



The Language of Canaan: Metaphor and Symbol in New England from the Puritans to the Transcendentalists

Mason I. Lowance Jr

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This is a study of New England figurative language from 1600 to 1850, from the English and Continental origins of Puritanism to the symbolic writings of Thoreau. It enriches our understanding of Puritan thought and expression and traces the influence of Puritanism on later American writing.

A common link among the writers of this period was a system of prophetic symbolism derived from Scripture. The Bible was the source of figures and types used to illustrate divine guidance in human affairs, and its prophetic language provided the Puritans with a method for explaining and projecting the course of history. Lowance explores these modes of prophetic and metaphorical expression and the millennial impulse in American thinking. In the process he provides a cohesive approach to such diverse writers as Bradford, Cotton, Taylor, Increase and Cotton Mather, Edwards, Freneau, Barlow, Dwight, and Emerson. His book will be welcomed by all students of early American thought and literature.



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