“England Hath Seene Her Best Dayes, and now Evill Dayes are Befalling Us.” Nostalgia in Puritan Culture

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ABSTRACT: To examine Puritan nostalgia in the context of the Great Migration (1630s-40s), this paper analyzes the spiritual autobiography of the English tailor John Dane, in which he recollects his memories of leaving his family and wandering through Hertfordshire, as well as his return home and subsequent move to New England. By investigating how Dane employs nostalgia to make sense of and emotionally cope with his separation from home, his conversion experience, and his decision to leave for New England, this paper argues that nostalgia was decisive in how early modern Puritans understood, experienced, and practiced their daily lives.

KEYWORDS: Nostalgia; Puritanism; Emotion; Migration; Pilgrimage; Conversion Narrative

> [R]everte to […] ancient puritie, and recover […] primative order, libertie, & bewtie.
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> (William Bradford, *Of Plimmoth Plantation* 1)

Introduction: Longing for a Lost Golden Age

In April 1631, Thomas Hooker delivered to his congregation in Chelmford his farewell sermon upon leaving England for the New World.[1] It was a sermon full of pathos, urgency, and terror, that was to touch and shake every individual of his congregation; it was to leave a bodily impression; it was meant to move the hearts of his hearers towards New England. “We see the Gospell going, brethren,” he lamented. Hooker wanted to warn his people that God was going to destroy England. Thus, feeling “low,” Hooker told his audience: “I deale plainly with you, and tell you what God hath told me […] England hath seene her best dayes, and now evill dayes are befalling us” (*The Danger* 13-15). Vividly, Hooker painted a gruesome picture of England’s present and future and pointed to the apocalyptic signs surrounding them: “Cities and Townes” were full of “poore fatherlesse children” and “helplesse mothers” (6); men would soon have to use “the sword.” “[W]omen, widdowes, and […] maids [would be] defiled;” children and loved ones would “be throwne upon the pikes, and dashed against the wals;” houses and churches would be burnt, and idolatry would rule. Why would God abandon England, Hooker questioned and argued it was “because no body will buy his wares, nor come to his price.” There used to be a time when England followed God's commandments whatever the price, but these times had passed, and no longer did England enjoy God's favor. “[W]hat sayest thou oh England?” Hooker asked his audience, “are you content?” (14). This sermon

[1] Williams et al. argue that “[i]t is quite possible […] to date the sermon as having been preached in or around Chelmford on the evening of Maundy Thursday, April 17, 1631” (Hooker, “The Danger” 223).

left a deep impression on its listeners, and Hooker noted the anxiety on the faces of his audience: “Methinks I see your colors rise” (“The Danger” 242). His speech was a call to immediate action. Yet, what was to be done? Many Puritans, as in Hooker's congregation, pondered this question in the late 1620s. Could they still further the Reformation in England? Could they still practice their faith? Was migration an option? How could they abandon their country and their people? Tailor John Dane (~1612-84) from Bishop’s Stortford was one such individual grappling with these questions. In early 1630, Dane left his family “to seke [his] fortin [i.e. fortune]” (8) but quickly lost himself in corruption, feeling tempted by women, alcohol, dancing, and games. Indeed, having left his home, he seemed to have walked straight into the cities and towns that Hooker described. Thus, Dane decided to go to “nu ingland” because in England he found “a deuell to tempt, and a corupt hart to deseue [i.e. deceive][2]” (12).[3]

While Dane could not have heard Hooker’s sermon, he would have been unable to escape the popular discourses of his time. The alleged declension of England was decried from pulpits, emphasized in admonitions to parliament, and “desolation,” “intemperance,” and “evill examples” were denounced in pamphlets (Winthrop and White 112-13).[4] The Thirty Years’ War raged in Europe and many, like Hooker and Massachusetts’s second governor John Winthrop, argued that “the like iudgement is comminge” for England (Winthrop and White 112). Letters and promotional pamphlets further highlighted the drastic social changes of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries that had resulted in unemployment, low wages, and “multitudes” migrating to the flourishing southeastern towns and cities in search of work.[5] As a result, the areas from which the majority of Puritan settlers originated were increasingly marked by poverty, thievery, violence, and public disorder (Nash 238; Dunn 161; Levy 38, 56; Delbanco xxii; Anderson 27). New England was therefore often portrayed as a “shelter” from these troubles. In his farewell sermon Hooker stated: “New England shall be a refuge for his Noahs and his Lots, a rock and a shelter” (“The Danger” 246).[6]

Ever since the first attempts to settle in America, from Virginia to Plymouth, laypeople received knowledge of the migration enterprise via letters, pamphlets, or other published accounts. These documents were shared, exchanged, copied, or read aloud, and consequently, information was disseminated throughout all echelons of society. Letters of famous emigrants were sometimes printed, such as minister Francis Higginson’s *Nevv-*

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[2] The letters u and v were used interchangeably.

[3] The exact time of Dane’s arrival is difficult to narrow down, but he can be found in the Ipswich Records by 1638 (Dane 3).

[4] Cf. *A Parte of a Register* (1593); John Winthrop’s pamphlet “Reasons to be considered for iustifieinge the undertakeres of the intended Plantation in New England” (1629) (Winthrop and White).

[5] Cf. Winthrop’s Letter to Unknown (1629) or John White’s *The Planter’s Plea* (1630).

[6] Cf. John Cotton’s farewell sermon *God’s Promise to his Plantations* (1630); Reverend Nathaniel Ward argued that he had come to New England for his “children[‘s] […] sak & safty” (504); John Hull states that his father came for the same reason (124).

Englands Plantation (1630). In these documents, laypeople, ministers, merchants, public spokespeople and others criticized the state of England, delineated their reasons for migration, and emphasized the benefits New England offered. Promotional publications insisted that New England provided what Thomas Weld called the "three great blessings, peace, plenty, and health" in a letter to his former parishioners in 1632 (96).[7] Furthermore, those planning the migration actively recruited settlers, and many who had already sailed to New England advised family, friends, and acquaintances to follow.[8] Whether Dane heard sermons, read pamphlets or received news from friends can only be assumed, but he states that he considered leaving England when he heard of "a great cuming to nu ingland," (12) as did other early settlers, like Roger Clap or Thomas Shepard. Dane thus became one of approximately twenty thousand individuals to join the Great Migration.[9]

What marks all the above-mentioned comments and links common people like Dane to public spokesmen and ministers is the intense nostalgia they felt and voiced when speaking about England. They all participated in a shared social memory that associated England's past with godliness, peace, and stability; they all remembered times in which they enjoyed God's favor, a lost "golden age." Yet, by the 1620s they were certain that England had become 'corrupted,' 'defiled,' and 'perverted' and could no longer be saved. The only possibility to "reverte to [...] anciente puritie, and recover their primative order, libertie, & bewtie" (1), as William Bradford, second governor of Plymouth, stated, was to rebuild this blissful past in another country. By sharing this belief and finding the courage to leave friends, family, and economic security[10] behind to revive their lost golden age in New England, individuals, as Virginia Anderson noted, were "stitched […] together into a larger social and cultural fabric" (40).

Dane's Autobiography in Context

Dane's autobiography is an exceptional source to study the importance of nostalgia in motivating the Great Migration, and even though, as Meredith M. Neuman indicates, Dane's manuscript was first published in 1854, it remains under-examined by scholars (273). Dane's narrative is one of the few written by an individual of the middling sort. Other well-known ego-documents of emigrants from the same social background are those of militia man Roger

[7] Cf. Edward Winslow's *Good Nevves from New-England* (1624); White's *A Planter's Plea;* and Higginson's *Nevv-Englands Plantation* (both 1630).

[8] Cf. Sir Richard Saltonstall's letter to Emmanuel Downing in 1632; Roger Clap and John Dane both saw family following them to New England.

[9] Numbers vary depending on which time span and destination is considered as Great Migration. Virginia Anderson speaks of 13,000 who went to Massachusetts between 1630-1640 (15). Christof Mauch, Anke Ortlett and Jürgen Heideking mention more than 20,000 immigrants who came to New England in a first wave from the 1620s to 1640s, including the early Plymouth migrants (24). Robert Charles Anderson emphasizes two phases of migration to New England, the first phase from 1628 to 1633 with 2,500 immigrants and the second from 1634 to 1640 bringing "between 15,000 and 20,000," excluding Plymouth yet including the Endicott group settling in Salem (407).

[10] According to Virginia Anderson, the group that left for New England was economically stable and had "much more to lose than to gain from migration" (28).

Clap and goldsmith John Hull. They, however, scarcely elaborate on life in England and their reasons for migration, devoting more space to chronicling New England's early history. Other Great Migration ego-documents, such as those of Richard Mather, Thomas Shepard, William Bradford, John Winthrop, and Francis Higginson were penned by ministers and leaders of the migration enterprise, and their recollections follow a much clearer agenda. Dane's narrative thus sheds light on the mental and emotional world of an average Puritan settler and explains how such individuals coped emotionally with the uncertainties of the early seventeenth century. Furthermore, Dane actively situates himself within the larger national migration discourse by asserting that his body, soul, and the nation all underwent a similar journey: From a secure home, through a wilderness of corruption, to salvation in a promised land. In doing so, he used typology to base personal and communal experiences on biblical precedent, as did ministers like John Cotton and Richard Mather in their farewell sermons.[11] In this paper Dane will thus serve as a link between the individual and the collective to exhibit how the feeling of nostalgia inspired and colored the migration to New England.

Dane wrote his narrative retrospectively from Ipswich around the 1670s or early 1680s, a period in which New England found itself in crisis. By the 1660s, most of the founding fathers, such as Hooker, Winthrop, Cotton, or Bradford had died, droughts and caterpillars ruined crops, smallpox epidemics and fires surged, and religious controversies plagued the country (Anderson, *New England's Generation* 179-80, 191-92). Especially the death of the founding fathers increased the generational distinction between the first, second, and third generations. Thus, settlers of the first generation, like Dane or Clap, wrote their autobiographies towards the end of their lives with a heightened sense of importance, having been among those who had laid the foundation of New England. By discussing the Great Migration in his life story, Dane therefore participated in the proliferation of chronicles about New England's history, such as reverend William Hubbard's *General History of New England* (~1680s, only published 1815), or autobiographies about the founding fathers, like Increase Mather's *The Life and Death of that Reverend Man of God, Mr. Richard Mather* (1670).

Ministers blamed the decline of New England on the people's backsliding, their 'lukewarmness,' and corruption. Those of the first generation could not have failed to notice the similarities to the declension that was decried in England in the 1630s. Yet, as Virginia Anderson has noted, in the 1670s Jeremiads[12] had a clear generational focus, accusing the second generation of falling "far short of those whom God saw meet to improve in laying the

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[11] Cotton's *God's Promise to his Plantation* is based on 2 Samuel 7:10, "Moreover I will appoint a place for my People Israel, and I will PLANT them, that they may dwell in a place of their OWN, and MOVE NO MORE" (1); in *A Farewell Exhortation to the Church and People of Dorchester in New England* (1657) Richard Mather wrote: "Is not the way to Canaan through the wilderness? […] and yet through this wilderness must Israel go, before they could enter into the good land. In like sort, a soul must go through a wilderness-like condition, that is, he must be afflicted with sight and sense of spiritual misery & sin, before he can attain to any state o[f] saving rest & grace in Christ Jesus" (3).

[12] A sermon form based on the Book of Jeremiah that laments 'backsliding,' a downfall from former virtue and pious zeal to sin and corruption (Elliott 41).

foundation of his Temple here," as the Cambridge Synod of 1679 stated (Mather, *The Necessity*; Anderson, *New England's Generation* 197-98). Thus, the climate of the 1670s invited individuals of the first generation to relive their migration experience and, as minister Samuel Danforth urged in his *A Brief Recognition of New-Englands Errand into the Wilderness* (1671), to "seriously enquir[e] to what purpose they went out into the Wilderness, and what expectation drew them thither" (2). Individuals were not only motivated to write their life stories for their own sake but also for the education of the new generations. Dane also penned a didactic narrative dedicated to his "louing Relations," hoping they could learn from his "wofull exkperans [i.e. experience]" (14).

Whether early modern ego-documents provide meaningful sources for the study of emotions has been amply discussed by literary scholars and historians alike. Whereas diaries in general were often perceived as the only 'authentic' sources to study the emotional world of individuals, the early modern spiritual autobiography defies this claim. While writing these recollections would surely have given the author a sense of emotional relief, diaries, journals, and autobiographies were written as a devotional exercise. Authors thus recorded their feelings and actions to identify sins, virtues, and God's Providence in order to grow spiritually. Furthermore, these diaries were often exchanged or handed to those in need when authors felt that their own experiences could provide emotional and spiritual support. Other times, as with Dane's, Clap's or Shepard's autobiographies, texts were produced with a clear audience and purpose in mind. Thus, Dane's narrative poses a challenge to an attempt to find 'truthful' or unmediated emotions. Following recent scholarship on the history of emotions, I have thus abandoned the distinction between 'real' and 'mediated' emotions in favor of understanding them as products of socialization and instruction that do not "have an existence prior to or completely separate from social scripts" (Scheer 193, 216).

While reading Dane's autobiography, I follow Barbara Rosenwein in assuming that it is exactly the very "insincerity" of the narrative that will expose emotional norms, "conventions and habits" (29). I am thus not interested in whether or not Dane's emotions are 'real' but rather which emotions are (un)imaginable to Dane, which thoughts, actions and feelings he associates with love, anger, fear or shame, how he frames the emotions he experiences, and which emotions he prizes and which ones he condemns. I investigate how his emotional experiences are shaped by his social, historical, and cultural context. Yet I also want to expose tensions and ruptures, during which Dane struggles to align his personal experience with accepted emotional norms. Consequently, I read Dane's pre-migration experience against the early modern ideological context and the historical and cultural context of England's early and New England's late seventeenth century. Therefore, I mix close and wide reading. I show how learned and social discourses inform and interact with Dane's personal life and influence how he understands, sees, and experiences his world feelingly. In doing so, I ascertain how one Puritan appropriates, reproduces but also challenges hegemonic discourses of his time, and how he interlinks his individual feelings with those of the collective.

While scholars have long discussed the reasons for the Great Migration, nostalgia did not figure prominently in these deliberations. Commentaries on the declension of England in the 1630s, like those by Hooker, White or Winthrop, and those on the demise of New England in the 1670s by Danforth, Increase and Cotton Mather have generally been analyzed in the context of the Jeremiad. Perry Miller and Sacvan Bercovitch, for example, acknowledge the sermon's influence on the thinking and feeling of New Englanders, but they nevertheless clearly stress the public and political nature of nostalgic rhetoric. Moreover, Puritans' consistent references to *the home* have either been read as emphasizing the importance of 'household government,'[13] or they have been construed as a-typical, hearkening to future developments.[14] Nostalgia, be it in discourse, as emotion or as literary trope remains a topic to be studied further, while related topics have been investigated, such as English traditions in New England,[15] "Primitivism" in Puritan theology and social life,[16] and homesickness.[17] This paper argues that nostalgia has always been a peculiar master mode of Puritan meaning-making. I agree with Theodore D. Bozeman's notion that New England Puritans were above all characterized by what he called "biblicist primitivism," the attempt to return to a "primitive church" (10-14). Yet I expand this idea by contending that nostalgia was so deeply ingrained in the Zeitgeist of this era that Puritan theology merely emphasized a cultural and social longing for the past. I show that Puritan nostalgia worked on three levels: As a master metaphor[18] and structuring logic of early modern ideology; as a distinctive mode of understanding the world feelingly; and as a coping strategy in times of existential crisis. As a consequence, grand narratives and practices like conversion, Pilgrimage or the Jeremiad are inherently nostalgic. In the following chapter I explain the inherent role of nostalgia in the conversion narrative and examine how Dane conveys this emotion by centering on the trope of the home.

Yearning to Recover Things Lost: John Dane's Conversion

When Meredith M. Neuman read Dane in 2005, she argued: "The journey away from the parent's house proves to be a spiritual cul-de-sac, if not a dead end. Accordingly, the trope itself is more suited to a picaresque diction than to an account of genuine spiritual conversion"

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[13] The home was considered a 'little commonwealth,' a microcosm of the larger social world. If homes were in order and governed, so was the larger commonwealth.

[14] Cf. Abram van Engen's reading of Mary Rowlandson's captivity narrative.

[15] Grayson, David Allen. *English Ways: The Movement of Societies and the Transferal of English Local Lawand Custom to Massachusetts Bay in the Seventeenth Century*. U of North Caroline P, 1981.

[16] Bozeman, Theodore D. *To Live Ancient Lives: The Primitivist Dimension in Puritanism*. The U of North Carolina P, 1988; Hughes, Richard Thomas, editor. *The American Quest for the Primitive Church*. U of Illinois P, 1988.

[17] Matt, Susan J. *Homesickness: An American History*. Oxford UP, 2011.

[18] A master metaphor, also called root metaphor, "is the most basic assumption about the nature of the world or experience that we make when we try to give a description of it. […] The function [...] is to suggest a primary way of viewing the environment or experience and this way of looking at things assists us in building categories or in creating art forms that will express this insight" (MacCormac 93-94).

(257). Neuman claims that Dane's narrative "seems more akin to Defoe than Bunyan" by understanding the plot to reveal his restless striving to move *forward*. Indeed, the only "latent nostalgia" she sees is one "for his preconversion identity […] shame and fascination with the man he once was" (259). I, however, argue that Dane's story is about moving *backward*, a struggle to find a way back home, returning with opened eyes and heart and finally appreciating what seemed hidden before. Thus, I claim that Dane does not feel nostalgia for the man but for the *boy* he once was, who was guided by others, securely integrated into community and family, and who seemed to effortlessly follow God's commandments.

Dane establishes the theme of nostalgia on the first page. It is no coincidence that he chooses the first family Providence to be about *scrabbling*. After moving from Berkhampstead to Bishop's Stortford, Dane's family met with financial hardship. Seeking guidance and help, Dane's mother prayed to God, and when one day his sister "went into the yard and sot doune […] laying hur hand on the ground […] thare lae a shilling," Dane quickly "went and scrabled with [his] fingers in the place and found a notther" (7). This incident sets the tone of the story and familiarizes the readers with the major theme: While God's mercies might not be visible to the eye, by patiently trusting in him, bearing his judgment, and searching, they can be recovered. Just like Dane uses his diary to retrospectively uncover God's Providence in the past which "then [he] slytly passed ouer" (7), his children should learn that buried under dirt there can be treasures, if one is willing to remove layers of sediment that have accrued over time to cover it. Recovering what was hidden there all along—the pure, the precious—is therefore at the core of Dane's story, and the place associated with it is home.

Even though the home is the point of departure in many conversion narratives, it is especially prominent in Dane's case. First, the importance of the home is reflected in the five most used nouns: God (44), father (23), house (14), mother (13), and home (12). Second, the first setting presented is Dane's home and by beginning to recount family mercies and Providences, this space is presented as blessed by God. Third, Dane was still a child when he was at home and heard God's voice more clearly. This is because, as noted by Hannah Newton, childhood was considered "the most innocent part of man's life" by Puritans, who believed in Original Sin and the accumulation of sin throughout one's life (19). Thus, in this early life phase, Dane's "Conshans was ueary apt to tell [him] of euells," he felt "gods goodness" and "Restrayning grace to presarue [him] from […] temptation" (7). His parents provided "instructions" (9) and corrections—whenever he did anything "without [his] fathers Consent," he was "basted" (7). Consequently, the home for Dane represents a place and time in which he was secure, loved, guided, and close to God.

The plot of Dane's story is revealed by the first family Providence: By pointing to God's favor in providing treasure that was hidden under dirt, Dane alludes to the analogy of God's judgment as a purifying furnace. Just as gold is impure and hardly recognizable to the eye when dug from the earth, its beauty and value need only be revealed by the goldsmith. Puritans used this picture to highlight that devout believers all had to experience affliction to unearth their hearts' inclination. Michael Wigglesworth, for example, states in his famous

Meat out of the Eater (1670): “Affliction is […] God’s Fining-Pot/Wherein he melts his Gold/Consumes the dross and maketh it/More lovely to behold” (9-10). As he did with Job, God tested his flock to see whether they trusted his plan or blasphemed. If they patiently endured hardship, searching their hearts for sin and truly repenting, then all the vile corruption that had encrusted and hardened the heart would be broken down and removed.[19] As a result, the first Providence foreshadows that the plot of the story will follow the general pattern of the conversion narrative.

What lies at the center of the conversion experience is the power of emotions. Puritans asserted that conversion changed the heart, the emotions it produced, and human behavior. Seventeenth-century medicine, philosophy, and theology held that the heart was the center of the body, the seat of emotions and God (Harvey 166; Lynch 7; Broomhall 21). Thus, Dane's narrative too concentrates on the heart: Decisions he makes he “thout in [his] harte” (7), his mother's words are “stuck in [his] brest” (8) and “knoct home on [his] hart” (9), and God's judgments are felt as a “sting […] at [his] harte” (9). Dane’s emotional estrangement from his family and God results from and mirrors Adam and Eve’s fall from grace. Originally, God created Adam and Eve with the affections of the heart so these would draw them to embrace God, because, as minister William Fenner argued, “[t]he Soul hath no other way to come at that which it loves, but only by its affections” (3). Yet, when Adam and Eve disobeyed God and ate the forbidden fruit, their emotions disjointed and turned away from God towards the world, becoming disordered and unruly. This Original Sin was passed on to all humankind and resulted in disengagement and alienation from God. Instead of loving God and following spiritual affections, humans were now forever drawn to love their carnal world and follow carnal desires. As independent agents with a mind of their own, hearts moved and guided humans towards sin and muffled God’s guiding voice (Hammond 86; Strier 29; Barbezat 121; Schoenfeldt 64). Yet, as Michael Schoenfeldt emphasizes, Puritans considered emotions to be “the locus of mortal suffering *and* the medium of redemption” (Schoenfeldt 64, emphasis added). To follow God’s commandments, humans had to attempt to return to a pre-lapsarian state: They had to forsake the world and their human desires to once again embrace God as their first love.[20]

Dane’s emotional turmoil and the plot of his story closely correspond to the stages of repentance and redemption given by ministers, as elaborated by Perkins in *The Whole Treatise of the Cases of Conscience* (1602) or popular books such as John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678). Dane passes through three stages that work on different levels: spatial (home, wilderness, home again), spiritual (Preparation, Justification, Sanctification[21]), and

[19] Cf. Ezekiel 36:26: “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your body, and I will give you an heart of flesh” (*Geneva Bible*).

[20] Cf. Revelation 2:4: “Nevertheless, I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy first love” (*Geneva Bible*).

[21] According to Perkins, in the stage of Preparation, God reveals his commandments and shows the believer “what is sinne, and what is not sinne,” and in doing so individuals can ascertain their own lives and when they

emotional (fear[22] and love; terror, despair, and grief; compassion and hope) (cf. Perkins 50-52; Bernard 68-69; Caldwell 2). Dane's coming of age is therefore characterized by a physical, spiritual and emotional *movement*. At home, Dane sincerely obeyed and loved his parents and God because he feared their judgment, but his youth brought prideful stubbornness, lust, and longing for worldly goods. Thus, when Dane left home, he found nothing but temptation, confusion, pain, and devastation. Lost in a wilderness of his own making and struck by God's punishment, Dane yearned to return home, but he could only do so once he acknowledged his sins and sincerely repented. Consequently, only when Dane renounced his desire for the world and turned his affections towards God, was he able to return home and once again practice obedience. Reintegrated into the home and having rekindled his love, he finally found "great incuregment" (10).

By basing his narrative on the story of conversion and Pilgrimage, Dane's physical journey is aligned with the pilgrimage of the soul: While he walks towards home, his soul walks towards Paradise. Yet, when Dane finally reunites with his family, he describes himself as "the child in the womb" (12). Thus, while Dane equates different spaces with one another—home, womb, Paradise—he also suggests that they share a distinct temporality. To Dane, they are all spaces from the past that appear forever lost. It is therefore no surprise that Dane's mother takes center stage in his narrative. The metonymy of the *womb* points to her personifying both earthly and heavenly home, spaces that seem both reachable and unreachable. It is his mother who is the protagonist of the first two Providences and it is her "words" that continually echo in Dane's ear, that "knoct home on [his] hart" (9) and "stuck in [his] brest" (8). By asserting that being in Paradise is like being back in the womb, Dane conflates a spiritual with a human origin and frames this state as a symbiosis with the body of the creator. Only here humans find themselves in perfect harmony, security, and dependence; only here exists an immediate and unbroken relationship. Dane therefore highlights that assurance can only be reached when believers *feel* as one with each another and with God (cf. Engen 3).[23] By attributing to his nostalgia the reverberating voice of his mother, Dane highlights the ambiguity of the emotion, its bitter-sweetness, a mingling of hope and disappointment. While memories can be retrieved and feelings rekindled, loved ones and past experiences remain forever ungraspable—they can never be brought back to life. Dane's mother therefore signals what is inherent in the quest for assurance: Its fleetingness, its intangibility, its nostalgia.

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find sin, they will "feare punishment and hell" (51). In the stage of Justification, individuals struggle with their own conscience and try to evaluate whether or not they will be saved. This will lead them to a "combat" with themselves and "cōnstant, & earnest inuocatiō for pardon." Only after this sincere repentance can Sanctification begin when the believer truly embraces God and can "obey his commaundements by a new obedience" (52).

[22] Fear is positively connoted in Puritan culture when it represents a loving appreciation, respect, and reverence for those higher in hierarchy. It is a precondition to sincere humility and obedience. It is only framed negatively when it represents a "slauish fear," as William Gouge points out, where individuals are merely afraid of punishment but harbor no love for those who rule them (162-63).

[23] Puritans understood *communion* in its Augustinian sense, emphasizing the origin of the word being "com- 'with, together' + unus 'oneness, union'" ("communion").

By centering the home and his mother in his conversion narrative, Dane pens a very personal story that incorporates the collective Puritan yearning to return to God's house. Only when believers could say "I have set my affection to the house of my God," could they be fairly certain of assurance (*King James Bible* 1 Chron. 29:3). By conflating earthly love for parents with the spiritual love for God and making his story a quest to return to these first loves, Dane appropriates larger theological discourses to make sense of his life. Dane also highlights this by writing: "Gods loue constraynes us to loue him that has loued us first" (13-14). It is thus a nostalgia to return "home to the heart," as Hooker described it, which pervades Dane's narrative (*The Soules Preparation* 26). By juxtaposing his return home and his reunion with his parents with his first conversion, Dane emphasizes that even though assurance can never be certain, the carnal world, as Van Engen pointed out, *can* provide solace, love, security, and fellow feeling that can be a sign of salvation. In the next chapter I show how Dane's journey follows the conventions of the Pilgrimage narrative, while also demonstrating how he struggles to understand his life as a mere transitory state, as ministers suggested.

Returning to the Right Path: John Dane's Pilgrimage

Dane's story is one of movement, travel, and migration, highlighting the Pilgrimage motif with verbs of motion, such as *going*, *coming*, *hastening*, and *rising*. Charles Hambrick-Stowe argued that the Pilgrimage was "[t]he principal metaphor running through Puritan spirituality and devotional practice" with which they made sense of their personal, collective, secular, and spiritual lives (54). Dane directly references this idea when he states: "I would goe and work Jurney work thorow all the Counties in ingland, and so walk as a pilgrim up and doune on the earth" (10).[24] Perkins summarizes the Pilgrimage as follows:

> [W]e are alway [sic] in a fleeting and transitorie state. For we are […] but strangers and Pilgrimes, that wander to and fro in the earth, as in a strange countrey, and still are making forward to our owne home. *We haue here no abiding citie*. The houses wherein we dwell, are but Innes, in which we sojourne for a time: yea the bodies which we haue, are but [t]ents and [t]abernacles, always [sic] readie to be shifted, and our selues to be translated into another place (142).

As in Perkins' "fleeting state," Dane's narrative is driven by his "Restles condishon" (10), as he is constantly "translated into another place." In his cyclical "Journey" (8) he moves "to and fro," from his home in Bishop's Stortford to Berkhampstead to Hertford to Charleston, back to Hertford and then back home; he goes from his house to "an inn for…lodging" (8), to living at his "masters house" (9) and then back home; he wanders from his home to "toune[s]" (8) through a "meadow side," "an orchard," "an arbor," through "a wood" (9) back home. The

[24] Dane's use of "up and doune" resonates with Perkins's "to and fro," emphasizing the shifting back and forth movement. As Hambrick-Stowe has shown quoting from Winthrop's Diary, this "seemingly offhand phrase, 'up and down' [...] was habitually connected in the seventeenth-century English mind with life as pilgrimage" and it "apparently was a traditional folk image that continued to find currency among Puritans" (66-67). Gary L. Ebersole similarly highlights this phrase in Thomas Shepard's diary and Mary Rowlandson's captivity narrative (58-59).

further he moves away from home, the more he loses himself in the midst of corruption and desperation. Yet, with each negative encounter, he quickly pulls back and tries to return to a safe space. When he felt enticed by "a mayd" he spent time with in his "shopbord," he "went out;" when he was asked to "drink a pot" with his "ostis [i.e. hostess] […] in her naked shift," he "hastend awaie to [his] Chamber" (8); when he was stung by a "fly, wasp, or hornet," he "went up to a hous" and then "hastend home to the Chamber […] at [his] masters house" (9), and when he was in a "forlorne condishon" and "at a sore lose," he "had sum thouts to goe first home to [his] fathers house" (10). Throughout his journey, Dane thus moves more backward than forward and in his fear that he is not "in [his] waie" (9), he desperately tries to find the right path that will lead him back home.[25]

Dane, like Perkins, complicates the notion of home as his story presents layers and layers of homes that he longs for. All of these homes conflate different types of space and time and hence increase the feeling of meandering that Dane and his modern readers experience. First, as mentioned above, Dane aligns home with Paradise as he follows the pilgrim's quest for assurance. Consequently, home spatially exists in this world and in the next, and temporally home rests in Dane's past, present, and future. Second, when considering that Dane is both protagonist and author of his narrative, home is associated with different pasts. Writing in the 1670s, he recalls his childhood and youth and remembers the loved ones he lost. As protagonist in the 1630s, he similarly longs for his childhood and even for his time in the womb. By participating in the larger discourse of England's declension, however, he also looks back to a past before his time when England had still, as Bradford stated, been "ye first of nations whom ye Lord adorned with [ye lighte of ye gospell]"[26] (1) and looks to New England, where he hopes this golden age can be revived in the future. As a result, Dane becomes a Janus-faced character that simultaneously yearns for past and future: He longs for a pre-lapsarian Paradise as well as one in his future, he looks to England's past and its revival in New England, and he contemplates his childhood at home and his adulthood in New England. In Dane's narrative, nostalgia is above all characterized by the dissolution of spatial and temporal boundaries, and even though Dane is consistently moving, he seems trapped in a feeling of in-between-ness that he cannot escape.

This uncertainty is manifested in Dane's unsettling doubt as he struggles to reconcile his longing to find peace and stability with ministers' assertions that Paradise and rest can never be found on this earth and in this life. By believing that a return to a pious earthly home, be it his home in Bishop's Stortford or New England, could bring spiritual growth and hopefully assurance, Dane reevaluates the significance of the earthly home and attempts to render his human quest much less futile than Perkins and other theologians would have it. This can be

[25] Cf. Proverbs 4:14-15: "enter not into the way of the wicked, and walk not in the way of evil men" (*Geneva Bible*).

[26] y = letter for Thorn; read as *th*. y^e = the.

seen in Dane's use of motion verbs. Dane writes: "I thout that the temptations thare ware two great for me. I then bent myself to cum to nu ingland, thinking that I should be more fre here then thare from temptations; but I find here a deuell to tempt, and a corupt hart to deseue" (12). He then suddenly interrupts himself: "But to Return to the way and manner of my *cuming*" (12, emphasis added). By switching from *going to*—the verb which dominated the storyline—to a *coming*, Dane signals a new directionality of his Pilgrimage. Whereas *going* does not necessarily require a direction, meaning—as the OED states—"to move or travel from one place to another," *coming* needs a destination as it means "to move to or towards a person or place" ("go," "come," [Oxford Learner's Dictionaries]). Hence, once Dane forsakes England, he does not *go* to New England but *comes* to New England and appears to leave his directionless wandering behind. Dane thus hoped that by migrating to New England he could end his "Restles condition."

However, Dane does not find rest in New England but rather seems to discover that Perkins's "fleeting" and "transitorie" state cannot be overcome. This becomes clear when reconsidering the deictic expressions in Dane's former quote. Having consistently written from the perspective of England, England was *here* and New England was *there*. Yet he states: "[T]hare was a great cuming to nu ingland; and I thout that the temptations *thare* ware two great for me. I then bent myself to cum to nu ingland, thinking that I should be more fre *here* then *thare* from temptations; but I find *here* a deuell to tempt, and a corupt hart to deseue" (12, emphasis added). Dane suddenly removes himself as the deictic center, now speaking from the vantage point of New England. Dane switches *here* and *there*, making it difficult for the readers to pin down where Dane locates sin and temptation. Is Dane "more fre" in England or New England? Is the "deuell" in England or New England? It seems that at this point, Dane the author and Dane the protagonist meet 'halfway' in time and space when he decides to leave England. Dane's past and future selves seem to discuss whether it is actually possible to tie corruption, temptation, and sin to geographical space and whether migration could truly free him. If the whole passage is read as being spoken from the perspective of New England, then this quote is wrought with regret, as Dane realizes that in New England he "find[s] *here* a deuell to tempt, and a corupt hart to deseue" (12). In this case, Dane experiences deep remorse when he sees that he cannot escape corruption by migration, and he is troubled by the nagging feeling that it was human pride that led him to believe he could find Paradise on earth. Patricia Caldwell finds the same theme in the conversion narratives of Thomas Shepard's congregation and argues that these relations were characterized above all by "discontent […] a kind of grim, gray disappointment," (31) and an "unfulfilled desire to 'find feelings,' which cannot be 'labored' for" (33). Thus, Dane, like other settlers, felt that even though he deserted a corrupting space, he nevertheless carried along his body, his "corrupt hart." Dane is consequently forced to shift his gaze from the outside to his inside.

Dane's quest to return home and find assurance shows that the Pilgrimage is inherently nostalgic, as Puritans attempt to recover a lost state of security, love, and safety. Wandering

and searching for this place is simultaneously a movement of the body, heart, and mind. Yet throughout this search, it can never be located: *where* and *when* is this lost state? Can it be found in this world or the next? Can it be found in England or New England? Is it inside or outside oneself? It is this failure to pin down longing and yearning that characterizes Puritan nostalgia and tinges Dane's narrative more bitter than sweet. In the next chapter, I show how notions of the body, heart, and emotions tie conversion and Pilgrimage together.

Reinstating a Functioning Body: John Dane's Reconciliation

As Dane moves his view toward himself, his body, heart and his emotions—locating the temptation within the self rather than outside—he seems forced to agree with Perkins again, who argued that "the bodies which we haue, are but [t]ents and [t]abernacles, alway [sic] readie to be shifted." Just like these tents were unsteady and easily moved, so was the human heart perceived as inconstant, fickle, and easily swayed towards or away from objects. Puritan ministers and physicians, for example, argued that "passions and sense" were "like two naughtie servants, who oft-times beare more love one to an other, than they are obedient to their Maister" (Wright 8). The use of the word "passions," from Latin "*passionem* (nominative passio)" emphasized that humans were thought to be "suffering" or "enduring" their emotions ("passion" [Online Etymology Dictionary]). Fenner believed "a man is moved by his affections," which are" the forcible and sensible motions of the heart." Humans' "souls" were "draw[n] […] as [if] [...] in a Coach" (3). Movement, an almost brutal pulling and pushing, was therefore inherent in the early modern concept of emotions. Indeed, just as Perkins uses passive tense when he writes "the bodies which we haue,…alway [sic] readie to be shifted, and our selues to be translated into another place," so is Dane involuntarily "Restles." His heart acts independently of his will and moves him to actions he has to willfully resist. Dane describes his heart as "Retched" (9) and "corupt" with the power to "deseue" him (12). In line with Hooker's claim that "the spirit of the divell [...] speakes by their tongues, and workes by their hands, and thinks, and desires by their minds, and walkes by their feet," Dane's body seems out of control, and he *is* moved—almost like a puppet (Hooker, *The Soules Humiliation* 36). Power, authority, and government were required to keep the heart on the right path and resist its temptation. By emphasizing the agency of the heart, Dane closely ties conversion and Pilgrimage together as a movement of different agents—body and mind—against one another and refers to the medical discourse of his time.

Even though the heart was thought to be deceptive and seductive—producing emotions that led humans away from God—Puritans nevertheless asserted that once governed and reformed, the heart and its feelings could embrace God's commandments. Hooker, for example, argues: "[T]here is in every mans [sic] heart naturally such corrupt carnall pleading [...] that it may not come home to the heart" (*The Soules Preparation* 27). In other words, to find assurance, God's word had to "be brought home unto the heart" (85). Thus, Puritans

intimately linked *home* and *heart,* and Dane points to this when he states that the feelings he experienced "knoct home on [his] hart" (9). Ministers used this association when they explained conversion: The heart was described as Christ's home, and only when he settled in this home was assurance won. However, if humans were to receive Christ, they needed to "prepare [a] roome for him [...] by cleansing," and only then they "may expect Gods comming into [their] houses" (Hooker, *The Danger* 16-17). To purify these inner homes, hearts had to be "emptied" and "purged" of their corrupted passions and worldly affections and instead be filled with nothing but love and fear of God. As a result, nostalgia for the home is also a yearning to reconcile hearts and minds, to come to an understanding with feelings, longings, ambitions, and fears.

By merging the Pilgrimage motif with the notion of embodiment and emotions, Dane follows the narrative and symbolism of the parable of the Prodigal Son. The Prodigal Son left home and spent all his fortune on 'wickedness.' Soon he found himself without money and almost starved. Similarly, Dane's passions hungered after worldly delights and his inner pride drove him to desert his family to indulge in the sweetness of the carnal world, chasing his "fortin," "dansing" (9), and drinking. Even though Dane never physically starved for food, he nevertheless craved nourishment. While the Prodigal Son is humbled by his experience of starvation, Dane painfully learns the truth of his mother's exhortation "goe whare you will, god he will find you out," as he is stung by a "fly, wasp or hornet" (8). This godly judgment reveals what lay hidden underneath skin, muscle, and flesh as Dane's corruption of the heart is inverted and manifests in a "payne and swelling [...] up to [the] shoulder" (9). Only now that he has been turned inside-out and his vileness was made visible to the human eye, Dane realizes that his heart had led him astray, chasing the wrong objects. What he thought would satisfy his craving turned out to be unpalatable and indigestible. Only through God's affliction can Dane *feel* his utter dependence on God's grace and he sincerely longs to embrace Christ. "[F]aith beginnes to breede in the heart," Perkins argues, "[w]hen he [...] withall hungers and thirsts after Christ" (61). Consequently, only once Dane renounced his desire for the world and emptied himself, his "hart turnes it selfe vnto" God (Perkins 52). Thus, a movement of turning towards the inside and then toward God defines the conversion experience. Only once Dane's heart was bent the right way, was he able to return home.

Dane's successful conversion and reintegration into the "companie with the choises Christions" (10) can be seen in his "[c]hange of the minde and [...] in affection, life, and conuersation" (Perkins 62). Like the Prodigal Son, who begged his father to accept him back home as a servant, Dane also returns truly humbled with a change of heart, and his community greets him with forgiveness as his "fatther and mother entertained [him] ueary louingly, and all the naighbors" (10). Dane's sincere tears for sin washed away the corruption that had accumulated on his heart and his reformation is visible in heightened spiritual emotions. Now, his heart has become pliable to godly "imppreshon[s]," and all other senses work as God had intended them to. Finally, his ears hear and understand sermons, his eyes see sin, and his

heart produces appropriate feelings: "[W]hen I herd anie Red a chapter [of the bible] that thare was anie of the promises in, my tares would Run doune my Chekes" (10). Now that Dane had fully emptied himself, he reverted to a being that only feels, "not knowing no more then [sic] the child in the womb" (12). Now, like involuntary bodily reactions, Dane can not refrain from fellow-feeling. When he sees his mistress Barrington cry because she witnessed a "cumpanie" that "was shewing trickes," he writes: "It toke sutch an imppreshon of my harte as that […] I could scarse here music nor se wantonnes, […] that I was able to show my face without sheding of tares" (13). Dane's successful conversion is indicated as he overcomes his former estrangement from his community and rekindles his love for family and God. Even though he still remains on this earth, he no longer feels like a "stranger [...] in a strange countrey," and Dane uses the same term when describing the feeling of comfort that he experienced listening to minister Faircloth's sermon, writing: "The words of m' fare Clothes text was thease: Ye that ware alents [i.e. aliens] and strangers from the commonwealth of isrell hath he Reconsild to himself" (10). As bodies, minds, and hearts have once again been brought in sync and no longer move against one another, Dane appears to have finally arrived.

Conclusion: A New Israel (?)

Hidden beneath the elaborate conventions of the conversion and Pilgrimage narrative, biblical references, symbolism, and formulaic writing, John Dane's narrative captured the feeling of an entire community: Nostalgia. Puritans were certain that underneath layers and layers of time there was beauty, perfection, and purity, and a yearning to recover this lost state lay at the heart of this emotional community. More than anything else, it was the Great Migration that exposed this longing to *re*build a lost golden age, to once again *re*turn home to God's house and *re*unite with the first love. Individuals like Dane followed this logic and feeling to make sense of their lives, as did public persons like William Bradford, Thomas Hooker, John Winthrop or John Cotton, when they justified their migration. In their personal, as in their collective lives, they sought "to recover their primitive affection," and "that estate which [they] loste" (Winthrop, Experiencia 166). All of them, as Lois Whitney said poignantly, "walked with face[s] turned backward," as they attempted to create new selves and new societies (qtd. in Bozeman 19). Dane's story vividly captured the ambiguity of nostalgia: While indulging in memories of the past provides a soothing comfort, the grim realization that it will remain forever lost is crushing. Thus, while Dane's pre-migration experience still capitalizes on the hope that reuniting with his family could bring closure, his post-migration experience is wrought with doubt. Like thousands of other settlers, Dane was never able to put a stop to his "walking" (12). Once he arrived in New England, he found himself in a country where "thare was no path but what the ingens [i.e. Indians] had made" (12), and "it was a place that was not mutch walkt in" (13). Paths first had to be formed; there was no Christian example to follow, and thus the settlers were forced to carve out their own ways, seeking to once again uncover the path that God had laid out for them.

Even though Dane left England to escape corruption, he was soon "trubled" by "the dealings of other men." Exhausted, he writes that his "[m]anie trobles" were even "two teadus to menshon." Furthermore, he still "found in [his] hart that [he] could not sarue god as [he] should" (12). Thus, Dane felt a sense of remorse when thinking about the English home he had deserted. Many other settlers felt similarly, like John Pond who wrote to his father William in 1630 that "the country is not so as we did expect it" (65). Nostalgia cannot be quenched in New England and in Dane's post-migration life. Rather, the conversion cycle begins again and time seems to repeat itself as Dane relives former experiences: In the past, God had answered his family's prayers by revealing money hidden in the dirt; now, in New England, God sent a flock of geese when Dane's family had been going hungry. When he was young, Dane deserted his home and was left vulnerable; now God burnt down his house, removing his shelter. Hence, just like nostalgia can never be satisfied and resolved, Dane leaves his narrative open-ended, and he, as Caldwell found with the Shepard confessions, "either will not or cannot end the story" (34). Thus, Dane, like other New Englanders, seems to remain trapped in the fleetingness and intangibility of nostalgic yearning.

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