

# PILGRIM PATHS:

## THE ROAD IN EARLY PURITAN WRITING

### CAMINOS DE PEREGRINACIÓN: EL CAMINO EN LA ESCRITURA PURITANA TEMPRANA

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Suggested citation (APA, seventh ed.)

Isgandarova, N. (2025). Pilgrim paths: the road in early puritan writing. *Universidad y Sociedad*, 17(3), e5157.

#### ABSTRACT

The motif of the road has played a crucial role in both Western and Eastern literary traditions, symbolizing physical journeys, spiritual quests, and moral trials. In early American colonial literature, particularly within Puritan writings, the road embodies a distinct spiritual and moral dimension, serving as both a metaphor for divine providence and a test of faith. For Puritans, migration to the New World was not merely a geographical relocation but a divinely ordained journey toward establishing a godly society. The road thus becomes a symbol of spiritual pilgrimage, reflecting struggles with sin, perseverance in faith, and ultimate redemption. This study examines the evolution of the road motif in Puritan literature, tracing its connections to earlier traditions, including biblical narratives, medieval Christian allegories, and European pilgrimage literature. John Bunyan's "The Pilgrim's Progress" (1678) had a profound influence on Puritan thought, portraying the road as a space of moral testing and divine grace. Similarly, the writings of William Bradford and Cotton Mather depict the Puritan journey as an arduous path filled with trials that mirror both individual and communal struggles for spiritual fulfillment. By analyzing these texts, the paper highlights how the road in colonial Puritan literature reflects both personal and collective experiences of faith, hardship, and perseverance. It argues that the road functions as a significant symbol of spiritual aspiration and moral discipline, shaping Puritan identity and reinforcing their vision of the New World as a place of divine purpose and ultimate redemption.

**Keywords:** Historical path, Metaphor, Self-discovery, American colonial literature, Spiritual journey, Moral testing.

#### RESUMEN

La peregrinación ha desempeñado un papel crucial en las tradiciones literarias occidentales y orientales, simbolizando viajes físicos, búsquedas espirituales y pruebas morales. En la literatura colonial estadounidense temprana, particularmente en los escritos puritanos, el camino encarna una dimensión espiritual y moral distintiva, sirviendo tanto como metáfora de la providencia divina como prueba de fe. Para los puritanos, la migración al Nuevo Mundo no era simplemente una reubicación geográfica, sino un viaje divinamente ordenado hacia el establecimiento de una sociedad piadosa. El camino se convierte así en un símbolo de peregrinación espiritual, reflejando la lucha contra el pecado, la perseverancia en la fe y la redención final. Este estudio examina la evolución del motivo del camino en la literatura puritana, rastreando sus conexiones con tradiciones anteriores, incluyendo las narrativas bíblicas, las alegorías cristianas medievales y la literatura europea sobre peregrinaciones. "El progreso del peregrino" (1678) de John Bunyan ejerce una profunda influencia en el pensamiento puritano, retratando el camino como un espacio de prueba moral y gracia divina. De igual manera, los escritos de William Bradford y Cotton Mather describen la travesía puritana como un camino arduo y lleno de pruebas que reflejan las luchas individuales y comunitarias por la plenitud espiritual. Mediante el análisis de estos textos, el artículo destaca cómo el camino en la literatura puritana colonial refleja experiencias personales y colectivas de fe, adversidades y perseverancia. Argumenta que el camino funciona como un símbolo significativo de aspiración espiritual y disciplina moral, moldeando la identidad puritana y reforzando su visión del Nuevo Mundo como un lugar de propósito divino y redención definitiva.

**Palabras clave:** Trayectoria histórica, Metáfora, Autodescubrimiento, Literatura colonial estadounidense, Viaje espiritual, Prueba moral.

## INTRODUCTION

The metaphorization of the concept of “road” represents a multilayered field of study, encompassing cultural, philosophical, and literary aspects. The concept of the road, in the context of spatial characterization is discussed in the works of literary scholars such as Bakhtin, Lotman, Toporov, Tsivyan, Demidova, as well as cultural theorists, philosophers, and historians of religion (Alalwani, 2017; Bakhtin, 1975; Demidova, 1994; Lotman, 1988; Toporov, 1983). In his article “Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel,” Bakhtin emphasizes the importance of the chronotope of the “road” as a symbol of journey and movement, which plays a key role in the structure of the novel (Bakhtin, 1975, p. 304). The “road” in Bakhtin’s works is not simply a physical space, but a metaphor for the life path, change, and transformation, reflecting the dialectic of time and space in a literary work. According to Bakhtin, the chronotope of the road, which begins with the short-lived and emotional chronotope of the meeting, has a broader scope but somewhat lesser emotional and value intensity. However, most encounters in novels typically occur on the “road.”

In this space, individuals, usually separated by social hierarchy and geographical distance, can accidentally meet; contrasts can arise here, and different fates can intertwine and intersect. In this place, the spatial and temporal sequences of human lives combine in a peculiar way, becoming more complex and specific through the social distances that are overcome (Soini, 2023). The road is the point of origin and realization of events. In this context, time seems to penetrate space and flows through it, forming roads, which gives rise to a rich metaphorization of the path-road and creation of stable phrases such as “life path,” “to embark on a new road,” “historical path,” “the path of self-discovery,” “the path to truth,” and others (Yunusova, 2025).

The metaphorization of the road is diverse and multifaceted, yet its core element is the flow of time. Describing the hierarchy of the concept of the “road” as an important narrative component in the history of the novel, M. Bakhtin examines its application in various literary traditions. The road plays a key role in ancient picaresque novels of travel, such as Petronius’ *Satyricon* and Apuleius’ *The Golden Ass*. The heroes of medieval chivalric romances often undertake their journeys on the road, where all the main events of the narrative unfold or concentrate (Bakhtin, 1975, p. 368).

In the novel *Parzival* by Wolfram von Eschenbach, the hero’s actual journey to Monsalvat gradually transforms into a metaphor for the life path and spiritual quest, which alternately brings him closer to and distances him from God, depending on the errors and trials he encounters along the way.

*Whom the evil spirit leads astray,*

*Who turns from Heaven’s guiding way,*

*Shall spend his earthly days in woe,*

*With soul sick and full of woe.*

(von Eschenbach, 1951).

The road also defines the plots of Spanish picaresque novels of the 16th century, such as *Lazarillo* and *Guzmán*. At the end of the 16th and beginning of the 17th centuries, Don Quixote embarks on a journey along the road, where he encounters all of Spain, from a galley slave to a duke (Koopal & Oliverio, 2024). In these and subsequent works of world literature, the road is deeply infused with the flow of historical time, bearing the marks and signs of the era. The concept of the “road” retains its narrative significance in the novels of D. Defoe, H. Fielding, T. Smollett, and in the works of romantic and historical genres by W. Scott (Visser, 2023).

Similarly, the road functions as a moral crucible in later American literature, particularly in narratives that grapple with Puritan legacies. Nathaniel Hawthorne’s “Young Goodman Brown” (1835) portrays the road as a site of temptation, where the protagonist encounters unsettling revelations about sin and human nature. The woods, marking a deviation from the moral road, serve as an ambiguous space between faith and doubt, reinforcing the Puritan view that life’s journey is one of constant vigilance against spiritual downfall.

Beyond its religious connotations, the road in literary traditions reflects evolving cultural and ideological paradigms. In the 19th century, the American road novel emerged as a vehicle for exploring individualism and national identity. Mark Twain’s “Adventures of Huckleberry Finn” (1885) transforms the river into an open road, where Huck and Jim’s journey becomes a critique of societal hypocrisy and racial injustice. Here, the road signifies not only freedom but also moral awakening, echoing earlier Puritan concerns with ethical self-examination.

By the 20th century, the road takes on an existential dimension, particularly in the work like Jack Kerouac’s “On

the Road" (1957). Unlike Bunyan's Christian, Kerouac's Sal Paradise embarks on an open-ended journey driven by spontaneity rather than divine purpose. The road, once a metaphor for spiritual discipline, becomes a space of rebellion and self-discovery, reflecting a shift from Puritan rigidity to modern existential uncertainty. Yet, even in its secularization, the road retains its symbolic function as a testing ground for the self.

The analysis of the concept of the "road" is enriched by the works of religious writers from the colonial period in America, such as William Bradford, Cotton Mather, and others. In their writings, the metaphor of the "road" is frequently used to denote the spiritual path and the pursuit of divine truth, emphasizing the importance of moral and religious guidance in human life. Bradford's "Of Plymouth Plantation" (1630–1651) frames the Puritan migration as a providential journey, echoing biblical narratives of exile and deliverance. Similarly, Cotton Mather's "Magnalia Christi Americana" (1702) portrays the lives of Puritan leaders as divinely guided paths of perseverance and faith.

The motif of the road also finds resonance in the sermons of Jonathan Edwards, whose works, such as "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" (1741), depict life as a precarious spiritual journey dependent on divine grace. Moreover, the writings of John Winthrop, particularly "A Modell of Christian Charity" (1630), conceptualize the Puritan voyage to the New World as a sacred pilgrimage, reinforcing the idea of America as a "city upon a hill". These narratives align with the broader tradition of Christian allegory, most notably in John Bunyan's "The Pilgrim's Progress" (1678), which deeply influenced colonial Puritan thought. By drawing from these sources, this study underscores the road's symbolic role as a marker of faith, trial, and redemption in early American Puritan literature, shaping the moral and spiritual identity of the new settlers.

Considering the above, in this paper it is analyzed the "road" motif in American colonial literature using a multidisciplinary methodological approach. The research methods used include a hermeneutic approach that interprets texts within their historical-religious context, a contextualization that links symbolism with biblical and allegorical narratives, and an interdisciplinary analysis that integrates perspectives from literary studies, religious history, and cultural theory. Drawing on archetypal concepts the study explores how the road motif represents not only a geographical displacement but also a complex metaphor for spiritual growth, moral testing, and divine providence.

## DEVELOPMENT

As stated before, this article aims to explore the life and creative paths of real individuals from the American colonial era, the first settlers of North America. The journey of these religious separatists, inspired by the biblical idea of creating a "city upon a hill," gradually transforms into a metaphor for the life path and spiritual quest, filled with trials and errors. This path was not always stable and smooth; depending on obstacles and mistakes, it would sometimes accelerate, bringing them closer to self-discovery, and at other times, succumbing to the weight of human weaknesses, it would change its trajectory, distancing them from the Truth. Real life, personal tragedies, and fervent faith in Providence and the protection of the Creator, are reflected in the diaries, historical chronicles, journalistic essays, and literary works of the early colonists. The analysis of the concept of "road" is enriched by the works of religious writers from the colonial period in America, such as William Bradford, Cotton Mather, and others. In their writings, the metaphor of the "road" is frequently used to denote the spiritual path and the pursuit of divine truth, emphasizing the importance of moral and religious guidance in human life.

John Bunyan's "The Pilgrim's Progress" (1678) had a significant influence on colonial Puritan thought, establishing itself as the foundation of the Christian allegory tradition. Referring to this work allows for highlighting the role of the road as a symbol of faith, trials, and redemption in early Puritan literature, helping to shape the moral and spiritual identity of the first settlers. The preacher's major works were published after his imprisonment: the two parts of "The Pilgrim's Progress" in 1678 and 1684, "The Life and Death of Mr. Badman" in 1680, and "The Holy War" in 1682. Most of his other 60 publications were doctrinal and homiletic works. Bunyan made his main characters and many secondary figures both realistic and diverse. As a result, "The Pilgrim's Progress" is valuable not only as a literary work but also as a realistic story that presents themes of salvation, temptation, the Christian armor, and the benefits of Christian fellowship through his road to the Heavens. The path of rapprochement and reunion with the Almighty reveals the pilgrim's journey not only in terms of his physical body but also through his moral strength and desire to rid himself of sins by suppressing the power of the flesh (Bunyan, 1903, pp. 87–93).

Thus, the study of the metaphorization of the concept of the "road" requires an interdisciplinary approach, taking into account literary theories, cultural studies, and religious treatises from the colonial period in America. Research into this concept allows for a deeper understanding of

how the metaphor of the “road” reflects and shapes our perception of the world, culture, and spirituality.

### The road concept in the US colonial literature

The study of concepts is closely linked to the examination of texts in which these concepts are embedded and verbalized as reflections of national culture, history, and consciousness. Any cultural concepts, understood as chronotopes, immerse the value-semantic dimensions of human existence into the spatiotemporal continuum. One such universal cultural concept is the concept of the “Road”. The idea of pilgrimage, wandering, and travel dates back to the genre of “journeys,” has deep historical connections, and is associated with the pursuit of truth in any culture (Meshcheryakova & Chermenskaya, 2012, pp. 71–80).

This idea is embedded in the history of the colonization of North America, in the search for Truth by the first Calvinist colonists who did not find a welcoming attitude toward their views and beliefs in their homeland. The reflection of these searches in the literary and non-literary sources of New England unfolds not only in the linear-geographical plane but also in a space that assumes the continuity of the human being in the cosmos—his choice of the right life path. The road, the path in the colonial history of New England, is the most vivid symbol of connection and unity among people. The plot of the “road” is metaphorical. The horizons of the wandering spirit of the first settlers, with its vague unease and longing for open space, striving for constant movement, express the idea of the eternal beginning of spiritual wandering—the pursuit of truth, the search for an ideal beyond the limits of existing being. The idea of the path inherently carries a positive, optimistic charge. The symbolic meaning of the concept of the “Road” is defined by a powerful spatiotemporal metaphor, a chronotope, which represents the life and biography of a person in the form of a path. Such a spatiotemporal organization, transforming objective reality into a categorized, meaningful world of things, fills the sense of the situation of movement experienced by a person.

The focus on the vector of movement of the first settlers of North America transforms their road into the foundation of many worldviews and existential categories, significant for understanding the inner worldview of the Puritans. The subject of this study is the set of associative representations underlying the concept of the road, reflecting the specifics of the realization of this concept. The awareness of intention is conditioned by the existence of universal concepts in human consciousness, i.e., “cultural clusters,” through which culture is presented in the mental world of a person. The identification of the concept as a mental

formation enriched by the social and cultural experience of the individual, according to O. Mitrofanova, is a natural development in the formation of the anthropocentric paradigm of psychology (Mitrofanova, 2006).

What kind of strength, energy, and enthusiasm did it take for the passengers of the first ship to cross the vast ocean and reach a new continent, where no one was awaiting them, where there were no friends or a home? In his “History of Plymouth Plantation” Governor William Bradford, an eyewitness reported the landing of the Mayflower passengers on the American shore in Mid-November 1920:

They fell upon their knees and blessed the God of heaven, who had brought them over the vast and furious ocean, and delivered them from all the periles and miseries thereof, again to set their feete on the firm and stable earth, their proper element. (Boorstin, 1964, p. 7).

Having crossed the vast ocean, the settlers arrived on a wild island, where they were greeted by unfriendly savages with arrows in hand; there was no way back – behind them lay the fierce ocean, separating them from the civilized world, and ahead of them – an unknown land and an uncertain future. Nevertheless, they were happy to have reached the “Promised Land,” which was granted to them by the Almighty after enduring all the blows of fate. Bradford describes the joy of these people, comparing their experience to the wise saying of the philosopher Seneca in one of his letters.

In Seneca’s Letter 28, “*On Travel as a Cure for Discontent*” the philosopher emphasizes that neither the place makes the man, nor does a change of scene bring peace to his mind; it is the mind itself to be improved. One who is in a discontent state everywhere, without altering his attitude, does travel in vain. We must free ourselves from the cares of the soul, notes the philosopher, which follow us no matter where we go. His ideas in the Letter are as follows:

Do you suppose that you alone have had this experience? Are you surprised, as if it were a novelty, that after such long travel and so many changes of scene you have not been able to shake off the gloom and heaviness of your mind? You need a change of soul rather than a change of climate. Though you may cross vast spaces of sea, and though, as our Vergil remarks, Lands and cities are left astern, your faults will follow you whithersoever you travel. (Seneca, 1918).

American colonists enthusiastically employed the thoughts and sayings of ancient Greek philosophers and thinkers in their efforts to emphasize the continuity of cultural values of Ancient Greece, of which they considered themselves the heirs. Drawing on the thesis from Seneca’s



28th letter, Bradford uses Seneca's ideas in the "*History of Plymouth Plantation*" in order to inspire his fellow citizen with their own perfect heroic act of crossing the ocean. He cites Seneca who preferred to stay on the land for 20 years rather than to swim across the sea, and adds his own comments on the Pilgrims:

they were thus joyful, seeing wise Seneca was so affected with sailing a few miles on the coast of his own Italy, that he had rather remain twenty years on his way by land than pass by sea to any place in a short time. (Bradford, 1650, p. 18).

The period of "twenty years", which was not mentioned in Seneca's letter, but referenced in W. Bradford's speech, has a significant historical background. It emphasizes the prolonged and arduous WAY of establishing and developing the Puritan movement in England. During Elizabeth I's reign in England, from 1558 to 1603, the Puritan movement began, encountering significant resistance from the Church of England authorities. In the 1590s, this movement was temporarily subdued through judicial actions, leading to further alienation between Anglicans and Puritans in the 17th century, particularly under the reigns of King James and King Charles I. As dissidents, the Puritans sought religious freedom and economic opportunities in distant lands. They were deeply pious people with a strong desire to establish a holy commonwealth that would fulfill God's will on the earth. Consequently, they moved to Holland, in 1608, where they stayed for 10-12 years. Beginning in 1620, many Puritans migrated to America from both England, and other parts of Europe to gain the liberty to worship God as they chose. Most of them settled in New England, while some ventured as far as the West Indies. Thus, the Puritans endured hardships for over 20 years both in their homeland, then in Holland, and later on in the way through the ocean to New England. However, their way to God remained stable, promising, and predestined. Bradford's speech, referencing Seneca, underscores this enduring perseverance when he states, "*he had rather remain twenty years on his way...*," metaphorically reflecting the Puritans' steadfast path.

Thus, the journey along any path is equivalent to a trial that the hero must undergo in order to find themselves and achieve the desired goal (or to correct the consequences of their disobedience). An essential element of the path/road is the reward (or punishment) that the hero receives for demonstrating moral qualities (Ostrovskaya, 2018, p. 580).

In the chronicle "History of Plymouth Plantation," the word "way" is repeated twenty times. We will examine some of these instances in order to reveal the content of the

information conveyed in the statements of the Puritans, as well as the cultural, social, and philosophical background of the presented information.

Upon arriving in the New World, the Puritans sought signs and symbols of the sacred land, predestined for them by the Creator. These signs paved their way, stretching from the Holy Land of Canaan to the promised paradise on the New Land. Thus, the passengers of the Mayflower, upon disembarking, saw:

but a hideous and desolate wilderness, full of wild beasts and wild men. Neither could they, as it were, go up to the top of Pisgah to view from this wilderness a goodlier country to feed their hopes; for which WAY soever, they turned their eyes (save upward to the heavens) they could have little solace or content in respect of any outward objects. (Bradford, 1650).

Once again, we observe the kind of endurance these people had not to stray from their righteous path. Originally, the narrative about climbing to the top of Pisgah, to view a fairer land is an allusion to Deuteronomy, where God commanded Moses to climb up and view the Promised Land from Mount Nebo (Pisgah).

Then the LORD said to him, 'This is the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob when I said, 'I will give it to your descendants.' I have let you see it with your eyes, but you will not cross over into it. ("Deuteronomy 34:1-4.," 2011).

Thus, as Bradford asserts, the land once promised and shown to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob rightfully belongs to its "lawful heirs" in the form of the Puritans. Bradford was a classic representative of "Puritan" historiography, unwilling and unable to seek the causes of events in anything other than Divine Providence. His texts are enriched with direct and indirect quotations from the Bible, and the discovery of correspondence between the Holy Scriptures and contemporary events served Bradford as a sufficient explanation for their meaning and origin. Bradford undoubtedly possessed high intellectual abilities, a keen sense, and knowledge of the fundamentals of philosophy and history. These qualities enabled the repeated governor of Plymouth to create an inseparable historical platform for the seizure of foreign territories, to legitimize their historical, religious, and political status, and to expand the territorial boundaries of the acquired lands to include the borders of the Near Eastern land of Canaan.

Ten years after the arrival of the Mayflower, in 1630, a new ship, the Arbella, with a carrying capacity of 350 tons and 28 types of firearms, and a crew of fifty-two was carrying westward across the Atlantic the future leaders

of Massachusetts Bay Colony. The ship had sailed from Cowes in the Isle of Wight on March 29 and was not to reach America until late June. Among the several ways of passing the time, of cementing the community, and of propitiating God, perhaps the most popular was the sermon.

The leader of the new community, **John Winthrop**, while preaching to his fellow passengers, struck the keynote of American history.

We shall be," Winthrop prophesied, "as a City upon a Hill, the eyes of all people are upon us; so that if we shall deal falsely with our God in his work we have undertaken and see cause him to withdraw his present help from us, we shall be made a story and a byword through the world. (Bradford, 1650).

The long voyage demanded means of maintaining morale, strengthening communal bonds, and reaffirming divine purpose. Among the most significant of these was the sermon, a practice deeply embedded in Puritan tradition. Preaching served as both a source of spiritual fortitude and a mechanism of social cohesion, reinforcing the shared religious convictions that defined the Puritan mission. It was during this voyage that John Winthrop, the leader of the new community, delivered what would become one of the most foundational sermons in American history, "**A Model of Christian Charity**" (1630). His words articulated a vision that would resonate throughout the centuries, shaping the very fabric of American self-identity.

This declaration by Winthrop was not merely rhetorical but carried profound theological and political weight. Drawing from biblical imagery, particularly from the Gospel of Matthew, Winthrop framed the Puritan settlement as a divinely ordained experiment—a model society meant to exemplify godly living for all the world to see. Winthrop's vision set the ideological framework for what would become the American exceptionalist narrative, embedding in the Puritan consciousness a deep sense of moral obligation and collective destiny. His sermon underscored the duality of this mission: the promise of divine favor if the community remained faithful, and the specter of failure should they falter. The Puritans were thus engaged in a covenant not only with God but also with history itself, bound to uphold an ethical and religious standard that would define their new society (Winthrop, 1630).

The *Arbella's* voyage, then, was more than a mere crossing of the Atlantic—it was the enactment of a spiritual pilgrimage, a movement toward what the Puritans envisioned as a new Israel in the American wilderness. The sermon delivered aboard that ship did more than inspire its immediate audience; it laid the foundation for a powerful

national mythology, one that continues to shape American political and cultural discourse to this day.

**Cotton Mather's "Magnalia Christi Americana"** opens with a grand proclamation inviting readers "to Write the Wonders of the Christian Religion, flying from the Depravations of Europe, to the American Strand: And, assisted by the Holy Author of that Religion..." The writer confesses that he fulfills this mission "with all Conscience of Truth, required therein by Him, who is the Truth itself..." These lines set the tone for Mather's extensive and ambitious chronicle of 17th-century Puritan New England.

Spanning nearly 700 pages in its printed form, "*Magnalia Christi Americana*" presents detailed information on the historical environment and the representatives of that period. It includes biographical sketches of religious and civic leaders, a history of Harvard College, theological debates on church polity and discipline, and vivid descriptions of the adversities faced by the Puritan settlers, such as conflicts with Indigenous peoples, doctrinal disputes with figures like Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson, and the perceived threat of witchcraft.

Central to Mather's narrative is his unwavering belief in divine providence, interpreting historical events as manifestations of the cosmic struggle between God and the forces of evil. As Michael P. Winship notes, "*Magnalia*" stands as "the last great document in the orthodox providential tradition" (Winship, 1996, p. 74). Cotton Mather himself regarded "*Magnalia*" as his most significant literary contribution, which serves as a religious chronicle of the American colonies rather than a conventional historical account.

His narrative frames the history of America through the lens of Puritan ideology, emphasizing divine providence, moral trials, and the unfolding of a sacred mission in New England. For Mather, history was inseparable from theology—only the Puritan experience held true significance, as it represented the fulfillment of a covenant with God. Any historical development outside this framework was secondary, reinforcing his conviction that the essence of America's past was rooted in Puritan influence and spiritual destiny (Mather & Murdock, 1977).

Cotton Mather (1663–1728) represented the third generation of a prominent lineage of Puritan ministers in North America. Having earned degrees from Harvard and the University of Glasgow, Mather joined his father in ministry at Boston's Second Church. His literary output was prolific, consisting of numerous sermons and pamphlets published by local Boston printers. However, the scope and scale of "*Magnalia Christi Americana*" exceeded the capacity of any printing press in the American colonies.

Therefore, the work of Cotton Mather was published in London, and he could finally see a copy of it on October 30<sup>th</sup>, 1702.

Cotton Mather's "*Magnalia Christi Americana*" occupied an ambivalent position within the intellectual and religious landscape of its time. While some readers lauded the work for its comprehensive chronicle of New England's Puritan heritage, others criticized it for its antiquated style and theological outlook. The mixed reception reflects a broader cultural and epistemological shift, taking place on both sides of the Atlantic at the dawn of the Enlightenment.

One of the primary sources of contention was Mather's reliance on providential history—a mode of historical writing that interprets events as direct manifestations of divine will. Though this perspective resonated with devout Puritan readers, it increasingly appeared anachronistic to those influenced by emerging scientific and rationalist discourses. The "wonders" Mather presented as evidence of divine intervention, such as miraculous deliverances or ominous signs, were beginning to be reinterpreted through natural philosophy. The growing influence of empirical reasoning, championed by figures like John Locke and Isaac Newton, contributed to the skepticism toward Mather's supernatural explanations.

Furthermore, the stylistic elements of "*Magnalia Christi Americana*"—its elaborate, at times overwrought, rhetoric and its encyclopedic structure—contributed to the perception that it was already outdated upon publication. The text's reliance on a heavily allusive, Baroque prose style was increasingly at odds with the emerging preference for clarity and conciseness in historical and theological writing. This stylistic disconnect likely limited its appeal outside strictly Puritan circles.

Despite all critiques, "*Magnalia*" remains an invaluable document of early American historiography and Puritan thought. It serves as a testament to the intellectual and religious concerns of colonial New England while also illustrating the tensions between traditional Puritan theology and the shifting paradigms of the Enlightenment. Thus, its reception underscores not only the contested legacy of Puritanism but also the broader transformations in historical and scientific inquiry taking place in the early 18th century.

From an archetypal perspective, Carl Jung identifies the road as a universal symbol deeply embedded in the human subconscious. Jung's archetypes, such as the Hero and the Wise Old Man, find resonance in the journey motif, where the road signifies spiritual growth and the pursuit of truth and meaning. Thus, the road archetype extends beyond physical movement, representing a path toward

self-discovery and existential understanding. Jungian interpretation reveals that the road's symbolic depth is rooted in its representation of movement—both physical and spiritual—and its ability to connect disparate elements of human experience.

## CONCLUSIONS

The metaphorical richness of the road extends beyond physical movement to encompass the passage of time and the evolution of spiritual identity. In American colonial literature, roads often symbolize the trials, aspirations, and faith of early settlers. William Bradford's "*History of Plymouth Plantation*" intertwines literal and metaphorical journeys, illustrating the Pilgrims' struggles as both physical challenges and spiritual tests. His references to Seneca's philosophical reflections further emphasize the settlers' resilience and unwavering faith. Ultimately, their journey—marked by hardship and perseverance—reinforces the road as a powerful symbol of spiritual growth, communal endurance, and the relentless pursuit of divine truth. John Winthrop, in "*A Model of Christian Charity*", presents the Puritan settlement as a divinely sanctioned endeavor, intended to serve as a model of righteous living. This vision underscores the Puritan belief in their unique covenant with God, reinforcing the idea that their society was not merely a colonial venture but a spiritual mission meant to inspire and instruct the world.

Cotton Mather regarded "*Magnalia Christi Americana*" as his most significant literary contribution, framing it as a religious chronicle that not only documents the history of the American colonies but also constructs a moral roadmap for future generations. His narrative presents the Puritan experience as a divinely guided journey, where trials and hardships serve as moral tests shaping both individual character and collective destiny. Through this lens, the history of New England becomes more than a sequence of events—it emerges as a spiritual pilgrimage, reinforcing the Puritan vision of the "road" as a path toward righteousness, divine favor, and societal order.

In conclusion, the road as a concept in Puritan American literature serves as a powerful metaphor for life, time, and spiritual growth. As an archetype, the road embodies universal themes of progress and continuity, underscoring the inevitability of change and the responsibility to navigate life's path thoughtfully. This interdisciplinary exploration reveals how the metaphorization of the road shapes and reflects cultural, historical, and spiritual dimensions of human experience. Through these varied lenses, the road emerges as a symbol that transcends time, culture, and genre. It embodies human struggles and triumphs, the passage of time, and the pursuit of meaning and truth.

Whether representing personal choices, societal transformations, or existential journeys, the metaphor of the road offers a variety of literary narratives through which human experiences and aspirations are understood and expressed.

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