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Dancing Along the Tightrope of Leisure: Puritans and Dance in Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts

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*Dancing Along the Tightrope of Leisure: Puritans and Dance in Seventeenth-Century
Massachusetts*

BY

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**Bachelor of Arts in History
Gonzaga University, 2010**

THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

**Master of Arts
Theatre & Dance**

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Dedication

I first dedicate this Thesis to all of those who love learning for learning's sake.

In doing so I also dedicate it to my parents who taught me to love learning and who made this thesis possible through their constant support and encouragement in all of my endeavors, through their constant confidence in all I do, and through their willingness and ability to read and edit my writing at a moment's notice.

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M.A., Theatre & Dance, University of New Mexico, 2012

Abstract

A more holistic view of the Puritans in seventeenth-century Massachusetts can be reached by looking at their complex relationship with leisure and its manifestation both in their dance practice and attitudes towards dance. This thesis takes a multi-disciplinary approach in bringing to light this understanding, consisting of research into a variety of fields including music, English history, Colonial American history, social dance studies, and theology. Chapter I lays out the theological and historical heritage of the Non-separatist Puritans who sailed to Massachusetts with John Winthrop in 1630. Chapter II progresses through a detailed exploration of Puritan dance examples and analyses from England and New England. Chapter III provides a thorough explication of the first argument in Increase Mather's 1685 tract, *An Arrow against Profane and Promiscuous Dancing Drawn Out of the Quiver of Scripture*. From this research the following conclusions can be drawn: the Puritans did dance, both in England and Massachusetts, and the stereotype of Puritans who condemned dance was the result of the Puritan's complex attitudes towards leisure which they saw as an acceptable pursuit, but only when practiced in an orderly manner.

Table of Contents

<u>Introduction & Review of Literature</u>	1
The Stereotype of “The Puritan”	1
Breaking the Stereotype: A Roadmap	2
Placing Puritan Dance in Historical & Scholarly Context	4
<u>Chapter I. Who Are These Puritans?</u>	10
The Puritan Spiritual and Theological Heritage	10
Some Historical Context	16
<u>Chapter II. Enter: The Dance.</u>	23
A Rich Heritage: Dance in England	23
The Dances	30
Dance Comes to Massachusetts	42
<u>Chapter III. A New Look at the Arrow From Increase Mather</u>	50
The Boston Situation	50
The Arrow Aimed at Dancing	52
<u>Conclusion: The End of the Beginning</u>	65
<u>Bibliography</u>	69

Introduction & Review of Literature

The Stereotype of “The Puritan”

A man’s stern and resolute eyes confront the world from under a dark, wide-brimmed hat. Adorned only with a polished buckle, this felt hat covers a staunch head of cropped hair which dankly falls just above the man’s shoulders. His thin lips, surrounded by a trim beard and mustache, are untouched by both liquor and laughter as they grimace above a white ruff, the only bright color and ornamentation on the man’s person. The rest of his clothing, from his doublet, breeches, and stockings, on down to his heeled shoes, is somber in both color and quality. This man, with his mind turned constantly to the Lord and his actions turned constantly to work, is the stereotypical American Puritan.

When asked what comes to mind upon hearing the word “Puritan”, a college classroom full of theater history students burst out with “religious”, “no fun”, “teetotalers”, “they don’t like sex”, “New England”, “Thanksgiving” and “Mayflower”.¹ While some of these terms are not wholly accurate, they do seem representative of the popular conception of the colonial Puritan.² One thing which is not even remotely implied in this concept of the Puritan is an image of an actual human being. A person who did pray, and was taken up with a stirring passion for God, but who also enjoyed the fruits of leisure and recreation. A growing body of literature exists on the Puritans as

¹ This was a representative sampling from an informal poll I took of nearly forty Theatre History II students at the beginning of a lecture on Puritans and dance at the University of New Mexico on Tuesday January 31st, 2012.

² Puritans were neither opposed to liquor in moderation nor were they against sex: “Contemporary Historians have developed a view of Puritanism that is in opposition to this popularly held view. According to them, Puritans enjoyed sex, beer, and time free from work.” (Daniels xii). For further information on the Puritans and sex see John D’Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman’s *Intimate Matters*, particularly Chapter 1, p.5-6. Orin Linde’s thesis “The Puritan Concept of the Body”, and L. Ryken’s article “Were the Puritans Right About Sex?”.

people who needed and enjoyed the lighter things in life, but one area which invites further study is the Puritans' views on, and experience of, dance.

Breaking the Stereotype: A Roadmap

In looking at the Puritans' practice of dance and their theological attitudes towards that practice, we gain a truer understanding of the Puritans not only as a historical people, but as some of the first Americans; a relatable group of frontiersmen and women who helped to found the social, political, religious, and economic world in which we now live. In order to form this picture I plan to use a varied approach, first by looking at the theological and historical background of the Puritans, and the way this relates to their migration to North America and formation of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Second, I look at examples of individual Puritans dancing both in England and New England, and closely examine the particular dances they performed, along with the settings of these performances. Third, and last, I examine the most commonly cited anti-dance tract of the seventeenth century, Increase Mather's *An Arrow against Profane and Promiscuous Dancing Drawn out of the Quiver of Scriptures*, in light of Puritan dance practice and more general dance history.

The common thread that connects these seemingly disparate approaches is the Puritans' attitudes toward leisure and the premium they place on order and control in pursuance of leisure activities. Bruce C. Daniels puts forward the idea that the Puritans had an ambivalent attitude towards leisure activities which stemmed from a lack of clear direction from their spiritual leaders (Daniels xi-xii). I do not disagree with this interpretation, but when applied to dance specifically, Puritan attitudes seem to vacillate less because of ambivalence than because of the particular circumstances in which they

occur, always returning to the theme of orderly leisure. In the more controlled setting of England, dance seemed to be more unquestioningly integrated into Puritan education and social life, where in the untamed Massachusetts Bay Colony, surrounded by the unknown and unencompassed by tradition, dance became the object of moral concern and debate. Even in England, and in the specific dances practiced by the Puritans there, a different attitude predominates towards those accepted in the controlled and orderly setting of higher society, and those of the lower classes in the countryside.

Besides demonstrating the theme of orderly leisure, juxtaposing these three approaches also allows me to extrapolate evidence and support of dance that would not have been evident from a more orthodox research approach. While some well-known and oft-cited Puritan remonstrations against dance were written from the 1680s on, only a few passing remarks either for or against dance have been recorded from the earlier years of settlement between 1631 and the 1680s. The very presence of this later anti-dance literature, however, indicates some sort of dance was being done in seventeenth-century New England. My challenge is in discovering what this dance was and incorporating it into a holistic image of the Puritans. Dance is an ephemeral subject of study as, at its most fundamental level, dancing consists of a series of movements that take up time and space; requiring nothing more than a single person's mind and body as the instruments of creation. I have turned to the theoretical work of Diana Taylor to aid in uncovering what the Puritans were dancing and how this fit into their social world in seventeenth-century Massachusetts.

In her book, *The Archive and Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*, Diana Taylor discusses the concepts of archival material, those physical

artifacts left to us from history which include architecture, literary documents, and material objects, and the concept of interpreting repertoire, the way individuals and groups acted and interacted, from these materials. In the case of Puritan dance in the seventeenth century, I am indebted to this method in deducing dance practice in Massachusetts, from literary evidence both in England and New England. I particularly rely on Taylor's theoretical approach in the latter part of my Chapter II where I explore Puritan dance in New England through the record of court cases and prevalence of musical instruments, and in Chapter III in my explication of Increase Mather's *Arrow against Profane and Promiscuous Dancing*.

Placing Puritan Dance in Historical & Scholarly Context

As a result of the here-now-gone-later nature of dance, research into its history has not developed at the same pace as that of music and theatre with their artifacts of written notation and scripts. Perhaps compounding the effects of its ephemeral nature, dance has existed in a liminal social space throughout western history. Dance was often only accepted and practiced by a certain segment of the population, and this positive or at least neutral reception was offset by another group's negative or dissonant attitude towards dance. In Ancient Greece many citizens participated in the dances of the chorus or the Dionysian rights, but in his ideal Republic, Plato excluded dance. In Imperial Rome both the ruling class and the masses flocked to circuses filled with exotic dancers, but performing professionally as a dancer was equated with prostitution. Courtly dancing and manners grew from High Medieval European society which witnessed the rise of courtly dance within the culture of courtly love, but these same Europeans also experienced the horrors of the frenzied dances of death. In each of these cases dance, in

some form, was practiced or enjoyed by mainstream society but always with a significant caveat from some other source; however, in each of these cases, dance is just as persistent as the other arts in acting as an expression of each society's character. This was still the case in the early days of American colonization by the British. Dance enjoyed a widespread popularity with the English masses and court, but was also the subject of particular reserve in the eyes of the more religiously conservative, including those who would come to be known as the Puritans.

The term Puritan is an elusive one (Miller 1-5). It can be applied to a number of different groups and its meaning is varied and has changed throughout history. In this paper I mean by the term Puritan those who were proponents and practitioners of Calvinistic congregationalism, especially (but not exclusively) those who came to New England in search of religious reform.³ The modern stereotype of the Puritan with which I opened this paper is a modern misconception which, in part, grew from anti-Puritan literature of the seventeenth century and, more recently, from the appropriation of the word Puritan by the anti-prohibition movement in the 1920s (Nevell 29, Miller 2). In their own time, the Puritans were also the subject of rhetorical and literary attack from other religious denominations as well as political opponents (Arber).⁴ Their negative descriptions of the Puritans were compounded by the liquor abolitionists of the 20th century who used puritan as a derogatory term for the teetotalers and spun them as ultra-conservative kill-joys. In doing so, the idea of the Puritans as dour, no-nonsense,

³ For a more in-depth explanation of the need for and substance of this definition please see Hans-Peter Wagner's thesis: *Puritan Attitudes Towards Recreation in Early Seventeenth-Century New England: With Particular Consideration of Physical Recreation*, p, 1-2.

⁴ Even in their own time, the Puritans as a group were subject to slander, disparagement, and misrepresentation. For more on this see the volume *The Story of the Pilgrim Fathers, 1606-1623 AD: As Told by Themselves, Their Friends, and Their Enemies* edited by Edward Arber.

religiously extreme, workaholics was embedded in the popular American psyche. There it has stayed and served near-mythological purposes as American society increasingly places a premium on productivity in our consumer-based society and economy.

While these stereotypical views may be prevalent in popular culture, in recent decades the scholarly community has made inroads into the plethora of early Puritan literature and unearthed a people who not only worked diligently and prayed constantly, but also enjoyed a glass of wine (in moderation) and even a lively game or hunting trip.⁵ I hope to add to this more comprehensive view of such a courageous and determined group by delving into their lives and literature to look at the way they danced. In all of my research only a small number of sources specifically treat the Puritans and dance in New England at any length, namely the honor's thesis of Cathy Velenchik titled "Dance in Colonial Massachusetts: The First Hundred Years" and the master's thesis of Joan English entitled "Dance in Seventeenth Century Massachusetts with Particular Reference to Indian, Puritan and Anglican Cultures".⁶ While I, like these authors, am taking dance as my main focus in the lives of the Puritan colonists to Massachusetts, I hope to bridge

⁵ In Daniels 225-6 (end-notes): "See, among others, the major revisionist histories of Puritanism by Perry Miller, *The New England Mind in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1939); Samuel Eliot Morison, *Builders of the Bay Colony* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1930); and Edmund Morgan, *The Puritan Family: Religion and Domestic Relations in Seventeenth-Century New England* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966). Many recent general interpretations of Puritanism disagree with important aspects of the Miller/Morison view but still agree with the conclusion that Puritans were not ascetic prudes. See, for example, the following diverse analyses: Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad* (Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978); Francis Bremer, *The Puritan Experiment: New England Society from Bradford to Edwards* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976). See also the following recent discussions of Miller's work: Francis Butts, 'Norman Fiering and the Revision of Perry Miller', *Canadian Review of American Studies*, 17 (1986), pp. 1-25; and Bruce Tucker, 'Early American Intellectual History after Perry Miller', *Canadian Review of American Studies*, 13 (1982), 145-57."

⁶ While I was unable to gain access to Velenchik's writing, I was able to obtain a copy of her bibliography to which I am indebted, and for which I heartily thank the Mount Holyoke College Archives and Special Collections for granting me access.

the disciplines of dance studies and history by using the specific lens of dance as part of orderly leisure to show a clearer historical image of the Puritans in early Massachusetts.

With scholarship specifically dedicated to the relationship of Puritans and dance fairly sparse, I've found focusing on their theological and practical relationship with leisure and the ensuing interactions with theater and music fruitful avenues of exploration. Often the Puritan thought process regarding theatre extends to concert-dance, and frequently music and dance (particularly informal occurrences) are found in the same settings being enjoyed (or not) by the same people. My greatest challenge has been to find primary sources describing or depicting actual examples of Puritans dancing in New England. From research into secondary sources, mainly Kate Van Winkle Keller's *Dance and It's Music in America*, Bruce D. Daniel's *Puritans at Play: Leisure and Recreation in Colonial New England*, and Percy A. Scholes' *The Puritan and Music in England and New England: A Contribution to the Cultural History of Two Nations*, I have been able to deduce much from the second-hand accounts, court cases, and anecdotes related therein. From their lead, I have been able to pursue some primary materials, namely the *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay 1628-1686*, the journal and papers of John Winthrop, and a sparse assortment of diaries and journals. All of these provide both introduction and framework to my in-depth treatment of one of the seminal Puritan writings on dance: Increase Mather's tract *An Arrow against Profane and Promiscuous Dancing Drawn out of the Quiver of Scriptures*.⁷

⁷ Many of these texts, while fruitful in my research, call for further examination and analysis than was warranted within the scope of this Master's Thesis. I hope to continue my inquiry into these texts, as enumerated in my conclusion, beyond my research here with a detailed and systematic search of many early governing records as well as personal diary and journal literature.

Increase Mather was one of the most influential Puritan ministers of New England. He was a second-generation Massachusetts colonist, the son of first-generation colonist and Puritan divine, Richard Mather. Increase Mather's 1685 tract, *An Arrow against Profane and Promiscuous Dancing Drawn out of the Quiver of Scriptures* is one of the most-cited examples of Puritan attacks on mixed dancing, or men and women dancing together. Both Increase Mather and his son, Cotton Mather, wrote against the evils of mixed dances, but both have been the focus of scholarly interest more for their contributions to the ordering of the Puritan community in Boston in the latter part of the seventeenth century, along with ecclesiastical literature of seventeenth century New England. Looking at Increase Mather's writing on dance in the context of the Puritans' practical dance experience over the course of the seventeenth century not only gives a clearer understanding of that text and the context in which it was written, but confirms the Puritan need for order and control in leisure and recreation.

In short, what I will lay out in the following chapters is not a series of heretofore unknown examples of Puritan dance. Rather, I intend to present recognizable examples of Puritans dancing from a fresh perspective. In Chapter I, I will lay out the roots of Puritan theology which inform the Puritan attitudes towards leisure, and why the idea of orderly leisure becomes such a significant lens through which to interpret Puritan dance. From there, I will place the Puritans in the context of seventeenth-century migration to the New World and the ramifications of their arrival in North America upon their social structures and traditions. In Chapter II I will begin a thorough examination of Puritan dance in England in the first half of the seventeenth century, particularly noting the controlled circumstances and purposes of these examples. I will then focus on

interpretation and description of particular dances which were prevalent in these circumstances and the conclusions which can be drawn from their popularity. In the second section of this chapter I will turn to the archival evidence of dance in seventeenth-century New England and the attitudes and practices which they indicate. In Chapter III I will undertake an explication of Increase Mather's *An Arrow against Profane and Promiscuous Dancing Drawn out of the Quiver of Scriptures*. I will place his arguments and examples against mixed dancing in the context of seventeenth-century dance and show how his writing informs the Puritan need for orderly leisure.

Chapter I. Who Are These Puritans?

The Puritan Spiritual and Theological Heritage

To understand the Puritans' reaction to anything, but particularly leisure and dance, it is imperative to have an understanding of their theological heritage. For the good Puritan, religion was the motivation for both major and minor life decisions. Understanding the particular tenets of the Puritans' faith is therefore necessary to a comprehensive understanding of their attitudes towards dance. Their beliefs in returning Christianity to the foundation of scripture, in the sanctity of the individual soul, in predetermination, and vocation were all instrumental in creating a people who took their lives and work very seriously and therefore placed leisure in a narrowly defined theological space.

While the Puritans were historically a sect within the Church of England, their theological heritage sprang from French Calvinism, one of many branches which grew out of the Protestant Reformation. Where the Anglican faith was effectively a deviant form of Roman Catholicism, the Calvinist tradition was one of Spartan spirituality, more antagonistic towards the pomp and ceremony of Catholicism than even the Lutheran tradition which initiated the break with Rome.⁸ Unlike the Anglican reformers, and the later Catholic counter-reformers, sects in the Calvinist tradition were significantly

⁸ The Anglican Church was founded in 1538 by King Henry VIII of England. Rather than the theological and political differences which initiated the Lutheran branch of the Reformation in 1517, Anglicanism was born of King Henry's personal and political differences with the Pope over his marriage to, and desire for divorce and annulment from, Catherine De Aragon. Because this split from Rome was not the result of ideological differences, there was very little change in both theology and hierarchical structure when the Catholic Church in England became simply the Church of England. The only substantial difference was that the King became head of the Church and thus religion and civic life became tied up together. For further information on the roots of Puritan theology and ideology see Percy Scholes' "Brief Preliminary Sketch of the History of Protestantism and Puritanism" in *The Puritans and Music in England and New England*.

interested in doing away with the trappings of the world and subjecting the spirit to God alone.

John Calvin (1509-64) was an early French Protestant, and strong theological leader of the Reformation who moved to the more congenially Protestant Geneva, Switzerland and founded what is known as Calvinism. One of the main tenets of Calvinism is predestination, in brief: the belief that, at birth, every man is born into sin, and God, by his divine grace and mercy, has granted salvation to a finite number preselected of souls. These souls, who God chose before their birth, were known as the Elect. Calvinists knew the Elect existed, but no individual was aware of their own status, whether God had or had not chosen them, until after their death. While Calvin's teachings on predestination were not unique to his own branch of Protestantism, his support of a congregational system of Church organization was radical.

Where Lutheranism and Anglicanism focused on moral and some theological reforms, both retaining the traditional church structures and doctrines which had developed over the preceding fifteen centuries, John Calvin "may be said to have started again from the beginning and [from there] built up a system of Church government based on his interpretation of the Scriptures, without regard to customs which had grown up during later centuries" (Scholes xvii). By the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the rigid hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church was so widespread it had become ingrained in the European socio-political mind and experience. Early Christian communities from the first centuries A.D. had been structured more loosely, and because they were often smaller and beset by persecution, they seemed to retain a more lively sense of spiritual communion. John Calvin wanted to return to this foundational stage of religious fervor,

and looked to the Bible as his guide. As a result of his focus on returning to a pre-Rome Christianity, Calvin's theology focused on Biblical interpretation and the importance of the individual soul. Calvin placed primary importance on the individual soul, and, insofar as Church structure, all members were of equal importance.⁹ Because of this focus on individual understanding and salvation, Calvinistic groups eschewed the use of Latin as the language of services in favor of the vernacular, held a personal reading and understanding of Scripture in high regard, and also placed great importance on simplicity and clarity in both worship and everyday life. Within the Church of England, those who were more inclined to these Calvinistic modes of religion wanted to do away with anything resembling Roman Catholicism, including ministerial hierarchy, ornate services, and structures. These people became known as the Puritans because they wanted to purify the English Church.

Another tenet fundamental to Calvinism in general, and Puritanism especially, was the inherently evil nature of the temporal world. Just as each individual was responsible for their understanding and enacting of God's will, so too, each individual had to come to terms with living in a sin-filled world, which they knew would never be redeemed. This tenet posed Puritans with a cosmic dilemma: to live in the world without becoming of the world. Edmund Morgan illustrates this tension through beautiful language in his short work on the life of Puritan leader John Winthrop¹⁰:

Puritanism required that a man devote his life to seeking salvation but told him he was helpless to do anything but evil. Puritanism required that he

⁹ While equality among church members was the rule, this does not mean that ministers were not held in high regard and looked to for spiritual guidance, which was indeed the case in both circumstances.

¹⁰ John Winthrop was a staunch Puritan land-owner and businessman. He was also the leader of the Non-separatist Puritan fleet as it crossed the Atlantic in 1630. Once established in Massachusetts, he remained in different political leadership positions throughout the rest of his life.

rest his whole hope in Christ but taught him that Christ would utterly reject him unless before he was born God had foreordained his salvation. Puritanism required that man refrain from sin but told him he would sin anyhow. Puritanism required that he reform the world in the image of God's holy kingdom but taught him that the evil of the world was incurable and inevitable. Puritanism required that he work to the best of his ability at whatever task was set before him and partake of the good things that God had filled the world with, but told him he must enjoy his work and his pleasures only, as it were, absentmindedly, with his attention fixed on God (Morgan *Dilemma* 5).

In other words, Puritans had to participate fully in the life and experiences God had provided them in a sinful world, but do so in a way that kept their hearts and minds always bent toward God.

This tenet particularly informed the way Puritans viewed the body, work, and recreation. In Orin Linde's thesis, "The Puritan Concept of the Body", he argues "The Puritan thought of the human body as a useful and positive instrument capable of bringing glory to God in their earthly existence" (Linde iv). The body was the same as the mind though, in that so long as the activities one pursued were useful and focused on God, those activities were acceptable within the Puritan theological understanding. A significant part of the positive view Puritans took of the body stemmed from their focus and interpretation of Genesis 1:28, "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." The Puritans saw the first part of this verse as validity for married life as a holy calling, and the whole verse as authority for the idea of vocations, particularly lay-vocations. Calvin was particularly concerned with the idea of the total man: body and spirit, as explained in the early Christian theologian, Augustine's, idea of interdependence. Augustine wrote that the soul needs the body just as the body needs the

soul (Linde 10).¹¹ This idea of vocation, too, was very important to the Puritans. Calvin, in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, wrote “It is to be remarked that the Lord commands every one of us, in all actions of life, to regard his vocation” (649). Thus, the Puritans had a positive concept of the body, but primarily as it tied into the concept of vocation and fulfilling the Lord’s call.

This idea of vocation was the main impetus behind what today we know as the Puritan work ethic (Weber).¹² For the Puritans, vocation was tied up in their belief with predestination. While no one could ever know with certainty whether he or she had been chosen to be one of the Elect to receive God’s mercy and live out eternity in heaven after death, the Puritans believed there were signs of salvation and a progression of grace which could help to indicate the possibility of God’s choice. The ability to find one’s vocation and succeed in his or her calling, whether that meant in an economic, family, social, and/or spiritual sense, was one of these signs. If this success caused a welling up of faith and subsequent urges to act in a godly manner, these were further signs that God may have chosen one for glorification after death. Thus work for the Puritans was far more than a means to economic security or social advancement; it was the outward sign of possible eternal salvation.

¹¹Augustine wrote: “We are to think of the soul as a rider and of the body as his horse. Certainly, they are in one sense separated and - what is more - the “real man” is the soul. Yet viewed in a different aspect the rider would not be a rider without the horse, nor the soul conceivable without its body. One might also regard the body as the “real man” and liken it then to a drinking vessel. This too exists independently of the drink (soul); but it is a drinking vessel only because its ‘raison d’être’ is to be filled with drink. Lastly, one might envisage the human being as body-soul and compare this to a yoke, that is, to a yoke of oxen which consists in two animals and could exist on no other terms” (Lind 10).

¹² While Max Weber explores the effects of Puritanism and Calvinism on the economic world in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, the idea of the Protestant ethic, which we now know as the Protestant or Puritan work ethic that stemmed from Puritan values and their Calvinist base, is also integral to an understanding of the Puritans’ social values and practices, such as I explore in this thesis.

This focus on vocation, while it gave us the Puritan work ethic, also meant recreation for the Puritan had to fulfill one of two aims: it had to refresh the mind and body for work at a later time, or be fruitful in some way for the individual. Recreation was also never supposed to be antagonistic towards scriptural precedent nor take the individual's focus from God. The New England preacher, Benjamin Coleman exemplifies this in the following explanation, building upon the beliefs and sermons of his English predecessors:

We daily need some respite & diversion, without which we dull our Powers, a little intermission sharpens 'em again. It spoils the *Bow* to keep it always bent, and the *Viol* if always strain'd up. Mirth is some loose or relaxation to the labouring Mind of Body, it lifts up the hands that hang down in weariness, and strengthens the feeble knees that cou'd stand no longer to work: it renews our strength, and we resume our labours again with vigour. 'Tis design'd by nature to chear and revive us thro' all the toils and troubles of life, and therefore equally a benefit with the other Rests which Nature has provided for the same end. 'Tis in our present Pilgrimage and Travel of Life refreshing as the *Angels provision for Elijah* in his sore travel (Coleman cited in Miller 392).¹³

John Winthrop, the great lay-Puritan and co-founder of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, also demonstrates the Puritan attitudes towards productive recreation in his internal debate over his own enjoyment of hunting. First of all, he said hunting "toyles a mans bodye overmuch" (Morgan *Dilemma* 6). Rather than replenish his strength for later work, hunting taxed his body. Secondly, it also taxed his mind and spirits as he writes:

For mine owne part I have ever binne crossed in usinge it, for when I have gone about it not without some woundes of conscience, and have taken much paynes and hazarded my healt, I have gotten sometimes a

¹³ In all primary source excerpts and quotes I have retained the original spelling, capitalization, italicization, and punctuation so as to give a sense of time and character to the words of the original speakers and/or authors, as well as to preserve the flow of speech and thought without the constant interruption of [sic]. For clarity's sake, though, I have chosen to both modernize and standardize the use of certain letters, specifically employing the modern use of letters *u* and *v* (which I have switched), *s* and *f*, and *i* and *j* (which I have distinguished from one another).

very little but most commonly nothinge at all towards my cost and laboure (Morgan *Dilemma* 6-7).

And finally, hunting was actually counterproductive from a social and economic perspective in that it was illegal and costly should he be caught (Morgan *Dilemma* 6-7).¹⁴ Winthrop's experiences with hunting exemplify the general Puritan attitudes towards leisure as a result of their belief in predetermination and vocation.

Some Historical Context

With this theological heritage in mind, the Puritan perception of the world and attitudes towards other branches of Christianity becomes clearer. The Puritans in England were in favor of greater reform among the Anglican clergy and church in general. They believed, should the Church of England under the leadership of the King continue on un-purified, God would let loose his wrath upon England. King Charles I's actions in disbanding and refusing to call Parliament for over a decade from 1629-1640, his marriage to the Catholic Henrietta Maria of France, and his own "popish" tendencies served to reinforce this belief in the Puritans' eyes. In particular, Charles' actions against Parliament reinforced this belief. At this point in English political history, many members of Parliament were of Calvinistic heritage and Puritan persuasion. They were educated members of the rising merchant and newly-landed class, and, as evidenced by the popularity of congregationalism among the followers of Calvin's doctrine, sympathetic to a limited monarchy. Therefore, when Charles I refused to call Parliament for 11 years after they limited his abilities to raise money through shipping duties and

¹⁴ The passages cited in Morgan's *The Puritan Dilemma: The Story of John Winthrop*, are taken from various sections of John Winthrop's *The Journal of John Winthrop, 1630-1649*.

other taxation, it was not merely the political body he threatened but a religious one as well.

Thus, compelled by religious fervor and political zest, two distinct groups of Puritans sailed from the Old World to the New: the Separatists and the Non-Separatists. The first to depart were the Separatists of Mayflower and Plymouth Rock fame. This group left England in 1620 under the leadership of William Bradford with the purpose of creating a completely independent Puritan haven. They had witnessed and experienced enough at the hands of impure England, and therefore sought to separate themselves entirely from what they believed was a condemned people and land. While still a relevant group to the history of the English experience in the Americas, the Plymouth Puritans do not exemplify the Puritan theological ideal of mission and redemption, as they sought to separate themselves from the ungodly world, rather than find balance within it. The Puritan's dilemma, as Edmund Morgan explained so beautifully in reference to John Winthrop's life was: "living in this world without taking his mind off God" (Morgan *Dilemma* 6). Because the Separatists do not represent this broad Puritan belief, I have chosen not to focus my attention on their interactions with dance, as it would be less representative of the Puritans as a larger group.

Living in the world without becoming of the world is what the Non-Separatists, the second and more numerous Puritan group to migrate to New England, tried to do. Seven-hundred colonists aboard eleven ships followed John Winthrop across the Atlantic in April of 1630 (Banks 25).¹⁵ These Non-Separatists founded the Massachusetts Bay

¹⁵ In a letter to his wife Winthrop writes that seven-hundred passengers (including men, women, and children) were to depart with him. However about six months after their arrival in Massachusetts, Thomas Dudley wrote a letter back to England which stated not all of these colonists stayed: "Insomuch that th shippes being now uppon their returne, some for England, some for Ireland, there was I take it, partly out of

Company and settled on the Massachusetts coast. Like the Separatists, this second band also came to the Americas for religious reasons. As John Winthrop stated in his sermon aboard the *Arbella* “Thus stands the cause betweene God and us: wee are entered into Covenant with him for this worke; wee have taken out a Commission” (Winthrop *Christian Charity* in Miller and Johnson 198). The Non-separatists’ safe arrival in the New World indicated to them that their covenant was acceptable to God. Unlike the Separatists though, this group of Puritans were not trying to cut themselves off from the sins of England. Rather, they believed their success in crossing the Atlantic indicated that God intended them to survive and placed increased pressure for them to be “as a Citty upon a Hill, [with] the eies of all people” watching them, a pure model of Christian society to act as a beacon to England to aid in her reform (Winthrop *Christian Charity* in Miller and Johnson 199). In doing so, these Puritans hoped to stave off what they believed was the imminent and inevitable doom of their mother country, should she remain unchanged.¹⁶

In order to serve as this beacon, the Non-separatists went about creating the societal structure they wanted to see adopted in England. They formed a congregational-model society under the complete leadership of the church, and lived out their day to day lives with the ultimate goal of fulfilling their covenant with God always in mind

dislike of our government, which restrained and punished their excesses, and partly through fear of famine, (not seeing other means than by their labour to feed themselves) which returned back again. And glad were we to be ridd of them. Others also afterwards hearing of men of their own disposition, which were planted at Piscataway, went from us to them, whereby though our numbers were lessened, yet wee accounted ourselves nothing weakened by their removall” (Young: *Chronicles of Massachusetts* cited in Banks 47).

¹⁶ Winthrop wrote of his concern over England’s fate in a letter to his wife in May of 1629: “I am verily persuaded God will bring some heavye Affliction upon this lande and that speedylie” (Winthrop *Life and Letters*, I, 308, 328 cited in Banks 19).

(Winthrop *Christian Charity* in Miller and Johnson 197).¹⁷ However, regardless of their mission for change, the Puritans were actually the most successful of the British colonies in replicating the English society they had left behind. This is salient because the Non-separatists were still a part of the larger English Puritan community. They hoped to save England from damnation by moving to the New World, but even on the eve of their departure they had their doubts that this was the right course of action. Even after John Winthrop wrote that they have “entered into Covenant with [God] for this worke, [and] have taken out a Commission” he went on to say “Now if the Lord shall please to hear us, and bring us in peace to the place wee desire, then hath hee ratified this Covenant and sealed our Commission” (Winthrop *Christian Charity* in Miller and Johnson 198). Here, even Winthrop the leader of the fleet to Massachusetts, says that the validity and success of their mission to purify England by example was conditional upon God’s acceptance of their plan. However, once the *Arbella* and the first wave of Puritan non-separatists were successful in establishing a community in Massachusetts, more English, Puritan, colonists moved over in droves.¹⁸

Compared to Virginia, the other (and much older) British colony in North America, New England appeared positively “Old World”. In Virginia the majority of colonists were single men under the age of thirty, generally hired out as indentured servants as their means of passage to the New World. The primary economic advancement was through tobacco cultivation, which brought successful planters great

¹⁷ Winthrop wrote in *A Model of Christian Charity*: “for the worke wee have in hand, it is by a mutuall consent through a speciall overruleing providence, and a more then an ordinary approbation of the Churches of Christ to seeke out a place of Cohabitation and Consortshipp under a due forme of Government both civill and ecclesiasticall” (Winthrop in Miller 197)

¹⁸ This movement, from 1630-1640 is often termed the Great Migration and consisted of nearly 20,000 Puritan immigrants to New England. The period of emigration directly correlates to the period during which Charles I disbanded Parliament (which consisted substantially of lay Puritans).

wealth and created a wide disparity in class between land owners and their newly-arrived servants. The lack of healthful climate, demands of plantation servitude, and lack of feminine presence in Virginia also meant there was a combined low birth rate and high mortality rate which kept lasting social networks from growing up as well.¹⁹

The Puritans in Massachusetts (and New England in general) differed from this pattern primarily because of their intentions in immigrating to New England and the resultant demographic and social patterns. As previously explained, the Puritans sailed to Massachusetts not for personal wealth or power, but because they saw it as their spiritual duty and mission to set an example that could potentially save their Mother England from eternal damnation. As a result they came across the Atlantic in family groups, taking their entire livelihoods with them. On the whole they were better educated than their Virginian counterparts and also of a more homogeneous and, on the whole, higher class.²⁰

Four classes of colonists came across in Winthrop's fleet in 1630. These comprised first, those who were able to completely pay for their passage at "the rate of 5 li. a person" (Banks 26). Second, there were artisans and tradesmen who would either receive money or grants of land in exchange for supplying their presence and trade. Thirdly, there were some who partially paid for their crossing and then would "labor at the rate of three shillings a day after arrival in repayment" (Banks 26). Fourth, and finally, there were indentured servants who were bound to work for their masters once

¹⁹ For more information on Virginian life and conditions in the seventeenth century, as well as discussion of the difference between New England and Chesapeake society see Jack P. Greene's book *Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture*.

²⁰ Naturally, as the bulk of those sailing to Virginia were indentured servants. For more see David Cressy's article "The Vast and Furious Ocean: The Passage to Puritan New England" and Edward Banks' research on the composition, logistics, and history of the Winthrop fleet in *The Winthrop Fleet of 1630: An Account of the Vessels, the Voyage, the Passengers, and Their English Homes from Original Authorities*.

they arrived, the latter of who received fifty acres of land in exchange for covering the expense of the servants' travel on the outset.²¹ However, these indentured servants were a far smaller percentage of the total migration to New England than was the case in the Chesapeake.

The Puritan majority, created a cultural hegemony in Massachusetts, primarily through the close ties of religion and politics in the congregational model they erected upon arrival. Additionally, the landscape of New England in this early period was one of rural survival for the Puritan colonists. As Wagner explains "With the exception of Boston - and there urbanization only started in the second half of the seventeenth century - New England during its first century was basically a rural society of small village communities" (Cf. Darret B. Rutman, *American Puritanism: Faith and Practice* p. vi, in Wagner 13). Even those who paid their own passage across were in the same situation as those below them on the social rung: everyone was a farmer, builder, and pioneer in the first decades after 1630 (Wagner 13).

Once they were established in Massachusetts, though, the Puritans did an exceptional job of staying connected to England. The Great Migration which lasted from 1630 to 1640 brought over 20,000 Puritans until the advent of the English Civil War in 1640 which not only decreased the number of colonists to Massachusetts, but also prompted many Puritans to return to England in support of the Parliamentarians. Close contact with England was furthered when the Parliamentarians were successful in 1649. The beheading of Charles I, and the ascension of Oliver Cromwell to power left England,

²¹ This information on the social makeup of the Winthrop colonists, and particularly the direct quote stating the rate per passenger, comes from the Massachusetts Colonial Records, I, 65. New England's Prospect, 42, cited in Banks' *The Winthrop Fleet of 1630*.

and thus her colonies, in the hands of Puritan leadership. This Commonwealth period lasted for eleven years until Charles II came to the throne in 1660 bringing about the Restoration Era. Charles II sought to bring the New England colonies (which by this time also included Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Maine) more directly under his control over the following decades and this trend was also pursued by his brother, and the next King of England: James II. In 1684 the Massachusetts charter was revoked, and while a new one was instated in 1691, the colony was then under the auspices of the crown and the control of a Royal Governor (Keller 300, Marks 2). However, by this point Puritan religion, organization, and precedent were firmly entrenched in Massachusetts. So, over the course of the politically volatile seventeenth century, Massachusetts remained both deeply rooted in its Puritan foundation as well as its English heritage and identity.

The close cultural ties between England and New England meant that the political volatility of the seventeenth century had a significant impact on the Puritan culture and experience in the New World. Primary sources indicate that Puritan attitudes towards and practice of dance reflect this greater socio-political upheaval, especially as New England became more and more saturated with non-Puritan immigrants, and even the progeny of the original Winthrop fleet seemed to slip from their calling. However, the colonists of Massachusetts were still English and inheritors of a rich dance tradition. The volatility in both locations may have caused a hesitant attitude towards dance on the part of some ministers, but the theological background of the English, and New-English Puritans, as we have seen, was not an indomitable obstacle to dancing.

Chapter II. Enter: The Dance

A Rich Heritage: Dance in England

The Puritans of New England did dance, regardless of their thoughts on dance at a theological level, and regardless of what the ministers preached to their congregations. As I argued in Chapter I, the Non-separatists in Massachusetts had created a distinct society in New England, but not one that was devoid of English influence. Despite their focus on creating a model and pure society in New England, the Non-separatists were still inherently English, and effectively transplanted English society to the New World. Percy Scholes, in *The Puritans and Music in England and New England* even makes the case that “Old England and New England Puritanism were not two movements, but one, with constant comings and goings between its two seats” (65). Bearing this in mind, it is reasonable to look at dance trends and Puritan participation in dance activities in England. The Puritans were part of English culture when they set sail for New England, and it is crucial to understand how the English trends and styles may have influenced them both before and during their move to the New World.

For this reason, I will begin this chapter with an examination of a number of English records which demonstrate that Puritan Englishmen did dance. From this evidence I will move on to a deeper investigation of the particular dances they found acceptable, and through this investigation arrive at a more realistic understanding of the relationship between Puritan doctrine and dance. After establishing this relationship I will move my examination to instances of dance in New England and the relationship between the Massachusetts Puritan leaders and dance in their communities. In examining the geographical, historical, and attitudinal shifts in this way, I hope to show that the

Puritans in Massachusetts were not so much against dance as against any form of disorderly leisure. When dance was practiced in privacy and moderation it was not objectionable to the godly Puritan.

To this end, it is worthwhile to consider the example of John Hutchinson.

Colonel John Hutchinson was born in 1615 to Sir Thomas Hutchinson of Owlthorpe Hall and Lady Margaret Byron of Newstead Abbey. Staunch Puritan and quintessential Roundhead soldier, he fought on the side of the Parliamentarians against King Charles I in the English Civil War, and was the thirteenth of thirty-nine commissioners to sign the death warrant of the King (Hutchinson 108-298).²² Before his career in the government and military, young John Hutchinson's father had provided him with the finest teachers in "dancing, fencing, and musician[ship]" and once Hutchinson had his own children he provided them with the same educational opportunities. As his wife Lucy put down in her memoirs of his life, "He spared not any cost for the education of both his sons and his daughters in languages, sciences, music and dancing and all other qualities befitting their father's house" (Hutchinson quoted in Scholes 62). Thus we have an example of a staunch Puritan, who waged war against, and even signed the death warrant on, his King in order to purify his country, and who also actively sought out dance training for his children. While the exact teacher, or teachers, Hutchinson hired is unknown, the styles of dance which both he and his children would have learned can be deduced.

²² Roundhead was the term given to members of the Parliamentary side of the English Civil war. The term came about as a result of the Puritan's practice of cropping their hair short, close to the head. This was in contrast to the long ringlets worn by the more fashionable *Cavaliers*, courtiers on the King's side. Regarding Colonel Hutchinson's strong Puritan bent, Percy Scholes describes him as "a foe to the kindly Arminian doctrine that every man can be saved by faith, and a firm upholder of the stern Calvinistic doctrine that only the Elect of God can reach salvation" (61-2).

Before joining parliament, and taking up arms against his Sovereign, John Hutchinson spent a number of years in education, first at Nottingham Grammar School, Lincoln Grammar School and Peterhouse, Cambridge, and then for a number of years (beginning in 1636) at Lincoln's Inn studying law (Hutchinson 54). This last establishment, Lincoln's Inn, was one of four Inns of Court where future barristers went to study and train in the law, the other three being Inner Temple, Middle Temple, and Gray's Inn.²³ Thanks to the interest and study of James P. Cunningham, B.Com. (Lond.) of the Middle Temple, Barrister-at-Law, there is, as of 1965, a published record of dancing not only taking place but actively encouraged at the Inns. The Inns have existed for over 500 years and for that time have "functioned as professional bodies of lawyers, concerned with the training and discipline of their members" (Cunningham 3). In the seventeenth century, the Inns were also concerned with the training and discipline of their members as gentlemen as well (Cunningham 3). The expectation and "custom" of dancing in the Inns was well established by the late 1400s, and was thus very firmly entrenched in the social order by the 1600s. It was even "accounted a shame for an Innes [sic] of Court man not to have learned to dance, especially the measures" at that time (Brerewood MS).²⁴

²³ By the seventeenth century the Inns had existed as trade-bodies for over 200 years, and were in the process of physically building great complexes including Halls, Chapels, and quarters and offices for over 100 members each. One place to begin a search for more general information on the inns of Court is the Encyclopædia Britannica's website, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/288741/Inns-of-Court>.

²⁴ Cunningham cites this manuscript and gives the following note on its authorship: "The MS bears the name, in pencil, of Sir Robert Brerewood, a Bencher of the Inn from 1637 (died 1654). It was thought that the MS. was written by him, but Master J. Bruce Williamson in his 'Middle Temple Bench Book' (1937, p. xvi) points out that a comparison of the MS. with letters written by Brerewood shows that this is not so" (Cunningham 15). While the actual authorship of some of these manuscripts is unclear, what is clearly understood is that they all originated from the Inns during the seventeenth century.

The measures referenced above were danced in each of the Inns, but Cunningham says that “From the end of the 16th century onwards, there are so many references to dancing in the Inns that it is easier to deal with each Inn separately” (4). As far as Lincoln’s Inn is concerned Cunningham treats on two examples related to these dances. First he gives an example of uproar caused by *lack* of dancing, and then a later example where this lack was remedied. To the first: it was a tradition, in the seventeenth century, to entertain alumni of an Inn with dancing when they came to visit. The barristers of Lincoln’s Inn caused great offense when they failed to do so upon one occasion:

Nor were these Exercises of Dancing meerly permitted; but thought very necessary (as it seems) and much conducing to the making of gentlemen fit for their Books at other times; for, by an Order made 6 Febr. 7 Jac. it appears that the under Baristers were by Decimation put out of Commons, for examples sake, because the whole Bar offended by not Dancing on Candlemass day preceding, according to the antient Order of this Society, when the Judges were present. (Dugdale 246)

Because they did not dance, the lower barristers were made to stand outside as an example to the rest of the Inn! Also, Sir Dugdale’s reflection, that dance was seen as a necessary respite from work, compliments exactly the Puritan concept and purpose of leisure activities.

The second example Cunningham provides is of the remedied situation of dancing before the “Judges”. Member John Green wrote in 1635: “On the first of this month, [November 1635] being sonday and also All Saints day the judges dined here. Solace was song and measures danst, and alsoe after supper. I danst the measure after dinner” (Lennard 114). So we see that, once more, dancing is an acceptable and expected part of general social life at the Inns, and that both the actual members of the Inns (the barristers, or full lawyers) and the barristers-in-training did not question or neglect its practice.

While Hutchinson studied at Lincoln's Inn, the other Inns were not devoid of Puritan attendance. Another prominent Puritan, by the name of Bulstrode Whitelocke, was the Master of Revels at Middle Temple in 1628:

...on All-Hallows day, which the Templars considered the beginning of Christmas, the master [Whitelocke], entered the hall, followed by sixteen revellers. They were proper handsome young men, habited in rich suits, shoes and stockings, hats and great feathers. The master led them in his bar-gown, with a white staff in his hand, the music playing before them. They began with the old masques [measures]; after that they danced the Brautes and then the master took his seat whilst the revellers flaunted through galliards, corantoes, French and country dances, till it grew very late (Whitelocke 57).²⁵

In the case of Hutchinson, his participation in dance at Lincoln's Inn, is inferred from what we know was common there at the time of his attendance. The above description, though, is an outright depiction of Whitelocke's participation in dance at the Inns. The existence of this second example lends greater credibility to the assumption that Hutchinson would also have danced while at Lincoln's Inn.

Another example from Whitelocke's life demonstrates that these were not the only places where Puritans danced, nor were barristers the only ones doing the dancing. In 1653 under the auspices of Oliver Cromwell's rule, Whitelocke embarked to Sweden as ambassador from England.²⁶ There, the following encounter and ensuing conversations between Queen Christina and Whitelocke demonstrate both the Puritan anti-dance stereotype and its falsity. Upon arriving in Sweden, Whitelocke was invited to

²⁵ Regarding the use of "Brautes", Cunningham explains the following about R. H. Whitelocke's source material: "In his Preface, R. H. Whitelocke explained that he wrote the Memoirs 'partly from unpublished MSS' [manuscripts]. It seems clear that we wrote this particular section on the basis of a manuscript, because he has a footnote referring to the word 'Brautes', 'Probably the bride's dance, unless I have mistaken the word for brauls or brawls'. Almost certainly the word would have been 'brawls' [or branles], and it is equally clear that his reference to 'the old masques' is another mis-reading [sic], and should really be 'the old measures'" (15).

²⁶ Cromwell, as mentioned in chapter I, was the Puritan head of state in England after the English Civil War and Charles I's beheading.

a State Ball which he declined to attend because it was to be held on a Sunday, a day set aside specifically for spiritual matters regardless of what other activities were available.²⁷

However when he received another invitation from Queen Christina, this one for a weekday Ball, he accepted. Whitelocke was eager to demonstrate his willingness to participate in the dances and in so doing, his respect and approval of the Queen and her court:

Seeing the high esteem and pleasure which her Majesty had in balls, dancing and music, which recreations being modestly and moderately used I hold to be indifferent things, and not unlawful to attend them at first times, lest I should be judged too severe and morose, and too much to censure those who used and delighted in them, and desired by company in them, having before been invited to a ball, and refused to come because it was the Lord's day, being now solemnly invited from the Queen herself to a ball this night at court, I thought, if I should again refuse to come to it, the Queen might be distasted, and think her favour slighted. I resolved, therefore, to go (Whitelocke 353-5).²⁸

In his own words, Whitelocke is making the case for dance as an allowable, harmless, form of recreation and diplomatic act. He does qualify his concession first by explaining that the dances he holds as "indifferent" are modest and moderate, so not a temptation to sin, and second, are not on Sundays, and are therefore not in conflict with the Lord for his time and attention. Also, because these particular dances are framed in the context of diplomacy, dance is also serving a larger purpose of state.

²⁷ Even when Puritans were not against dance, they still held Sunday, and times set aside for spiritual matters, such as meeting times and holy days, as sacred time, not to be profaned by any other activities.

²⁸ There is some debate as to the quality of these memoirs stemming in part from research into their posthumous publishing and also from questions as to the accuracy of Whitelocke's memory later in life. For a more thorough treatment of this subject please see Blair Worden's review, "The 'Diary' of Bulstrode Whitelocke" (The English Historical Review, Vol. 108, No. 426, Jan., 1993, pp. 122-134 Oxford University Press).

After attending this ball and demonstrating his skill in the dance, Whitelocke remembers the following conversation where the Queen discovers, outright, the falsity of rumors concerning Puritans and their distaste for dance:

WHITELOCKE. Madam, I am fearful I shall dishonour your Majesty as well as shame myself by dancing with you.

QUEEN. I will try whether you can dance.

WHITELOCKE. I assure your Majesty I cannot in any measure be worthy to have you by the hand.

QUEEN. I esteem you worthy, and therefore make choice of you to dance with me.

WHITELOCKE. I shall not so much undervalue your Majesty's judgement as not to obey you herein, but wish I could remember as much of this as when I was a young man.

[when they had finished dancing]

QUEEN. *Par Dieu!* These Hollanders are lying fellows!

WHITELOCKE. I wonder how the Hollanders should come into your head upon such an occasion as this is, who are not usually thought upon in such solemnities, nor much acquainted with them.

QUEEN. I will tell you all. The Hollanders reported to me a great while since, that all the *noblesse* of England were of the King's party, and none but mechanics of the Parliament party, not a gentleman among them. Now I thought to try you, and shame you if you could not dance, but I see that you are a gentleman, and have been bred one; that makes me say the Hollanders are lying fellows, to report that there was not a gentleman of the Parliament's party, when I see by you chiefly, and by many of your company, that you are a gentleman. (in Scholes 63)

Queen Christina had been told that the Parliament party, composed primarily of Puritans, were all "mechanics" and not one of them was a gentlemen. In the seventeenth century the concept of a gentleman included courtly manners. These were not just the ability to be polite, but included skills such as horsemanship, appreciation of beauty and art, fencing, and dancing. In saying mechanics, Queen Christina meant someone who not only lacks these gentlemanly skills but also the requisite grace and studied mind of the

ideal courtier (Castiglione).²⁹ Fortunately Whitelocke demonstrated that these notions of the Parliamentarians, and through them the Puritans, were wildly mistaken.

From these key examples of John Hutchinson, the Inns of Court, and Bulstrode Whitelocke, it can be clearly seen that Puritans did dance in England in the seventeenth century, even during the Commonwealth period of Puritan control. Because these general examples of dancing Puritans list genres and names of specific dances, we can now move to a closer examination of what they were actually doing when participating in these movements. In looking at the particulars of individual dances I can demonstrate a much closer relationship between the dances themselves and the attitudes of the Puritans. The most common types of dance mentioned in seventeenth-century English writing were the measures (mentioned most often in the above examples), galliards, corantos, branles, and the country dances (Cunningham 11).³⁰

The Dances

Exploring a detailed description of the particular dances gives us a clearer understanding of what the Puritans were reacting to in their attitudes and literature about

²⁹ The courts of Europe were in a constant state of trying to represent and embody the ideal of courtly manners, as most notably portrayed in Baldasar Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano* (*The Book of the Courtier*). First published in its entirety in 1528, *The Book of the Courtier* became extremely popular in England during the reign of Elizabeth I, and was still held as the gentlemanly ideal by the seventeenth century. While dance is mentioned a number of times throughout the work, it is first addressed directly in the following lines: "There are certain other exercises that can be practiced in public and in private [by the ideal courtier], such as dancing. And in this I think the Courtier should take great care; because, when dancing in the presence of many and in a place full of people, I think he should maintain a certain dignity, though tempered with a fine and airy grace of movement" (Castiglione 102). For more on the ideals of the courtier mentioned in-text see specifically pages 32, 37, 38, and 40-42.

³⁰ The term Country dances was used both in a general sense to differentiate from the courtly dances imported from France, as well as specifically for certain types of dances comprised of particular steps (Kennedy 83). Country dances were also known as contradances, particularly in France. This variation in spelling and even pronunciation of dance titles was quite common in seventeenth-century Europe. Dances which originated in one country and language often mutated in name and sometimes even in form as they spread to other countries and languages.

dance. From the following descriptions trends can be uncovered and in some cases shifting attitudes could be explained from the rise and fall of different dance styles. In the following section I will explore first the measures, galliards, corantos, and branles, all of which were courtly dances with origins in Italy and/or France. I will then move into description and background of the English Country dances which originated as peasant dances of the English countryside and were introduced as a novelty in court during the reign of Elizabeth I. Although these dances differ in origin, by the seventeenth century they are all familiar options at social gatherings, thus the level of order and formality in their practice was quite high.

The first of the dances mentioned in the examples above, the measures, were the most often mentioned dances among the Inns of Court. This may have been due to their nature as more stately, and therefore less boisterous and exhausting, dances. Although “measure” was sometimes used in the general sense of a dance, e.g. “shall we partake in a measure?”, most commonly the term refers to a specific type of dance.³¹ Measures were usually performed at low to moderate tempi and employed sequences and steps reminiscent of (and sometimes even named after) the pavan and almain (Rubin 156).³² Although they sometimes consisted of formations in the round, they were mainly processional dances. This also may account for some of their popularity among the Inns where they were included in the “Solemn Revels” (Cunningham 11). The procession was

³¹ For further discussion on the etymology see John M. Ward’s thorough article “The English Measure” in *Early Music* (Vol. 14, No. 1, Feb. 1986, p. 15-21).

³² The pavan and almain were courtly dances of Medieval and Renaissance origin. The focus of these dances was a stately presentation with focus on floor patterns and complex-in-their-simplicity step patterns.

comprised of a column of couples³³ who would progress around the floor, but the main focus of the dance was not so much on formation as on steps and step sequences (Rubin 158).³⁴

In her article “English Measures and Country Dances: A Comparison”, Dorothy Rubin explains that the six manuscripts from the Inns of Court, dated c. 1570-1670, are the only choreographic sources for the measures (Rubin 156). At the Inns the measures were the first set of dances to be done under the heading: Solemn Revels (Cunningham 11). Three of the manuscripts were written by members of the Inns of Court (notes they took as memory aids, most likely), a fourth was composed by the sister of a member of the Inns, and the last two are by unknown authors. Each of these manuscripts vary to some degree in the dances they include, but there are seven measures which are contained in all of them, and which (in all but one) are also laid out in the same order. These are: “The Quadrian Pavin”, “Turky Lony”, “The Earl of Essex”, “Tinternell”, “The Old Almain”, “The Queen’s Almain”, and “Sicilian Almain” (Cunningham 14).

As processionals, these measures consisted of basic steps primarily the singles and doubles. These, a step-together, and a step-step-together, respectively could be combined in a number of patterns and directions to create beautiful, intricate sequences.³⁵

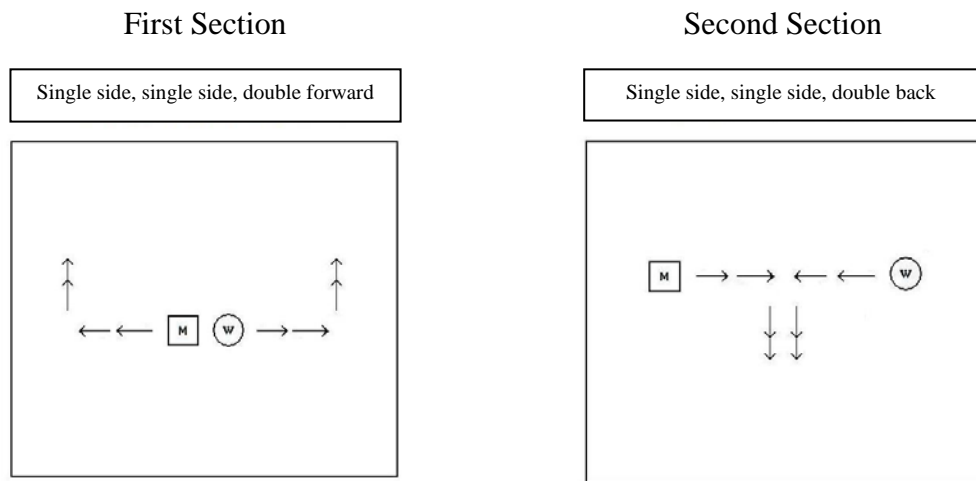
One aspect that lent itself to the complexity of the measures was that each measure was

³³ Couples of men and women. Women were not admitted as members of the Inns until 1919, but were most likely invited in especially for the dances. For further information on women in the Inns please see Cunningham’s *Dancing in the Inns of Court*, p. 17-20.

³⁴ For further analysis and description of both the measures and country dances see Dorothy Rubin’s article “English Measures and Country Dances: A Comparison” from 1985.

³⁵ While some discrepancy between sources exist as to the number of steps in a single and a double, I have taken Arbeau’s definition of a single as a *simple*: “You will take one step forward with the left foot for the first bar, then bring the right foot up beside the left for the second bar” (55). Here the step forward takes one beat of music, and the bringing together of the feet takes a second beat. The double would then consist of two steps in two beats with the third beat bringing the feet together.

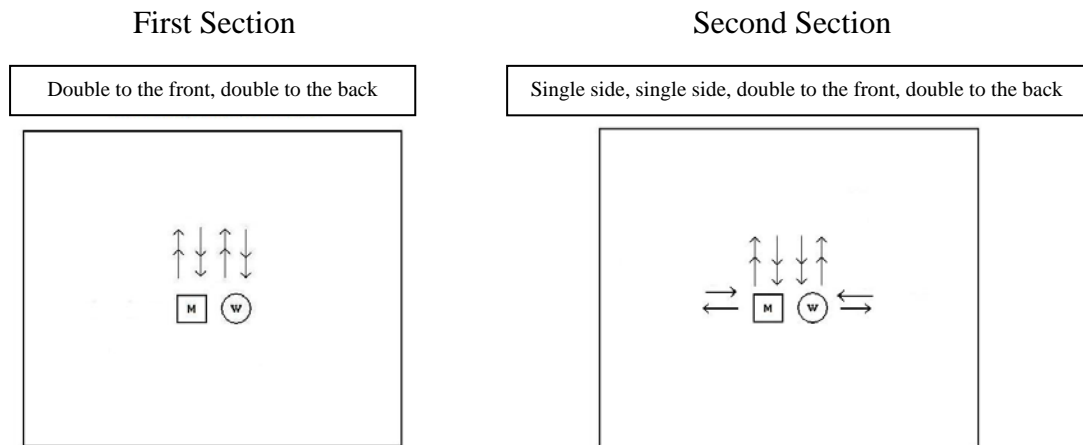
usually quite succinct and had an irregular pattern of repetition (Rubin 161). For example, comparing the first two measures described in each of the Inns of Court manuscripts will demonstrate the variety of step patterns. In the “Quadrian Pavan” the first section consists of two singles to the side, and a double forward. The second section consists of two singles to the side, and then a double back. While the directions of the steps are not indicated in any of the manuscripts, they can be guessed from the title of the dance: quadrian, involving or making of a four-sided shape. This arrangement of the steps, and the floor pattern they create, can be seen in the following diagrams:



In this measure, the first section is completed then the second, and this pattern is repeated in its entirety four times.³⁶ So, if the first section were to be titled “A” and the second section titled “B” the pattern would be A B A B A B A B. Taken in this way each couple performing “The Quadrian Pavan” makes a pair of squares while staying mostly in the same space.

³⁶ The direction of the steps is not given in any of the manuscripts. In Joseph Casazza and Patri Jones Pugliese’s *Practice for dauncinge Some Almans and a Pavan, England, 1570-1650: A Manual for Dance Instruction (in Which is Explained the Performance of a Number of Dances Popular in the London Inns of Court in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries)*, the authors note that “the instruction that the paired singles be to the same side is not specified in the dance descriptions, but is suggested by the title; for done in that manner, each dancer describes a square” (12).

The A B A B A B A B pattern of repetition in “The Quadrian Pavin” contrasts to that of the second measure mentioned in the Inns of Court manuscripts, “The Turkey Lony”. In “The Turkey Lony” the first section consists of a double forward and a double back. The second section consists of two singles to the side, a double forward, and a double back.³⁷ Again, one arrangement of these steps and their floor patterns can be seen in the following diagrams:



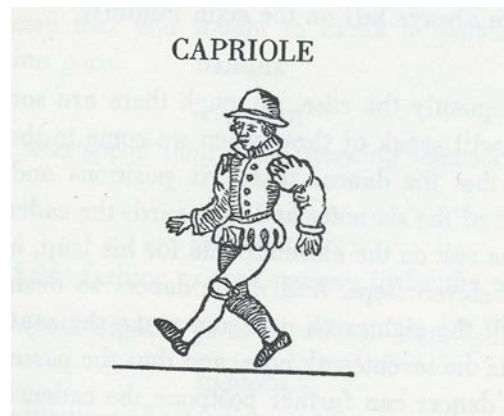
In this measure though, the first section is repeated four times, then the second section is repeated four times, and finally the first section is again repeated four times.³⁸ So, in this measure if the first section were section “A” and the second were section “B” the pattern would be A A A A B B B B A A A A. While the complexity of variation in patterns between the measures meant they were far from predictable, the floor-patterns which can

³⁷ There is some discrepancy between the manuscripts in the direction for the second section of “The Turkey Lony”; some of this may be due to the wide time span over which the manuscripts were written. I have presented here the steps as they were laid out in the Ashmole MS, Bodleian Rawl. D. 864, the “Buggins” MS No. 1, Inner Temple. Miscellanea Vol. XXVII, and the “Buggins” MS No. 2, Royal College of Music M.S. 1119, as these were all written between 1630 and 1672, and thus describe the dances as they would have been done at the time of Colonel Hutchinson and the Puritan migration to New England (as reprinted in Cunningham’s *Dancing in the Inns of Court Appendices IV, V, and VI*).

³⁸ Again the directions of the steps are not given, and in this measure it seems reasonable that the singles to the side should alternate each time so that the partners end up near each other at the end of each phrase.

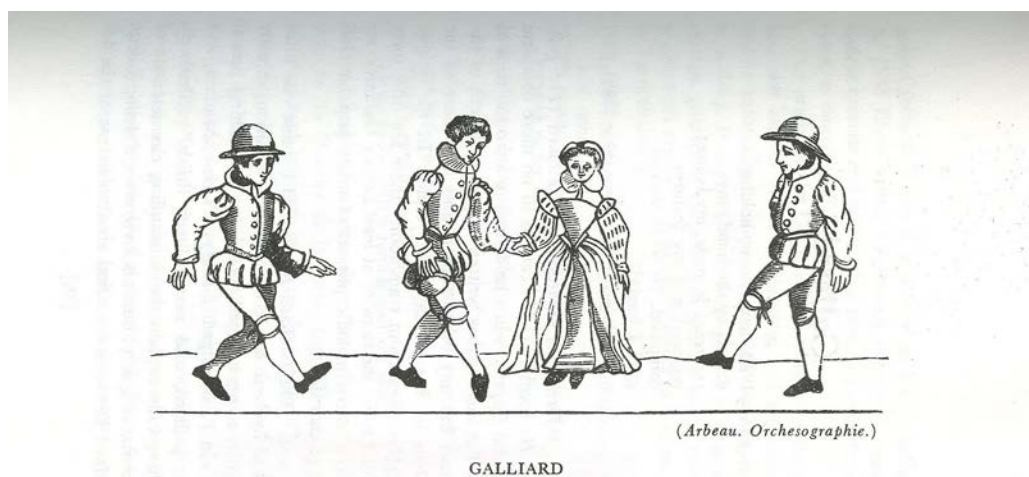
be deduced from these patterns show a very rigid dance structure which proved readily acceptable to the Puritans who danced them.

The galliards, corantos, and branles were all social dances which originated on the European continent in the extremely formal contexts of the French and Italian courts (Rubin 156). Galliard, spelled gaillarde in French and gagliarda in Italian comes from the Old French galach, meaning lively, and could also derive from the Italian word gigolane, meaning kicking. Both of these translations suit the spirit of the dance which is one of gaiety and quick energy (Horst 18-19). Early on, in the sixteenth century, the galliard was grouped with the pavan into a dance suite, where its more lively nature served to counter the pavan's stately composure. As a slow, sedate dance, the pavan was often used as an entrance of the nobility. Literally translated as peacock in French, it was an opportunity to show of one's finery while taking stately ownership of a space, usually the great hall. The following galliard served as a foil with its more athletic steps. The galliard involved a series of kicking steps, runs, hops, skips, and even lifts of the lady. In its basic form, it was comprised of four kicking steps, followed by a hop, which could be performed as a "caper" in English, or a "cabriole" in French, indicating a switching of the legs which showed off the dancer's skill and agility (Wells 164).



A drawing of a cabriole, or caper, from Arbeau's *Orchesography*, p. 91. Note that at his early date (mid 1500s) it appears to be barely leaving the floor.

Besides its inclusion in the Inns of Court dances, the popularity of the galliard throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries can be seen from the numerous literary references to it. Shakespeare, in particular, referenced the galliard numerous times, particularly in *King Henry the Fifth*: "--the prince our master / says that you savour too much of your youth / And bids you be advised / There's nought in France / That can be with a nimble galliard won" and in *Twelfth Night*: "Why dost thou not go to church in a galliard and come home in a coranto?" and "I did think, by the excellent constitution of thy leg, it was formed under the star of a galliard" (cited in Horst 19). This last quote from *Twelfth Night*, in focusing on the condition of the leg, particularly emphasizes the athleticism involved in the naturally skipping steps and showy jumps. Indeed by the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries the galliard had ceased to be performed as a dance, and instead was, as Melusine Wood explains an "acrobatic display" (Marks 12). Even in his 1701 publication *Choregraphie, ou L'Art de Decrire La Dance* French dance master and annotator Raoul Auger Feuillet lists the *pas de Galliarde* among the off-balance, more athletic steps (Feuillet 47).



A drawing of a Galliard from Arbeau's *Orchesographie*, in Horst p. 17

The Corantos, also spelled courantes, courante, and corantoe, was one of the most popular court dances for two centuries, c. 1550 to 1750. Two forms of corantos developed over the course of these two centuries. The first, which was most likely the type practiced by the Puritans and other Englishmen and colonists in the seventeenth century originated in Italy. The music for this type befitted its name, corrente from the Latin *curro* meaning to run, as it consisted of lively eighth-note runs in $\frac{3}{4}$ time (Horst 34). One of the earliest literary works written in English which mentions the coranto is the poem *Orchestra* by Sir John Davies. In the following lines, Davies describes the fleetness of foot needed to dance a coranto as well as the circuitry of its patterns:

What shall I name those current travases,
That on a triple dactyl foot do run
Close to the ground with sliding passages,
Wherein that dancer greatest praise hath won,
Which with best order can all order shun:
For everywhere he wantonly must range,
And turn and wind with unexpected change (in Horst 35).

Davies illustrates how the compelling rhythm of the $\frac{3}{4}$ meter requires the dancer to have nimble or “dactyl” steps, and the “sliding passages which keep the dancer more grounded and even with the floor than the more boisterous galliard. Although not as athletic as the galliard, Thomas Macy did describe it as “full of sprightliness and vigour” in 1650 (cited in Horst 38).

A second type of coranto originated in France and was the more formal court dance which sustained the form's popularity through the seventeenth and into the eighteenth century. In this style the music is statelier and includes less eighth-note runs, although it does still use a $\frac{3}{4}$, or sometimes $\frac{3}{2}$, time signature. In *La Danse* Charbonnel explains that it was a “dance of attitudes” filled with posturing and employing a more subdued air (Horst 38). However, in *Orchesography*, Arbeau still describes this style as needing to “be executed with a spring [in each step] which is not the case in the pavan” (Arbeau 123). Both styles of corantos eventually became solo dances, performed without a partner and thus showing off each individual's technical and energetic ability

or lack thereof. This could be one of the reasons they were discontinued in the Inns of Court revels later on in the seventeenth century (Cunningham 15).

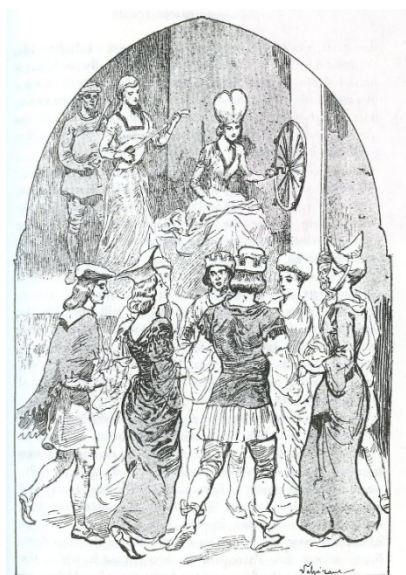


A Coursant, from Horst p. 33

Branles, also sometimes spelled brauls, brawels, and bransles, were of French origin and popular in England throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Arbeau 128, 202). Branles were a very malleable dance form and could vary in tempo, difficulty, and formation, depending on the number of participants and their skill levels (Arbeau 128-131). Where the coranto was the most popular couple's dance during the first part of the seventeenth century, the branle was the most popular group dance up until mid-century (Semmens 36). In the seventeenth century the branle was done in a suite of five or six segments consisting of the "premier bransle", "bransle gay", "bransle de Poictou", "bransle double de Poictou", and "cinquiesme bransle" and ending with a Gavotte (De Lauze in Semmens 36).³⁹ Most of these branle segments were set to duple or triple meter and performed in the round, although "bransle de Poictou" was a line

³⁹ Semmens also cites the writing of Marin Mersenne, his *Harmonic universelk, contenant la thiorie et la pratique de la musique* from 1636, which supports the five part structure of the segmented branle with the concluding gavotte (36).

dance, according to both Francois de Lauz in *Apologie de la danse* published in 1623, and Marin Mersenne's *Harmonic Universelk* published in 1636 (Semmens 36). While the first branle in the suite was "grave and serious" the rest were quite lively, with the "bransle gay" composed entirely of jumps and "so called because "a foot is always in the air" (de Pure 278-9, Furetiere 35-62). In the latter half of the seventeenth century the suite was trimmed down to the gavotte proceeded by only three branles, the premier branle or branle simple, the branle gay, and the branle de Poictou which was also called the branle menner (Semmens 37-8). This reduction of the suit coincides with the branle's fall from popularity and the increased use of line and single-couple dances towards the end of the seventeenth century. I posit there is a correlation between the decreased popularity of the branle, a group dance, the rise in popularity of couple dances and the increased vehemence of Puritan literature attacking mixed dances, all of which took place in the later part of the seventeenth century.



BRANLE (Charbonnel. La Danse.)

A Branle, from Horst p. 3

Country dances were first mentioned in writing in the play *Misogonus* dated 1577.⁴⁰ Country dances were incredibly popular with every class of English citizenry. While they originated as common folk dances popular in communities throughout Britain, Henry VIII and Elizabeth I were instrumental in bringing them into fashion among the gentry (Kennedy 83).⁴¹ In his *Orchestra, or a Poem of Dancing* English Poet Sir John Davies describes the circular and weaving patterns of the country dances in these two stanzas:

LXIII

As when a nymph arysing from the Lande
Leadeth a daunce with her long watery traine
Down to the sea, she wries to every hand,
And every way doth cross the fertile plaine;
But when at last she falls into the maine,
Then all her traverses concluded are,
And with the sea her course is circulare.

LXIV

Thus when at last Love had them marshalled,
As erst he did the shapeless mass of things,
He taught them Roundes and winding Heyes to tread,
And about trees to cast themselves in rings;
As the Two Beares, whom the First Mover flings
With the short turne about Heaven's axle tree,
In a rounde daunce for ever whirling be (Davies).

⁴⁰ The following is taken from R. W. Bond, "Early Plays from the Italian", 1911, and cited on page 22 of Cunningham's *Dancing in the Inns of Court*.

"*Misogonus*" by Rychardes or Barjona, Act 2, Scene 4, beginning at line 269:

"*Misogonus*: What countrye dauncis do you here dayly frequent.

Cacurgus: The vickar of s. fooles I am sure he would crave to that daunce of all other I see he is bent.

Sir John: Faythe no I had rather have shakinge oth shetes or sund. . . or cachinge of quales. . ."

⁴¹ Henry VIII was instrumental in introducing and Anglicizing the Masque to the English court. In so doing, he also introduced the country dances to the aristocracy as part of the elaborate entertainments and floor-shows. Douglas Kennedy O.B.E., the Director of the English Folk Dance and Song Society from 1925-1961, explains: "Under the Tudors, especially in Henry VIII's and Elizabeth's reigns, the vigorous if often rude dancing and singing of the countryside became positively fashionable. These English country dances came directly from the folk in the form of rounds and squares and long ways and contras. Having established themselves as the fashionable ballroom forms they continued through the times of the Stuarts, the Commonwealth, the Restoration, Queen Anne and the Hanoverian line right into our own century" (83).

Country dances were very popular with dancers of every class. They were simple to learn with their emphasis on floor patterns, rather than the intricate step sequences of the measures (Rubin 158).

The most famous and oft-cited evidence and description of country dances comes from the music publisher John Playford's *The English Dancing Master or Plaine and Easie Rules for the Dancing of Country Dances, with the Tune to Each Dance*. This handbook for country dances was first published in 1651 during the Commonwealth period and, thus, during the term of greatest Puritan power in England. In his preface, Playford acknowledges Inns of Court men among the great "Heroes of the Times" who have danced the country dances in the following words: "The Gentlemen of the Innes of Court, whose sweet and ayry Activity has crowned their Grand Solemnities with Admiration to all Spectators" (Playford 2). Most of the country dances in Playford's book are "longways" or processions similar to the measures, but a few are specified as being in the round (Playford 20). Also, where the manuscripts depicting the measures do not specify a certain number of participants the country dances are often either "for six", "for four", or "for eight" but are also sometimes "for as many as will" (Playford 10).

From these examples and analysis it is clear that Puritans did dance in seventeenth-century England. The dances they learned and practiced were primarily group dances, such as the branles, or for a series of couples, such as the measures and country dances. It is worthwhile to note that as the rise of the more formalized couple's dances began towards the end of the seventeenth century, with the fade of the branles from popularity and the ascent of the minuet, and that these changing trends coincide

with some of the more outspokenly anti-dance literature and actions from Puritan ministers in Massachusetts.

Dance Comes to Massachusetts

The back-and-forth of Puritan ministers and general communication between England and New England meant the tension between warnings against dance and the actual presence of dance practice existed in both places. In the early decades after settlement in 1630, there is a paucity of records that include dance in Massachusetts. However, this does not mean the Puritans were not dancing. A number of other factors are key in this lack of archival evidence for dance in the middle decades of the seventeenth century. First, the Europeans in Massachusetts at this time existed in a frontier society. Everyone in the colony at the beginning had to be focused on physical survival, not on the legitimacy of different leisure activities.⁴² As indicated in Chapter I, even the more specialized craftsmen, merchants, and gentlemen became farmers in order to support themselves in their founding society for the first decade or so of Boston and the surrounding areas (Wagner 13).

Another reason there may be few records of dance in the earlier days of colonization may be that the leisure activities of the first generation were acceptable to the ministers because their safe arrival and success in establishing the Massachusetts colony indicated the Lord tacitly approved their activity. In keeping with what Winthrop had stated aboard the *Arbella*, their successful crossing of the Atlantic meant God accepted them and the terms of their covenant. This however would not hold true for those who came after them, or for later generations of Puritan colonists. The second- and third-generation Puritans, who were born in Massachusetts, had not made the same

⁴² See David Cressy's article, "The Vast and Furious Ocean: The Passage to Puritan New England".

choice their forefathers had. The commitment of their parents and grandparents had been tested and found strong through their migration to New England. The later generations were there only as a result of nature and they knew they had not been tested and confirmed in the same way. This uncertainty in their spiritual strength, and even their spiritual worth, particularly influenced the later writings such as Increase Mather's *An Arrow against Profane and Promiscuous Dancing*, and his son Cotton Mather's sermon *Corderius Americanus* which called their generations to return to a purer way of life and leisure.⁴³

Finally, I would posit for a lack of literary evidence of dance in Massachusetts in the period just after 1630 is that dance, in its close relationship to music, followed that art's reception and development in New England. The practice of music in New England by individuals in the privacy of their homes is discernible from the shipping lists from early ventures to New England which included a number of musical instruments, particularly stringed instruments such as viols and shoulder violins.⁴⁴ Thus the laity was participating in music performance and enjoyment in the privacy of their homes, even though few records of secular performance exist and music as a subject and presence in religious service was under public debate (Daniels 57-8). Although dance does not leave behind this same archival evidence, it is reasonable to deduce that dance was also an acceptable leisure activity when practiced in the same setting.

⁴³ In a sermon at the teacher Ezekiel Cheever's funeral Cotton Mather laid this complaint against his contemporaries: "I cannot but observe it with a just indignation --to feed our children, to clothe our children, to do anything for the bodies of our children--or perhaps to teach them some trifle at a dancing school, scarce worth their learning, we count no expense too much--at the same time to have the minds of the children enriched with the most valuable knowledge here--to what purpose is the cry?--A little expense--how heavily it goes off!" (Cotton Mather 17).

⁴⁴ See Daniels, page 57-8 for more information on the types of instruments the Puritan colonists brought with them to Massachusetts.

I feel safe in drawing this parallel because of dance's strong historical ties to music, and particularly the violin. Daniels explains that strings, especially shoulder violins were fairly prevalent among the Puritan colonists, particularly among tavern keepers who used them for entertainment purposes and as dance accompaniment (Daniels 58). From the days of traveling minstrels and troubadours in the High Middle Ages, the violin or fiddle had served as the most common instrument of dance accompaniment. Even in the seventeenth century dance masters were also adept fiddlers, able to play the tunes to which their pupils performed (Astier 9). In his pivotal 1589 work explaining the courtly dances, *Orchesographie*, Thoinot Arbeau even includes an illustration of a fiddler.



A drawing of a fiddler/violinist from Arbeau's *Orchesographie*, p. 129

So, where Daniels puts forth that music was performed in the privacy of Puritans' homes, so too it is reasonable to conclude that dance occurred in similar settings. When practiced in the order and privacy of individual homes this trend also fits into the Puritan idea of leisure: it is beneficially refreshing to the dancers, as it is not overly exuberant, and does not interfere with their public and spiritual duties.

The bulk of the records we have of dancing in colonial Massachusetts are from cases where it was done in a manner, time, or place that contravened the Puritan idea of

orderly leisure.⁴⁵ That there was dancing in New England, and by Puritans can be seen in a number of examples. The first, while antagonistic to some of the most conservative among the Puritans, actually demonstrates a Puritan minister dancing, and at his ordination! Percy Scholes relates the story of Jonathan Edwards, a “fiery” Puritan minister:⁴⁶

“Timothy [father to Jonathan] was considered to be unusually learned; but was otherwise a normal New England parson. He was afraid of God, but he was not, according to modern notions, especially puritanical. He had a healthy appetite for brandy and rum; and when he was ordained, a dance was held at his house.” ...[this] took place at Winsor Farmes, Connecticut, in 1694 (Parkes quoted in Scholes 74).

This example, while it shows Puritans dancing in New England, also demonstrates a key difference from the dance events in which they participated in England: the setting and structure. Part of the reason dancing seems to have been more readily publicized and accepted in England was most likely the difference in occasions, places and types of people dancing. While the upper classes of New England gentry would have been dancing such dances as we saw the Inns of Court men practicing and Ambassador Whitelocke showing off to the queen of Sweden, these were done in fairly controlled settings.

This was not necessarily the case with the examples available in New England. Most mentions of dance in Massachusetts come from court records involving complaints against late-night noise disturbances. In many of these cases dance was not even the primary offense. First an example from 1638 records “Laurence Waters’ wife, Nicolas

⁴⁵ For more on the development of musical practice, especially that which correlates with dance see Daniels’ third chapter “Music and Theater Struggle for Legitimacy” in *Puritans at Play*.

⁴⁶ Jonathan Edwards was a renowned Scottish Calvinist minister. Well known for his fiery sermons, prolific writings, and tempestuous relationships with political authority, he was the epitome of the “fire and brimstone” cleric.

Theale and Edward Lambe were fined ‘and all of them were admonished to avoyed dancing.’ (Keller 306). Second, in 1651, “Samuel Eaton and ‘Goodwife Halle, of the towne of Duxburrow [were admonished but not fined] for mixed dancing.’” (Keller 306). Both of these cases cite dancing as the cause of mischief, but most likely are only available because they disturbed their neighbors with their noise “and drunken retorts” (Keller 306). Had they not been loud and drunken, their dancing would probably have gone unnoticed; little cared about, and un-fined.⁴⁷

This was the case with most of the complaints against dancing. The dancing itself was not so much a problem as the disorder which surrounded it, particularly when it took place in taverns and at large celebrations. This is why in 1651 a law was passed in Boston, in an attempt to end the occasions for disorder in these places and at these events.

Whereas it is observed that there are many abuses & disorders by dauncinge in ordinaryes, whether mixt or unmixt, upon marriage of some persons, this Court doth order, that hence forward there shall be no dauncings uppon such occasion; or at other times, in ordinaryes, uppon the paine of five shillings for every person that shall so daunce in ordinareys” (cited in Keller 306-7).⁴⁸

The above cited law was created in an effort to stop dancing so much as the “many abuses and disorders” caused by dancing at marriages.

Another instance of Puritan legal interest in dancing dates from 1662, when the Boston Record Commissioners

⁴⁷ These cases were cited in Kate Van Winkle Keller’s *Dance and its Music in America, 1528-1789*, but come from the *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England*, Vol. 1, p. 233, and Vol. 2, p. 174.

⁴⁸ Keller points out that similar laws have been cited for 1631 and 1640, but that in her thesis “Dance in Colonial Massachusetts: The First Hundred Years” Cathy Velenchik searched without finding any records of them.

While the word ordinaryes has many definitions, and did even in the seventeenth century, here it is meant to indicate a tavern or eating house which served regularly scheduled meals.

requested that the constables watch for “If after 10. . . they see any lighte, then to make discreet enquiry . . . if it appeare a reall disorder, that men are dancing, drinkeing, singinge vainlie etc., they shall admonish them to cease, but if they diserne the continuance of it after moderate admonition, then to . . . take the names of the persons.” These and other court cases from the 1670s cite dancing and disorderly behavior as well as breaking curfew (cited in Keller 306-7).

Daniels corroborates the concern of the leaders in Massachusetts with the unruly activity in taverns when he explains that many people of wide-ranging social and economic status possessed shoulder violins, but that “[n]ot surprisingly, a large number of tavern keepers owned them and used them for entertainment on the premises. Most prosecutions for lascivious dancing in taverns list the violin as the offending instrument that provided the tune” (Daniels 58).

In addition to the complaints and records of fines for dancing, there are also records of dancing masters attempting to settle themselves and their trade in Massachusetts.⁴⁹ While many of the masters mentioned in these records were unsuccessful in establishing themselves in Massachusetts, Percy Scholes points out that they seemed to be disreputable people who were more likely unwanted by the Puritans for their moral character than for the fact of their trade. This opinion is well supported by the most famous example: Francis Stepney. Upon arriving in Boston, Stepney is reported to have said that he could “teach more Divinity than Dr. Willard or the Old Testament” and also schedules dancing lessons specifically on Thursday evenings, which were standard evenings of religious meeting and worship in the Puritan community. Judge

⁴⁹ “Mr. L. C. Elson in *The National Music of America* (1899) says: ‘A work published in London 1673, entitled “Observations made by the Curious in New England” informs us that in Boston there are no musicians by trade. A dancing school was set up but put down; a fencing school is allowed.’ [footnote: I have failed to find a copy of this work. It does not seem to be in the British Museum or the Library of Congress.]” (Scholes 66)

Samuel Sewell recorded the incidents of the matter in his diary and each record seems to paint a picture of a less and less honorable character:

Thursday, Nov. 12, 1685. 'The Ministers of this Town Come to the Court and complain against a Dancing Master who seeks to set up here and hath mixt Dances, and in time of meeting is Lecture Day; and 'tis reported he should say that by one Play he could teach more Divinity than Dr. Willard or the Old Testament. Mr. Moodey said 'Twas not a time for N.E. to dance. Mr. Mather struck at the Root, speaking against mixt Dances.'

Dec. 17. 'Mr. Francis Stepney, the Dancing Master, desired a Jury, so He and Mr. Shrimpton bound in £50 to Jan. Court. Said Stepney is ordered not to keep a Dancing School: if he does will be taking in contempt and be proceeded with accordingly. Mr. Shrimpton muttered, saying he took it as a great favour that the Court would take his Bond for £50.'

Jan. 29, 1686. 'Mr. Francis Stepney has his Jury to try his speaking Blasphemous words; and Reviling the Government. 'Tis referred till next Tuesday.'

Thursday, Feb. 4 'Francis Stepney fined £100. £10 down, the rest respited till the last of March, that so might go away if he would.'

July 28. 'Francis Stepney the Dancing Master runs away for Debt. Several Attachments out after him' (cited in Scholes 67).

Thus, while he was a dancing master, Stepney also seemingly antagonized the ministers of Boston, and then failed to fulfill his civic duties by running away from his debts.

In all of these examples of Puritan legal antagonism towards dance, whether aimed generally at the community or towards particular individuals such as Francis Stepney, one theme emerges. In each case, the Puritan leadership takes actions which, if successful, would increase the level of order in their community and reign in excessive behavior that exceeds the bounds of productive recreation. As the seventeenth century came to a close, though, the ministers' attempts at order were superseded by the influx of non-Puritan leaders and citizens. The growing Anglican population and increased royal presence, in the form of a royal governor, in New England created a demand and subsequent increase in balls and other formal mixed dances. John Playford's publication

of *The English Dancing Master or Plaine and Easie Rules for the Dancing of Country Dances, with the Tune to each Dance*, published in 1651, allowed for the easy dissemination of popular dance steps with their accompanying music. This increase in demand and material brought more dance masters to Boston and by the eighteenth century dance was a regular and popular pastime in Massachusetts.

Chapter III. A New Look at the Arrow from Increase Mather

The Boston Situation

The first generation of Puritan colonists to Massachusetts Bay had set out on a spiritual mission of moral and social redemption. They were not always certain they had made the right choice in leaving their English brethren, but in the end they were compelled to attempt their “Holy Experiment”. As the colony grew over the course of the seventeenth century, a number of factors caused the Puritan ministers to take a more stringent attitude towards morality, social practice, and leisure activities. The first worry of the ministers was the inevitable demise of the first generation and the uncertainty that plagued the second and third generations who were born into the New England colony without having made a personal choice to join in the covenant. A second concern was Boston’s role as a major port city, which meant it was not only the hub of Massachusetts social and economic life, but also the home of large transient and migrant populations.⁵⁰ The resultant mixing and crossing of religious views and moral priorities made the ministers increasingly intent upon solidifying the Puritan morality and spiritual values in their communities.

The controversy with Francis Stepney in 1685-86, reinforced the suspicions of the ministers as it demonstrated dance and its practitioners could be a means of immorality and social disorder. In February of 1685 the ministers of Boston chose Increase Mather to author their public response to this controversy as I outlined it at the end of Chapter II.⁵¹ The tract Mather penned, *An Arrow against Profane and Promiscuous Dancing*

⁵⁰ In this sense I mean transient to include the large, yet temporary, naval community of sailors, merchants, traders, and others of this nature.

⁵¹ This is what Judge Sewell was referring to when he wrote that “Mr. Mather struck at the Root, speaking against mixt Dances” (cited in Scholes 67).

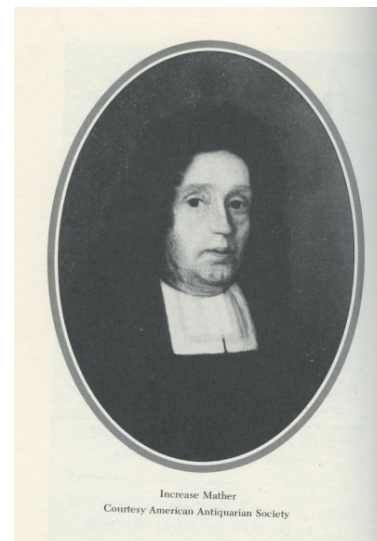
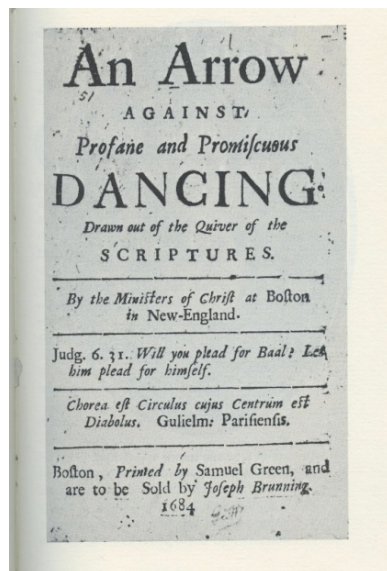
Drawn out of the Quiver of Scriptures, was publicly displayed in front of the Dutch book-seller, Joseph Brunning's, shop next door to the Town house near the center of Boston (Marks 1). Increase Mather was chosen for this task due to the respect in which he was held by his peers and for his previously demonstrated leadership capabilities. Mather had been the minister called upon to sail to England to negotiate the renewal of Massachusetts' charter with the Crown and had been able to secure the Puritans' power of choice as to who their royal governors would be (Marks 2).

Increase Mather was a second-generation New England Puritan, the son of Katherine Holt and the famous Puritan divine⁵² Richard Mather. Born in Dorchester, Massachusetts in 1639, Mather attended school at Harvard, where he earned his A.B. and then traveled to Ireland where he received his M.S. degree at Trinity College in Dublin. While he was given a pastorate in England, Mather felt compelled to return to the less Anglican Massachusetts. He was elected minister of the Second Church of Boston in 1681, and became the Rector and eventual President of Harvard College in 1692. Over the course of his life, Increase Mather became one of the preeminent leaders of the city of Boston, the commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the greater New England area. His renown and respect throughout New England lent added weight to his ministry and his words against mixed dancing (Marks 1-2).

While nearly every piece of literature which deals with Puritans and dance in New England mentions Mather's writing, no deep explication of *An Arrow* has been written from the perspective of dance. To date, the main scholarly treatment of this document comes from Joseph E. Marks III who published *The Mathers on Dancing* in 1975. Marks begins by deftly placing Increase Mather's 1685 *Arrow* and Mather's son, Cotton

⁵² Divine's were a highly respected class of Puritan ministers.

Mather's, c. 1700 tract *A Cloud of Witnesses Darting out Light upon a Case too Unseasonably made Seasonable to be Discoursed on* into literary, religious, and historical context. In his text, Marks then reproduces the *Arrow against Profane and Promiscuous Dancing* and *A Cloud of Witnesses* in their entirety, allowing for the possibility of independent analysis and interpretation of these documents. In explicating Increase Mather's *An Arrow against Profane and Promiscuous Dancing* I plan to focus on Increase Mather's preliminary information and his first argument in support of his claims against mixed dancing. The subsequent four arguments also merit the same treatment in future writing, but their subjects do not coincide with the parameters of this thesis as does Mather's first argument.



The front page of Mather's tract and a portrait of Increase Mather (Marks 29-30).

The Arrow Aimed at Dancing

Increase Mather begins his tract with a qualification: "Concerning the Controversy about *Dancing*, the Question is not, whether all *Dancing* be in itself sinful" (Mather in Marks 31). In this phrase Mather takes the very first line of his tract to clarify

his argument: he is not trying to prove the inherent sinfulness of dance. By initiating the tract in this way, Mather implicitly acknowledges the Puritan precedent both of actively and appropriately participating in dances, and also of writing in support of dance as a leisure activity so long as it is pursued in a moderate and orderly fashion. Mather concludes his opening remark with a summary of those dances which he believes not to be sinful:

It is granted, that *Pyrrhical* or *Polemical Saltation*: i.e. where men vault in their Armour, to shew their strength and activity, may be of use. Nor is the question, whether a sober and grave *Dancing* of Men with Men, or of Women with Women, be not allowable; we make no doubt of that, where it may be done without offence, in due season, and with moderation. The Prince of Philosophers has observed truly, that *Dancing* or *Leaping*, is a natural expression of joy: So that there is no more Sin in it, than in laughter, or any outward expression of inward Rejoycing (Mather in Marks 31).

While this passage clearly exemplifies the Puritan ideal of productive and orderly leisure in a general sense, the particular dances and some of Mather's remarks require closer scrutiny.

First, Mather approves of "Pyrrhical or Polemical Saltation" because they "may be of use". As I clearly explained in Chapter I, this idea of purpose is a key component of Puritan theology regarding leisure. Pyrrhical dance was a form of sword dance which consisted of choreographed and/or mock swordplay, and thus involved the practice and refinement of a useful skill. Although the musket had grown in popularity as weapon of choice by the time of the seventeenth century, swordsmanship was still held to be a gentlemanly skill. Sword dances were also group dances, usually performed by all-male groups, and set with specific choreography. Thus they were rarely the cause of disruptive or disorderly behavior, which could stem from less formalized activities. In this same

vein, “Polemical Saltation” involved (as Mather mentioned) training in horsemanship, physical strength and dexterity, as well as also requiring dedication, focus, and a controlled practice and performance atmosphere. Thus this style of dance also conformed to the Puritan ideals of leisure.

In the second part of the passage, Mather calls homogeneous dancing “allowable” but then qualifies this later part three times over: “where it may be done without offense”, “in due season”, and “with moderation” (Mather in Marks 31). In these qualifications Mather explicitly states the Puritan understanding and requirement of recreation, as well as the Puritans’ desire for orderly behavior. His words echo perfectly the sentiment behind the actions taken against the unruly behavior cited in the cases of disorderly dancing and boisterous behavior I described in Chapter II. Despite these reservations, Mather allows for the truth of the “Prince of Philosophers”, and Increase Mather’s father-in-law, John Cotton’s words when he claimed dance was acceptable as an outward expression of inner joy (Daniels 111).

However, after so qualifying his terms, Mather arrives at the meat of his entire tract: mixed dancing is not one of these acceptable dance-forms. It is important to remember that while Mather will go on to give sundry reasons for this claim, they all will come back to the same root. Mather was writing *An Arrow against Profane and Promiscuous Dancing* because the actions of Francis Stepney, a dance master intent upon teaching mixed dances, had caused scandal, unrest, and disorder in the community of Boston. Mather’s own words against mixed dancing are as follows:

But our question is concerning *Gynecandrical Dancing*,⁵³ or that which is commonly called *Mixt* or *Promiscuous Dancing*, viz. of Men

⁵³ Gynecandrical: from the Greek roots *Gynec* for women, and *Andre* for men, and the suffix *-ical* meaning of or pertaining to.

and Women (be they elder or younger persons) together: Now this we affirm to be utterly unlawful, and that it cannot be tollerated in such a place as *New-England*, without great Sin (Mather in Marks 31).

In generalizing his argument against all mixed dancing, rather than merely against the teaching of Francis Stepney, Mather not only justified the actions of the ministers against Stepney, but described the problem from their perspective. Francis Stepney would not have been such a cause of scandal had he not pitted his dancing lessons against the religious meetings and teachings of the Boston ministers. Therefore, Mather and his colleagues saw Stepney's profession and subject matter as the cause of this disorder.

However, Mather did also specify New England as the location where mixed dance could not be tolerated "without great Sin". By including such specificity, Mather again implicitly acknowledges the controversy mixed dancing has endured in Puritan moral debate. As I described in Chapter II, the Puritans did participate in mixed dances such as the galliards, corantos, measures, and country dances. Even the literary evidence from Puritans in England shows a lack of consensus regarding mixed dancing. In 1611 the Puritan William Perkins wrote against mixed dancing, summoning many a Biblical passage to support his assertion that there was no scriptural precedent for men and women dancing together:

We reade indeede, of a kind of dauncing commended in Scripture, that Moses, Aaron and Miriam used at the red sea, Exod. 15, 20 [The prophetess Miriam, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand, while all the women went out after her with tambourines, dancing; and she led them in the refrain: Sing to the LORD, for he is gloriously triumphant; / horse and chariot he has cast into the sea]. And David before the Arke, 2 Sam. 6, 14 [Then David, girt with a linen apron, came dancing before the LORD with abandon]. And the daughters of Israel, when David got the victory over Goliath, 1 Sam. 18 [At the approach of Saul and David (on David's return after slaying the Philistine), women came out from each of the cities of Israel to meet King Saul, singing and dancing, with tambourines,

joyful songs, and sistrums]. But this dauncing was another Kinde. *For it was not mixt, but single, men together, and women apart by themselves.* They used not in their dauncing wanton gestures, and amorous songs, but the Psalmes of praise and thanksgiving. The cause of their dauncing was spiritual joy, and the end of it was praise and thanksgiving (emphasis my own, Perkins cited in Wagner 56).⁵⁴

Perkins takes the ultimate of Puritan authorities, the Bible, and points out a series of passages which seem to indicate dancing was not mixed. However only a decade later, in 1625, renowned Puritan minister, and Increase Mather's father-in-law, John Cotton used the same Biblical examples in support of mixed dancing in a letter to R. Levett:

Dancing (yea though mixt), I would not simply condemn. For I see two sorts of mixt dancings in use with God's people in the Old Testament, the one religious, Exo. XV, 20-21 [The prophetess Miriam, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand, while all the women went out after her with tambourines, dancing; and she led them in the refrain: Sing to the LORD, for he is gloriously triumphant; / horse and chariot he has cast into the sea], the other civil, tending to the praise of conquerors, as the former of God, I Sam. 18, 6 [At the approach of Saul and David (on David's return after slaying the Philistine), women came out from each of the cities of Israel to meet King Saul, singing and dancing, with tambourines, joyful songs, and sistrums]. Only lascivious dancing to wanton ditties and in amorous gestures and wanton dalliances, especially after great feasts, I would bear witness against, as great *flabella libidinis* (Cotton in A. Wagner 57).

In these verses, Cotton interprets the lack of a clear description of the men and women dancing separately as evidence supporting mixed dance.

Besides mixed dancing's connection with Francis Stepney, as a manifestation of disorderly leisure as seen in the taverns and court cases I described in Chapter II, it compounded the ministers' perception of declining personal spirituality. Many instances of dance from Mather's time in the decades surrounding the 1680s, are known to us from court case records. While the rowdy dances of my examples from Chapter II were not

⁵⁴ Perhaps a reaction to "cushion dancing" where men would chose a women, place a pillow or cushion down before her, and throughout the dance kneel before her and kiss her (A. Wagner 56).

the only dancing done at this time, they did support Mather's negative view of mixed dancing. In the eyes of the ministers and other leaders of Boston, mixed dancing was an activity which led to disorder and caused others displeasure, particularly in such an urban setting. Boston in the 1680s was a bustling seaport town, full of comings and goings of the English, various European immigrants, and other colonists from the rougher more hedonistic colonies to the South (Scholes 75). These instances of disorderly mixed dancing only compounded the pervasive doubts the second and third generations of Massachusetts Puritans held of their spiritual worthiness. As I described in Chapter II, the Puritans of the later generations had not volunteered to participate in the Massachusetts experiment, and thus the ministers constantly combated what they perceived to be overall spiritual declension. In specifically stating mixed dancing was a great sin "in such a place as *New-England*" Mather demonstrates the threat of disorder to his own time and place, and leaves open for further discussion the morality of mixed dancing in more rural, or more orderly, communities.

After thus introducing his charge against mixed dancing, Increase Mather goes on to lay out arguments in support of his condemnation of mixed dancing, the first of which is that scripture upholds his position:

And that it may appear, that we are not transported by *Affection* without Judgement, let the following Arguments be weighed in the Ballance of the Sanctuary.

Arg 1. *That which the Scriptures condemns is sinful.* None but Atheists will deny this *Proposition*: But the Scripture condemns *Promiscuous Dancing* (Mather in Marks 31-2).

Mather's first scriptural support, he claims, is the Seventh Commandment, Thou shalt not commit adultery: "This *Assumption* is proved, 1. *From the Seventh Commandment*"

(Mather in Marks 31-2).⁵⁵ Mather explains that while dancing is not the same thing as adultery, it is a lesser sin on the same scale, for any act which could lead to the sin or which could be considered a lesser degree of the sin falls under the direction of that commandment. Mather calls this understanding an “Eternal Truth to be observed in expounding the Commandment” continuing “whenever any Sin is forbidden, not only the highest acts of that sin, but all degrees thereof, and all occasions leading thereto are prohibited” (Mather in Marks 32). The highest, or most overtly sinful, act against the Seventh Commandment would be outright adultery, but Mather believes mixed dancing to be one of the occasions which could become an opportunity for some people to sin.

Mather cites Puritan literary precedent in supporting this implication of mixed dancing as an occasion to adultery: “Now we cannot find one Orthodox and Judicious Divine, that writeth on the Commandments, but mentions *Promiscuous Dancing*, as a breach of the seventh Commandment, as being an occasion and an incentive to that which is evil in the sight of God” (Mather in Marks 32). Mather is safe in making this assertion for even in the most liberal example of Puritan written attitudes towards dance, John Cotton’s letter refusing to condemn it outright, “lascivious dancing to wanton ditties and in amorous gestures and wanton dalliances, especially after great feasts” is still condemned for its ability to lead practitioners to sin (Wagner 57). Mather concludes this portion of his first argument citing the Assembly and the Larger Catechism which does refer to “lascivious” dance as a near occasion to sin (Scholes 69). Here Mather is appealing to a much wider authority as the Catechism was compiled by the Westminster Assembly of 1643-47 and approved by Parliament. In appealing to the authority of the

⁵⁵ Mather is using the term adultery here, in the Biblical sense, meaning any sexual act conducted outside the faithfulness of wedlock. This definition would be the highest degree of sin condemned by the Seventh Commandment.

Catechism, Mather demonstrates a more universal mistrust of mixed dance on the part of Puritan leaders, both in England and New England, rather than relying on the writings of ministers from Massachusetts. It is important to remember that these leaders were attempting to strengthen Puritan attitudes in England, before the Commonwealth era, and even more overtly in the wilderness of North America. So, again, they placed a premium on order and control, which seemed to be threatened by the promiscuity which could be expressed in mixed dances when not part of the controlled court culture in England.

After calling upon the support of these authorities, Mather succumbs to the spiritual worry of the second-generation Puritan colonists. Specifically, he laments the falling-away of his generation in regard to their reception of mixed dancing. In the following lines he compares his New England contemporaries with his perception of the strength and spiritual acumen of the first-generation colonists: “It is sad, that when in times of Reformations, Children have been taught in their Catechism, that such *Dancing* is against the Commandment of God, that now in *New-England* they should practically be learned the contrary.” These times of Reformation which Mather mentions were the periods of Puritan rule in England under Cromwell and the era of the Great Migration when the Puritans founded their Massachusetts experiment in spiritual purity. While the actual spiritual teachings and beliefs of the Puritan colonists may not have changed as drastically as Mather believed, the appearance of order had. As I explained in Chapter II and reiterated earlier in this chapter, the ministers in Boston were surrounded by threats to civil and social order which were only inflamed by the Francis Stepney incident. So, after reinforcing the presence of the Catechism in his argument, Mather goes on to

intimate that even the smallest provocation of evil could bring about the moral chaos feared by the ministers:

The unchast Touches and Gesticulations used by *Dancers*, have a palpable tendency to that which is evil. Whereas some [Puritan colonists] object, that they are not sensible of any ill motions occasioned in them, by being Spectators or Actors in such *Saltations*; we are not bound to believe all which some pretend concerning their own Mortification. But suppose it were so, if there be other persons, who are by *Mixt Dancing* drawn into sin; that's enough against it (Mather in Marks 32-33)

Mather argues that even if the individual who witnessed the dance was not compelled to sin, the possibility another may be tempted was reason enough to refrain from encouraging mixed dancing's continuation.

Mather further supports this sub-argument with examples from Classical history, specifically the Roman poets Juvenal and Horace. Mather claims their writings also condemn the evils of dance and its ability to draw the innocent into sin. It is telling that Mather chooses the Romans for this support, as opposed to the Greeks. In Roman culture, particularly the later years of the Republic during which both Horace and Juvenal lived, dance and any other form of physical performance for money was held in very poor regard. Dancers, actors, and gladiators were all socially equated with prostitutes because they earned money through the use of their bodies. Even the great orators and statesmen of the late Republic and early Empire trod a precarious line between the respect and derision of their peers should their oratory take on too many characteristics of performance (Parker 162-179). The phrases Mather employs are Juvenal's "*Forsitan expectus ut [Gladitana] canoro Incipiat prurire choro, plausuq; probatae*" which Marks translates to "You may look perhaps for a troop of Spanish maidens to win applause by immodest dance and song" and Horace's "*Motus doceri gaudet Jonicos Matura Virgo, &*

Fingitur Actibus, jam nunc & incestos amores, &c” which Marks translates to “The maiden early takes delight in learning Grecian dances, and trans herself in coquetry e’en now, and plans unholy amours with passion unrestrained” (Mather in Marks 33). When understood through the lens of Roman perceptions of dance Mather’s own concern with sinful contamination, becomes even clearer.

Thus Mather concludes the first in his series of supports for his argument that the Bible condemns dancing as sinful. Mather’s second argument moves from the generality of the Seventh Commandment to specific passages of scripture. Mather explains that “Besides the seventh Commandment, *There are other Scriptures, which seem expressly and particularly to concern the Dancing we plead against*” (Mather in Marks 33). He first cites Isaiah 3:16, saying “It is spoken of as the great sin of the Daughters of *Sion*, that they did walk with stretched-out necks, and with wanton eyes, *walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet*” (Mather in Marks 33).⁵⁶ Mather equates the mincing and walking with outstretched necks to the “proud carriages” learned in dancing schools. The instruction of proper posture and carriage was an important aspect of dance training at that time as it was tied up with the idea of the ideal courtier as I discussed through Castiglione’s work in Chapter II. The demand for poised grace and the increased technicality and intricacy of the dances over the course of the seventeenth century were the two primary reasons dance masters had grown in demand over that same period, and the reason Increase Mather was within able to include this passage in his denouncement of mixed dancing.

⁵⁶ Isaiah 3:16 reads in its entirety: “The Lord also saith, Because ye daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched out necks, and with wandering eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet”.

The next two verses which Mather cites speak more fully to the Puritan fear of disorder in leisurely pursuits, particularly with the contextual knowledge of the court cases against dance and the occasions of disorderly dance often taking place in taverns or after great revels such as weddings. First Mather mentions Romans 13:13, “So that we walk honestly, as in the day: not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying”, and then follows with Peter 4:3, “For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lust, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries”. Both passages deal with unruly behavior as the result of wine, such as that taken to task by the leaders of Boston in the court cases examined in Chapter II. While these verses do not explicitly claim to include mixed dance in the settings condemned, Mather’s own experience of these settings was tinged with the association of mixed dancing. This gives him the confidence to interpret the terms rioting and reveling as “*Petulant Dancings*” (Mather in Marks 34). Even here though, in the middle of Increase Mather’s tract against mixed dancing the objection seems to be aimed more towards disorderly conduct and excess than the actual sinfulness of dancing.

Mather concludes his first argument against mixed dancing citing those scriptures which only “implicitly condemn [mixed dances] as sinful” (Mather in Marks 35). In this section Mather begins by equating dance with madness as the Bible praises “*Gravity and Sobriety*”. Mather writes “How often does the Scripture commend unto Christians, *Gravity and Sobriety*, in their behaviour at all times; and condemn all *Levity in Carriage*” (Mather in Marks 35). That Mather sees dancing as overly exuberant is not unreasonable especially keeping in mind how athletic many of the older couple dances had become by

this period. As I pointed out in Chapter II, the corantos by Increase Mather's day in the late 1600s had become athletic exhibitions. By Mather's time, in the great centers of dance such as France, the corantos or *courant* were left to the fledgling class of professional dancers who distinguished themselves from the armature courtly dancers by their additions of beats and higher leaps achievable through extended hours of practice (Needham 175).

Mather goes on to cite Philippians 4:8 which reads "Finally brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things" and I Corinthians 10:32 which reads "Give none offence, neither to the Jew, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God". Mather claims that because these passages focus on keeping only those wholesome things in mind and refraining from causing offence they also condemn mixed dancing because it is neither wholesome nor inoffensive. Mather's own words are quite assertive: "Moreover, the Scripture saith, *Whatsoever things are of good report*, think of these, *Phil. 4.8* which implieth, that Christians ought to avoid things of evil report. But *Promiscuous Dancings* are so; & that not only amongst serious Christians, but even amongst the Gentiles" (Mather in Marks 36). Mather writes that the verse from I Corinthians acts as a catch-all then for any morally ambiguous behavior should be avoided in case it gives offense, but that promiscuous dancing is most certainly not ambiguous and "is very offensive upon more accounts than one" (Mather in Marks 36). Here again Increase Mather has argued against mixed or promiscuous dancing and in the process demonstrated the Puritans more prominent distaste for disorder leisure.

Throughout this first argument Increase Mather takes scriptural passages to indicate that mixed dancing is unacceptable in New England. Biblical passages were the ultimate support of any argument made by a Puritan, and thus Increase Mather used them as the first argument against mixed dancing to give immediate weight to his assertions of that dances' sinfulness. Mather's subsequent arguments are equally primed for further dance explication, but focus more on the ritual and primitive origins of dance among the "Heathen". Research and explication of these arguments fall more appropriately within the bounds of research into ancient and earlier classical dance, rather than the English courtly and country dance traditions which I have examined over the course of this thesis. In the future I plan to enter into the more varied archival evidence supporting these later arguments of Mather's tract more thoroughly, as well as complete the requisite research into biblical and ritual dance. However for the purposes of this thesis, examination and interpretation of Mather's first argument was sufficient in demonstrating the heightened Puritan antipathy for disorderly leisure as manifested in mixed dancing.

Conclusion: The End of the Beginning

When I began research for this paper, my idea of the Puritans was much more akin to the stereotypical description I gave to open this work. While I had a general idea that historians over the years had been looking at the Puritans for their positive contributions to the political and ideological American culture, I still saw them as an overtly religious group focused on the sanctity of work and opposed to the wastefulness of leisure. While my belief in their strong spirituality have only been strengthened in this process, my understanding of their tolerant attitudes towards recreation and its manifestation in dance throughout their New England culture has undergone a complete transformation. Through my research I discovered that Puritans believed leisure was a necessary part of life and that, to many Puritans, dance was a theologically acceptable form of recreation. Additionally, regardless of theological vacillation over the topic, Puritans did dance, both in England and Massachusetts, throughout the seventeenth century.

Increase Mather's tract against mixed dancing shows a Puritan leader's concern for his fellow Christians, and is a culmination of the Puritan need for order and control in their lives and leisure. In the late seventeenth century the Puritan influence on New England was beginning to wane, despite the Puritan ministers' fierce attempts to keep the people's memories turned to the covenant of the first colonists. When placed in the context of dance culture both in a general historical sense, as well as the specific Puritan experience, Mather's *An Arrow against Profane and Promiscuous Dancing Drawn out of the Quiver of Scriptures* can be seen less as an anti-dance tract, and more as an alarm, warning his fellow Puritans against the dangers of falling from their forefathers covenant

with the Lord. However, Mather's tract does bear further scrutiny and in the future I hope to complete an explication of his document. In particular, I would like to further explore the architectural spaces of colonial Boston in search of indications as to what types of buildings these Puritan colonists were gathering in to dance, as well as the more specific rooms and how their arrangement would have influenced the dances. I would also like to further explore the dances of the English countryside, particularly the popular morris dances and the sword dances and how these differed from the courtly and country dances which came from the more urban centers of England. Finally, research into other literary works from the seventeenth century which treat on biblical dancing would only strengthen an understanding of Mather's own perspective.

The Puritan colonists who sailed to Massachusetts Bay with John Winthrop in 1630 were a brave and inspired people. It is no surprise, then, that popular culture should remember the extremes of their characteristics. However, in bringing them back down to the realm of average people who sometimes doubted their callings, found comfort in leisure, and were not always the perfect practitioners of what they preached, their condition and accomplishments in New England can be better appreciated. Looking at the Puritans' practice of dance in England gives a much more detailed idea of the experiences and exposure to dance the Massachusetts Puritans brought with them to their New England homes. John Hutchinson and Bulstrode Whitelocke served as representative examples of Puritans dancing, and through their connection a closer look at the places and styles of dance of that time became possible. Examining the specific dances such as the measures, country dances, branles, corantoes, and galliards, opened a wider understanding of Puritan attitudes towards dance. The situations where the

Puritans danced, whether the Inns of Court, the privacy of their homes, or in colonial taverns, and the dances they did in these places, whether round dances or processional, group dances or for couples, lively or stately, all significantly impacted the views Puritans took towards them and the role they played in the Puritans' daily lives. Analyzing detailed descriptions of these dances alongside writings from the Puritans, themselves, brought far greater depth to an understanding of their views than merely listing the occasions of Puritans dancing and leaving the story at that, it placed their shifting and seemingly contradictory attitudes in clearer perspective.

In bringing the historical, theological, and dance perspectives to bear on the Puritans in New England a number of avenues opened which I hope to investigate further in the future. First, in her article "Dance References in the Records of Early English Drama: Alternative Sources for Non-Courtly Dancing", E. F. Winerock begins to explore the records of dance available through the Records of Early English Drama. Non-courtly dance is one area that would greatly strengthen a more comprehensive look at the range of dance available to the Puritan communities. Another avenue which I hope to follow is a deeper and more systematic search of the *Records of the Governor and Company of Massachusetts Bay in New England*. So far, these records have turned up the records of court cases involving dance I included in Chapter II, but the scope of their volumes warrant further study. Finally a wider examination of journal literature with an eye to references of dance could also bear more fruit in discerning both attitudes and habits of the New England Puritans and dance.

In bridging and including so many disciplines in one analysis, I have intended to lay a foundation for further study in this same vein. Dance does not exist in a vacuum of

time and culture. It demonstrates the humanity and attitudes of a particular people at a particular time. In examining the dance practices of seventeenth-century New England Puritans, I propose a more holistic understanding of those settlers of Massachusetts can be reached and I also hope that in placing these dances on this specific people, in this specific place, a deeper appreciation and understanding of the dance forms can also be found. The Puritans have long been viewed through the lens of a stereotype which, like all stereotypes, had its origins in truth but has become stretched and distorted past the point of reality. As I undertook the research and writing necessary for this paper, the innumerable avenues which opened for further research have also pointed me towards a larger scholarly theory I hope to further explore. As I wrote this paper I realized I was writing about a subject which was only a very small point at the convergence of a myriad of scholarly fields. I have only scraped the upper reaches of what can be found about Puritan dance in seventeenth-century Massachusetts, but I believe I have opened an avenue that can and will be much more interdisciplinary its approach. I have chosen to look at the Puritans with an eye to dance and performance studies as well as traditional historical studies, but others could continue to deepen our understanding of these people by integrating these disciplines with others such as leisure, architecture, theology, music, sexuality, sociology, gender, performance, politics, and visual art. In my own right, I also hope to continue down this path uncovering an ever more approachable picture of these early colonists through increasingly interdisciplinary research.

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