposed” to his “progress” (10). Eventually he comes to believe that he no longer has the “obligation to persevere” in his evangelism, and he returns to family and farm.

For the first time in his life, Wieland appears to have found an appropriate balance of domestic, social, and religious devotion all undergirded by a methodical—if rigorous—management of his time: “An interval of tranquility succeeded. He was frugal, regular, and strict in the performance of domestic duties” (10-11). Although his religion is antisocial and he “allie[s] himself with no sect” because he “perfectly agree[s] with none,” he generally fits in well with his society and his family, and maintains a methodical commitment to keeping time according to his personal religious practice in which he sets aside on each day “An hour at noon, and an hour at midnight” in the religious “edifice” he builds on a “precipice” that is “sixty feet above the river which flowed at its foot” becoming “the temple of his Deity” in which he continues to rigorously mark and manage time: “Twice in twenty-four hours he repaired hither, unaccompanied by any human being” (11).

In this new, more methodical phase of Wieland's religious life, he becomes defined by a "sadness" that "perpetually overspread his features," a sadness that eventually becomes uncontrollable as Wieland loses control of his time again (12). This sadness is not a temporally progressive and rigorous Edwardsean aesthetic-affective apprehension of his own guilt, but is instead combined with deep confidence and pride: "His own belief of rectitude was the foundation of" this sadness that shuttles wildly to "happiness" on occasion (12). This strange combination of sadness and confidence comes to an abrupt end—or, to put it more accurately, meets, in Brainerd-like fashion, an uncontrolled temporal interruption—when "Suddenly the sadness that constantly attended him was deepened" (12). This new, more intense, and eminently unmanageable sadness stems from his conviction that he has neglected "A command" that "had been laid upon him" (12). The interval of opportunity to perform this unspoken and mysteriously unexplained religious duty has passed, and now he is told by his deity that he is "no longer permitted to obey," and must resign himself "to endure the penalty" for his religious negligence" (12). The penalty, like the neglected task for which it is assigned, remains unspoken and undescribed, but Clara notes that this penalty seems simply to be an immense and uncontrollable affect of guilt—an unmanageable passion of guilty feeling: "It appeared to be nothing more for some time than a sense of wrong" (12). Like Brainerd, Wieland's guilt grows, but he is unable to manage it and express it by recruiting it into a manageable temporal economy as Edwards did: "Time, instead of lightening the burden appeared to add to it" (12). As a result of his inability to manage his time and his feelings of guilt, his anxieties ("anticipations") remain "vague and indefinite" (12-13).

Wieland's vague fate comes into focus on a "sultry day in August" when he returns to Mettingen from the city (Philadelphia) and is "indisposed" to a degree that alarms the rest of his

family (13). This day, Wieland awaits his midnight devotional hour in unusual fashion, and the scene is defined by the relationship of the marking of time to a particular mood of uncontrollable fear: “Contrary to custom, the lamp, instead of being placed on the hearth, was left upon the table. Over it against the wall, there hung a small clock, so contrived as to strike a very hard stroke at the end of every sixth hour. That which was now approaching was the signal for retiring to the fane at which he addressed his devotions” (14). Time passes, and Wieland watches anxiously as he keeps time according to his specially crafted clock, but he himself has no control, either over his emotional state or the use of his time. Wieland becomes paralyzed by a fear in which he loses control of himself and his time: “Now frequent and anxious glances were cast at the clock. Not a single movement of the index appeared to escape his notice. As the hour verged toward twelve his anxiety visibly augmented” (14). Wieland helplessly marks time in this religious state of unmitigated fear, and when the moment striking the special midnight hour of his devotions comes, he is completely startled from his paralyzed state: “At length the hour was spent, and the clock tolled. The sound appeared to communicate a shock to every part of my father’s frame” (14). Wieland’s state doesn’t affect only him. This mood that combines uncontrollable fear with a complete inability to use the parts of time in positive action also falls on his wife, who “gazed at the clock, with nearly as much eagerness as my father had done, in expectation of the next hour” (15). Everyone in the scene, paradoxically rendered passive by a fixation on the clock, loses control of both time and emotional state.

Exactly one “half hour” passes in this midnight vigil (Wieland at his special temple, his wife anxiously watching and waiting) before the novel’s infamous episode of spontaneous combustion (what I prefer to call self-explosion) occurs, blasting Wieland mysteriously while he performs his hour of worship in his special edifice built for the purpose. As Wieland’s wife

watches, “A gleam diffused itself over the intermediate space, and instantly a loud report, like the explosion of a mine, followed” (15). When she recovers from the involuntary shock, she notices that the blast of light that staggered her remains in the “edifice,” which is “filled with rays” (15). Wieland’s wife calls her brother from the house, he runs to the special religious building on the cliff, “for a moment exhausted by his haste,” and has the opportunity to observe the “cloud impregnated with light” that remains in the edifice, which “vanishe[s]” the moment he sets his “feet within the apartment,” leaving him “powerless” with “Fear and wonder” (16). Clara’s uncle is thus another person in the scene who loses control in the face of this strong brand of religious fear. Wieland himself is, of course, in a terrible physical state after the self-explosion, “naked...scorched and bruised” (16). But his mental and emotional state is much worse, as he is “nearly in a state of insensibility...passive under every operation...with thoughts full of confusion and anxiety” (17). He relates the story of his combustion to Clara’s uncle, but the latter believes that “half the truth had been suppressed” before Wieland dies, “two hours” after the incident.

The entire episode of self-explosion strains credulity (which leaves the author eager to remind his readers in a footnote that such cases of spontaneous combustion have been documented). But more importantly, this scene sets the tone for Clara’s own life and leaves her with unanswerable but very important questions that set the tone of the novel. When the incident occurs, Clara is “a child of six years of age,” and she notes in recounting the tale as narrator that, in the Lockean sense, “impressions that were then made” on her “can never be effaced” (18). This trauma runs deep in her, and, in this moment, the reader is invited to take this declaration into consideration as an invitation to read Clara herself as a less-than-reliable narrator of events. The trauma has the effect of leaving Clara with some pointed questions about the relationship of

the natural to the supernatural, even as she, for obvious reasons, comes to question the value of religious commitment such as her father's: "Was this the penalty of disobedience? This the stroke of a vindictive and invisible hand? Is it fresh proof that the divine ruler interferes in human affairs, meditates an end, selects and commissions his agents, and enforces, by unequivocal sanctions, submission to his will?" (18) In this series of questions, Clara asks whether or not religion is true, in a strict Enlightenment sense in which truth is the absolute verifiability of a religion's theological claims. These questions remain unanswered, and Clara turns to a second line of questioning: "Or, was it merely the irregular expansion of the fluid that imparts warmth to our heart and blood, caused by the fatigue of the preceding day, or flowing, by established laws, from the condition of his thoughts?" (18) This second set of questions is not clearly a secular critique of religious belief. The fact remains for Clara, regardless of her own thoughts about religion, that an extraordinary event has occurred, and she needs to interpret it.

David Smith reads the spontaneous combustion incident as Brown's indulgence of the supernatural in the novel, claiming that because "the incident at the temple eludes an easy empirical explanation," it raises "more questions about Brown's affirmed allegiance to Enlightened principles and their ability to refute religious 'superstitions' in both the Gothic and the national context" (5). Smith's reading of the spontaneous combustion incident as "undermining a definitive rational explanation" depends on interpreting the novel in terms of an opposition between religion as "superstition" and secular interpretation as comprised of "Enlightened principles"—an opposition that doesn't hold in a postsecular approach (Smith 8). The spontaneous combustion event is neither a supernatural critique of enlightened confidence, nor a return of a repressed religious atavism, but is a proto-pragmatic narrative lesson on the psychological and ultimately physiological destruction that inadequate, unmethodical religious

practice produces in its subjects. In her second line of questioning, Clara seems less to be interrogating the truth claims of religion by positing either natural or supernatural causes of her father's death than she seems to be interrogating the value of her father's religion particularly as a way of coping with himself and managing his time. Perhaps, she is implying, the "irregular expansion" of fluids that caused the self-explosion was itself caused by "fatigue," or even more pointedly, Wieland's own bad "condition" of "thoughts." The question for Clara seems to be less about whether the cause of the combustion was natural or supernatural, and more about whether or not her father's own particular form of religion created an adverse psychological state that set the conditions for a physical explosion. Clara isn't asking whether or not religion is "true" as a way of explaining the phenomenon of the spontaneous combustion through an appeal to the supernatural. We know from the opening pages of the novel that Clara subscribes to the idea of God as the clock-winder or *deus absconditus* who has set nature as the course of human events, which humans must interpret and navigate. Clara is not asking about the truth of religion in general, but whether a particular erratic form and unmethodical practice of religion destabilized her father's psychological state to the point that it created the physiological conditions ("irregular expansion" of "fluid") for this natural event. The very strong implication that Clara gives is that, through his inability to manage his religious experiences, emotions, and above all his time, through a methodical practice of religion, her father Wieland became "exhausted" in his "irregular" religion based on uncontrollable "thoughts" and feelings, thus setting the conditions for his entirely natural self-explosion. Wieland's religious life thus offers a natural explanation for the extraordinary event. The buffered self explodes from within due to unmethodical religious practice that fails to regulate itself in this-worldly time.

The Untimeliness of Religious Hauntology in the Second Generation of Wielands

After the traumatic events of Wieland's spontaneous combustion, the novel moves forward to a new phase defined by the next generation of Wielands, Clara and her older brother Theodore; this new phase is defined by the Wielands' relationship to time just as the first one is. Clara and Theodore are quickly orphaned, as Wieland's wife is so shaken by the combustion that she quickly succumbs to "a disease" (18). Theodore and Clara are assigned to "a maiden aunt" whose "tenderness" leaves the children "tranquil and happy," with lives that have "few of those cares that are incident to childhood" (19). One of the aunt's neighbours, Catharine Pleyel, quickly becomes a playmate of "bewitching softness" (19). Theodore, Catharine, and Clara quickly become an inseparable threesome. While living with their aunt, Theodore and Clara are "instructed in most branches of useful knowledge," and Theodore has the "fortune" of inheriting the Mettingen estate which "determine[s] that his profession should be agriculture," but with he himself "exempted...from the necessity of personal labour." A further benefit for Theodore is that he doesn't have to study the subject of his profession for periods of "any long time" (19). Clara and Catharine do however sometimes miss him when he is away for studies, as they are a pair "on whom time had no other effect than to augment our impatience in the absence of each other and of him" (20). Time for these young people is simply something that passes, which they don't mark except when they are impatient, and which they use for nothing other than leisurely pursuits such as "walks" and "music" otherwise (19-20). These young people neither mark nor control their time, except when overtaken by the briefest moments of "impatience."

In their youth, and despite the precedent of their father, these young people passively experience time as something which only has positive experiences in store for them: "The felicity of that period was marred by no gloomy anticipations. The future, like the present, was

serene. Time was supposed to have only new delights in store” (20). Life for these young people is a passive reverie in which they neither mark nor use time with any particular kind of intentionality or method. Soon they come of age to inherit Mettingen, and the estate is “equally divided” between Theodore (now married to Catharine) and Clara. Here again on the estate, they take to a kind of quasi-religion that, though very different from that of their father’s, is still like his noticeably unmarked by any kind of method. This religion is as accidental in its tenets and as temporally undisciplined as the elder Wieland’s was:

It must not be supposed that we were without religion, but with us it was the product of lively feelings, excited by reflection on our own happiness, and by the grandeur of external nature. We sought not a basis for our faith, in the weighing of proofs, and the dissection of creeds. Our devotion was a mixed and casual sentiment, seldom verbally expressed, or solicitously sought, or carefully retained. In the midst of present enjoyment, no thought was bestowed to the future. As a consolation in calamity religion is dear. But calamity was yet at a distance, and its only tendency was to heighten enjoyments which needed not this addition to satisfy every craving. (21)

The religion of Mettingen now is happy, uncritical, “casual,” and never systematically explicated or analyzed. It has no method, and is lived in an eternal “present” regardless of a “future.” This religion is accidental and unmethodical as the elder Wieland’s was, but this one is much more congenial in its outlook than the uncontrolled moodiness of the original Mettingen religion was.

Despite all the encouragements the young Wielands have toward a happy religion, Theodore forebodes something different in the ways in which he takes after his father. His “deportment” is described by Clara as “grave, considerate, and thoughtful” (21). Although she notes that, among the residents of Mettingen, “The images that visited us were blithesome and

gay,” they don’t have as positive an effect on Theodore because his own mental and emotional life is “of an opposite hue” (21). Although Clara notes that he isn’t as darkly inclined as his father, she does declare his “temper” to be “a sort of thrilling melancholy” (21). Although perhaps more educated and reasonably inclined, Theodore is as fascinated by religion as his father. “[M]uch conversant with the history of religious opinions,” he takes “pains to ascertain their validity,” and applies as much rigour of criticism to his own “belief, to settle the relation between motives and actions, the criterion of merit, and the kinds and properties of evidence” (21-22). Where the elder Wieland was taken into his religion by a chance encounter with an Albigense Protestant treatise, Theodore devotes the same passion to Cicero. He obtains a bust of the Roman orator and places it in the Mettingen temple, but the real “object of veneration” for Theodore is Cicero’s writings, as he engages in oratorical imitation, and obsessive textual criticism by cross-referencing all the copies of Ciceronian “editions and commentaries that could be procured” (23).¹¹⁶ While Theodore certainly has some of the tendencies of his father, he also appears to be more reasonable. He engages in comparative religious study, and is personally more taken with the works of a philosopher and orator, to whose works he applies a much more rigorous form of textual criticism than his father did to either his Albigense treatise or the Bible.

Although Theodore appears, then, to be a figure of moderate and reasonable religious commitment, he is set in the novel as a dark contrast to Henry Pleyel, his brother-in-law. Henry has “the same attachment to the Latin writers,” and demonstrates the same level of knowledge of comparative religious history (23). Nevertheless, Pleyel is a figure of secular enlightenment reason where Theodore is a figure of melancholy religious commitments:

¹¹⁶ For a reading of the relationship of *Wieland* to an early American culture of oratorical performance, see Sandra Gustafson’s *Eloquence is Power: Oratory and Performance in Early America*.

Where one discovered only confirmations of his faith, the other could find nothing but reasons for doubt. Moral necessity, and Calvinistic inspiration, were the props on which my brother thought proper to repose. Pleyel was the champion of intellectual liberty, and rejected all guidance but that of his reason. Their discussions were frequent, but, being managed with candour as well as with skill, they were always listened to by us [Clara and Catherine] with avidity and benefit. (23)

Immediately on Pleyel's arrival, then, Theodore appears to be, in a foreboding way, as taken by religious melancholy as his father, although Clara notes that Theodore "la[ys] aside some of his ancient gravity" when in the company of his friend Pleyel (24).

Upon Theodore Wieland's first mysterious and confusing encounter with a voice that he believes to be Catharine's, but which Catharine denies was hers, Clara raises an important issue, speculating that the source of dangerous confusion for Theodore Wieland might be his own lack of mental and emotional discipline of the senses, a lack of discipline stemming from inadequate temporal "habit," rather than simple honest confusion (29-31). Wieland sticks to bad conclusions ("I must deny credit to [Catharine's] assertions" that the voice was not hers, "or disbelieve the testimony of my senses") because he dedicates his skills of argumentation and natural conviction without examining the possibility of an internal source of confusion within himself which deserves the most fundamental analysis. Clara turns Lockean epistemology upon itself when she muses on her brother's condition: "The will is the tool of the understanding, which must fashion its conclusions on the notices of sense. If the senses be depraved it is impossible to calculate the evils that may flow from the consequent deductions of the understanding" (32-33). Clara strongly suggests here that what Wieland needs to be exploring is the possibility that his own temporal-habitual mechanisms of *aesthesis* ("sensation and meaning making") are not only

foundationally flawed, but, in a morally and Calvinistically charged way, depraved. If Wieland doesn't explore, acknowledge, and express this flawed side to himself, he may continue to make bad conclusions based on this fundamental state of depravity. If the process of sensation is depraved, then, in a Lockean sense, he really is fundamentally depraved. Because Wieland himself won't devote any time to explore the "depraved" side of his own perceptual and analytical self, Clara does it for him:

I said, this man is of an ardent and melancholy character. Those ideas which, in others, are casual or obscure, which are entertained in moments of abstraction and solitude, and easily escape when the scene is changed, have obtained an immoveable hold upon his mind. The conclusions which *long habit* has rendered familiar, and, in some sort, palpable to his intellect, are drawn from the deepest sources. All his actions and practical sentiments are linked with long and abstruse deductions from the system of divine government and the laws of intellectual constitution. He is, in some respects, an enthusiast, but is fortified in his belief by enumerable arguments and subtilties. (33 emphasis added)

Note that Clara begins not with a reflection on the verifiability or nature of the phenomenon Theodore Wieland claims to have experienced—hearing his wife calling to him to leave his trip to the temple to return to the house. Instead, she opens a reflection on the nature of Wieland's own mental and emotional state as formed by temporal self-management and projection—"habit." He tends to melancholy, which leads him to "immoveable...conclusions," which he then uses logic as well as theological and philosophical principles to defend. Theodore is in danger because he does not see how his perceptions and conclusions, cultivated by "long" temporal "habit," influence him passively and without adequate personal examination.

Clara continues to emphasize through the narrative how Wieland's unreflective cognitive and affective state is linked to a passive, undisciplined relationship with time. When Clara gets the opportunity to ask Theodore how he interprets his experience, he remarks that "There is no determinate way in which the subject can be viewed. Here is an effect, but the cause is utterly inscrutable" (33-34). Theodore takes a decidedly fatalistic view regarding this deception and claims that, in the face of uncertainty, the one and only thing he can do is passively wait for the event to clarify itself. There is no need for him to reflect on his own mental disposition through reflection on the possibility of his depravity. Rather, he must simply wait until, out of the "twenty" possible explanations, "*Time* may convert one of them into certainty" (34 emphasis added). Wieland here advocates for a passive, unmethodical state of temporal existence in which time itself is not something to be apprehended and disciplined through active and methodical self-reflection, but is an absolute given, something that, through its passage, brings clarity to the passive and innocent Lockean subject.

"Time" does indeed continue to "elapse," but the mere passing of time does not allow the confusing events surrounding the voice to become any clearer. What time does continue to disclose is Theodore Wieland's narrow but paradoxically confident views regarding his conception of depravity. When Henry Pleyel brings news that Theodore has inherited a German estate according to a "law of male-primogeniture," Theodore refuses to take up his claim, and his arguments, much to Pleyel's chagrin, are all about how power and wealth morally corrupt a person:

was it laudable to grasp at wealth and power even when they were within our reach?
 Were not these the two great sources of depravity? What security had he that in this
 change of place and condition, he should not degenerate into a tyrant and voluptuary.

Power and riches were chiefly to be dreaded on account of their tendency to deprave the possessor. [Theodore] held them in abhorrence, not only as instruments of misery to others, but to him on whom they were conferred. (35)

Wieland's speech sounds to the enlightenment ear like a form of Calvinism, in which Theodore is suspicious of power because of how it corrupts. But this is only a soft view of depravity, in which certain circumstances will bring depravity out of a person who might otherwise be virtuous. This is a much softer view than that of Clara, who has already posited the idea that the senses themselves could be depraved in their active apprehension of external phenomena—a more radical and fundamental view of depravity that calls subjects not to think about depravity in the social abstract as a trapping of adverse external conditions, but as a fundamental and active exercise of cognitive and affective apprehension that each individual must reflect on as his or her original reality. This soft view of depravity that Theodore holds ties into his entire outlook, which, as I have been arguing, is generally passive both temporally and intellectually insofar as it is based on an unexamined interior life which, the novel seems to suggest through the voice of Clara, is fundamentally depraved in the very exercise of sensation, or perception. Because Theodore subscribes to this softer view of depravity, he seeks new justification for his burgeoning mistrust towards his wife after the incident involving the second disembodied voice by researching the history of “the Daemon of Socrates” (45). Theodore refuses to consider the possible links between his epistemological weakness and the weaknesses of senses fundamentally “depraved” by disposition, and this refusal to actively use his time by grappling with his depravity means he has no control over it. Theodore is so unwilling to examine the possibility of his own depravity that he actively researches the possibility that he is a victim—or privileged recipient—of porous selfhood, receiving messages from a “Daemon” as Socrates did.

Soon after Clara relates Theodore's research into the Daemon of Socrates, she details the arrival of Carwin to the vicinity of Mettingen, which is mysteriously associated in chapter XI with Clara's own harrowing encounter with a voice in her bedroom closet threatening her rape and murder.¹¹⁷ The body of this rapacious voice is not identified, and Clara admits to herself the possibility that the entire episode was simply a dream of half-sleeping fantasy of her own. In any event, her attempts to better understand the circumstances of the episode meet with no satisfaction. In fact, no one at Mettingen is able to solve the problem of the threatening voice or the voices that others, including Theodore and Henry Pleyel, have heard at Mettingen: "After all our efforts, we came no nearer to dispelling the mist in which they were involved" (56). As the residents of Mettingen ruminate on the case by relating it to epistemological inquiries into the nature of the senses and their relationship to the understanding and will, they come no closer to a clear solution, and time passes them by as they fail to comprehend their plight: "time, instead of facilitating a solution, only accumulated our doubts" (56).

I am claiming here that time passes the residents of Mettingen helplessly by as they cast about for solutions to the mysterious phenomena they encounter because they are looking for a solution in an incorrect theological manner. Clara is as much a victim of her own temporal passivity and depraved senses as Theodore is. Their extended reflections on Lockean epistemology as a means out of their confusion do demonstrate a more than adequate philosophical knowledge according to the norms of the time, but these conversations are occasioned by the actual "incidents" in which they encounter mysterious voices. For all their knowledge and desire to recruit the voice-phenomenon into a pre-existing system of epistemology, the Mettingen residents lack a methodical approach to themselves. They refuse to

¹¹⁷ I am reading Carwin's role in *Wieland* as little more than an enabler of the plot, and certainly not as the agent worthy of "blame" for Theodore Jr.'s "familicide" (Wolfe 436).

mark and use time regularly through a methodical introspection that accounts for and expresses their own internal states of “senses” that are “depraved.” Epistemological reflections on the voice in the novel are thus incidental and abstract, refusing to enter the realm of the temporally methodical, personal, and perhaps theological realm of rigorous discipline. As a result, the reflections of Clara, Theodore, and Henry Pleyel on the voice-phenomenon are always *post facto* attempts to catch up with their own unexamined senses, rather than attempts to manage and control them according to the principled knowledge that these senses are “depraved.” As a result, time passes the Mettingen residents helplessly by as they cast about incidentally for a solution to the mystery of the voice. This is seen on the occasion in which Clara meets with the rapacious voice a second time, which this time protects her by warning her from accidentally walking off a cliff (57-60). When Clara is able to after the fact, she notes that she is “incontestably assured of the veracity” of her “senses” (60). When Clara considers that the voice warned her to disclose its presence to no one else at Mettingen, citing the warning of her father, she wonders if it was “the infraction of a similar command, that brought so horrible a penalty upon” him (61). Clara thus wonders if it was the breaking of a rule that led to the supernatural combustion of her father, a line of questioning and reasoning that takes her far out of the realm of inquiry in which she wondered if it was the malignant effects of an unmethodical and melancholy religion on her father’s body that led to his natural self-explosion.

Clara’s thoughts on the phenomenon of the voice lack method, are based on the events themselves, and depart wildly from her earlier two-part approach to the unexplained phenomena of both her father’s demise and Theodore’s hearing of voices. This approach posits 1) that there is a natural explanation for phenomena which appear to be unexplainable, and 2) the effects of unexplained phenomena on the human subject, whether the effect be spontaneous combustion

(Clara's father) or sudden doubt of one's spouse, friends, and associates (Theodore), can be attributed not to the power of the phenomena themselves, but to the unexamined faulty interior function of the human subject itself: "senses" that are "depraved."

In an important sequence surrounding her discovery of Carwin in her closet, Clara connects her inability to fully articulate her own depravity with a fatalistic and passive relationship to time. When Clara narrates in chapter IX her second harrowing closet encounter, this time with the flesh and blood appearance of Carwin, she opens with a fascinating remark that offers itself as an injunction to the reader: "My errors have taught me thus much wisdom; that those sentiments which we ought not to disclose, it is criminal to harbour" (73). This is a remarkable double-bind which Clara subscribes to, in which she proposes that negative internal feelings which shouldn't be publicly expressed (presumably because of their social unpalatability) should nevertheless not be left unexpressed. Clara implies that it is not negative feelings and desires that do a person in, but the lack of their adequate expression. Soon after Clara refers to "The hateful and degrading impulses which had lately controlled me"—a description of her knowingly playing her attention to Carwin against the love interests of Henry Pleyel in social interactions (75). This kind of behaviour and desire does not necessarily seem to be of the worst kind, but Clara continues to berate herself, claiming that by not speaking her negative internal desires (either to create jealousy in Pleyel or to actually indulge her own fantasy of a relationship with Carwin, or both), she is now being controlled by them. She thinks Pleyel is ignoring her out of disinterest from seeing her with Carwin, and she is now "tormented by phantoms of [her] own creation" (76). Furthermore, being overcome by circumstances out of her control, she "cannot ascertain the *date*" on which she became "the victim" of this "imbecility" (emphasis added 76). She has not been marking her time and interior life, so her

depraved interior life has become unmanageable. By not attending to and accounting for her duration and depravity, she has lost control of her narrative.

It is worth noting here that, despite Clara's declaration of the need to externalize negative internal "sentiments"—or feelings and desires, she actually hasn't clearly expressed in this narrative account her "degrading impulses." In effect, in this passage, Clara has spoken an unspoken, or acknowledged a negative impulse while continuing to leave it inexplicit. The reader is only directly aware that Clara has left Pleyel to wonder if perhaps she is romantically interested in Carwin, thus making Pleyel prey to jealousy—which leads, she thinks, to Pleyel missing a meeting with her. These musings on the need to express one's own dark feelings and desires, which Clara nevertheless fails to perform, are followed in the same chapter by Carwin's exposure in her closet—the same closet where she earlier heard voices threatening her rape and murder. This time, against a disembodied voice's warning for her not to investigate the suspected presence of a trespasser in her closet, she insists on attempting to discover the lurker. As she considers the nature of the voice that has warned her not to open the closet where Carwin is (his identity is unknown to Clara at this point), she muses that the warning comes from a benevolent deity, "He to whom all parts of time are equally present, whom no contingency approaches," and who is "the author of that spell which now seized upon me" (80). The spell she refers to is a dream she has that her brother, Wieland, is the one in the closet. But more importantly, it is worth noting Clara's attitude to time here. Time has repeatedly been posited in this novel by now as something which people maintain a passive relationship with. Time reveals things in its course, but time is not marked and used industriously by subjects in the novel to obtain greater self-knowledge and achievement. Here Clara reveals a little more of this attitude to time, when she posits an external deity as something that controls and knows time fully, and reveals certain

things by direct oracle to human subjects. The voice Clara hears, and the dreams she has, are both divine interventions that shatter and illuminate mundane time, a time which she maintains a passive relationship to. Two things at once stand out in the setting of the scene in which Carwin is soon to be discovered as the one in the closet. First, Clara acknowledges her need to express her own negative feelings and desires, even as she fails to articulate them. Second, this failure is implicitly linked to a passive relationship to time. Clara's enlightenment confidence in the passage of time as inherently ameliorative is thus linked to both her faith in her own innocence, and faith in a deity that knows and secures that time for good ends.

Part of the reason this scene of Clara's eventual discovery of Carwin in the closet reads compellingly as a moral defeat for Clara is the way that it impresses itself allegorically—or metonymically—as a tale of her own internal feelings and desires. The “ruffian in the closet” is the negativity internal to herself (81). The sense the scene creates is that Clara, in attempting to open the closet against a human force from the other side, is fighting herself. To be sure, the scene is a literal part of a gothic narrative in which there is a real person in a real closet, but at the same time it impresses itself by both association and allegory as a story about the internal life of Clara herself. The closet is the depraved recess of her own psychology that is unknown to herself. Carwin revealing himself here is thus both a real external threat and the culmination of Clara's injunction that is also a double bind—the order to express that which should not even be harboured internally (73). Clara's inexplicit and negative emotions and desires (perhaps for Carwin himself), are represented allegorically and metonymically (by the association of the closet with the hidden recesses of one's own mental and emotional faculties) by Carwin and his own evil impulses and schemes. The horror and defeat of the scene for Clara, then, is the implication that everyone, including Clara, has a Carwin lurking in the closet.

Because it claims innocence despite her many intimations in the novel that her motives are not innocent, Clara's response to Pleyel's accusations of dishonourable behaviour with Carwin is both deceptive, and, with respect to time, passive. Innocence and passivity are always connected in the novel. When Henry Pleyel confronts Clara regarding her supposed promiscuity with Carwin (an illusion of ventriloquy produced by Carwin), his accusations frame her as positively depraved: "Is not thy effrontery impenetrable, and thy heart thoroughly cankered? O most specious, and most profligate of women!" (96); The first question she asks herself before deciding how to respond to Pleyel's accusations regards time: "Should I suffer [Pleyel's] mistake to be detected by time?" (98). This answer is temporally passive and innocent: "Wrapped in the consciousness of innocence, and confiding in the influence of time and reflection to confute so groundless a charge, it was my province to be passive and silent" (98). Clara takes up a passive relationship to time based on a claim to innocence. Of course, there is nothing she can say to the vehement and angry accusations of Pleyel, since she doesn't know specifically what she is being accused of other than general romantic misconduct with Carwin, but that is not the point. The point is that Clara, who has already given many strong hints that she is not leading an innocent interior life, claims innocence, and that comes with direct and explicit appeals to a passive relationship to time which, in its passage, will somehow exonerate her. And the passage more broadly implies that innocence as a moral claim of character is, out of the necessity of its very nature, temporally passive. Importantly, this would mean that the only way for Clara to gain any kind of control over the narrative and the plot would be to embrace a claim to her own internal depravity. Literally, allegorically, and metonymically speaking, she met Carwin in her closet as a defeat because the scene was the projection of herself as total innocence meeting with a projection of depravity that turns out to be both an external call (or voice) and an internal

impulse within her—a scene which the projection of self as innocence can only meet with as defeat. When Pleyel further accuses her, her innocent self-projection leaves her utterly passive.

To be clear, I am not proposing that, in actual fact, Clara is guilty of sexual or other romantic promiscuity with Carwin or anyone else. If this novel is teaching an Edwardsean lesson about the need to feel and express one's own depravity more profoundly over carefully measured (rather than passively experienced) time, the point is not to express actual instances of venality; remember, Edwards's own confession at the end of his personal narrative avoids reference to or anatomization of specific sins. The point is that in the face of accusations regarding her conduct, Clara tends to claim innocence in her, even as she does repeatedly acknowledge the spectre of her own depravity. The further point is that the only way out of this passive relationship to others and to time is to positively embrace the foreboding sense she has of her own depravity (and the depravity of others in the novel). The only active option in response to accusations is to embrace depravity as a deep ontological state. That is how Clara can gain control of her time and narrative. It is this response, paradoxically, which would free Clara as a moral agent in time. Instead of such a response, however, Clara's actual response to feelings and accusations of depravity is markedly otherwise. She does eventually admit to mishandling her budding romantic situation with Henry Pleyel by playing coy with him, and deceptively expressing an ambiguous affection for Carwin, but her admission of guilt in this matter comes with a persistent and passive claim to an essential state of innocence: "That Pleyel should abandon me forever, because I was blind to his excellence, because I coveted pollution, and wedded infamy, when, on the contrary, my heart was a shrine of all purity, and beat only for his sake, was a destiny which, as long as my life was in my own hands, I would by no means consent to endure" (103-4). Note the rhetorical ambiguity of this reflection. It appears to come with an admission of some guilt, e.g. "I was blind

to his excellence...I coveted pollution, and wedded infamy,” even as it makes a startling shift in the second half of the sentence to an unambiguous claim to innocence, e.g. “my heart was a shrine of all purity.” Clara doesn’t explicitly say that Pleyel’s accusations are actually entirely off the mark, and her reflections here exemplify how an individual can admit wrongdoing in a particular matter while still maintaining a claim to an essential, ontological, or deep state of innocence that ensures the individual maintains a passive relationship to oneself, one’s society, and one’s time. Clara’s repeated claims to romantic and sexual innocence do not preclude occasional admissions of wrongdoing. But these claims to innocence ensure a fundamentally passive temporal state.

Clara’s passive state of innocence continues when she articulates her mixed feelings of resentment, regret, and disappointment in the face of Henry Pleyel’s accusations: “When I reflected on the nature of the accusation, I burned with disdain. Would not the truth, and the consciousness of innocence, render me triumphant?” (104). She then asks herself if there is an active measure she can take to express her innocence: “Should I not cast from me, with irresistible force, such atrocious imputations?” (104) But this question meets with realization that the projection of innocence fundamentally means passivity: “Yesterday and today I am the same” (104). On one hand this declaration could mean a claim to absolute control over oneself and time, an allusion to Hebrews 13.8: “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever” (*KJV*). But I would propose that the declaration stands more to signify Clara as a deeply passive and therefore unchanging subject. She takes no active control over herself and time because she constantly posits herself as the passive subject of time and the observations and conversations of other people. She remains the same not because she is constant in some active sense denoting temporal resolve, but because she is a fundamentally passive figure.

Henry Pleyel's rejection of Clara causes in her a certain loss of hope which involves a new opinion about the role of time. When she considers the possibility of time's passage in restoring Pleyel's faith in her innocence, she remarks, "I strove in vain to believe in the assuaging influence of time" (130). Even after this accurate comment regarding the failure of time's simple passage to accomplish anything for her, she displays a confused mental state which goes back to what now seems to be a naïve belief that she can still convince Pleyel of her innocence, or at least convince Carwin to set things straight with Pleyel by admitting that the scene which the latter overheard containing Clara's supposed promiscuity was a deception on the former's part: "Have I not reason on my side, and the power of imparting conviction?" (135). Clara's indeterminacy regarding what she should do to reclaim control of herself and her narrative continues. She admits that her "narrative may be invaded by inaccuracy and confusion," but holds to a model of her own moral purity that leaves her continually passive.

When Theodore Wieland, guided by an internal voice which he believes to be divine and commands him to murder his entire family, including Clara, Wieland only balks, after murdering his wife, children, and Louisa Conway, at the thought of extinguishing Clara; and Clara herself remains entirely passive in the scene. Although there is evidence in the novel to support a deeply incestual bond between Theodore and Clara, the reason he gives for not wanting to murder her appears not to be psychosexual but based on an appeal to her innocence: "here is sanctity and excellence surpassing human. This workmanship is thine, and it cannot be thy will to heap it into ruins" (141). Earlier in the scene, Clara claims to be prepared to defend herself against the intruder (who she thought to be Carwin) with a penknife, but in the moment of supreme horror that the novel offers, her innocence renders her passive. We could be left to wonder if perhaps the report Clara gives us here of Theodore's reasons for balking are exaggerated by her own

narration. But the main thing to point out is that, even when she comes face to face with her prospective murderer, armed though she is in preparation for the moment, her own projection of personal moral innocence renders her passive.

Passive temporality and innocence also appear as the cause of the novel's tragedy when, after the murders of Catharine and the Wieland children in the crisis point of the novel, Clara recovers her senses and obtains the transcript of Theodore's courtroom confession in which she discovers finally that Wieland is the murderer, and reads his account of the killings. Immediately in the transcript Wieland makes an appeal to his own innocence, even after admitting to the killings. He claims innocence by calling up his "integrity" and the "unchangeableness of his principles" in the "habits of his life" (150). Of course, habits are about the regularized temporal management of the self, and Wieland here claims that he has managed himself and his time with a single and upright heart" and a "dauntless and erect eye" (151). Even as he claims a kind of innocence and appeals to his habitus as optimal in its demonstration of innocence through the management of his time in family life, he begins quickly in the confession to portray himself in a passive relationship to time, a state which I am claiming is always linked in the novel to claims to innocence and which are the cause of the novel's gothic horror. When recounting the night of the murders, Wieland recalls waiting for Clara to return from her visit to Pleyel in which she has tried to plead for her innocence, and he notes that "time passed" in the act of innocent waiting. Soon after, when he goes out to find Clara, he is overtaken by uncontrollable thoughts and desires of religious enthusiasm, "Thoughts" which take "absolute possession" of his "mind" and "obliterate" for him "the relations of time and space" from his "understanding" (152-153). The initial innocent passivity of Wieland as a moral and temporal agent in the scene is thus implicitly

yet closely linked in the narrative here to his susceptibility to a sudden temporal interruption of religious enthusiasm and madness that transforms him into a porous self.

As he loses control of himself and his time in a fit of religious ecstasy, Wieland rushes into action to obey the voice that has commanded him to kill his wife Catharine by trying to prove that he has overcome commitment to family devotion. He expends considerable effort “not to think,” and in his actions seeks to “abridge this interval” between the command to kill his wife and its execution by seeking to carry out the duty as quickly as possible. It is in this state of sudden transition from innocent passivity to enthusiastic religious monster that Theodore Wieland’s transformation occurs. This is most clearly obvious when Catharine, realizing that Wieland intends to kill her, exclaims in fear, “thou art Wieland no longer!” (157). After killing his wife, Wieland remarks that he has “successfully subdued the stubbornness of human passions” (158) He means that, by killing his wife, he has proven to a jealous deity that his natural affections for his wife were no obstacle to his obedience in murdering her. These passions, until now, were always declared to be innocent: innocent passions for one’s wife, one’s children, one’s virginal purity, and so on. In other words, passions are benign and positive parts of life that, in this strange and disturbing transformation, seem to have suddenly been deemed by the enthusiastic Wieland as characteristics of humanity that need to be overcome.

One of the interesting parts of this transformation is how the overcoming of passions is linked to the assumptions of these passions as innocent. In rushing into action and losing control of his sense of time, Wieland is overcoming ostensibly innocent domestic passions. If Wieland had lived his life in a more Edwardsean fashion by also taking more time to account for an ontological state that is not innocent, perhaps Wieland would not have been an innocent and

passive figure, suddenly transformed by an uncontrollable temporal interruption of porous selfhood.

Clara herself is, of course, shocked to discover through reading the confession that the killer is her brother, and she links her incredulity to the fact of Wieland's innocence in a portrait that also implies both his passivity and her own: "Who was the performer of the deed? Wieland! My brother! The husband and the father! That man of gentle virtues and invincible benignity! placable and mild—an idolater of peace!" (160). This expostulation stands out at this point in the narrative because it begins to seem obvious that, in this novel at least, Wieland's projection of passive innocence connects to his killing. And Clara herself continues in her own projected state of innocence that entails a passive relationship to time as well as knowledge of oneself and others. She claims that reading the document produces in her a "hideous confusion" of her "understanding," but she also states that "Time slowly restored its customary firmness to my frame, and order to my thoughts," and she further states that "time" effects her healing "in a more beneficial manner" than her active inquiries into how Wieland's nature could include the ability to perform these killings (160). At least Clara explicitly connects her innocence and passivity when she acknowledges that she "desired knowledge, and, at the same time, shrunk back from receiving the boon" because she is "incapable of deliberately surveying a scene of so much horror" (161). Deliberation, active introspection, and an active relationship to time are all incompatible with Clara's projection of supreme innocence.

Clara becomes anxious to attribute Theodore Wieland's actions to an "agency" that is "external," as well as to hereditary psychological deficiency, but her efforts nevertheless leave her feeling like a passive and innocent figure, vulnerable like her brother Theodore to the same "influences" of psychological delusions (163-165). Her uncle, Thomas Cambridge, tries to assure

her that she has a strong mental constitution, but the only thing that allows Cambridge's arguments to work on her is the fact that are "aided" by the passage of "time" which restores to Clara "Confidence in the strength" of her "resolution" and the "healthful state" of her mental "faculties" (165). It's only the passive experience of the passing of time that restores to the always innocent Clara her sense of her own innocence which she constantly projects throughout the narrative. In this sense Clara's "resolution" stands in opposition to Edwards's resolutions, which depend on an active and methodical temporal relationship to one's own sense of depravity as a religious source of moral and psychological agency. Clara's resolution is temporally passive, non-introspective, and innocent. This is what leads Clara to Carwin as somehow still implicated in her brother's crime with an "agency" that is "at once preternatural and malignant" (166).¹¹⁸ Clara's insistent belief that Wieland might be the "murderer" but not the "criminal" is linked to her temporally, morally, and psychologically passive innocence. Indeed, Clara and Theodore's passivity connect when Clara implies her own satisfaction with Theodore's belief in his own innocence and virtue as she comments approvingly on that fact that "He was acquitted at the tribunal of his own conscience" (166). Innocence, temporal and moral passivity, and criminality all align in both Clara's and Theodore Wieland's assessment of the killings—an alignment they both fail to see.

As Clara begins to consider her options for life after the killings, her uncle Thomas Cambridge begins to convince her to go to Europe with him, but a lingering complaint for Clara is that Henry Pleyel still seems to be convinced of her promiscuity with Carwin. She declares that she "might reasonably expect that my innocence for me would at some time be irresistibly

¹¹⁸ The scholarly debate over Carwin's culpability for Theodore Wieland's crime is, in my view, a major distraction from the actual narrative thrust of the novel. Forensic scholarly arguments, such as Laura Korobkin's explicit proposal Carwin's responsibility for the murders are beside the main message of the novel, and they repeat Clara's own misguided obsession with the exoneration of herself and her brother (731).

demonstrated,” and she confesses to “delight” in “the veneration of so excellent a man” as well as happiness from the “pleasure” Pleyel would “derive from conviction” of her “integrity” (167). Clara relinquishes the idea of trying again to convince him of her innocence even as she remarks that perhaps “time or some new discovery” has already convinced him of her innocence. This continuing temporal and moral passivity links shortly after this to Clara’s unenthusiastic and depressed decision to leave for Europe (a decision also precipitated by new knowledge that Wieland desperately wants to escape prison in order to murder her in further obedience to his divine voice): “I acquiesced in the proposal to go to Europe...because, since my principles forbad me to assail my own life, change had some tendency to make supportable the few days which disease should spare to me” (173). Note that Clara is projecting herself as the innocent victim of Pleyel’s unfounded but innocent judgements, and the innocent survivor of Wieland’s own innocent but misguided attempts to prove his religious devotion. And all of this innocence links to Clara’s own temporally passive self-configuration in which she seeks to pass “the few days” left to her fending off disease and suicidal impulses, while entertaining private suspicions of Carwin’s responsibility for all of her misfortunes (174). Her temporal and moral passivity, linked to her belief in not only her own, but her brother’s and former suitor’s innocence, connects to her externalization of the evil in the novel onto the figure of Carwin.

Carwin’s own confession of non-criminal mischief reads primarily as a scene designed to tie together many of the unanswered plot questions in one monologue. It is in this confession that Clara discovers the extent of Carwin’s culpability for Theodore Wieland’s murders, learning that Carwin never used his powers of ventriloquism (“*bilouquium*”) to impersonate Theodore’s deity to order the murders, even though he is guilty of other uses of his skill to create dissension and uncertainty at Mettingen. Carwin claims that his “purpose” in using his ventriloquism was never

“evil,” even as he admits to a “rooted passion for scattering” emotions of “amazement and fear” (186, 191). The remarkable thing about Carwin’s confession is that it simply adds to the novel’s catalogue of paradoxical confessions of innocence. Through Carwin’s confession, Pleyel’s failure of judgement regarding Clara’s innocence comes to appear more as a failure of Pleyel’s character than anything else, and Theodore’s killing of his wife and children cannot be attributed to the machinations of Carwin—to the disappointment and disbelief of Clara.

The temporally and morally passive projection of innocence that pervades the novel comes crashing apart in the closing sequences of the novel, not as some crude return of the repressed, but as a consequence of Theodore’s and Clara’s failure to account in their methods of temporal self-regulation for the fact of their depraved feelings, impulses, and sensational orientations—sinful feelings.¹¹⁹ When, after escaping prison, Wieland appears again at Mettingen to murder Clara, he is entirely self-accusatory, calling himself a “Dastardly wretch...eternally questioning the behests of” his God, and he further accuses himself of being “weak in resolution” and “wayward in faith” (199). Because Theodore and Clara have failed to regulate negativity into their methods of self-management, uncontrollable “self-loathing” becomes, temporally speaking, the suddenly interrupting and controlling affect. When Clara recounts the scene of Theodore’s near-murder of her, she claims “hatred” as her just desert because her “guilt surpasses that of all mankind” (203-204). She further declares that “the curses of a world, and the frowns of a deity, are inadequate” punishments for her, an agent “worthy of

¹¹⁹ Siân Silyn Roberts’s reading of Brown’s *Arthur Mervyn* similarly rejects interpretations of gothic climax in Brown as a return of the repressed; Roberts dismisses such psychoanalytic readings, informed by Leslie Fieldler’s assessment in *Love and Death in the American Novel*, as artificially limiting the true scope of Brown’s ambition to “reimagin[e] the conditions of subjectivity and citizenship for a population” (325-6). Robert’s reading, however, posits Brown as engaging Lockean and Scottish Enlightenment liberal theory as both a source of his vision of citizenship, and subject of gothic critique. While it is certainly justified to observe in a Brown novel the author’s engagement with this philosophy, it is important at the same time to bear in mind his deep engagement, at least in *Wieland*, with religious sources of the American self as well—often set in dialogue with Lockean and Scottish Enlightenment liberal theory.

infinite abhorrence” (204). Theodore’s and Clara’s sudden affective descent from a state of projected innocence to uncontrollable “misery” and self-loathing, can, in my reading, only be attributed to their refusal until now to account for the negative side of themselves, always maintaining a blank innocence that directly connects to a passive relationship to time in the plot of the novel. This passive structure of innocent temporal projection comes crashing down in the conclusion.

Even as Theodore declares his own self-loathing, he moves uncomfortably back to the pole of extreme self-righteousness, in which he projects himself as the innocent, passive, and virtuous victim of malignant delusions. He claims to be “pure from all stain” in the belief, however deceived he may have been, that “God” was his “mover” (205). Just before Theodore Wieland again transforms violently back to his plan to kill her, Clara notes with satisfaction that he “found consolation in the rectitude of his motives” (205). Besides Clara’s own passive observance of Wieland’s madness, what stands out here is the fact that Wieland’s own claim to innocence connects to the fact of his passivity as a paradoxical non-agent of destruction and malevolence.

Temporality becomes the explicit theme of Wieland’s final attempt to obey his God when, after deciding that he still must carry out divine orders against Clara’s life, he tells her to “Mark the clock” because “three minutes are allowed” to her to “prepare” for death (207). Clara’s use of this time is, in keeping with her character projection up to this point, entirely passive. And while I am not trying to argue here that Clara is in fact somehow deeply and really depraved, I am trying to point out that her failure to account for and manage negative affects, or sinful feeling, ties into her passivity here. Even as she finally admits “The improbability that the influence which governed Wieland was external or human,” she passively appeals to her

innocence as she passively resists Wieland's murderous advances even though she is armed with a penknife: "Even now I hesitated to strike. I shrunk from his assault, but in vain" (208).

Clara is nevertheless saved at the last second by Carwin's ventriloquism. The voice calls Wieland a "Man of errors" and commands him to "Be lunatic no longer," and the commands shatter Wieland's resolve to kill Clara by completely shaking his faith in his own virtue: "He muttered an appeal to heaven. It was difficult to comprehend the theme of his inquiries. They implied doubt as to the nature of the impulse that hitherto had guided him" (210).¹²⁰ In the face of doubt over the nature of his own impulses, Wieland undergoes one final transformation, "transformed at once into a man of sorrows" (211). Indeed, Clara laments what she sees as Theodore's mistaken loss of his projected innocence when she mournfully notes that he "saw not that his discovery in no degree affected the integrity of his conduct; that his motives had lost none of their claims to the homage of mankind; that the preference of supreme good, and the boundless energy of duty, were undiminished in his bosom (211). Nearing the end of a plot in which every character has insistently projected passive innocence, the protagonist cannot bear the notion of her brother coming to a sudden realization that he has murdered, so she continues to insist on his fundamental innocence as a passive victim of delusion. Even in these final moments, just before Wieland ends his own life with Clara's penknife, Clara apostrophizes him as "Thou who hast vied with the great preacher of thy faith in sanctity of motives, and in elevation above sensual and selfish" (211). It should come as no surprise that Wieland, who has projected his own innocence throughout the novel, would, when confronted with the reality of his actions in killing his family, be unable to cope with the facts except through suicide. And it makes sense

¹²⁰ Numerous scholars have noted the irony in Wieland's obedience to Carwin's voice at this moment, in which "he is persuaded by means of his senses that his senses have been mistaken" and "a supernatural voice instructs him not to believe in supernatural voices" (Bradshaw 376)

that Clara herself would continue to play the role of projecting passive innocence for every character in the novel including her brother (Carwin is the only exception).

The final chapter reads in fact like an epilogue, and comes with its own fascinating temporality in relation to the rest of the novel. The chapter is dated as “Written three years after the foregoing, and dated at Montpellier” (214). Clara opens by telling her readers that, after the final confrontation with Theodore Wieland, she “had every reason to be weary of existence, to be impatient of every tie which held me from the grave,” and she insists that she “experienced this impatience in its fullest extent” (214). Impatience is an affect and a temporality, a passive but uncomfortable and paradoxical desire for the passive passing of time to occur more speedily. Clara relates that her impatience to die was eventually overcome, in fact, by that very passive passing of time, when she remarks that “Time will obliterate the deepest impressions,” and, “as day follows day, the turbulence of our emotions shall subside, and our fluctuations be finally succeeded by a calm” (214). Passive impatience is overcome by the passive passing of time. Clara even goes so far as to attribute her current state of happiness three years after the terrible events at Mettingen to an “accident” which overcame her inability to apply any “exertion” or even leave her bed (214-215). Furthermore, Clara declares that her change to happiness in the closing of the novel is not due to active “fortitude,” but is simply due to the happy fact of passive change over time (215). Indeed, she admits that her happiness could be thanks to “fickleness of temper, and a defect of sensibility”—or passivity (215). Regarding her eventually successful romance with Henry Pleyel, Clara takes a slightly more complicated tone and claims that both “Time” and “the exertions” of her “fortitude” led her to accept Pleyel’s marriage to another, the Baroness de Stolberg, before she eventually is able to marry Pleyel when the Baroness dies; but the dominant atmosphere of the closing chapter, which is one of those passages in the novel

where Brockden Brown is clearly catching his novel up to its own plot by using extended plot summary, is passive.

Given all of the passivity in the closing chapter, which is consistent with the rest of the novel, the often-criticized moral turn in the final paragraph is abrupt. First, Clara addresses the reader directly: “I leave you to moralize on this tale” (223). But then she moralizes anyway, observing that it is a “mournful consideration” that “virtue should become the victim of treachery,” a notion that is in keeping with her projection of all the characters in the novel as passive victims of some external malignance (in her suspicions, most likely Carwin’s). But then, she suddenly observes that “the evils” detailed in the narrative “owed their existence to the errors of the sufferers” (223). This revelation should not be a bombshell to anyone reading the novel, but as an admission from Clara, this is a startling turn of attitude. She continues to be more specific when she claims that “If [Theodore] Wieland had framed juster notions of moral duty, and of the divine attributes,” he would have never committed the atrocities he did (223-224). Furthermore, Clara remarks that she would have done much better against Carwin’s machinations if she had been “gifted with ordinary equanimity or foresight” (224). The question of what Clara means by “juster notions of moral duty” is an open one, but I propose that one of the lessons this novel drives home is that of Edwardsean preparationism: one must take up a moral duty to actively measure and use time to apprehend and express, through incremental disciplines of self-management as articulated in Edwards’s “Resolutions,” one’s own sense of depravity, or sinful feelings. The only way not to fall victim to one’s own inner errors—or depravities or sins—is to mark and manage one’s sense of sinfulness every day in an active relationship to oneself and one’s time. Otherwise one becomes a victim of error and, morally and temporally speaking, a passive victim of the force of depravity. Conversely, if depravity is

recruited as a source of moral and temporal agency, the subject is, though much more cognizant of one's own depravity, much less susceptible to its terrors.

Conclusion

Scholars have long been attending to the ways in which Charles Brockden Brown's novels critique triumphalist histories of the American republic by emphasizing the possibilities of depraved citizenship through spatial allegories of Lockean psychology. This postsecular reading of gothic temporality in *Wieland* advances such spatial "hermeneutics" to account for the equal emphasis on time in the novel, an emphasis hidden in plain view, even though scholars have not attended to it. These scholars have most often turned to ways in which Brown uses architecture, topography, and geography to illustrate depravity through spatial allegory in which, for example, "a land of pits" is understood as the "perennial eruptions" of depraved performances of collective public citizenship—such as Shay's Rebellion or the Whiskey Rebellion (White 56). *Wieland* proposes a cautionary hermeneutics of citizenship understood not merely in terms of a spatial allegory as the upheavals of Lockean faculty psychology in the nascent American republic. *Wieland* also offers a hermeneutics of time, in which the ideal republican citizen should, unlike Theodore Sr, Theodore, and Clara Wieland, actively grasp empty time in the spiritual discipline of progressively apprehending—that is understanding, accounting for, and controlling—one's factual state of essential depravity as a necessary limiting principle of "Lockean sensational psychology" (Voloshin 342). The gothic horror of the novel is caused by the tragic flaw that each of the Wielands shares: a passive relationship to time and innocent projection of the self. The alternative the novel suggests is a gothic temporality of citizenship in which the citizen, like Jonathan Edwards, actively attends to her state of depravity as something to be gradually

measured and understood through active temporal discipline. Clara does not so much pass on a “gift of secularized antinomianism” to future American authors of fiction as she transmits an originally Puritan lesson about the importance of using time to give methodical attention to one’s internal state of depravity (Ruttenburg 258).¹²¹ *Wieland* instead suggests that active monitoring of one’s depravity over time is, as we saw in Edwards’s modeling of it for pre-revolutionary evangelicals, an ideal form of citizenship that counteracts moral and temporal passivity and the consequent civic disengagement that, as Jennifer Harris notes, is so obvious in the novel (194). In *Wieland*, as in Edwards, the only way to avoid conversions that turn out to be disastrous transformations of rational citizenship into civically destructive religious selfhood is to actively use this-worldly time (duration) to mark, manage, express, and control sinful feeling (depravity). The Edwardsean lesson of *Wieland*, then, is that both confident enthusiastic religion (the elder Wieland) and confident secular forms of humanistic self-belief (Theodore and Clara) are temporally passive forms of citizenship that are vulnerable to the depravity they ignore.

¹²¹ Ruttenburg does not herself accept Clara’s “American aesthetic of innocence,” and instead reads her positioning of herself as “good” to be “fraudulent,” (260, 263). I read Clara’s “innocence of humbles self-enlargement as ultimately a rhetorical failure that discloses the Edwardsean lesson of a need to own one’s personal depravity as the source of agency and authorship (263).

Conclusion

Duration and Depravity: Secular and Democratic

Martin Hägglund's 2019 book *This Life* is an unapologetically secularist work which derives its secularist vision for the Western world from astute and in-depth readings of time-consciousness in major Christian texts: Augustine's *Confessions*, C.S. Lewis's *A Grief Observed*, Søren Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling*, and even the Bible itself. Insofar as Christianity has had value through history, Hägglund argues, it has been in its tendency to orient religious individuals and communities towards valuing this-worldly—or secular—time. Augustine's *Confessions* are instructive for Hägglund in this regard not because of Augustine's intention "to convert the passion of secular experience that is bound by time into a passion for the eternity of God," but because of his insights into the experience and value of secular, everyday, this-worldly time as a *distentio* which "both holds you together and pulls you apart" as a person. (86, 71). Augustine teaches the reader to value secular time by explaining how embedded we are in it: "Augustine uses the Latin word *saecularis* to evoke how we are bounded by time, through our commitments to a shared world history, as well as to generations before and beyond us. The historical world in which we find ourselves is the *saeculum*" (*This Life* 71). It is in the dedication to the struggle (*distentio*) of maximizing that secular time that we find the true value of the *Confessions*—a struggle which leads in that text to the fundamental Western insights into the phenomenology of time and memory, as well as the valuation of that time. While the experience of the limitations of "death" and temporal distention are often painful, it is only through embracing this temporal struggle that a person can be free according to Hägglund: "unlike a religious conversion, a secular conversion does not aim to bring the struggle" of temporal existence "to an end," but rather aims to recommit to that struggle daily (200, 98). Although he never acknowledges it as a postsecular scholarly insight as such, Hägglund's argument for

secularism as the supreme valuation of finite secular time vis á vis an illusory eternity is remarkable precisely because it emerges from his intensive readings of ostensibly Christian texts.

Hägglund engages extensively with Charles Taylor, and recognizes as I do that the most important insight which Taylor's theorization of the modern secular condition offers is his attention to secularity as primarily a state of time-consciousness that values this-worldly time over eternity, and transforms it into a "homogenous, empty" medium. I have already noted that Taylor follows Weber and tends to imply that secular time-consciousness is, at best, the experience of a loss of some pre-secular temporal richness which was better attuned to eternity and sacramental forms of temporal experience that limit the worst "proto-totalitarian" impulses of secular modernity. And I have also noted that Taylor blames Puritanism for this shift to secular time-consciousness. Hägglund also identifies Taylor's characterization of secular time-consciousness as entailing a phenomenological deficit, and he exposes the problems here with Taylor's thinking. Hägglund notes that Taylor uses the example of secular people still using religious funerals as evidence that most people cannot accept that secular time is all there is, indicating a fundamental human "need for eternity." Rejecting Taylor's claim, Hägglund suggests that the fact that secular people still turn to religious forms of mourning at funerals merely indicates that "secular forms of acknowledging mourning in communal ways are still underdeveloped" (66). As Hägglund states, the human tendency to long for something beyond secular time does not point, as Taylor would have it, toward a basic human need for eternity, but to that fact that "we need a language that expresses our faith in the value of finite lives" (66). There is no reason to think that Hägglund is wrong here. The simple fact that many people live in a world defined by secular time-consciousness and secular temporal orientations while still

longing for “something more” does not amount in itself to a complete argument for the value of religion as something that should persist in a secular age.

Hägglund crafts his argument for a completely secularist valuation of finite, secular time as the fundamental thing to value in a good society by deriving this value from readings of Christian texts, but he might also look to religious history to find the form of mourning which he claims we need in a secular world to acknowledge loss by recognizing secular time as fundamentally valuable in and of itself. After all, we have the Puritans to thank for the historical formation of a default phenomenological experience of secular time; might we not find in Puritanism a form of mourning that reinforces and values this secular time as well? We find this secular form of mourning in religious experiences of the Puritans documented in this dissertation. When Thomas Shepard instructs his congregants to incite themselves to experience their own depravity in a temporal cycle of repeated preparation for the Lord’s Supper, he is pointing them to both the constraints and value of this-worldly time *vis á vis* the value of a dialectic of sin and grace that would place his subjects increasingly in the realm of a gathered time that would “convert the passion of secular experience that is bound by time” and thus “to no longer care” about the passions of this world (86, 77). Insofar as Shepard’s religious method of Preparationism tends to use the recurrent temporal experience of personal depravity to place the believer squarely in a space that measures and values secular time over and against a glorified eschatological time of grace and sanctification, it has value as a secular form of mourning. When Michael Wigglesworth takes Shepard’s method and uses it to orient the sacramental temporal cycle of preparation for the Lord’s Supper as simultaneously a mourning and celebration of his own queerness, he inscribes a form of mourning that makes the cycle of sacramental temporality a profoundly secular ritual. Wigglesworth gauges the days, months, and years as primarily a lack

of grace and sanctification that would provide a progressive eschatological release from the cares, concerns, and disruptive desires of this-worldly time. When Wigglesworth repeatedly notes his lack of progress in grace and sanctification by documenting the recurrent details of his queer sexuality, his ostensible mourning of this lack of religious progress is also a celebration of the fact that his depraved queerness is that which keeps him squarely in secular time. Jonathan Edwards articulates a supremely secular relationship to time. In his sermons, his overture to listeners to achieve conversion depends on a vision of time as pure secular duration. Although it is of course true that he tries to convince his listeners of the reality of eternal damnation, even this tends to reinforce a sense of time that I have shown to be secular. And whatever we might say of his sermons, we see in his diary and resolutions a completely secular assumption and valuation of time in which “death is the horizon that renders intelligible all temporal relations” in his life ambitions, in which he recognizes secular time to be “finite” and of “precious quality” (200-1). Everything Edwards plans for himself in his diary and resolutions is based on an appraisal of time as a state of being-before-death that is limited, finite, and precious—without relation to an eternity after it. In his own conversion narrative, conversion is not a transformation from a state of care oriented toward the secular world to a state of grace, sanctification, and eternal bliss being actualized in this world. Instead, his “Personal Narrative” concludes with Edwards characterizing conversion as the “struggle” of living in the distention of secular time defined by sinful feeling. Edwards’s conversion narrative does not “end,” but leaves off by marking duration and depravity as the defining state of an “ongoing life” (98, 108). I believe that Edwards valorizes his own sinful feeling—or recognition of his own depravity—at the conclusion of his personal narrative because he understands it—explicitly or not—as that which ties him to secular time. As he crafts an aesthetic form of religious mourning, Edwards is a

secularist because he knows that duration and depravity are linked. It is the affective and temporal confluence of duration and depravity that keeps Edwards grounded in this world, rather than carried away in the bliss of a conversion towards a dubious eschatological notion of eternity which entails an erasure of the self and its time. Insofar as Charles Brockden Brown's gothic vision of America in *Wieland* is a Puritan cultural inheritance, it uses the notion of personal depravity to unsettle confident assumptions about the inevitable passage of secular time on a progressive trajectory, and it does so to reinforce the Edwardsean insight into the need for the individual citizen to actively engage in striving to maximize the use of that time for realistic and constructive democratic ends.

I am characterizing the Puritan emphasis on the link between duration and depravity in its forms of mourning as not only inherently secularizing, but as also democratic. For Hägglund, secular democracy is only free if it values the individual's right to decide what to do with her time. This freedom is achieved by shrinking the amount of duration that must be committed to labour in the realm of necessity (labour for the necessary capital to survive), and expanding the amount of labour that the individual can commit to labour in the realm of freedom (labour directed to intrinsically fulfilling intellectual, athletic, familial, and social interests). For Hägglund, this truly democratic transformation can only occur under a re-evaluation of the category of value in order to resist the notion of value under capitalism as the exploitation of labour time. Instead, democracy will be actualized "only if our measure of wealth reflects a commitment to socially available free time (democratic socialism) rather than a commitment to exploiting socially necessary labor time (capitalism)" (304). Spiritual freedom in a secular democracy that is truly secular and truly democratic will be deeply spiritual because it will be based on the right of the individual to maximize her free time—time to devote towards labour

she finds intrinsically fulfilling: “The fundamental questions of economy—the questions of what we prioritize, what we value, what is worth doing with our time—are thus recognized as being at the heart of our spiritual lives” (313-314). For Hägglund, capitalism as a historical system that values the exploitation of labour time must be transformed from within for this to happen. But, just as importantly, religion as a rejection of the value of secular time must wither away and die completely. Religions are anti-democratic because they “offer consolation that our time ultimately is insignificant and will be redeemed by eternity” (330). Just as Hägglund extracts his argument for the supreme value of secular time from his reading of Augustine’s struggle in the *Confessions*, C.S. Lewis’s mourning of the loss of his wife in *A Grief Observed*, and Kierkegaard’s analysis of Abraham and Isaac in *Fear and Trembling*, he argues that a true secular democracy must transform and discard its religion as a counter-democratic vestige: for “emancipation: to be truly achieved, “religious faith must be converted into secular faith” devoted to “social justice” understood as the commitment to the right of the individual to actualize as much free time as possible (332). Hägglund’s argument for secularism thus emerges from readings of religion, and culminates with calls for religion’s abolition.

Hägglund’s utopian vision of democratic socialism as devoted to the individual’s self-actualization based on the maximization of free time devoted to intrinsically meaningful rather than alienated labour is compelling; however, his conclusion depends on too neat a distinction between the religious and secular that ignores his own insightful articulation of a secularist position from a reading of religious texts. Arguing for the abolishment of religion because of its tendency to value a dubious notion of eternity over the maximization of the use of secular time is reasonable but not pragmatic. Post-secular sociology has shown that religion is here to stay. Instead of arguing, then, for religion’s abolishment in secular democracy, we might commit

ourselves to identifying the secular democratic tendencies embedded in religious texts themselves, just as Hägglund himself does with Augustine, Lewis, and Kierkegaard. We might call this a reparative reading of religious texts for secular insights.

The Puritans' emphasis in their mourning rituals on the religious experience of duration and depravity is secular and democratic. Thus we can celebrate the Puritans not for their oppressive religiosity, but for their secularism. The Puritan emphasis on duration and depravity resists religious conversion in Hägglund's sense of the term because it resists the false bliss of eternal sanctification and explicitly refuses "to bring the struggle" of commitments to secular time "to an end" (98). The thing for the Puritans that constantly brings them back to secular time in their valuation of it is their depravity—a sense of their sinful feeling that simply refuses to be sanctified. As the Puritans mark and value their secular time, they constantly turn to their own sense of depravity as that which grounds them in that time, refusing to allow them to be swallowed up in eschatological visions of conversion as freedom from secular temporal care. The Puritan emphasis on duration and depravity is thus a resistance to both religious and secular social orders that coerce the individual to give up her free time for eschatological projects—whether those projects be a Puritan "City upon a Hill" or a neoliberal capitalist system built on exploited labour time. If we focus on their commitment in personal religious experience to duration and depravity, we do not find as Bercovitch does a tendency for Puritanism to consummate in "the union of eschatology and self-interest under the [capitalist] canopy of American progress" (*The American Jeremiad* 108). Rather, we find a subversive resistance to any kind of social project that takes away the individual's right to free time.

In the introduction to *Duration and Depravity*, I raised the issue of the use of Puritanism for democratic conversation by citing Pete Buttigieg's avowed belief that Christianity is a

progressive political force, a belief which may be connected to his own advanced study of Puritanism under Bercovitch at Harvard. Rather than trying to answer “yes” or “no” to the question of whether or not religion can be a force for “progress” in democracy, I contend that the Puritan emphasis on duration and depravity is a secularizing cultural inheritance that does two important democratic things. First, it inscribes a fundamentally secular time-consciousness that grounds the individual in the marking, experience, and fundamental valuation of secular time as intrinsically valuable. Second, Puritan religious experience uses the Calvinist concept of depravity to keep the individual grounded in this secular time rather than absorbed in an eschatological vision of society that coerces the individual’s free time for use toward a dictated objective. The twin Puritan emphasis on duration and depravity, both as we find it in the Puritan archive and as it resonates in the genealogy of the American gothic, is culturally valuable for secular democracy because it resists eschatological valuations of eternity over secular time, and because it resists salvation as a lack of secular care. The identification of the link between duration and depravity in the Puritan archive is not useful for secular democracy because it is inherently progressive, but because it constantly re-orient us towards the value of secular time while calling given notions of progress into question by positing depravity as a resistance to that progress. Shepard, Wigglesworth, Edwards, and Brockden Brown mourn and celebrate their depravity not because they wish to be rid of it, but because by calling attention to it they relieve both religious and enlightenment pressuring of the individual towards assumed ideas of progress that limit individual freedom.

To be sure, mine is a reading of Puritanism that goes against its own grain. I doubt that Shepard, Wigglesworth, or Edwards would personally avow the tendency I have identified in their writings. But, as Hägglund has shown, it is in reading religion against the grain that we find

a secular democratic valuation of time that raises the all-important “questions of what we prioritize, what we value, [and] what is worth doing with our time” (313-14). And it is Charles Taylor who directly attributes the rise of secular time to Puritanism. We don’t want to be Puritans, and we don’t want to make postsecular methodology a celebration or argument for either the return or exclusion of religion. Rather we want to find the democratic and secular insights that are available in the religious genealogy of the truly democratic secularity we want.

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Curriculum Vitae

Taylor Kraayenbrink**Education**

2014-2019

Western University
PhD English (February 2020)

Duration and Depravity: Religious and Secular Temporality in Puritanism and the Early American Gothic

Primary Supervisor: Dr. Bryce Traister

2013-2014

Western University
MA English

“King Philip’s War and the Meaning of Wilderness in Puritan New England’s Transatlantic Discourse”

Supervisor: Dr. Bryce Traister

2009-2013

Redeemer University College
BA Honours (Distinction) English

Academic Positions

2018

Western University
English and Writing Studies
Part-time Faculty

2016-2017

Lambton College
English and Liberal Studies
Contract Faculty

Teaching

Fall 2018

**Western University
English and Writing Studies**

Part-time Faculty

Course Instructor for English 3471F: US Literature and Civil Rights

Responsible for developing all content for the course syllabus, ensuring that course assignments and objectives align with department learning outcomes, lecturing on course material in all classes, marking assignments, keeping office hours, and supervising a TA

Winter 2018

**Western University
English and Writing Studies**

Part-time Faculty

Course Instructor for English 2180G: Sport in Literature

Responsible for developing all content for the course syllabus, lecturing on course material in all classes, marking all course assignments, creating and administering the course exams, and keeping regular office hours to meet with students. I wrote the syllabus for an innovative course that encouraged students' critical reading, writing, and oral communications skills, while also encouraging students to stretch their capacities for creative writing

Fall 2017

Fall 2016

**Lambton College
English and Liberal Studies**

Contract Faculty

Responsible for developing and teaching English 1173 and 1113, Professional Writing courses also designed to develop students' essay composition, critical reading, critical thinking, and oral communication skills

Research Grants and Scholarships

2016-2018	Western Doctoral Excellence Award Western University, \$40,000
2015-2018	SSHRC Doctoral Fellowship, Western University, \$80,000
2015-2016	Ontario Graduate Scholarship, \$15,000 (declined)
2014-2015	Ontario Graduate Scholarship Western University, \$15,000
2013-2014	SSHRC CGS Master's Award Western University \$17,500

Selected Honours and Awards

2015-2016	Sara Marie Jones Essay Award Western University
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Publications (refereed)

Forthcoming in <i>Canadian Review of American Studies</i> 50.1, April 2020	“Jonathan Edwards, Secular Duration, and the Evangelical Aesthetics of Sinful Selfhood” <i>Canadian Review of American Studies</i> .
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