Review Essay: Farewell to the 'New England Paradigm' of Colonial Development

Michael Zuckerman
University of Pennsylvania


*Pursuits of Happiness* is a great book. Or at any rate a remarkable one. It is at once an extravagantly comprehensive survey of the Anglo-Atlantic colonial world and an intrepid interpretive essay. It rests at once on an incomparable command of contemporary scholarship and on a daring high-wire act of historical imagination. It achieves at once an indispensable summary of past work and an imperative agenda for the future.

I do not find it compelling on any but its most elemental and least original arguments. I would dispute almost every one of its emphases beyond the most basic. But I sing its hosannas despite my disagreements. It is the most important book we have had in early American history in years. It is a study of integrative power and brilliance, and it appears at a time that such a study seemed altogether beyond our competence.

There is a song which Jews sing at the end of their Sabbath service, the *Dayenu*. The song celebrates God's inexhaustible graces to His people in their hours of need. Each verse hymns another of His abounding beneficences. Each chorus echoes *dayenu*. It would have been enough for us.

Similarly in our own time of trouble, when research and writing proliferate without apparent priorities, when pluralism provides the only rationale for most professional scholarship, and when publication outruns any ordinary mortal's capacity to control or care, *Pursuits of Happiness* seems as providential in its advent as it is lordly in its accomplishment.

If Jack Greene had merely mastered the mounting mass of recent scholarship—not only on New England and the Chesapeake but also on the Middle Atlantic and the Lower South, not only on the mainland settlements but also on the Caribbean colonies and the Atlantic islands, not only on the New World outposts but also on Ireland and, for that matter, on the mother country herself—it would have been enough for us.

If he had merely managed a plausible synthesis of that scholarship—a synthesis few have essayed in our time even for a single provincial region, and that no one has even attempted on any more expansive scale—it would have been enough for us.

If he had gone beyond such synthesis to set a new schematic scaffolding for
colonial history—a model of early modern Anglo-American morphology as suggestive as it is sensible, and as intriguing as it is insightful—it would have been enough for us.

If he did all this in a scant two hundred pages—as deft as they are dense, as swift as they are sure—it would have been enough for us.

And indeed it is enough for us, and more than enough, to see at last where we have been going in these years of pell-mell pluralism and where we might go in the years ahead if we would proceed with any coherent conception of mutual purpose.

Greene begins by devastating the presumptions upon which early American history has stood since at least the end of the Civil War: the paradigmatic primacy of New England, the ethical aberrancy of the South, and the essential irrelevance of Ireland, the Caribbean and Atlantic islands, and the Middle Colonies. He shows that New England was far more peculiar than the South through the first century and a half of English settlement in the New World and that the South—and in particular the Chesapeake region—provided the pattern of subsequent experience in all the provincial enterprises except New England. The very strength of the corporate impulse in Massachusetts and Connecticut, and of the religious discipline which underlaid it, marked the peripherality and in truth the deviancy of the Puritan precincts. The very unabashedness of motives of material gain and modes of acquisitive autonomy, and the subordination of concern for communal cohesion which attended it, pointed the priority of the Chesapeake in the unfolding evolution of an American way of life. It was, in the final analysis, the society of Virginia and Maryland which epitomized “the most important element in the emerging British-American culture: the conception of America as a place in which free people could pursue their own individual happiness in safety and with a fair prospect that they might be successful in their several quests” (p. 5).

Reduced to its essence, Greene’s position is not only refreshing but also irresistible. It reminds us of the aspirations which actually impelled England’s migrations overseas and of the settlements which were actually established on such aspirations. It recalls to us a seventeenth century in which English emigration to the Chesapeake was twice as great as emigration to New England—and the exodus to Ireland and the Caribbean double and triple that to the Chesapeake—even during the decade that historians have dubbed “the great migration” to New England. It recognizes that New England was never a significant destination for English people in the colonies even in the brief moment it enticed them at all. Plymouth Rock and Pilgrim religiosity may have made a satisfying story for the socialization of school children of subsequent centuries, but they were far from foundations of American character and culture for the colonists themselves.
The power of Greene's treatment of the first half-century of settlement lies in its relentless emphasis on the dynamism and the possessive individualism of the English, at home as well as across the Irish Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. And the problems are there as well. Pursuits of Happiness simply goes too far in proclaiming a pulsing, pushing atomism the only essential existence of the metropolis and of its Western colonies; it cannot or at any rate does not acknowledge the collective and conformist aspects of early American life. But Greene's unremitting stress on mundane materialism is still preferable to the inane insistence of New England filiopietists and their followers on the hegemonic influence of Calvinism, covenant, and national election. Only if we allow other alternatives; only if we abandon the polarity itself for a richer appreciation of the connections between pursuits of private and public happiness, only if, in Greene's metaphor of regional rivalries, we go beyond New England and the Chesapeake to accord a different and less derivative role to the Middle Colonies, will we gain a more adequate understanding of the complexities of early American experience than Greene can offer. But more on the Middle Colonies in a moment.

The power of Greene's treatment of the century from 1660 to 1760 is in its continuing recovery of the predominance of self-seeking among the pioneers and, more, in its ingenious articulation of a nested set of notions he calls his "developmental model" of colonial society. On this account, the social and political structures of the orthodox Puritan colonies came apart in the years after 1660, but those of the Chesapeake and of the other English colonial regions came together. Where such settlements had once been secular, unruly, and individualistic, they became by the mid-eighteenth century "more settled, cohesive, and coherent" (p. 81), more like one another in their increasing complexity, and more like the mother country besides. From "the simplified and inchoate social structures" (p. 81) so prevalent in the first generations of colonization, they became differentiated, diversified orders of augmenting affluence and inequality, dominated by increasingly consolidated elites progressively more prone to take their cultural cues from the metropolis.

Greene calls the New England pattern of religious and communal solidarity at the outset and decay of such coercive corporate discipline in later years a "declension model." Though others have chauvinistically taken it for a framework for all early American history, Greene declares, quite correctly, that declension does not describe the experience of any other colonial region. On the contrary, the corrosion of community and the emergence of a measure of modernization in the Puritan provinces neither anticipate nor exemplify equivalent evolutions elsewhere. They merely mark the region's belated reconciliation to tendencies its founders disdained. They merely register a dawning disposition to "rejoin the Western world" (p. 166).
Greene calls the Chesapeake pattern of institutional debility in the first decades and social stabilization in the creole era a "developmental model." Though others have anachronistically taken it for a deviant formation in the colonial period because the South became a peculiar place in the nineteenth century, Greene maintains, rather more problematically, that Chesapeake development prefigured as New England declension never did the pattern of the other provincial areas and that it recapitulated as declension did not the pattern of England itself.

Greene wrests real illumination from his comparisons of the Chesapeake to England, Ireland, and the other Anglo-Atlantic colonies. He traces a number of ways in which Maryland and Virginia as much as England entered the epoch after the Restoration as volatile, permissive societies characterized by religious laxity, tolerance for disorder, and license for assertive individualism and in which they achieved by the eve of the American Revolution a comparable social consolidation, elite hegemony, political stability, and cultural sophistication. He sets out an extensive array of ways in which other New World settlements echoed the evolution of society in the Chesapeake provinces.

But for all Greene's ingenuity and erudition, his arguments seem to me, in the end, forced and unpersuasive. Virginia, Maryland, and England may alike have moved from "social and political disarray" before 1660 "toward an ever more settled and coherent society" in the century succeeding (p. 102), but only insofar as one is willing to focus on such abstract similarities and discount a profusion of particular differences between the mother country and its Chesapeake spawn. "A developmental model of the kind formulated in the discussion of the Chesapeake" may "best . . . describe the process of social change" in the other English colonies of the Atlantic world (p. 123), but only insofar as one is willing to abjure all substantive purchase on decisive differences such as the Protestant-Catholic breach in Ireland, pluralism in the Middle Colonies, and the divergent slave regimes of the Lower South and the Caribbean. Greene may believe that we are already oppressively aware of such differences and that we have more to gain by elaborating the similarities that attend or even underlie them. But the differences are so profound and provocative that it is difficult to conceive histories of early America that do not ineluctably recur to them. More to the point, it is difficult to see how the developmental model enables us to engage them in any new or fruitful fashion.

Take the "marked similarity," indeed, the "astonishing correspondence," that Greene alleges between British and Chesapeake social mobilization (pp. 102, 113). And take it on the very terms that Greene alleges it. Contrary to his claim that Britain remained rural and agricultural "almost to as great an extent as the Chesapeake" (p. 102), Greene discloses that London alone had far more inhabitants than all of Virginia and Maryland, white and black, in 1750. Moreover, and again on his own account, England had more than a hundred
other towns of at least 2500 inhabitants in the same year—a teeming variety of county seats, marketing and manufacturing centers, ports and dockyard towns, spas and resorts, providing "the foci of polite society, consumption, communication, and the arts" (p. 111)—while the Chesapeake had not a single place which even approached that urban threshold. By the mid-eighteenth century the English economy encompassed a vast concourse of middlemen, contractors, manufacturers, teachers, clerks, architects, and civil servants, and an immense investment in woolen, cotton, silk, and linen textiles, coal, brewing, banking, insurance, and shipping, which were utterly impossible in a Chesapeake economy devoid even of consequential towns, let alone great cities.

Greene attempts to offset these daunting disparities by an incessant emphasis upon the "profit-hungry capitalists" (p. 108) who swarmed both societies, but such compensation is simply too crude to be convincing. It does not tell us anything we need to know about the kind of profits for which men hungered or, for that matter, about the kind of capitalists they were. In Greene's own words, the English economy was an intricate "symbiosis among land, trade, and the professions" (p. 108), whereas the Chesapeake economy planted itself overwhelmingly upon the land.

And Greene's sketches of social structure imply divergences even deeper than those of demography and economics. In England, on his account, the century after 1660 saw an "extraordinary resurgence" of the aristocracy (p. 103) and a distinct decline of the smaller gentry. In the Chesapeake, over the same span, there was never an authentic peerage at all, and the planter gentry advanced its position visibly. In England, the gulf widened between the elite and the "pauper residuum" (p. 104); in the Chesapeake colonies, all levels of society improved their lot and the numbers of the poor declined. In England, a fifth of the entire population was on poor relief; in Virginia and Maryland, virtually none of the inhabitants were on public assistance. And these are just tokens of the distinctions Greene himself delineates.

Greene's assertion that the other colonial regions followed the developmental course of the Chesapeake and converged with one another toward an emergent Anglo-American culture is as dubious as his claim that the Chesapeake followed the model of the mother country. His treatment of almost any of the other colonial regions could stand emblematically for the rest, but here let us consider the Middle Colonies.

Take the pronouncement with which Greene begins, that the provinces on the Delaware and Hudson too "proceeded in the direction of greater elaboration, consolidation, and coherence within a broad framework of rapid economic expansion" (p. 124), and the one on which he concludes, that Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York can be comprehended with the other settlements south of New England since the "process of social development" was "remarkably
similar" in them all (p. 152). And again, take these dicta in terms of Greene’s own data.

Greene does catch a thread of similarity, at these lofty levels of abstraction, but in doing so he misses a rich fabric of difference, at a host of levels where the colonists actually lived. Perhaps most strikingly, he misses the significance of his discussion of the distribution of property. In the Chesapeake (and in New England!), the top 20% of household heads controlled two-thirds of the measured wealth of their societies. In England, Ireland, the Caribbean, and the Lower South, the top 20% controlled considerably more than that. But in the Middle Colonies, the top 20% held barely half of all property. Moreover, and quite contrary to the model’s requirement of “growing . . . social stratification” (p. 135), the advancing prosperity of Pennsylvania and its neighbors “was widely shared” and entailed no notable “increase in inequality” (p. 137). Just as Greene sees but cannot consequentially acknowledge that “the Middle Colonies were becoming more like Britain” than the Chesapeake provinces he considers exemplary (p. 135), so he sees but cannot quite say that in their diffusion of wealth the Middle Colonies were much more nearly the egalitarian exception than New England. His developmental model precludes his appreciation of a unique middle-class prosperity in the Middle Atlantic area. His concentration on the commonalities that the model can contain obscures much more tantalizing diversities that lie outside its orbit.

Greene senses as much, but in his determination to define and defend his model he fails to pursue some of his most suggestive insights. He observes that many men of the Middle Colonies viewed communities and governments as necessary evils in the attainment of individual fulfillment, but he immediately assimilates this “powerful antiauthoritarian strain” to similar sentiments evident all around the Anglo-Atlantic world (p. 139). He does not observe that the “contempt of authority” (p. 139) in that region is a far more fascinating phenomenon than the hostility of Irish Catholics to their Protestant oppressors, or than the antagonism of a vast English underclass to a tiny elite, or than the alienation of Chesapeake yeomen from the government of the proud planters. He does not explore the implications of a broad middle class that could vote for its own rulers and still mistrust authority, in effect mistrusting itself.

He knows that Middle Colonial leadership was less cohesive and commanded less deference than the elites of the Chesapeake and even of New England. He knows that Middle Colonial politics were more marked by conflict than politics anywhere else on the mainland, and more marked by large-scale violence besides. And he knows that movement in these domains ran counter to the trends predicated by his developmental model. The Middle Colonies did not fit the declension model because they neither sought nor secured orthodoxy at the outset. But they did not fit the developmental model either, because they did not become more solidified or settled with time. Their social life continued to
"rest upon the same broad heterogeneous base that had characterized it from the beginning" (p. 137), but that "rich cultural diversity" compounded itself in the mass migrations of the mid-eighteenth century (p. 138). Their religious life continued to be tolerant of a pluralism unthinkable elsewhere, but that pluralism augmented itself in the migrations and in the successive revivals that began in the 1720s. Their political life continued to be contentious, but that abrasive factionalism of the early years elevated itself to an unparalleled acceptance of political opposition as legitimate.

Greene can only concede these developments and then discount them, since they represent an increasing incoherence which is incompatible with the consolidation of society that his model demands. He can only confess such devolution and then dismiss it, in reiterated reminders that the Middle Colonies still maintained a "shared commitment to a set of values rooted in the premises of possessive individualism" (p. 138). For in the end it comes down to that. The rich elaboration of the model reduces to the solitary aspect of acquisitive privatism. And as it does, the model ceases to be a model. It ceases to specify or even to credit its concatenated elements and collapses into a single overriding one. More than that, it ceases to provide perspective on what is most arresting in the real world. For possessive individualism appeared everywhere in the early modern English world. A middle-class pluralistic society, a society which prefigured the American order that emerged after the Revolution, appeared only in the Middle Atlantic region. A theory that can scarcely countenance such an appearance, let alone count it as crucial, is a theory unlikely to afford us the analytic leverage we require on the momentous transformations of our national life.

And yet Pursuits of Happiness does permit us a powerful purchase on the terms of early American experience, one which we have never had before with such simultaneous starkness and sophistication. If Greene’s developmental model finally fails, his adamant insistence on the centrality to the settlers of their quest for the main chance hits the nail squarely on the head. The prevalence of privatism among the colonists and the consequent heedlessness of collective endeavors and obligations may seem an unsavory story, but Greene will not let us blink the fact that it is our story. We will have to reckon with his rendition of it for a long time to come.

We will have to figure out how to reconstruct our conventional account to make sufficient place for individual grabbiness and greed and for social underdevelopment. We will have no less to figure out how to reintegrate ideas and ideals of mutuality which the colonists did hold with the unyielding realism of Greene’s formulation.

We will have to ask how half a dozen distinctive regional cultures could have arisen—as Greene demonstrates they did, despite himself—if so many of the settlers were so identically fixated on the promise of personal fulfillment. We will
have no less to ask how so many of those distinctive cultures could have come together as they eventually did, across the divides of their disparities, to wage a common war for independence and to create an American nation and an American culture.

We will be obliged to ask such questions by the very clarity of Greene’s argument as much as by its deficiencies. Even as *Pursuits of Happiness* provides us a magisterial distillation of past scholarship, it intimates a multitude of issues for future inquiry. Even as it absorbs almost the entirety of recent work in the field, it leaves, and better, creates, more than enough work to go around.

---

Michael Zuckerman’s *Pursuits of Happiness: A Comment*

*Jack P. Greene*

The Johns Hopkins University

Whether authors should endeavor to correct misreadings of their work is a question I have always answered in the negative. Upon publication, books take on an independent existence. Always the product of a dialectic between authorial intentions and the multiple perspectives brought to a work by its many readers, the meanings books acquire depend very heavily on how they are received by their readers and may or may not have much to do with the author’s original goals. Indeed, precisely because every work—and whatever body of literature may grow up around it—is engaged anew by each reader, it is subject to a continuous process of elaboration and interpretation that makes it difficult even to think in terms of “correct” or “incorrect” readings.

By writing their own reviews in their prefaces, taking special pains to make their intentions and interpretations as explicit as possible, and similar devices, authors can endeavor to shape the ways readers encounter their work. Because each reader brings a peculiar set of concerns to a text, however, authors have little control over how their published works are interpreted. To the extent that, even as they move on to new concerns, authors retain a proprietary interest in an earlier work, they probably ought to be content simply to sit back and observe, with as much detachment as possible, the process by which it is reshaped as a result of its encounters with other minds. By thus distancing themselves from their offspring, they can at once acknowledge that it now has a life of its own, gracefully permit it to enjoy its own history, and get on with other work.
If my conviction that authors should let their works stand or fall on their own merits makes me reluctant to try to rescue *Pursuits of Happiness* from some of the more imaginative features of Michael Zuckerman’s creative reading of it, so also does the appreciative nature of that reading. Unsurpassed among early American historians, Zuckerman’s mastery of hyperbole is surely one of his most engaging qualities, especially when it is turned in one’s favor. To make any objections to so positive an assessment can only appear ungrateful. Yet two considerations prompt me to overcome my reluctance. First, both implicitly and explicitly Zuckerman’s objections to my use of the explanatory model proposed in *Pursuits of Happiness* raises issues that are of considerable importance to the ongoing effort to reconstruct the colonial British-American past. Second, his analysis provides a pointed example of the way a given reader’s special intellectual concerns can shape his reading of a work.

As Zuckerman points out, *Pursuits of Happiness* proposes what I have called a developmental model as an alternative to the declension or gemeinschaft-gesellschaft or modernization model employed by so many students of early America since World War II. Derived out of my reading of the monographic literature on English, Irish, and colonial British-American social history and implicit in much seventeenth- and eighteenth-century literature, the proposed framework posits that the colonial experience in the early modern British Atlantic world can best be understood as an ongoing process of adaptation, institution building, and expansion of human, economic, social, and cultural resources in association with a transformation of the simple and inchoate social entities of the earliest years of settlement into the ever more complex, differentiated, and well-articulated societies of the late colonial era.

Among other objections, Zuckerman contends that my use of this model in *Pursuits of Happiness* subordinates crucial regional differences to an abstract general theme. To the extent that this objection is valid, the model worked against the book’s purpose, which was diametrically the opposite. To quote the preface, the book was intended not to minimize but “to call attention to the considerable diversity within the British-American social world” (p. xii). As we all know, uncritical applications of explanatory models, both implicit and explicit, can produce exactly the sorts of distortions and inattention to context and variety that Zuckerman alleges to have found in *Pursuits of Happiness*. As I believe to be the case with the developmental model, however, they can also serve to focus attention upon variations in context, process, and development. Indeed, my concern to point up such differences and to emphasize regional (and subregional) distinctions was one of the principal reasons why the volume included detailed reconstructions of the social histories of every one of the major regions of the early modern British colonial world and why that concern was highlighted by the incorporation of the word *variations* in the titles of each of the chapters in which those reconstructions were adumbrated.
Whether or not the developmental model actually functioned in *Pursuits of Happiness* to produce an understanding of the distinctiveness of these several regional cultures as I intended will have to be judged by the book's readers, but the very abstractness and open-endedness of the model should have facilitated that goal. By not proposing a set of highly specific outcomes that each region had to achieve, the model should have—and I think does—promote an understanding of spatial and temporal variations at the same time that it provides "an analytical framework within which these distinctive regional experiences can be both related to one another and comprehended as part of a generalized process of social formation that may help to provide some larger coherence to colonial studies" (p. xii).

Citing the treatment of the middle colonies to illustrate how he believes my use of the developmental model inhibited appreciation of regional peculiarities, Zuckerman contends that those colonies did not fit the developmental model "because they did not become more solidified or settled with time." But that model does not posit the attainment of any particular degree of solidity or settledness. Rather, it suggests only that as the new societies of early modern America moved through time towards greater complexity, they found ways to balance whatever elements composed them. Contrary to structural-functionalist theory, which has been much too casually employed by early American historians and seems still to inform some of Zuckerman's commentary, pluralism of the sorts found most extensively (among the free segments of society) in the middle colonies did not automatically produce chronic instability and incoherence. It simply required that whatever coherence they achieved would have to be built on a more variegated base. Far from representing "increasing incoherence," then, religious toleration and acceptance of party politics in the middle colonies seem rather to have been implemented for the development of a coherence compatible with the plural foundations of middle colony societies. Whether that coherence was substantially more fragile than or only different from the coherence attained by less plural societies is a question that can only be determined by empirical research and comparative analysis.

Zuckerman's suggestion that the developmental model is also excessively reductive also strikes me as misleading. In the sense that they seek to identify particular variables that account for continuities, changes, and variations, all explanatory models are reductive. But it is simply inaccurate to say that in the final analysis the developmental model "reduces to the solitary aspect of private acquisitiveness." To be sure, that model places heavy emphasis upon the material aspirations that were brought to the colonies by free (and prospectively free) immigrants and that were there nourished by the opportunities that they and their descendents found and created. As the book takes pains to emphasize, however, the pursuit of happiness involved far more than the simple quest for individual gain. Everywhere, even in the West Indies, possessive individualism was accom-
panied by a collective desire to transform the new colonial societies into "improved" societies on the model of metropolitan England, a social expectation that settlers actively cultivated as part of their several pursuits of happiness.

As many students of early modern colonization have recognized, the successful adaptation and reformulation of metropolitan cultures in the new world neither automatically produced a demand for a new "American" identity nor reduced the authority and pull of the metropolitan cultures from which the settlers emanated and to which they remained politically, economically, and culturally attached. On the contrary, as their own societies became more complex and sophisticated and the prospects for attaining the improved state to which they aspired thereby came to seem more within their grasp, the attractive power of the metropolis appears to have intensified, even among many of those segments of the population who could not trace their ancestry directly to it. As much as the demographic, economic, and social results of the expansive and, for free people, empowering conditions shared by every region between 1720 and 1770, this quest for anglicized improvement was a primary component of the social convergence that by the third quarter of the eighteenth century had made the North American colonies more alike than they had ever been before or, perhaps, would be again before the present century.

As Pursuits of Happiness nowhere suggests, that convergence by no means produced identical societies. But, the developmental model postulates, through the conjoint processes of creolization—adaptation to local conditions—and metropolitanization—successful cultivation of the principal values and forms of the parent culture—it did provide the foundations for both the loose political confederation that came into being during the century after 1775 and the emergence of a rudimentary national culture, a process that remained incomplete until last half of the twentieth century.

To understand colonial development in terms of a series of creative interactions between these two processes as they functioned differentially from region to region strikes me as potentially more promising than a reversion to the presumed—and almost certainly greatly exaggerated—tension between individualism and collectivism that has always been the central analytic device in the declension model and that yet informs Zuckerman's characterization of the middle colonies. In any case, a comprehension of how that tension was played out in the several regions of the early modern British-American world, as well as an appreciation of the differential operation of the many centrifugal and centripetal impulses in that world, can be accommodated within the developmental model. In this effort, attention to British social developments is useful not because much light can be gained through a comparison of the still (even in the 1770s) relatively new and simple colonial societies with a much older, larger, more dense, and infinitely more complex old-world society but because it shows how the metropolitan inheritance itself changed as the parent society underwent
alterations that, to whatever extent regional conditions permitted, were being replicated in the colonies, for which, for as long as they remained colonies and even for a long time thereafter, the metropolis continued to be an authoritative exemplar.

If Zuckerman's remarks about the obscuring and reductive character of my use of the developmental model are misleading, his assertion that that model cannot explain "the momentous transformations of our national life" is irrelevant. Specifically set forth as model to explain the development of early modern colonial societies, that model may very well be applicable to the experiences of most of the new colonies established by other European powers during that era. As Peter S. Onuf's recent book, Statehood and Union: A History of the Northwest Ordinance (Bloomington, 1987), would seem to suggest, it may also facilitate understanding of the process of regional social formation in the west during the century and a half after the Revolution. It might even, with modifications and refinements, be useful in analyzing some types of regional social and economic change involved in the shift from the rural and commercial societies of the colonial and Revolutionary eras to the urban and industrial societies of the mid-and late nineteenth century. But it was never presented as a paradigm for the development of a national society or a national culture, a task for which the declension model would seem to be even less well-suited and for which there are already several other explanatory models, the utility of which must be evaluated by historians of later periods and of national entities.

Zuckerman's principal contention, that Pursuits of Happiness fails to identify the middle colonies as the primary crucible for the generation of American culture, has no necessary connection to his observations on the utility of the developmental model. Indeed, that contention can perhaps best be understood as a reiteration of a position to which Zuckerman has been committed since at least the beginning of this decade. The introduction to a collection of essays entitled Friends and Neighbors: Group Life in America's First Plural Society (Philadelphia, 1982), his provocative essay "Puritans, Cavaliers, and the Motley Middle" not only, like Pursuits of Happiness, attacked the uncritical reliance of so many early American historians on the New England paradigm but also vigorously and effectively championed the contention "that the configuration of American civilization first found its essential contours in the mid- and South-Atlantic regions, and especially in the province of Pennsylvania." Emphasizing the extent to which "the pluralistic modes of the middle colonies" both prefigured the subsequent development of American culture and "spread irresistibly in national affairs," Zuckerman argued in that essay that "in political, economic, social, and even religious life, Pennsylvania provided the pattern for the nation more than Massachusetts [or Virginia] ever did" (pp. 11-12).

If one accepts the premise, employed by both the advocates of the New England paradigm and Zuckerman, that it is important to show which region of
colonial America more nearly typified the culture of later America, Zuckerman, in my view, has by far the stronger case. But I also think that he exaggerates the social uniqueness of the middle colonies and the extent of their similarity to later American "civilization." Had he done no more than merely take the opportunity provided by Pursuits of Happiness to restate this position, I could scarcely object. In fact, however, his concern to reiterate that position has shaped his reading of my book in ways that can only mislead his readers as to its purpose and argument. In particular, his commentary implicitly functions to involve my volume in a debate to which it was not intended to contribute on a question that its author thinks both impossible to resolve and unpromising to pursue.

Rather than entering the debate over which region merits priority as the seedbed of American culture, as Zuckerman implies, Pursuits of Happiness, in fact, attacks the impulse behind that debate as "reductionist" (p. xii). The book does not argue that American culture derived exclusively or even principally out of the Chesapeake. Rather, it contends only that a pervasive pattern of behavior that was powerfully evident in early modern England and Ireland and that quickly became a dominant feature in all of the new English societies in America found its earliest expression in English America in the first permanent settlements in the Chesapeake, that the orthodox Puritan New England colonies in many respects during their earliest generations represented a deliberate if ultimately largely unsuccessful rejection of that pattern of behavior, but that it was nevertheless central to the cultures that developed everywhere in English America, including eventually even in New England. This contention does not in any way suggest, as Zuckerman implies, that the culture of the middle colonies or any other colonial region derived from that of the Chesapeake. Rather, it posits a series of independent beginnings from a common cultural base that resulted in similar but quite distinctive regional cultures, with the distinctions being a function of several significant variables relating to situation and time.

As the preface declared, Pursuits of Happiness sought, "to depict the emergence of American cultural patterns during the century beginning around 1660 as the product not of the influence of one predominant region but of a powerful social convergence among all four of the broad cultural regions ... that beginning in 1776 would constitute the United States" (p. xii). As a corollary, it also argued that, far from being deviant or distinctive areas, both the Chesapeake and the Lower South "were before 1800 in the mainstream of British-American development" and "perhaps as much as any of the several distinctive regional cultures in colonial British America [italics added] during the early modern era ... epitomized what was arguably the most important element in the emerging British-American culture: the conception of America as a place in which free people could pursue their own individual happiness in safety and with a fair prospect that they might be successful in their several quests" (p. 5).