ENG253

Week #3: Weekly Reading and Writing

Tuesday: Read “The Literature of Colonial America 1620 – 1776,” pages 65 – 72
William Bradford, pages 79 – 92

“It is no exaggeration to say that Puritan Colonial literature arose from the private need to examine the inner life.”

“Finally I can hear one of these writers breathing.”

Thursday: Anne Bradstreet, pages 95 – 105

Terms / concepts
- Inua
- Colony / colonial
- Reformation / Anglican / Catholic / Protestant
- Ancient World – 476 AD / Middle Ages = 476 – 1450 / Modern World 1450 – present
- Puritan / Pilgrim
- Providential

Write in response to one or two of the following.
- Imagine that you’re writing to someone entirely unfamiliar with American history and literature. Explain the pilgrims and the puritans. To do this, you’ll want 1) to describe the ways in which they are similar as well as different, 2) to illustrate the ways in which they colonized themselves. What is their relation to the “Church,” to scripture, to the land?
- Take on that same audience (#1) and describe the differences between the Jamestown settlers and the Puritans, e.g. why did they migrate to the “New World,” what did they “accomplish,” what was their relation with the land and its people?
- Same audience, now introduce William Bradford. Draw from his text, Of Plymouth Plantation, and explain the ways in which his plain style is an important feature of his history of Plymouth. Pay close attention to this rhetorical style as you read and, as you write, use examples and details from his text to illustrate your points.
- One scholar has noted that Bradford’s stormy Cape Cod landscape is “more a poetic image than a historical reality” – or put another way, that Bradford “turns the actual landscape into a metaphor for the desolation confronting a people, who, in the face of God’s omnipotence, are forced to recognize human impotence.” Write about this stormy landscape and how it figures (both figuratively and literally) in his writing.
- As a woman, Anne Bradstreet could not take an active part in the political life of the colony. Explore and write about her willingness to engage in “rhetorical sparring” with her male readers and critics in “The Prologue.” How would you have responded (emotionally, intellectually, socially) to Anne Bradstreet’s poetry had you been a colonial woman reading her poetry?
- Write about Anne Bradstreet’s (“The Prologue”) humor, sometimes ironically self-deprecating, and her wit -- qualities we don’t normally associate with Puritan culture. Write from the perspective of a 21st century reader.