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Michael P. Winship. *Making Heretics: Militant Protestantism and Free Grace in Massachusetts, 1636-1641.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002. xv + 322 pp. $29.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-691-08943-0.

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Making Ideologues: Militant Ministers and Puritan Orthodoxy in Early Massachusetts

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Michael Winship's new book is a careful, clear, and thorough study of the politics of "the antinomian controversy" in early Massachusetts, which Winship renames the "free grace controversy" (p. 1). From 1636 through 1638 (with a denouement lasting three more years) the chief public authorities in Massachusetts Bay–the General Court, its most prominent leaders, the First Church of Boston, and puritan ministers–confronted a crisis of authority that nearly fractured the colony. Recognized especially in the story of Anne Hutchinson, the controversy pit two interpretations of puritan teaching on divine grace. The more radical form of puritanism promoted the individual's immediate experience of grace through Christ and the Spirit. The other emphasized moral obedience and religious training as integral to the experience of grace.

Winship's contribution to a rich historiography of the topic is to provide a close reading, nearly month-by-month at times, of the unfolding of this controversy. This book is full of new detail about the ebb and flow of events. It corrects dozens of mistakes that are commonplace in the scholarly literature. It also has a rich bibliography embedded in the annotations. Winship takes us into the letters, sermons, meeting records, and treatises that illumine the quite personal dynamics of the tactics, decisions, agendas, and strategies of the major actors. Two figures previously in the background emerge front and center in Winship's account. Thomas Shepard, a minister and divine in Cambridge, appears as a hardened, illiberal ideologue. He manipulated events and opinions to compel Anne Hutchison into a radicalism she never quite intended and ministers such as John Cotton into a legalism they never fully embraced. Henry Vane also looms large in Winship's narrative. Well-connected to the royal court, Vane was elected (briefly) as governor of Massachusetts and, later, made a member of Parliament. An opponent of John Winthrop, he supported Hutchinson, encouraged her ideas, and became an advocate of religious toleration in the Bay Colony. Winship uses Vane to assert transatlantic and political connections. Highly visible and always controversial, Vane represented the threat of political instability and royal incursion into New England's affairs. His support for the radicals implicated them in dangerous ways.

Making Heretics argues that the free grace controversy erupted as much out of personal and political maneuverings as from deep doctrinal divisions. From the start, Winship alerts us to his rejection of large claims based on "structural" polarities: "radical/orthodox; conservative/innovative; free market/agrarian; patriarch/proto-feminist" (p. 2). Puritanism, Winship argues, was inherently instable and essentially flexible enough to include these apparent polarities (a suggestive but confusing formulation which merits more explanation than Winship delivers). Yet personal agendas and the quest for authority over-rode puritanism's potential comprehensiveness. "Conflict," he maintains, was "a consequence of contingencies and personalities" (p. 6). Jealous for their clerical authority and for New England's independence, figures such as Shepard exacerbated a profound, but not necessarily definitive, religious difference into a full-blown crisis. They made the likes of Hutchinson, who initially had a generous lay following, into heretics: abandoned by moderate clergy such as Cotton and by laity such as Winthrop. This is an intriguing conclusion, which is provocative and open to debate.

What, then, of Winship's reading of previous studies that focus on larger cultural or social–what Winship calls "structural"–contests? He argues that studies of gender and the controversy focus too narrowly on Anne Hutchinson. He critiques Emery Battis' demographic account of the connections between upwardly mobile merchants and antinomianism by contending that such as-

sociations resulted from a mere coincidence: merchants were aplenty in Boston, as were radicals. He similarly dismisses Louise A. Breen's recent book on the social location of antinomians: their connection to Boston's military and commercial networks as well as their attraction to an ideology that elevated individual conscience over corporate cohesion. William K. B. Stoever's penetrating monograph on puritan and radical theologies of preparation blurs important political considerations and local variations, according to Winship. *Making Heretics* draws on Philip F. Gura's wide-ranging account of radical teaching and the extent to which it was a deviation from, and not a stark antithesis to, puritan orthodoxy; but Winship, even more than Gura, downplays the innovations or heterodoxy of radical groups.[1]

Winship's book ought to be read in conjunction with these others. His argument against Battis and Breen underestimates the striking extent to which radicals in fact were vested in commercial and military ventures. Stoever presents the theology (grace, preparation, conversion, moral obedience, and assurance of salvation) more precisely and, at places, more intelligibly than does Winship. Gura's work remains an important exploration of the dialectic between puritanism and radicalism, a dynamic that Winship often minimizes. In sum, the greatest strengths of this books–its focus on power struggles, personalities, and issues of authority–present some limitations, as well. Winship's close readings threaten to obscure the large interpretive meaning of the free grace controversy, viewed in intellectual or social terms. For many readers, especially those not immersed in the history of New England puritanism, the personalities and power struggles of those involved in the controversy are, in the end, important only as they illuminate the deeper cultural and religious divisions of the period. Yet, as Winship might well reply, one should get the facts of the case right and know the close narrative before venturing generalizations about the larger meaning of those divisions.

Note:

[1]. Emery Battis, *Saints and Sectaries: Anne Hutchinson and the Antinomian Controversy in the Massachusetts Bay Colony* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962); Louise A. Breen, *Transgressing the Bounds: Subversive Enterprises among the Puritan Elite in Massachusetts, 1630-1692* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); William K. B. Stoever, *"A Faire and Easie Way to Heaven": Covenant Theology and Antinomianism in Early Massachusetts* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1978); Philip F. Gura, *A Glimpse of Sion's Glory: Puritan Radicalism in New England, 1620-1660* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1984).

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