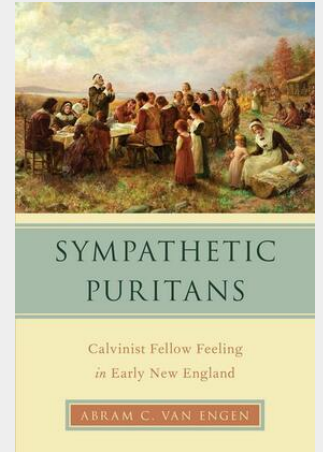


Van Engen

SYMPATHETIC PURITANS

Revising dominant accounts of Puritanism and challenging the literary history of sentimentalism, *Sympathetic Puritans* argues that a Calvinist theology of sympathy shaped the politics, religion, rhetoric, and literature of early New England. Scholars have often understood and presented sentimentalism as a direct challenge to stern and stoic Puritan forebears: the standard history traces a cult of sensibility back to moral sense philosophy and the Scottish Enlightenment, not Puritan New England. In contrast, Van Engen's work unearths the pervasive presence of sympathy in a large archive of Puritan sermons, treatises, tracts, poems, journals, histories, and captivity narratives.

Sympathetic Puritans also demonstrates how two types of sympathy -- the active command to fellow-feel (a duty), as well as the passive sign that could indicate salvation (a discovery) -- pervaded Puritan society and came to define the very boundaries of English culture, affecting conceptions of community, relations with Native Americans, and the development of American literature. By analyzing Puritan theology, preaching, prose, and poetry, Van Engen re-examines the Antinomian Controversy, conversion narratives, transatlantic relations, Puritan missions, Mary Rowlandson's captivity narrative -- and Puritan culture more generally -- through the lens of sympathy. Demonstrating and explicating a Calvinist theology of sympathy in seventeenth-century New England, the book reveals the religious history of a concept that has largely been associated with more secular roots.



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