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THE CIVIC SOLUTION TO THE CRISIS OF ENGLISH COLONIZATION, 1609–1625*

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ABSTRACT. *Historians have portrayed the Virginia Company and its colony, the first permanent English settlement in America, as an essentially commercial enterprise. The atmosphere of the colony is represented accordingly as one of proto-capitalist individualism. This paper shows that the Virginia Company promoters described the aims of its colony in civic terms: that is, in terms of a politics of virtue, citizenship, and the pursuit of the common good. Promoters of the colony drew on a civic tradition particularly hostile to commerce; a tradition in which wealth was portrayed as Asiatic luxury and corruption. The civic arguments of the Company were a response to the commercial and human disasters which characterized the first years of the colony and its Elizabethan predecessors. The civic ideology promoted by the Company was an attempt to remedy what were perceived to be the causes of this disastrous situation – corruption, greed, faction, and idleness. The promoters' civic arguments also provided an ideological motivation both for potential investors and colonists who might otherwise have been deterred by the financial and human expense.*

The political landscape of the first years of the Virginia Company's colony has always been clouded. This uncertainty is perhaps surprising given that Jamestown would become the first permanent English settlement in North America. The problem lies in part with the failure of the records of the first administration of the Company to survive.[1] The absence of those records has contributed to contention among historians of the colony's politics. One patriotic tradition of American history held that the administration of the Company from 1619 by the parliamentary leader Sir Edwin Sandys and, prior to that, the reformed charters of 1609 and 1612 initiated the nation's struggle for liberty.[2] Opposed to this was the argument that the Virginia Company was

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[1] On the loss of the Virginia Company's two court books covering the period 28 Jan. 1606 to 28 July 1619, see S. M. Kingsbury, ed., *The records of the Virginia Company of London*, 4 vols. (Washington, 1906–35), I, pp. 25–31.

[2] Alexander Brown, *English politics in early Virginian history* (first published 1901, reissued New York, 1968), pp. 11–13; E. D. Neill, *The English colonisation of America during the seventeenth century* (London, 1871); Charles Mills Gayley, *Shakespeare and the founders of liberty in America* (New York, 1917).

purely a business enterprise with no political aims.[3] In recent years this interpretation has prevailed. Surveying the secondary literature, Jack P. Greene observes that 'Virginia's orientation was almost wholly commercial from the beginning.'[4] The context for this understanding of the enterprise has been, as Kenneth Andrews observes, that 'European overseas expansion in this epoch was fundamentally a commercial movement.'[5] Such accounts have emphasized that in its first years the colony was ruled by martial law and only gradually adopted some of the legal and political customs of England.[6] From the rudimentary political character of its early years the colony developed a 'highly individualistic and materialistic' atmosphere in which colonists 'showed little concern for the public weal of the colony and routinely sacrificed the corporate welfare to their own individual ends'.[7]

By contrast with these claims, I shall show that the Virginia Company articulated an ideological programme in this period. This ideology was civic. It was neo-Roman and specifically classical and Italian republican in its intellectual alignments. Its central precept was that virtue and the active political life of the citizen are necessary to secure the common good. This civic ideology was first presented in 1609 as the solution to the failures of Elizabethan colonies and to the disasters of the first years of Jamestown. Those historians who have emphasized the role of martial law in the colony have failed to appreciate the Machiavellian undertones of that regime. Moreover, the argument that the Company was purely a business enterprise does not sit easily with the fact that the particular blend of civic thought professed in Company-sponsored pamphlets included that tradition which rejected profit as a corruption of the pursuit of the common good.

In the absence of complete Virginia Company records this interpretation will rest primarily upon an examination of the Company's propaganda. There was some separation between the image of colonization portrayed in the Company's promotional tracts and the experience of colonization. The ideology of the colony itself cannot be reduced to that of the Company. Indeed, I shall argue that in its later period the Company articulated civic arguments

[3] Kingsbury, ed., *Records of the Virginia Company*, I, pp. 12–15; Wesley F. Craven, *The dissolution of the Virginia Company* (Oxford, 1932), p. 24, 'The true motif of the Company's history is economic rather than political.' The colony, according to this account, was governed along predominantly military lines: Craven, *Dissolution of the Virginia Company*, p. 48; and Herbert L. Osgood, *The American colonies in the seventeenth century*, 3 vols. (first published 1904, reissued New York, 1930), I, pp. 68–71.

[4] Jack P. Greene, *Pursuits of happiness* (Chapel Hill, 1988), p. 8. See also Edmund S. Morgan, *American slavery American freedom* (New York, 1975), pp. 44–5, 95, 118.

[5] Kenneth R. Andrews, *Trade, plunder and settlement: maritime enterprise and the genesis of the British empire* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 5.

[6] See, for example, Warren M. Billings, 'The transfer of English law to Virginia, 1606–1650', in K. R. Andrews, N. Canny, and P. E. H. Hair, eds., *The westward enterprise* (Liverpool, 1978), pp. 216–18; N. Canny, 'The permissive frontier: the problem of social control in English settlements in Ireland and Virginia', in ibid., p. 18; David Thomas Konig, 'Colonization and the common law in Ireland and Virginia, 1569–1634', in James A. Henretta, Michael Kammen, and Stanley N. Katz, eds., *The transformation of early American history* (New York, 1991), pp. 70–92.

[7] Greene, *Pursuits of happiness*, pp. 11, 15.

to a large degree in opposition to practices in the colony. The political designs of the Company and the experience of the colony cannot, however, be entirely separated. In their understanding of the ideology of the colonizing enterprise historians have focused upon the colony to the neglect of the Company.

The first reason for not separating the two must be that the ideology of the Company was largely developed in response to the experience of the colony. Moreover, there is evidence that the civic design of the Company could be found outside its propaganda, for example in the use of martial law and in the expansion of public participation in the enterprise. It is also true that the civic arguments of the promotional pamphlets were expressed as much by those experienced in the colony as by hired pens. To privilege such direct experience in the colony is, however, to some degree anachronistic. Certainly experience was a claim which had as much rhetorical force for Jacobean audiences as it has had in the twentieth century. Jacobean culture, however, also placed great emphasis upon the power of speech, which included printing. Speech was perceived as a form of action and believed to perform fundamental acts in the foundation and conservation of a commonwealth. In this context the propaganda of the Company must be understood as a foundational act no less significant than, for example, patterns of migration or the colony's institutional structure. Understood in this context, those who wrote to promote the colony, even those without 'first-hand' experience, cannot be dismissed merely as an 'intelligentsia' or as marginal to the enterprise, but rather must be seen as central to the act of colonizing.

The examination of the Company's promotional tracts proves to be particularly appropriate to understanding what kind of enterprise the protagonists believed they were undertaking. Given that civic thought was concerned with the spirit of a commonwealth it was, consistent with the history of republican political argument, more likely to be expressed in histories and orations written by those involved in the business of the commonwealth than codified in statutes. The Company's propaganda, therefore, was for this further reason far more significant to the politics of the enterprise than has previously been recognized.[8]

Historians have commonly held that the revival of civic thought and classical republicanism which followed the English civil wars was unprecedented.[9] Jacobean politics has been characterized in terms of monarchical theories of

[8] For scepticism about the value of the Company propaganda as an historical resource, see David B. Quinn's authoritative *New American world: a documentary history of North America to 1612* (5 vols., New York, 1979), v, p. 233. Quinn notes that 'No examples … of the sermons preached to potential subscribers are given' in the five volumes. He justifies this omission with the observation that 'they are long-winded and in content only of intermittent interest'. Similarly, Kenneth Andrews dismisses the propaganda as 'hollow rhetoric' but grudgingly concedes 'Difficult though it may be now to swallow such sanctimonious bombast, we can only assume that the leading preachers of the day knew well enough how to rouse the Christian conscience and national feeling of the Jacobean public', *Trade, plunder and settlement*, p. 320.

[9] The most notable of such accounts is J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian moment* (Princeton, 1975). See also Blair Worden, 'English republicanism', in J. H. Burns and M. Goldie, eds., *The Cambridge history of political thought, 1450–1700* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 443–75.

hierarchy, order, and unity, and also as possessing 'a variety of political viewpoints' including contractarian theory and the ancient constitution, but classical republicanism has been excluded from each of these portrayals.[10] Recently these claims have been shown to be inconsistent with the widespread appeals to civic thought in Elizabethan and Jacobean England.[11] Republican thought, it is argued, thrived in the margins of court politics.[12] Historians have been ready to characterize the New World as one of the margins of early modern Europe, or as marginal to the European mind. The promotion of civic thought in this context might prove to be consistent with the claim that such ideas flourished in the political margins. I will argue, however, that the Virginia Company promoters did not understand their use of civic language in this way. They believed they were establishing a new commonwealth and this act was in no way marginal to their humanistic cultural preoccupations.[13] Civic thought can be shown not to be flourishing on the margins of politics but to be providing a tool with which to address a political crisis where other political means have failed.[14]

When civic thought is understood as a tool the question of whether the Company or the audience believed such ideas recedes. Certainly we shall see

[10] For an emphasis upon theories of order and unity in early Stuart political thought, see Kevin Sharpe, 'Introduction: parliamentary history from 1603–1629: in or out of perspective?', in Sharpe, ed., *Faction and parliament: essays on early Stuart history* (Oxford, 1978), p. 28: 'The political theory of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century England was the theory of the correspondency between the ordered macrocosm and hierarchical microcosm of the state'; Conrad Russell, *The causes of the English civil war* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 131–60. For an emphasis that 'there was a variety of political viewpoints in early Stuart England', see J. P. Sommerville, 'James I and the divine right of kings: English politics and continental theory', in Linda Levy Peck, ed., *The mental world of the Jacobean court* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 55–70, at p. 70; Linda Levy Peck, 'Kingship, counsel and law in early Stuart Britain', in J. G. A. Pocock, ed., *The varieties of British political thought, 1500–1800* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 80–115. Cf. J. P. Sommerville, *Politics and ideology in England, 1603–1640* (London, 1986), p. 86 n. 1: 'civic humanism was buried if not dead before the English civil war'; see also pp. 57–8.

[11] Patrick Collinson, 'The monarchical republic of Queen Elizabeth I', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, 69 (1987), pp. 394–424; Markku Peltonen, *Classical humanism and republicanism in English political thought, 1570–1640* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 1–6.

[12] This position is adopted in particular by Peltonen and to some degree by Collinson but not, it must be stressed, exclusively. Both examine civic thought in the context of the commonwealth. See Peltonen, *Classical humanism and republicanism*, p. 54: 'the occurrence of humanist and republican arguments at the margins rather than at the centre reveals something of their controversial nature'; Collinson, 'The monarchical republic of Elizabeth I', p. 397. See also Worden, 'English republicanism', p. 445: 'Republican ideas might be missing from the political treatises of the generations before the Civil War, but they were often explored in imaginative literature.'

[13] It is tempting to argue that the Virginia Company introduced civic arguments to fill the vacuum created by the debate over whether Virginia was held by right of conquest and fell, therefore, under James's prerogative, or whether it was subject to parliament and the common law. (On this debate, see Noel Malcolm, 'Hobbes, Sandys, and the Virginia Company', *Historical Journal*, 24 (1981), p. 303.) As we shall see, however, the Company's pronouncements of policy respond to what is represented as a crisis in establishing a commonwealth and not to a question of authority.

[14] Cf. Peter S. Onuf, 'Reflections on the founding: constitutional historiography in bicentennial perspective', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 46 (1989), pp. 350–1.

that this ideology could be and was employed opportunistically, or even cynically, but the designs of those by whom it was articulated were no less serious for that. Indeed, cynicism is a mechanism through which political argument responds to its context: it is an acknowledgement of the boundaries of legitimate political discourse. Equally, however, civic values were used by those authors who did in fact travel to Virginia to account for why they were prepared to risk their lives, a risk underlined by the very high mortality rate in the Jamestown colony. In the spectrum between these extremes civic language provided the terms in which the actions of colonization were understood.

The view advanced here is not merely that the experience of colonization shaped the ideology of the protagonists: that political thought was a tool for solving problems in the world of experience, although that is both true and central to my present argument. The view presented is also that, given that humanism provided the terms in which colonization was understood, the foundation of the colony provided a means through which humanists could pursue their moral and political values. This is not to argue that the humanistic language of the Virginia Company's promoters was exclusive of other political idioms; natural law claims, for example, were central to the justification of the colony. The argument, rather, is that these other political idioms were grafted on to the humanist trunk which was the language of the new commonwealth.

The Virginia Company's promoters had all received an education in the *studia humanitatis* which was pervasive in Elizabethan and Jacobean schools and in the two universities.[15] The term 'humanism' is taken here to refer to the revival of classical languages and texts in each of the disciplines of the *studia humanitatis* – grammar, rhetoric, history, poetry, and moral philosophy – and to the distinctive values for the conduct of social and political life which were furnished by that study.[16] Central to these values was an emphasis that the health of a political community rests upon the character and spirit of its leaders and citizens rather than upon its institutions.[17] Flowing from this concern were preoccupations with the merits of an active versus a contemplative life, the cardinal virtues, and the ends of honour and glory as opposed to peace and security.[18] Moreover, the *studia humanitatis* provided a vehicle, namely classical rhetoric, for the dissemination of those values. Above all, this colonial enterprise

[15] On the *studia humanitatis* in grammar school education, see T. W. Baldwin, *Shakespeare's small Latine and lesse Greeke* (2 vols., Urbana, 1944). For the universities, see Mark H. Curtis, *Oxford and Cambridge in Transition, 1558–1642* (Oxford, 1959). See also Quentin Skinner, *Reason and rhetoric in the philosophy of Hobbes* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 19–110.

[16] Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance thought and its sources*, ed. Michael Mooney (New York, 1979), pp. 21–32.

[17] Quentin Skinner, *The foundations of modern political thought* (2 vols., Cambridge, 1978), I, p. 45. While the language of citizenship may seem inappropriate to Renaissance England, Patrick Collinson observes that in early modern England 'citizens' were 'concealed within subjects'; see Patrick Collinson, *De republica anglorum* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 23–4.

[18] On the contrast between the aims of humanist and scholastic political philosophy, Quentin Skinner, 'Political philosophy', in Charles B. Schmitt and Quentin Skinner, eds., *The Cambridge history of renaissance philosophy* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 413.

could be conceived in terms of the humanist discourse on the best form of a commonwealth. The speeches and tracts arising from Elizabethan and Jacobean colonising enterprises were an extensive discourse on that topic to which the Virginia Company made a distinctively civic contribution. The scope for employing these humanistic skills is underlined by the poet Sir William Alexander who declared when writing of his own American land-holdings: 'Where was ever Ambition baited with greater hopes than here, or where ever had Vertue so large a field to reape the fruits of Glory.'[19]

I

The beginnings of English colonization in North America can be dated to Elizabeth's grant of a patent in 1578 to Sir Humphrey Gilbert, who had distinguished himself in the conquest of Ireland.[20] The literature promoting Gilbert's attempts to establish colonies was humanistic. The leaders of the voyages were humanistically educated and many prominent humanists were central to or associated with the enterprises.[21] The authors promoting Gilbert's ventures consistently turned to the conventions of classical deliberative rhetoric. The ventures were exhorted in terms of the ends of honour and profit – the ends of deliberative rhetoric and the ideals of Academic moral philosophy.[22] George Peckham's *A true report of the newfound landes* (1583) is typical of the literature which supported Gilbert's enterprise. The author's father, Sir George Peckham, was one of the chief investors in Gilbert's voyages and a trustee of his patent.[23] Peckham was forced to meditate upon the soundness of the project following two unsuccessful attempts at exploration, a third voyage which failed to establish a colony, and the disappearance of Gilbert (who would prove to have perished with one of his ships on the return).

[19] Sir William Alexander, *An encouragement to colonies* (London, 1624), p. 42.

[20] David Beers Quinn, ed., *The voyages and colonising enterprises of Sir Humphrey Gilbert* (2 vols., London, 1940), I, pp. 35–6. Gilbert would be only the first of many New World adventurers to have participated in the colonization of Ireland. It is now widely acknowledged that republican thought was used to address the problems of Ireland. I will not address here the possible links with the civic thought employed by the Virginia Company. On common involvement in the two enterprises, see Howard Mumford Jones, 'Origins of the colonial idea in England', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 85 (1942), p. 463. On republicanism in the Irish context, see Peltonen, *Humanism and republicanism*, pp. 74–102.

[21] Supporters included John Dee, Richard Hakluyt, Philip Sidney, George Gascoigne, John Florio, and Walter Ralegh.

[22] On the nature and ends of deliberative rhetoric, see Aristotle, *The art of rhetoric*, trans. J. H. Freese (London, 1926), I.3–6; Cicero, *De inventione*, trans. H. M. Hubbell (London, 1949), II.155–6; Cicero, *De oratore*, trans. E. W. Sutton and H. Rackham (London, 1942), II.334; Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, trans. H. E. Butler (4 vols., London, 1920), III.viii.1–2; Thomas Wilson, *The arte of rhetorique*, ed. Thomas J. Derrick (New York, 1982), pp. 76, 89. On the role of these values in Academic moral philosophy, see Cicero, *De officiis*, trans. Walter Miller (London, 1913).

[23] David Beers Quinn, *England and the discovery of America, 1481–1620* (London, 1974), pp. 379–80 and 371–80; Quinn, *Gilbert*, I, p. 59.

He first recounted learning of the disasters of the latest voyage – the loss of the *Delight* and the failure to reach the mainland of America – from Edward Haies, the captain and owner of the only vessel to return. His meditation is placed in the context of Athenian deliberative rhetoric. 'Upon his report… I did call to my remembraunce, the Historie of Themystocles the Grecian, who… signified unto hys Countrimen, the cittizens of Athens, that hee had invented a device for theyr commonwealth very profitable.'[24] The Athenians consulted Aristides who confirmed that it was indeed 'a very profitable practise for the common wealth but it was dis-honest', leading to its rejection. Peckham then turned from this meditation to the exhortation of the colonial venture in terms of the ends of deliberative rhetoric which he casts explicitly as 'deliberation': 'by occasion of this historie, I drewe my selfe into a more deepe consideration, of thys later undertaken voyage, whether it were as pleasing to almightie God, as profitable to men? as lawful as it seemed honourable… upon mature deliberation, I founde the action to bee honest and profitable'.[25]

This classic humanist formulation of both profit and honour was maintained by all Elizabethan colonial adventurers. It was employed to promote colonization based principally upon the motive of profit in imitation of the spoils of Spanish conquests. This motivation was revealed in the younger Richard Hakluyt's seminal *Discourse of western planting* (1584). Hakluyt became the leading Elizabethan promoter of American colonization. His chief promise was the 'manifolde comodyties that are like to growe to this Realme of Englande by the Western discoveries lately attempted'.[26] With such a 'greate treasure', he argued, 'did not the Emporer Charles' gain his dominions. He continued at length: 'With this treasure hath he not mayneteyned many Cities in Italie as well against the Pope as againste the frenche kinge… With this treasure did he not… With this treasure.'[27]

Following Gilbert's death and the grant of the patent to his half-brother Sir Walter Ralegh, colonial enterprises resumed in earnest, first in the Roanoke colonies and then in the Guiana voyages. In each of these enterprises profit remained the principal motivation.[28] It was in Ralegh's *Discoverie of the large, rich and bewtiful empyre of Guiana* that the Elizabethan pursuit of colonies based upon profit reached its promotional height. He begun by urging the emulation of Spanish wealth:

if we now consider of the actions both of Charles the fifte, who had the Maydenhead of Peru, & the aboundant treasures of Atabalipa, together with the affaires of the Spanish King now living, what territories he hath purchased, what he hath added to the actes

[24] George Peckham, *A true report of the newfound landes* (London, 1583), sig. B3r.
[25] Ibid., sig. B3r–v.
[26] E. G. R. Taylor, ed., *The writings and correspondence of the two Richard Hakluyts* (2 vols., London, 1935), II, p. 211.
[27] Ibid., II, p. 243.
[28] See, for example, the *Letters patent* granted to Raleigh, in Richard Hakluyt, *Principal navigations* (London, 1589), pp. 725–8; Thomas Harriot, *A brief and true report of the new found land of Virginia* (London, 1588) sigs. A4v–Br; Arthur Barlowe, *Letter to Ralegh*, in Hakluyt, *Principal navigations*, p. 728; Robert Harcourt, *A relation of a voyage to Guiana* (London, 1613), sig. A2v.

of his predecessors, how many kingdomes he hath indangered, how many armies, he hath & doth maintaine … we shall find these abilities rise not from the trades of sackes, and Civill Oranges … It is his Indian Golde that indaungereth and disturbeth all the nations of Europe.[29]

'The empyre of Guiana', Ralegh argued, 'hath more abundance of Golde than any part of Peru', and specifically 'Manoa, the emperiall Citie of Guiana which the Spanyardes cal el Dorado' far exceeds 'any of the world' for 'riches'.[30] The emulation of Spanish power required the 'conquest' of El Dorado.[31]

The failure of the first Guiana enterprise was followed by a hiatus in colonial projects during the remainder of Elizabeth's reign. The war with Spain encouraged the use of maritime resources for privateering. A number of minor and inconclusive voyages were made from 1602 to Norumbega, later named New England, to establish the potential for colonies. Profit from the commodities of the region – 'Mines and many other rich commodities' – continued to dominate the motivation of the voyages.[32]

A renewed interest in colonies followed the accession of James I, peace with Spain, and a more limited scope for privateering. In 1606 the new charter granted for planting in North America led to the creation of the joint-stock Virginia council.[33] The problem facing the council was how to attract investment and personnel ('purse' and 'person') for the proposed colony when the failures of all previous attempts were notorious. If this exigency was not clear enough to the leaders of the colony when the first colonists embarked in December 1606, it soon would be.

There were signs that the Virginia adventurers had not sufficiently absorbed the lessons of their predecessors. In a letter written in the first months of the colony and returned with Captain Newport, William Brewster remarked that at the head of the river 'ar Rokes and Movntaynes, that prommyseth Infynyt treasvr'. Strikingly he added, in the fashion of the Spanish, that the adventurers will 'Conquer this land'.[34] This persistent model of Spanish New World riches is also reflected in Sir Walter Cope, a patentee of the Company, writing to Robert Cecil, Lord Salisbury, James I's lord treasurer. 'In stead of mylke', argued Cope, 'we fynde pearle / & golde Inn steede of honye.'[35] Within

[29] Walter Ralegh, *The discoverie of the large, rich and bewtiful empyre of Guiana, with a relation of the great and golden citie of Manoa (which the Spanyards call El Dorado)* (London, 1596), sig. q3v. On Ralegh as conquistador, see also Anthony Pagden, *Lords of all the world: ideologies of empire in Spain, Britain and France, c. 1500–c. 1800* (New Haven, 1995), pp. 67–8.

[30] Ralegh, *Discoverie of Guiana*, p. 10. See also pp. 93–4.

[31] Ibid., pp. 90–1.

[32] John Brereton, *A brief and true relation* (London, 1602), in David B. Quinn and Alison M. Quinn, eds., *New England voyages* (London, 1983), p. 157.

[33] Philip L. Barbour, *The Jamestown voyages under the first charter, 1606–1609* (2 vols., Cambridge, 1969), I, pp. 13–15.

[34] *Undated letter from William Brewster*, in Barbour, *Jamestown voyages*, I, p. 107.

[35] *Sir Walter Cope to Lord Salisbury*, 12 Aug. 1607, in Barbour, *Jamestown voyages*, I, p. 108. See also *Letters patent*, 10 Apr. 1606, in which gold, silver, and copper are named as motives, in Barbour, *Jamestown voyages*, I, p. 24.

twenty-four hours Cope reported that the promise of gold proved false: 'Oure newe dyscovery ys more Lyke to the Lande of Canaan than the Lande of Ophir.'[36] Undeterred, Sir Thomas Smith, treasurer of the Company, reported to Cecil that Newport had promised not to return from his next supply of Jamestown without gold.[37] His promise, however, was overtaken by events.

Having endured a hot and humid first summer the settlement suffered a bitter winter in 1607–8. The planters failed to establish crops. Hunger, disease, discontent and faction, conflict with the Indians, and death plagued the colony.[38] George Percy, one of the leaders of the colony, summarized the situation: 'Our men were destroyed with cruell diseases as Swellings, Flixes, Burning Feuers, and by warres, and some departed suddenly, but for the most part they died of meere famine. There were neuer Englishmen left in a forreigne Countrey in such miserie as wee were in this new discouered Virginia.'[39] This news returned to England in 1607 and 1608 through the repeated resupply journeys made by Newport and others.[40] In 1608 John Smith, the most renowned of the colony's leaders, published his *A true report*, providing a first-hand account without the authorization of the Company.[41] He conveyed some sense of the problems in spite of the more offensive passages having been excised.[42]

After two years the state of affairs in Jamestown was worse than it had been at Roanoke. In late 1608 and 1609 the Company reassessed the project and secured a second charter including, amongst other changes, the substitution of rule by a president and council with a single governor in the hope of controlling the spirit of faction. The new charter also vastly expanded public involvement in the enterprise, a move significant for corresponding with the civic turn in the promotion of the colony.[43] At the same time the Company initiated a propaganda campaign which for its sheer volume was unprecedented in the history of English colonization. This campaign established a strategy of promotion which would flourish until the dissolution of the Company in 1624. The cornerstone of this propaganda was the publication over the following three years of no fewer than twenty treatises concerning the merits of the colony. While many of these pamphlets were twenty or thirty pages in length, a number were more substantial volumes. The promotional literature also included numerous letters, verse, and oratory. Indeed speeches were an important part of the campaign. They were primarily presented as sermons but also as occasional speeches such as addresses to Company meetings. Many were the basis for the pamphlets which followed. Frequently the authors of this diverse literature were not major players in the venture. They served, however,

[36] *Sir Walter Cope to Lord Salisbury*, 13 Aug. 1607, in Barbour *Jamestown voyages*, I, p. 111.
[37] *Sir Thomas Smith to Lord Salisbury*, 17 Aug. 1607, in Barbour, *Jamestown voyages*, I, p. 112.
[38] Barbour, *Jamestown voyages*, I, pp. 127 and 209.
[39] George Percy, *Discourse*, in Barbour, *Jamestown voyages*, I, p. 144.
[40] Barbour, *Jamestown voyages*, I, p. 209.
[41] See Quinn, ed., *New American world*, V, p. 188.
[42] Barbour, *Jamestown voyages*, I, p. 3.
[43] Quinn, ed., *New American world*, V, pp. 191, 205–12.

as barometers of the Company's sentiment. The authors, as we shall see, possessed close connections within the Company and their publications were either explicitly commissioned or tacitly sanctioned.

This campaign also revealed a major shift in the ideology of the enterprise. Civic values were offered as the solution to the problems of establishing the new commonwealth. A number of the elements which constituted this civic appeal were clearly present in the Elizabethan promotional tracts. What distinguished this ideology as civic was not an adherence to any one value recognizably drawn from traditions of civic thought, but rather the proposal of a number of such values related in such as way as to offer a solution to the Company's problems. All these elements were present in the propaganda campaign of 1609–10. To reveal this design it is necessary at first to approach the literature thematically.

II

The Virginia Company's promoters consistently defined the colonial enterprise as the foundation of a new commonwealth. When used in a general sense the term 'commonwealth' referred to a discrete political community possessing the highest political authority. The use of this term by the Company and its promoters to define their ambition is therefore highly significant: their intention was not merely to establish a trading post or a military post, nor merely to conquer foreign lands, nor to expand the existing commonwealth of England. The aim was to establish a new civil society. The civic arguments of the Company were addressed to that context.

'There is nothing', the colonist Thomas Studley wrote in 1612, reflecting on the previous six years of the Jamestown colony, 'so difficult as to establish a commonwealth.'[44] In 1610 the Virginia Company advertised for 'men of most use and necessity, to the foundation of a Common-wealth'.[45] The promotional authors accordingly structured their discussions of the projected plantation in the humanist language of the best form of a commonwealth. This, as we have seen, was deliberation in terms of the ends of *honestas* and *utilitas*. The example we have seen of Peckham's deliberative oratory was placed in the context of an Athenian debate over what course was best for the 'common wealth'.[46]

The first of the promoters' civic themes was the consistent portrayal of the successful foundation and conservation of the commonwealth as the product of the *vita activa*, or of 'public actions'.[47] This sentiment is reflected in the promotional sermons of William Crashaw and William Symonds. Crashaw, a

[44] T. Abbay and William Symonds, eds., *The proceedings of the English colonie in Virginia* (Oxford, 1612), pp. 10–11.

[45] *A true and sincere declaration of the purpose and ends of the plantation begun in Virginia* (London, 1610), pp. 25–6. See also John Rolfe, *Relation of the state of Virginia*, in *Virginia: four personal narratives*, Research Library of Colonial Americana (New York, 1972), p. 104.

[46] Peckham, *True report*, sig. B3r.

[47] On *negotium* and the *vita activa* in the civic tradition, see Skinner, *Foundations of modern political thought*, I, pp. 80, 108, 217–19; Peltonen, *Classical humanism and republicanism*, pp. 21–34. 63–4, 109.

fellow of St John's College, Cambridge and then preacher at the Temple Church, effectively performed the role of master of ceremonies for the Virginia Company.[48] He was responsible for co-ordinating much of the promotional material and he drew Symonds, the master of Magdalene School and preacher of St Saviour's, Southwark, into this co-ordinated effort. Crashaw argued in his sermon before the Company in 1610 that 'The English Christians will not undertake a public action that they will not prosecute to perfection.'[49] Echoing Cicero's dictum that 'All the praise that belongs to virtue lies in action', Symonds represented planting as the ideal field of action in his sermon *Virginia* delivered in April 1609: 'Get abroad where vertue is skant, and there, by the advancing of thy wisedom and vertue, thou shalt bee more eminent and famous in yeare, then at home half of thy ranke shall be all their daies: hidden vertue is neglected, but abroad it is magnified.'[50] In characteristic civic terms this active life is represented as a duty incumbent upon all. According to Symonds mankind is under a 'duty' to God to 'fill the earth'.[51] Contributing to the same battery of sermons in 1609, Robert Gray, whose identity is otherwise obscure, endorsed the Platonic dictum, which acted as a premise of the active life, that 'Man is not borne for himself alone', famously cited by Cicero in *De officiis*.[52] Encouraging those people alarmed by the failures of the colony, Gray exhorted, 'We are not borne like beasts for ourselves, and the time present only.'[53]

Crashaw's *Sermon* was the most comprehensive of the promotional tracts in its appeal to the duty to pursue an active life and in its argument that colonization fulfils the requirements of that life. He attempted a direct translation of Cicero's *De officiis* into the context of establishing the new commonwealth. The sermon opened with a passage from Luke: 'When thou art converted strengthen thy Brethren.' Through Ramist analysis and dichotomous *dispositio* he drew two arguments from this passage: 'The parts are two: Christ's mercy / Peter's dutie.' Christ's mercy is the doctrine of the elect. Peter's duty is that if he is one of the elect he must pursue a virtuous and active life. This duty enjoins 'all others that shall be partakers of this promise' of election, from Peter it is 'derived to the whole Church, and every particular Christian'. Crashaw then applied this lesson to 'the businesse now in hand' with the obvious conclusion that 'it is not voluntary or left indifferently to a mans choice, but (plainly) a

[48] On Crashaw's position, see Louis B. Wright, *Religion and empire: the alliance between piety and commerce in English expansion, 1558–1625* (New York, 1965), p. 100.

[49] William Crashaw, *A sermon preached before the right honourable the Lord Lawarre* (London, 1610), sig. K3v.

[50] Symonds, *Virginia* (London, 1609), pp. 31–2. Cicero, *De officiis*, 1.19; see also 1.22 and 58.

[51] Symonds, *Virginia*, pp. 31–2.

[52] Cicero, *De officiis*, 1.22.

[53] Robert Gray, *A good speed to Virginia* (London, 1609), sig. Dr. Gray probably graduated from St John's College, Cambridge: see Wright, *Religion and empire*, p. 92. This Platonic dictum was popular in contemporary civic thought; see, for example, Henry Crosse, *Vertues common-wealth: or the high-way to honour* (London, 1603), sig. R3r; see also Peltonen, *Classical humanism and republicanism*, pp. 149, and 136–9.

necessarie duty'.[54] He then paraphrased Cicero's expansion and qualification of such duties:

> But lest any man mistaking or abusing my words, should here cavill and say; Belike then this man holds all damned that are not adventurers to Virginea, and it is a sure signe of a prophane man, if he be not an undertaker in that action, or the like: Take notice that my assertion is qualified with these two limitations: First, that a man must know the true state of this businesse, and true grounds and ends both of his Maiesties gratious grants, and of the undertakers adventure... such therefore wee are farre from condemning, but leave them till they be satisfied of the truth... Secondly, though a man know it never so well, hee must bee of abilitie to contribute, or else this ties him not: for a man is bound first to maintaine himselfe and his family, and to beare his parte of needful burthens of the Church and State where he lives: then out of that which remaines, such actions as this doe challenge a part. Now whether a man be able or no, hee must be left to his own conscience to give judgement. But herein let a man take heed he flatter not himselfe... the divell delights to make men betray their owne soules.[55]

This passage first corresponds to Cicero's discussion of the priority of duties (1.57–8). Crashaw's ranking of the duty to assist the Virginian adventure behind the duties to family, church, and state is comparable to the secondary duty Cicero grants to empire (1.74–6). His qualification of these duties also corresponds with that made by Cicero (1.71), as does his warning against false excuses (1.71). Cicero concluded his caveat to the citizen's public duties with the claim: 'But those who are equipped by nature to administer affairs must abandon any hesitation over winning office and engage in public life' (1.72). Similarly, Crashaw declared: 'Thus with these two cautions I make my conclusion, that the assistance of this business is a dutie that lies on all men.'[56] This conclusion possessed an unmistakably civic note: all men have a duty to participate in public affairs.

The authors promoting the Virginian colony also agreed with the proposition central to the civic tradition that virtue is the quality necessary to the successful pursuit of an active life.[57] This belief is seen, for example, in Symonds's representation above of the New World as the ideal field for the exercise of virtue. It is also seen in John Smith's use of the related humanist commonplace that 'Vertue be the soule of true Nobilitie' in his dedication of *A map of Virginia* to the earl of Hartford.[58] Following the convention of humanist moral philosophy the promotional authors portrayed colonization in terms of a division of the four cardinal virtues: wisdom, justice, courage, and temperance. Justice was believed to be fundamental to the success of the colonies. The justice of supplanting the Indians and the claims of rival European colonizers were great anxieties. 'We freely confesse', Crashaw

[54] Crashaw, *Sermon*, sig. C3r. [55] Ibid., sig. Dr–v. [56] Ibid., sig. D2r.

[57] On the place of this proposition in the civic tradition, see Skinner, *Foundations of modern political thought*, I, pp. 88–94.

[58] On the use of this commonplace in early modern English political thought, see Peltonen, *Classical humanism and republicanism*, pp. 35–9.

acknowledged, 'an action cannot be good, excellent, or honourable, and much lesse can it be necessarie, unlesse it first of all appeare to be lawful: secondly, for the present action, we also confesse and yeeld to this as to a principle of Iustice.'[59] Wisdom, particularly as exemplified in Solomon's Ophirian voyages, was repeatedly demanded of the leaders.[60] The qualities of courage and temperance, however, were represented as especially vital to the success of the enterprise. They were the conceptual tools believed to be appropriate to redressing the sorry state of the project; the qualities which the audience needed to embrace if they were to be undeterred by the disastrous situation.

Temperance, as we shall see, was prescribed as the solution to the excessive greed which corrupted the enterprise and was particularly required from those who adventured in purse, while courage was said to be necessary if the prospective adventurers, those who adventured in person, were to leave the relative security of England and undertake a dangerous journey to an even more dangerous colony. Potential settlers faced the possibility of loss of property, death by disease, starvation, accident, or warfare. In 1612 the Jamestown colony continued to show little improvement or prospect. In this year Robert Johnson, alderman of London and son-in-law to Company treasurer Sir Thomas Smith, published his second promotional treatise. This tract reveals a dramtic change in emphasis from the Elizabethan arguments used to promote colonies, a marked shift from the promises of El Dorado.[61] Johnson addressed the leaders of the Company and colony:

> And first to you the heads and guides of that plantation, it cannot be doubted, but as you are wise and provident men you tooke this worke in hand, for casting wisely that the price thereof might be no lesse than the care of your mindes, the labour of your bodies, and perill of your lives. And seeing you are sure of nothing more then the extremest lots, which either the barren coldnesse of such a naked action in the infancie thereof, or the malice of divellish men can cast upon you, arme your selves therefore against all impediments, to effect those honorable ends that were first intended to be put upon our King, upon our nation, and Christian religion, by that plantation. If the work be more

[59] Crashaw, *Sermon*, sig. D3r. On the concern with justifying the Virginian colony in the promotional literature of this period, see Symonds, *Virginia*, p. 10; Gray, *A good speed to Virginia*, sig. Br–v, B4v, C4v; *A true declaration of the estate of the colonie in Virginia* (London, 1610), pp. 6–12; William Strachey, *The historie of travell into Virginia Britannia* (1609–12), eds. Louis B. Wright and Virginia Freund (London, 1953), pp. 22–6; Alexander Whitaker, *Good newes from Virginia* (London, 1613), p. 19.

[60] See Robert Johnson, *Nova Britannia* (London, 1609), sig. C2r–v; *A true declaration of the estate of the colonie in Virginia*, pp. 1–2; Richard Crakanthorpe, *A sermon at the inauguration of King James* (London, 1609), sig. D2r–v; Gray, *A good speed to Virginia*, sig. A3r–v. On the topic of wisdom in general, see Symonds, *Virginia*, sig. A3r; Crashaw, *Sermon*, sig. K3r; Robert Johnson, *The new life of Virginea* (London, 1612), sig. A3r–v; Strachey, *The historie of travell into Virginia Britannia*, pp. 8–9; Whitaker, *Good newes from Virginia*, p. 10.

[61] On this shift, see Charles M. Andrews. *The colonial period in American history* (New Haven, 1934), I, pp. 99–100. It has also been emphasized by recent commentators. See, for example, Pagden, *Lords of all the world*, pp. 67–8.

hard and difficult then you took it for, and that you must like Hannibal (piercing the stony Alpes) make cleare way to your desired ends with fire and vinegar; will not your honour be the greater, and your service more acceptable in the performance of it? Nay, if losse of life befall you by this service (which God forbid) yet in this case too, wee doubt not but you are resolved with constant courage, like that noble King Henry the fift, before his triumphant victorie in the fields of Agincourt, where seeing the fewness of his own, and multitude of enemies, like a valiant Champion to stir up his little Armie against that great conflict; 'Be cheered my hearts (said he) and let us fight like English men, all England prayeth for us: if here we dye, let this be our comfort, our cause is good, and wee have fathers, brothers, friends and countrimen that wil revenge our deaths'.[62]

Death replaced gold as the glory of Virginia. Courage was the quality required to achieve such glory. In addition to paraphrasing Shakespeare, Johnson conformed closely to the topic of courage in the pseudo-Ciceronian *Rhetorica ad Herennium* to support the Company's new emphasis: 'When we invoke as motive for a course of action steadfastness in Courage we shall make it clear that … from an honourable act no peril or toil, however great, should divert us, death ought to be preferred before disgrace.'[63]

Johnson's civic theme of courage and martial vigour was first exploited in the tracts of 1609 and 1610. 'Our forefathers … settled their commonwealths', argued Crashaw, not by 'dalliance and pleasures', 'nay they exposed themselves to frost and colde, snow and heate, raine and tempests, hunger and thirst, and cared not what hardnesse, what extremitie, what pinching miseries they endured, so they might achieve the ends they aimed at.'[64] These appeals consistently conformed to the rhetorical commonplace of courage, as for example in Gray's summary: 'If an honourable death were set before a vertuous minde, it would chuse rather to die heroically, then live opprobriously.'[65]

The promotional authors shared the civic conviction that such a sacrifice of life was justified by the pursuit of the common good.[66] The active life and the exercise of virtue were undertaken to achieve that goal. In his preface to Crashaw's *Sermon* Thomas West, Lord de la Warre, one of the leaders of the Virginia Company, dedicated the text to the parliament, observing that the foundation of new commonwealths advanced 'their interest in all endeavours for the common good'.[67] In his first promotional tract, published in 1609, Robert Johnson claimed to have been converted to the cause of establishing

[62] Johnson, *New life of Virginea*, sig. D4r–v.

[63] *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, trans H. Caplan (London, 1954), III.5.

[64] Crashaw, *Sermon*, sig. F4r.

[65] Gray, *Good speed to Virginia*, sig. B4v. For further examples of this argument, see Symonds, *Virginia*, pp. 13–14; Johnson, *New life of Virginia*, sig. A3r–v; *A true and sincere declaration of the purpose and ends of the plantation begun in Virginia*, pp. 15–16; Crashaw, *Sermon*, sig. H4v; and John Smith, *The general history of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles* (London, 1624), sig. q.

[66] On the common good as the end of civic action, see Skinner, *Foundations of modern political thought*, I, pp. 44–8, 175–80.

[67] Crashaw, *Sermon*, sig. Ar–A2v.

colonies having been 'moved so effectually, touching the publike utilitie of this noble enterprise'.[68] The colony was perceived not only to advance the common good of England but also, as a new commonwealth, to possess a common good of its own. John Smith's claim to have endangered his life in the course of his adventures was justified as having been undertaken 'as wel for his own discharge as for the publike good'.[69] Members of the Virginia Company routinely justified their actions in these terms. Henry Wriothesely, earl of Southampton, a principal investor and leader of the Company advised the planting of silk worms for the 'common good' of the colony. A gentleman of the colony, Ralph Hamor, argued that John Rolfe married the 'barbarous' Pocahontas 'merely for the good and honour of the Plantation'.[70]

We have seen that the Elizabethan promoters of colonies had argued in classical humanist terms that the reward for establishing colonies would be both *honestas* and *utilitas*, honour and profit. The Jacobean promoters signal a marked shift from these ends. The exercise of virtue and the pursuit of the common good were to be rewarded by honour and glory above all.[71] Profit, as we shall see, was portrayed either as secondary or as corrupting. The emphasis upon honour was again found from 1609. *Sauls prohibition staide*, by Daniel Price, was one of the many sermons both delivered and then published later that year addressing the problems of Virginia. Price was chaplain to Prince Henry, soon to be invested Prince of Wales, in whom many of the hopes for the future of American colonization were placed before his death in 1612 at the age of eighteen. He advertised the Virginia colony as fulfilling the ends of 'The glory of God, the honour of our Land, ioy of our Nation.'[72] Similarly Richard Crakanthorpe, an Essex parson and chaplain to the bishop of London, asked 'what glory shall heereby redound unto God?' from the foundation of the colony: 'What honour to our Soveraigne? What comfort to those his subjects.'[73] The same shift in emphasis to placing a priority upon honour was found in the Company's official response to the disastrous loss of the leading vessels in Sommers and Gates's supply fleet of 1609 (which had been intended to bring the new regime of the 1609 charter to the colony). This tract was published with the aim of publicly establishing the ends of the project and was accordingly entitled *A true and sincere declaration of the purpose and ends of the plantation begun in Virginia*. While the anonymous author still maintained that both honour and profit were the ends of the plantation, profit had slipped to a secondary position:

[68] Johnson, *Nova Britannia*, sig. A4r.

[69] John Smith, *A true relation* (London, 1608), sig. B3v.

[70] Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus posthumus or Purchas his pilgrimes* (London, 1625), pp. 1787–8; Ralph Hamor, *A true discourse of the present estate of Virginia* (London, 1615), p. 24.

[71] On honour and glory as the reward of civic action, see Skinner, *Foundations of modern political thought*, I, pp. 100–1, 178–80; Peltonen, *Classical humanism and republicanism*, pp. 34–5.

[72] Daniel Price, *Sauls prohibition staide* (London, 1609), sig. F2r.

[73] Crakanthorpe, *Sermon at the inauguration of King James*, sig. D2r–v. See also Crashaw, *Sermon*, sig. B3v; Abbay and Symonds, eds., *The proceedings of the English colonie in Virginia*, p. 109.

The 'Principal and *Main Ends* (out of which are easily derived to any meane understanding infinit and lesse, and yet great ones) weare first to preach, & baptize into Christian Religion … a number of poore and miserable soules … Secondly, to provide and build up for the publike *Honour* and *safety* of our gratious King and Estates … Lastly, the appearance and assurance of Private commodity to the particular undertakers.[74]

The glory of God and honour had become principal among the stated ends of the enterprise.

The promotional authors concurred not only upon the virtues required to establish the commonwealth, promote the common good, and achieve honour and glory. They also agreed upon which vices would corrupt the pursuit of those ends. Their agreement upon those vices was informed by Roman and, especially, Italian civic traditions. According to those traditions, idleness is one of the main threats to the performance of civic duties and the pursuit of an active life.[75] It was idleness that was prescribed as the greatest impediment to the success of the Virginia colony. According to the Company's *True and sincere declaration*, 'Idleness and bestial slouth' was the main cause of the colony's problems and its consequence was that 'every thing [is] returning from civill Propryety, to Naturall, and Primary Community'.[76] Crashaw similarly condemned luxury and extolled martial vigour as the quality necessary for establishing commonwealths: 'Stately houses, costly apparell, rich furniture, soft beds, daintie fare, dalliance and pleasures, huntings and horse-races, sports and pastimes, feasts and banquets are not the meanes whereby our forefathers conquered kingdomes, subdued their enemies, converted heathen, civilized the Barbarians, and settled their commonwealths.'[77] In such appeals to martial vigour, by Johnson and Gray on the topic of courage and Crashaw here, we find the colony's regime of martial law did not substitute for political life but rather complemented the theme of martial discipline in the civic tradition. Crashaw's sentiments were expressed with as much strength by those who lived in the colony as by the Company's hired pens. In his *Map of Virginia* published in 1612 John Smith expanded upon Crashaw's observations from his own experience. Jamestown, he claimed, was overburdened with men who never

did any thing but devoure the fruits of other mens labours. Being for the most part of such tender educations and small experience in martiall accidents, because they found not English cities, not such faire houses, nor at their owne wishes any of their accustomed dainties, with feather beds and downe pillowes, Tavernes and alehouses in every breathing place, neither such gold and silver and dissolute liberty as they expected.[78]

[74] *A true and sincere declaration of the purpose and ends of the plantation begun in Virginia*, pp. 2–3.
[75] Skinner, *Foundations of modern political thought*, I, pp. 99, 162–6.
[76] *A true and sincere declaration of the purpose and ends of the plantation begun in Virginia*, pp. 10–11.
[77] Crashaw, *Sermon*, sig. F4v.
[78] John Smith, *A map of Virginia* (Oxford, 1612), pp. 37–9. On the opposition between 'dissolute liberty', or licence, and liberty enjoyed with responsibility, see Conal Condren, 'Liberty of office and its defence in seventeenth-century political argument', *History of political thought*, 17 (1997), p. 462.

He argued that this endemic idleness was, more than any other cause, responsible for the disastrous state of the colony:

> There were many in Virginia meerely projecting, verbal and idle contemplatours, and those so devoted to pure idleness, that though they had lived two or three yeares in Virginia, lordly, necessitie it selfe could not compell them to passe the Peninsula, or Pallisadoes of James Towne… Thus from the clamors and the ignorance of false informers, are sprung those disasters that sprung in Virginia, and our ingenious verbalists were no lesse plague to us in Virginia, then the Locusts to the Egyptians.[79]

Historians have provided some insight into the apparent apathy of the colonists; an apathy so profound it was held largely to be responsible for the high mortality rate. One problem was that the presence of such a large proportion of soldiers and gentlemen was inappropriate to a project which needed to be essentially agricultural if it was to be self-sustaining (although their presence would have made more sense to the Company with their civic promotion than it does with the hindsight of economic history).[80] Moreover, simple environmental factors such as the salinity of Jamestown's water supply could account for much of the weakness of the settlers.[81] These explanations of the colony's problems do not provide an alternative to the civic diagnosis of the Company. Rather, the civic language of colonists such as Smith and the colony's promoters were the terms through which such threats to the commonwealth as the effects of water salinity were understood.

Consistent with the doctrines of Marsiglio and Bartolus, the problem of faction was also identified as a threat to the continuing existence of the commonwealth.[82] One report remarked with surprise that the plantation had survived its first three years with 'al their factions, mutenies, and miseries'.[83] The new charter of 1609 was designed in part to redress this situation. The Company's tract published shortly after conceded that from returning ships 'ariseth a rumor of the necessity and distresse our people were found in, for want of victual: of which… we doe confesse a great part of it'. The author argued, however, that it is possible to 'lay aside the cause and fault from the designe, truely and home upon the misgovernment of the Commanders, by dissention and ambition among themselves, and upon Idleness and bestial

[79] Smith, *Map of Virginia*, pp. 37–9. On the diagnosis of idleness as a problem in this period of the colony, see also Abbay and Symonds, eds., *Proceedings of the English colonie in Virginia*, sig. A2r; and *A true declaration of the estate of the colonie in Virginia*, pp. 34–5: 'our mutinous loiterers would not sow with providence, and therefore they reaped the fruites of too deare-bought repentance. An incredible example of their idleness, is the report of Sir Thomas Gates, who affirmeth… he hath seene some of them eat their fish raw, rather than they would go a stones cast to fetch wood and dresse it'.

[80] Morgan, *American slavery*, *American freedom*, pp. 83–4; Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Settling with the Indians* (London, 1980), p. 17.

[81] Carville V. Earle, 'Environment, disease, and mortality in early Virginia', in Thad W. Tate and David L. Ammerman, eds., *The Chesapeake in the seventeenth century* (Chapel Hill, 1979), pp. 96–125.

[82] On faction and civic thought, see Skinner, *Foundations of modern political thought*, I, pp. 55–64.

[83] Abbay and Symonds, eds., *Proceedings of the English colonie in Virginia*, p. 78.

slouth, of the common sort, who were active in nothing but adhering to factions and parts'.[84] The emphasis upon idleness and faction amongst the participants in the colony revealed the characteristic civic prescription that the successful foundation and conservation of a commonwealth lies in the character and spirit of its members.[85]

The most dramatic change in the ideology of colonization under the Virginia Company concerned the propagandists' attitude toward profit. Again this change was first introduced in 1609. Following the series of Elizabethan colonial failures and then the disasters of the early Jamestown colony, the promoters turned from promising profit and riches to denouncing those who pursue profit. They portrayed the desire for profit as one of the vices corrupting the commonwealth. This shift was not confined to the Company's propaganda. On 25 November 1612, the Virginia Company issued a bill of complaint against 'Sir Thomas Mildmaye, James Bryarley, Mathewe De Quester, and Others' for a failure to fulfil promises to invest in the venture.[86] Mildmaye responded that his promise was made when the Company had offered great returns, but now he had 'byn lately told that he this Defendant must expect noe profit of his adventure by the space of Twenty yeares'.[87]

The promotional authors drew upon the civic argument that profit corrupts civic virtue.[88] To pursue individual profit whilst engaged in a public action, according to this argument, is to place personal interests before those of the common good. This is not to say republican thought was hostile to private pursuits: one of the principal aims of civic government was to create the conditions in which citizens could enjoy private lives unthreatened by the invasive claims of arbitrary rule.[89] In such a regime profit was a legitimate aim insofar as it was secondary to the common good. Temperance was represented as the virtue necessary to establishing this balance.

[84] *A true and sincere declaration of the purpose and ends of the plantation begun in Virginia*, p. 10. On the theme of faction, see also Rolfe, *Relation of the state of Virginia*, p. 104.

[85] On the civic emphasis upon the character and spirit of the citizens, see Skinner, *Foundations of modern political thought*, I, pp. 44–5.

[86] 'Virginia Company vs. Sir Thomas Mildmaye, James Bryarley, Mathewe De Questor, and Others. The bill of complaint, November 25, 1612', in Kingsbury, ed., *Records of the Virginia Company*, III, pp. 34–9.

[87] 'Virginia Company vs. Sir Thomas Mildmaye and Others. The Answer of Sir Thomas Mildmaye to the Bill of Complaint. December 11, 1612', in Kingsbury, ed., *Records of the Virginia Company*, III, p. 40.

[88] On wealth as the corruption of civic virtue, a theme stressed by Roman moralists such as Sallust and Juvenal, endorsed by Latini, and revived by Machiavelli and Guicciardini, see Skinner, *Foundations of modern political thought*, I, pp. 42–3, 162–3. On the revival of this theme in Elizabethan and Jacobean civic thought, see Peltonen, *Classical humanism and republicanism*, p. 79. In this context it is striking to note that William Vaughan, a prominent player in and vigorous promoter of Jacobean colonial designs, translated Trajano Boccalini's *The new-found politicke* (London, 1626) which diagnosed the corruption of the Italian republics. On Vaughan, see Gillian T. Cell, ed., *Newfoundland discovered* (London, 1982), pp. 19–26.

[89] See Quentin Skinner, 'The republican ideal of political liberty', in Gesela Bock, Quentin Skinner, and Maurizio Viroli, eds., *Machiavelli and republicanism* (Cambridge, 1990); and Quentin Skinner, *Liberty before liberalism* (Cambridge, 1998).

Some Roman republican sources, such as Sallust, were sceptical even of the pursuit of collective wealth, as this was associated with Asiatic luxury and the corruption of martial values which were believed to have contributed to the downfall of the Roman republic. 'As soon as riches came to be held in honour', Sallust recalls of the late republic, 'when glory, dominion, and power followed in their train, virtue began to lose its lustre.'[90] The authors of the promotional pamphlets were particularly strong in their attack upon the pursuit of private profit but there were also reservations and warnings that there should be any hopes whatsoever for profit from the enterprise: the aim was to establish a commonwealth not a business.

Crashaw directly confronted the crisis of profit when dismissing objections against the colony. In doing so he revealed the sensitivity of his own arguments to the situation of the Company:

> The next discouragement is, the uncertaintie of profit, and the long time that it must be expected, it be certaine. But I will not wrong you nor myselfe, in seeking to say much to so base an objection. If there be any that came in only or principally for profit, or any that would so come in, I wish the latter may never bee in, and the former out again.[91]

Without completely rejecting ambitions for profit, Crashaw adopted the civic line that they must be subordinated to the higher aims of the enterprise. Gray likewise argued that the desire for money was in conflict with virtue and must at best be secondary, praising the Virginia Company for having

> undertaken so honourable a project, as all posterities shal blesse you and uphold your names and memories so long as the Sunne and Moone endureth: whereas they which preferre their money before vertue, their pleasure before honour, and their sensual security before heroical adventures, shall perish with their money, die with their pleasures, and be buried in everlasting forgetfulnes.[92]

III

While these civic solutions were first addressed to the problems of establishing an American commonwealth in 1609, neither the problems nor the prescription would be fast to fade. Following the great propaganda push of 1609 and 1610 the colony continued to suffer disease, a high mortality rate, and disasters such as the wreck upon the Bermudas. When Gates and Sommers eventually reached Jamestown they found such a dire state that a decision was taken to abandon the colony. As the few survivors left Chesapeake Bay it was only their chance meeting with De La Warr's supply fleet that forced a change of heart

[90] *Sallust*, trans. J. C. Rolfe (London, 1921), xii.1, see also x–xii. For the revival of this theme in early modern Britain, see Skinner, *Liberty before liberalism*, pp. 64–5.

[91] Crashaw, *Sermon*, sig. G2r–v. Crashaw harps on this point: 'But if it be urged further: Why is there not then present profit, at least after so many voyages and supplies sent? In answere, that *profit is not the principall end of this action*' (my emphasis), sig. G3v.

[92] Gray, *Good speed to Virginia*, sig. A3r–v. In the same year Robert Johnson asks 'are we to looke for no gaine in the lieu of all our adventures', replying that there is such a hope 'but looke it be not chiefe in your thoughts', *Nova Britannia*, sig. Cr.

and the continued survival of the plantation. Against this background the Company continued to sponsor promotional tracts.

Alexander Whitaker, son of the master of St John's College, Cambridge, was one of those members of Gates's voyage wrecked upon the Bermudas and who subsequently arrived in Jamestown at perhaps its most desperate ebb. He opened his optimistically entitled *Good newes from Virginia* (published in 1613 shortly before his own death) with an extended passage upon what is now a familiar civic theme of the propaganda:

> Be bould my Hearers to contemne riches, and frame your selves to walke worthie of God; for none other be worthie of God, but those that lightly esteeme of riches. Nakednesse is the riches of nature; vertue is the only thing that makes us rich and honourable in the eyes of wise men. Povertie is a thing which most men feare, and covetous men cannot endure to behold: yet povertie with a contented mind is great riches: hee truely is the onely poore man, not that hath little, but which continually desireth more.[93]

The Elizabethan desire for New World wealth was dramatically reversed in this plea 'to contemne riches'. Whitaker emphasized the corrupting power of profit and the necessity for temperance, for curbing the continual desire for more. Wealth is not even granted a secondary position. He esteemed honour as the appropriate reward for action, and portrayed virtue as the means to achieving that end: much of his treatise was an exhortation to the virtues required for the audience to adventure successfully. 'The worke', of establishing the new commonwealth, he argued, 'is honourable, and now more than ever sustained by most honourable men.'[94]

In 1615, although the colony was still far from returning a profit to the investors, a couple of years of relative stability encouraged Ralph Hamor, previously secretary to the colony, to publish a treatise in which he expressed greater hope and potential for profit.[95] Hamor devoted part of the tract to persuading merchants to invest. Merchants, he argued, want some 'present returne' of 'commodities'. He promised this return and yet he was still obliged to advise patience and temperance: 'If I may persuade them to be constant in proceedings, some small time longer, the benefit will be the greater and the more welcome when it commeth.'[96] For the remainder of his audience, however, Hamor still held with the argument that civic virtue was the quality required for the foundation of the colony:

> I would gladly now by worthy motives, allure the heavie undertakers to persist with alacritie and cheerefulnesse, both for their owne reputations, and the honour of God,

[93] Whitaker, *Good newes from Virginia*, p. 1. He returns to this theme repeatedly through the tract: 'you wealthy men of this world, whose bellies God hath filled with his hidden Treasure: trust not in uncertaine riches, neither cast your eyes upon them; for riches taketh her to her wings as an Eagle, and flieth into Heaven. But bee rich in good works', pp. 26–7; see also p. 32.

[94] Ibid., p. 32.

[95] On the improvement in conditions, see Hamor, *A true discourse of the present estate of Virginia*, p. 16.

[96] Ibid., p. 25.

and their King, and Countrey. The worthier sort, I meane those Nobles and others of that honourable counsell interessed therein, neede no spurre, their owne innate vertues drives them apace.[97]

Again, honour remained the reward of virtuous public action, particularly for those whose birth made them more fit for public actions.

John Rolfe, later famous for having introduced tobacco into the colony, published his *Relation of the state of Virginia* the following year. Rolfe addressed the common objection that if Virginia was such a fruitful country how was it that men there 'pined with famine'.[98] His answer was a civic diagnosis of the ills of idleness and faction, each of which he claimed was being remedied. In his prescription we again see the civic emphasis upon the character and spirit of the participants as the key to the colony's success. 'The greatest want of all', he argued, 'is least thought on, and that is good and sufficient men.' With such men they 'might come with ease to establish a firme and perfect commonweale'.[99]

By the 1620s, with some success in planting tobacco, the promoters of Virginia were ready once more to promise profit. The air of crisis, however, which permeated the colony's early history was not distant and the civic themes of that period proved to be salient. It would be a mistake to attribute that salience wholly to the reputed 'republican sympathies' of Edwin Sandys and Henry Wriothesley, the earl of Southampton, the Company's new administrators.[100] Certainly Sandys was accused of attempting to establish a 'Brownist republic' in Virginia, but the slander would seem to have rested more in the accusation of Brownism.[101] The civic ambition, as we have seen, was not novel in this context.

The disputes between the Sandys and Smith factions, leading to the eventual dissolution of the company in 1624, added to the sense of crisis. While profit was now within reach, the Company was still deeply in debt.[102] Moreover, the interests of the Company and the colonists had steadily diverged over the previous ten years. Property owners 'showed little concern for the public weal of the colony', sacrificing the 'corporate welfare' to their 'own individual ends'.[103] Company officials in the colony 'led the way' through their expropriation of Company resources.[104] In this climate, civic argument could be employed as a critique of political corruption as much as a foundational programme. It was in this vein, when writing of the history of the American colonies in 1624, that John Smith returned to the civic theme that the consideration of private gain corrupts the pursuit of the common good: 'the

[97] Ibid. [98] Rolfe, *Relation of the state of Virginia*, p. 102. [99] Ibid., pp. 103–4.

[100] On the republican sympathies of Southampton and Sandys, see S. L. Adams, 'Foreign policy and the parliaments of 1621 and 1624', in Sharpe, ed., *Faction and parliament*, pp. 144–5. See also Malcolm, 'Hobbes, Sandys and the Virginia Company', pp. 300–1.

[101] Malcolm, 'Hobbes, Sandys and the Virginia Company', pp. 300–1.

[102] Craven, *Dissolution of the Virginia Company*, pp. 33–5.

[103] Greene, *Pursuits of happiness*, p. 11.

[104] Ibid. See also Morgan, *American slavery, American freedom*, pp. 117–18.

desire of present gaine (in many) is so violent, and the endeavours of many undertakers so negligent, every one so regarding their private gain, that it is hard to effect any publike good, and impossible to bring them into a body, rule, order'.[105]

The air of crisis about the Company in the 1620s corresponded with a renewed propaganda effort. Amongst the sermons and tracts commissioned by the Company at this time was that given by John Donne, dean of St Paul's, who had sought to become secretary to the Virginia Company in 1609. Donne returned to the theme of the necessity of the *vita activa* to the foundation of new commonwealths. More clearly than any other of the Company's propagandists, he revealed that the production of promotional tracts was regarded as a part of the active life and therefore as central to the foundation of colonies. This view was underpinned by the close relation between classical rhetoric and the civic business of the foundation and conservation of the commonwealth. Cicero portrayed the centrality of eloquence to the foundation of commonwealths in his myth of the first orator in the opening of *De inventione*: the myth of the orator who through the power of his wisdom and speech persuaded uncultivated men to follow laws and form a community.[106] This myth rested upon the idea central to the rhetorical tradition that speech is a powerful instrument of political participation. To speak, Quintilian argued, is to act: 'rhetoric is concerned with action; for in action it accomplishes that which it is its duty to do'.[107] Consistent with this view, Donne opened his sermon before the Virginia Company on the *Acts of the Apostles* with the observation that: 'There are reckoned in this booke, 22. sermons of the Apostles; and yet the booke is not called the Preaching, but the Practice, not the Words, but the Acts of the Apostles.'[108] He extended this argument that words are acts to his own sermon and to the whole body of literature promoting the Virginian venture. For Donne, the promotional tracts were themselves acts in the foundation of the new commonwealths: 'By your favours, I had some place amongst you, before; but now I am an Adventurer; if not to Virginia, yet for Virginia; for, every man, that Prints, Adventures.'[109]

[105] Smith, *The general history of Virginia*, p. 242. For the continuing secondary position of profit in promotional arguments at this time, see also Samuel Purchas, *Virginia's verger*, in Purchas, *Hakluytus posthumus or Purchas his pilgrimes*, p. 1816.

[106] See also Cicero, *De oratore*, 1.33; Wilson, *The arte of rhetorique*, pp. 17–18. Cf. Stephen J. Greenblatt, 'Learning to curse: aspects of linguistic colonialism in the sixteenth century', in Fredi Chiappelli, ed., *First images of America* (2 vols., Berkeley, 1976), II, p. 565.

[107] Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, II, xviii.1–2. This view is also expressed by Cicero: *De inventione*, 1.6.

[108] Donne, *A sermon ... preached to the honourable company of the Virginian plantation* (London, 1622), p. 1.

[109] Ibid., sig. A3r. This view is expressed metaphorically by Patrick Copland whose sermon *Virginia's God be thanked* (London, 1622) was published by the Company six months before Donne's sermon: 'How could I, at so earnest entreatie, refuse to adventure this Mite of mine, among so many worthy adventures', sig. A3r. In the style of Crashaw, Copland's sermon is also devoted to arguing that there is a duty to adventure to Virginia. The implications of Donne's argument are

Donne's commitment reveals that the unprecedented propaganda campaign launched by the Virginia Company in 1609 was in itself, as an instrument of the *vita activa*, regarded as a central part of civic effort thought to be necessary to establish the commonwealth. According to a humanistic understanding, the sermons and histories of Virginia would perform the same civic function as had the orations and histories devoted to the foundation and conservation of the Italian city republics. The promotional tracts were, that is, a crucial part of the civic solution to the Virginia Company's problems. This proposition returns us to the question of how seriously we should take the ideology of the Virginian colony as it is expressed in the Company's propaganda. The central position, according to a humanist and civic view, of such acts of propaganda in the foundation of the commonwealth leads to one conclusion: that these tracts are central to the politics of the colony and that therefore it is precisely in such propaganda that we should look for deliberative statements of policy.

The early 1620s saw not only the continuing struggles of the Virginia Company but also attempts to establish colonies in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and New England. In addition to the existing and new English adventurers, Scottish, Welsh, and Irish interests supported and initiated these projects.[110] The leaders of these ventures appeared to learn, in the publication of their own promotional tracts, from the relative success of the Virginia Company's propaganda campaign – a success measured by the persistent survival of an unprofitable colony. They also learnt from the civic arguments used by the Virginia Company. The salience of civic themes was seen, for example, in the promotional tracts of the Plymouth colony which initially settled under the Virginia Company's charter, albeit outside their territory. The Plymouth leaders William Bradford and Edward Winslow were acutely aware in their *Relation of Plymouth* (1622) of the potential for the pursuit of profit to corrupt the common good: 'let every man represe in himselfe and the whole bodie in each person, as so many rebels against the common good, all private respects of mens selves, not sorting with the general convenience'.[111] Robert Cushman concurred in his *Sermon preached at Plimmoth* of the same year, devoting the sermon to the theme 'Let no man seeke his owne, but every man anothers wealth.' He concluded that 'Sweet sympathy is the only maker and conserver

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fully explored in Andrew Fitzmaurice, 'Every man, that prints, adventures: the rhetoric of the Virginia Company sermons', in Lori Anne Ferrell and Peter McCullough, eds., *The English sermon revised* (Manchester, forthcoming).

[110] On Scottish plans, see Alexander, *An encouragement to colonies*; John Mason, *A brief discourse of the Newfoundland* (Edinburgh, 1620) in Cell, ed., *Newfoundland discovered*, pp. 89–99; Robert Gordon, *Encouragements* (Edinburgh, 1625). On Welsh plans, see William Vaughan, *The golden fleece* (London, 1626), and Cell, ed., *Newfoundland discovered*, pp. 13, 15–26. On Irish plans designed primarily by Henry Cary, Viscount Falkland, and George Clavert, Lord Baltimore, for the resettlement of the Catholic 'Old English', see T.C., *A short discourse of the Newfoundland* (Dublin, 1623), in Cell, ed., *Newfoundland discovered*, pp. 227–36; see also pp. 17, 207–49.

[111] Bradford and Winslow, *A relation of Plymouth*, sig. B3v (see also pp. 2–3).

of Churches and commonwealths': a useful argument for a colony with no legal basis.[112]

The Plymouth colony was, of course, concerned with a problem different from those facing the Virginia Company: namely, that of religious liberty. The civic emphasis of their tracts may have arisen as much from that predicament as the disastrous history of English colonization. In this respect they anticipate the Massachusetts Bay colony.[113] The civic thought of the Virginia Company had more in common with the Providence Island company of the 1630s in their stress upon virtuous public service.[114] But again, although drawing upon a similar tradition of civic thought, the Providence Island Company was motivated by religious repression whereas the Virginia Company was responding to thirty years of commercial disaster. In this respect the civic themes of English colonization in the 1630s did not signify continuity with the Virginia Company but rather marked the end of their particular crisis and its own distinctive solution.

That break is perhaps marked most clearly by Robert Gordon's *Encouragements* (1625). Gordon, like Sir William Alexander, filled the dual roles of colonial land-holder and propagandist. His work is one of the least discussed of the early promotional tracts: a deficiency probably accounted for by the fact that it was consistently derivative of the Virginian literature. Gordon wrote in support of the 1620s campaign promoting colonies in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. Although plantation had been attempted in Newfoundland for the same period as in Jamestown, the hostility of fishermen and Trinity House to the occupation of the beaches, used for drying fish, probably accounted for the suppression of promotional material. The settlement of this dispute in 1620 by the privy council opened the promotional floodgates.[115] These authors wrote against a background of similar difficulties to those of the Virginia Company. The sense of crisis was deepened by the fact that numerous attempts to establish colonies in Newfoundland had generally withered in the face of harsh conditions. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the Newfoundland interests attempted to emulate the propaganda success of the Virginia Company and that this propaganda was structurally and thematically derivative of the Virginia Company tracts. Attempting to establish a settlement upon his own holdings of land, we have seen that Sir William Alexander struck the now

[112] Robert Cushman, *A sermon preached at Plimmoth* (London, 1622), pp. 1, 2, and 13. The western branch of the original Virginia council which became the New England council under the leadership of Sir Ferdinando Gorges was at the time threatening 'to give the law along those coasts', see *A brief relation of the discovery and plantation of New England* (London, 1622), in *Sir Ferdinando Gorges and his province of Maine*, ed. J. P. Baxter (New York, 1967), p. 225.

[113] On the concern with liberty in Massachusetts Bay, see Karen Ordahl Kupperman, 'Definitions of liberty on the eve of civil war: Lord Saye and Sele, Lord Brooke, and the American Puritan Colonies', *Historical Journal*, 32 (1989), pp. 17–33.

[114] On the comparison between the Massachusetts Bay and Providence Island colonies, see Kupperman, 'Definitions of liberty on the eve of civil war'.

[115] Cell, ed., *Newfoundland discovered*, pp. 26 and 32. The council included George Calvert, Lord Baltimore, and Henry Cary, Viscount Falkland, both with vested interests in Newfoundland.

familiar theme of a virtuous active life rewarded by glory: 'Where was ever Ambition baited with greater hopes than here, or where ever had Vertue so large a field to reape the fruits of Glory.'[116] The commonplaces of courage and temperance prove popular once more. They are never more apparent than in the substantial volume promoting Newfoundland colonization written by Richard Eburne, a little-known Somerset vicar.[117] Eburne addressed the objection that 'the adventures are very dangerous and liable to losses of life and goods'. With characteristic bluntness, he replied with the example of the Apostles; God 'doth send them forth as lambs among wolves that they should be hated, persecuted, and put to death for his sake'.[118] Public virtues were again to be exercised for the common good and rewarded with honour and glory. The corrupting vices, particularly idleness, were again held to be responsible for the failures of the colonies: 'We must not greatly marvel if our so long continued rest and peace from wars and warlike employments, our unspeakable idleness and dissolute life, have so corrupted and in manner effeminated our people.'[119] In this appeal to martial values we hear the republican diagnosis of the decline of the Roman republic.

These themes are summarized by the Scot Gordon who dedicated his *Encouragements* to Alexander and the 'Under-takers in the plantation of New Scotland'. The derivative character of his tract was reflected in the fact that frequently he merely plagiarized previous promoters, reprinting long passages from Virginia Company literature without acknowledgement.[120] Gordon announced that he had obtained a patent to establish a colony and in this context he cited the civic commonplace: 'We are not borne to our selves; but to help each others.'[121] In a further Ciceronian commonplace commending the active life he argued that knowledge alone of the colonial enterprise 'cannot content mee: but knowing that the chiefe commendation of vertue consisteth in action'.[122] In response to the 'difficulties and impediments' bedeviling the foundation of colonies he then argued:

Now let us compare our selves with Citizens now, whose credite wee see doeth surpasse ours, although wee bee above them, both in qualitie and richesse. Whence is this woorth

[116] Alexander, *Encouragement to colonies*, p. 42.

[117] On the author's obscurity and possible motivations, see Richard Eburne, *A plaine pathway to plantations*, ed. Louis B. Wright (Ithaca, 1962), pp. xxvi–xxviiii.

[118] Ibid., pp. 58–9. 'What high and worthy enterprise', he argues, 'is there that ever hath without some difficulty been achieved', p. 75. For this commonplace of courage, see also Robert Hayman, *Quodlibets, lately come over from new Britanniola, old Newfoundland* (London, 1628), Bk 2, p. 34; and Gordon, *Encouragements*, sig. E3r, 'Doe wee dreame of difficulties? Then know; that it is out of the greatest difficulties, that spring the greatest honours.'

[119] Eburne, *A plaine pathway to planatations*, p. 120.

[120] For example, Gordon's lengthy passage justifying colonization (*Encouragements*, sig. B4r) is taken, verbatim, from *A true declaration of the estate of the colonie in Virginia*, p. 12; his argument that 'no other moderate or mixt course' (*Encouragements*, sig. B3v) of colonization can be followed also repeats *A true declaration*, p. 10; his division of the ends of adventurers according to position (*Encouragements*, sig. C2r) reprints a passage from Smith, *General historie of Virginia*, p. 221.

[121] Gordon, *Encouragements*, sig. B2v.

[122] Ibid.

of theirs, but from their industrie, and trueth; which beareth them out both to this credite, and respect, as well at home as abroad. Were it not (then) better in these our dayes for us to imitate the foot-steppes of vertue in the Italians, that thinketh it neither dishonourable, nor disparagement unto their greatest Princes, their Dukes, Marquesses, and Countes, to make themselves great, and get patrimonies inlarged by their hazards at Sea? It is their glorie to bee vertuous; and may condemne our dissolutions, and idleness, that may as easilie bee great, by such honest and honourable endeavours.[123]

The qualities which, according to Gordon, characterize citizens are those with which we are already familiar from the earlier promotional tracts. He prescribed industry and an active life. He exhorted virtue as the key to the successful pursuit of that life. He condemned the vice of idleness for corrupting these qualities, and he portrayed honour and glory as the reward of good citizens. He revealed that these values were drawn from Italian republican sources. He was careful, however, to stress that a civic ideology need not conflict with a monarchical and aristocratic culture. Above all, Gordon's argument is striking because he did not think of his comments as stemming from the margins of an ideological hegemony. His starting-point is that there is a crisis of colonization. The appropriate solution to that crisis is civic. The derivative character of Gordon's treatise reveals his sense of the history of the problems of colonization in the enterprises of the Virginia Company and the Elizabethans. His sense of this history showed him to be one of the last propagandists to propose the civic solution to the now pan-British (rather than simply English) crisis of colonization.

IV

If the civic ideology used to promote Virginia was discontinuous with the different models of liberty employed in New England and Providence Island, what place does the early Virginian model hold in the larger history of English colonization? The first context within which this question may be answered is in a comparison of the character of the Virginia colony with those in New England. Whereas Virginia is commonly held to be the nursery of materialistic, individualistic, commercial, and proto-capitalist values, it is frequently contrasted with the communal and religious character of the New England colonies. These were corporate communities, established by covenant, which sought to 'subordinate individual interests to the common good'.[124] The civic designs of the Virginia Company were more remote from the common portrayal of Virginia than from this New England ideal. In fact, in the fundamental premises of their politics the Virginia Company and the New England colonies were twins. They were separated more by motivations than values.

[123] Ibid., sig. Ev.

[124] Greene, *Pursuits of happiness*, p. 23. Stephen Forster, *Their solitary way: the puritan social ethic in the first century of settlement in New England* (New Haven, 1971); Allen Cardin, 'The communal ideal in puritan New England, 1630–1700', *Fides et historia*, 17 (1984), pp. 25–38.

From this contrast we discover a larger context in which the values of the Virginia Company must be understood. It is now an historical commonplace that the Elizabethan idea of the conquest of the New World was abandoned for a colonization of commerce.[125] The civic thought employed by the Virginia Company reveals that the shift from the Elizabethan model of conquest was initiated in response to the crisis of 1609. The colonization of settlement and trade is said to have established the premises of the future commercially based empires of England and France. This interpretation would appear to be consistent with those historians who argue that the Virginia Company was fundamentally a business enterprise. The language of humanism was increasingly employed in the definition of the nature and ends of business in the sixteenth century and in the early seventeenth century. Humanism and civic thought, however, were far from wholly reconciled with commerce. Moreover, foremost amongst the various strands of the civic tradition employed by the Virginia Company was that which was particularly hostile to commerce; that which rejected the acquisition of wealth as corrupting the common good.[126] The shift from Elizabethan ideas of empire, and the civic ideology of what would become England's first permanent American colony, did not anticipate an individualistic America or a British commercial empire. Rather, as Robert Gordon revealed, the Virginia Company and its immediate successors walked in the footsteps of the Italian republics.

[125] Pagden, *Lords of all the world*, ch. 3.

[126] Cf. Onuf, 'Reflections on the founding', pp. 351–3; Richard Vetterli and Gary Bryner, *In search of the Republic: public virtue and the roots of American government* (Totowa, 1987); J. G. A. Pocock, *Virtue, commerce, and history* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 272.