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Semiotics, Textuality, and the Puritan Collective: "Speaking to Yourselves in Psalms"

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**SEMIOTICS, TEXTUALITY, AND THE PURITAN
COLLECTIVE: “SPEAKING TO
YOURSELVES
IN PSALMS”**

By

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B.A. University of St. Thomas, 1998

A THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

(in English)

The Graduate School

The University of Maine

May, 2001

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In order to understand the relationship between Puritanism, iconoclasm, and texts, it is advantageous to approach Puritanism as a sign system. Thus iconoclasm can be seen as the semiotic overthrow of the old sign system of *imagery* in Catholicism with the new, text-based sign system of Protestantism. The privileging of text over image via the printed page also suggests various theories concerning print culture (McLuhan, Ong, Johns, etc.) which work in tandem with ideas concerning Puritan plainness (or minimalism, primitivism). The destruction of imagery in the English churches sets the stage for not only the regicide, but the destruction of the natives in the New World, which are then replaced by a text, the Puritan icon.

The synthetic nature of this thesis allows the drawing together of several fields of study (material culture, religion, history, semiotics, literature) to try to understand

Puritanism as a system with its own inherent unity but with, as well, a destructive element that can be viewed as cleansing on the one hand, but also allows for regicide, civil war, and ultimately genocide. It is "ironic" that the Puritans through iconoclasm replaced the statuary of the churches with the text of the English Bible, that the beheaded Charles I is replaced by the *Eikon Basilike*, and the Pequods with John Eliot's Indian Bible. It is questionable, however, whether the adopted approach of semiotics is capable of conveying that irony or is itself subject to the same internal prejudices as Puritan textuality.

Many primary sources have been referenced along with works by contemporary scholars to try to offer a generalized introduction to the study of Puritanism and textuality, though some familiarity with historical events is presupposed. Due to the paper's synthetic nature, it can offer a variety of ways into the material through each of its sections. Taken as a whole, however, it provides an original analysis into the possible relationships between icon and text in the Puritan collective.

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INTRODUCTION: SIGN SYSTEMS AND RELIGION

Between 1638 and 1645, Thomas Shepard, pastor of the church at Cambridge in New England, recorded the public “confessions” of fifty-one people applying for membership in his congregation, wherein each applicant would stand before the church and testify as to God’s work of grace upon his or her soul (Selement, Woolley, 3). The twenty-first confession of this series is by “John Trumbull or Trundle or Turnbull (1606 – *circa* 1687), a mariner and owner of a small trading vessel, [who] emigrated from Newcastle, Northumberland, sometime before 1637 and settled at Cambridge” (106). As Shepard recorded it, “John Trundle, His Confession” included the following:

Afterward coming to the sea by some men checking me
there for them I left those sins. And having by sea lost all time I
thought I would learn to read it again. And reading *Poor Man’s*
Pathway, they told me the more I read the more I would delight in it
but I read in it only to learn to read. And at last I heard he that read
that book over and it should be a witness against him. And though
[I] thought it a serious book, then reading book of repentance,
learning some sins yet I lived in, so saw my misery. Yet this broke
me that I saw wrath and sin and was yet alive. After this I was
moved to seek after some other means. And so resorting to a place
where the means were twice, my spirit being oppressed for God’s

wrath and sin, the Lord preached by one of His servants: How much are you better than they? And so showed the Lord had more respect to one sinful than unto many others beside. And the Lord rejoiced more in one lost creature than in many others. And hence I thought yet there might be mercy. And handling another text – Thy glory is above the heavens – hearing excellency of God’s attributes, I saw the Lord’s excellency. And so I saw the evil of sin, that it should separate from his glory as the creature could not desire God again. So I resolved no more to sin, but then many friends set themselves against me that I would go mad as other ministers with study.

(107)

Trumbull not only made quick reference in this excerpt to Arthur Dent’s *The Plain Mans Path-Way to Heaven*, the Book of Luke (“And the Lord rejoiced more in one lost creature than in many others”), the Psalms (“Thy glory is above the heavens”), an anonymous “book of repentance”, but would go on to incorporate 1 Peter, the Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Exodus and Deuteronomy, Matthew, Proverbs, 1 John, and tells how he “walking on the deck took a book *To Live Well and to Die Well* (probably the volume by Richard Rolle) which affected me”, as well as sermons he has heard preached, including those by Puritan minister Obadiah Sedgwick of St. Mildred’s Church, Bread Street, London (106-9).

It is a romantic image, of course. This man in anguish over his inability to have peace with God, pacing the deck of the ship, searching through volumes to forge

a knew identity in God's grace, could be straight out of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. However, the narrative that is being given is not a symbolic one but is ostensibly a real-life event being described in all sincerity. William Andrews, a shipmaster, in his confession before the congregation, tells a similar story, though his anguish seems to have been even more acute than Trumbull's, for he states: "And indeed I had oft temptation to kill myself hence durst not carry a knife about me not go near water," then goes on to say, "And at sea I got books, searching between a true believer and a temporary, as Dike and Rogers's *Seven Treatises*" (112).

Richard Eccles' confession begins in this manner:

For my education I was brought up in popery a good many years. Yet afterward I came to hear the word first text Christ should appear in flaming fire to them that know not God. God affected heart a good space. After I heard another minister, Romans 8:I – no condemnation to them that be in Christ. And in *Practice of Piety* I read torments of hell which affected my heart with my estate by Adam's fall. And by Mr. Perkin's *Exposition of Creed* I saw my condition bad. And so getting some light I forsook ill company and reformed diverse things and got light by reading *The Burning Bush*. (115)

Throughout the confession recorded by Shepard, there are not only many books and tracts named, but also the recollection of sermons preached, perhaps

referenced by those parishioners who could not read. “Brother Winship’s Wife” (Jane Wilkinson Winship), for instance, starts her confession “Hearing 2 Jeremiah 14 – two evils broken cisterns – I was often convinced by Mr. Hooker my condition was miserable and took all threatenings to myself” (147-8). In quick succession she mentions “hearing” TS (Thomas Shepard), Mr. Eaton, a Mr. Rogers and another Mr. Rogers of Rowley, and Mr. Wells, then continues her list of what she has heard by giving fragments of scripture, such as, “Hearing – oppressed undertake for me – eased” (148-9). Some of this is Shepard’s shorthand of what is being said before the congregation, but reading through the other confessions there are many references to hearing a passage from the Bible or a certain preacher, whereas others speak of reading particular books.

In their introduction to the volume, Selement and Woolley note that only a little more than a third of these people were literate, most of them being yeoman, tradesmen, or mariners (3). About half of those confessing before the congregation were women, subservient to their husbands and fathers, though “Puritan women usually functioned independently from their men in the matter of receiving grace, and hence many of the confessions by women were as long or longer than those by men” (5-6). Thus, we find people with little, if any, formal education struggling with texts of theology (as John Trumbull termed it, “handling” a text). Whether through reading, writing, or hearing, the Puritan’s life was imbued with textuality.

The keeping of diaries by both ministers and laity, for instance, was a common enough practice so that the diaries of Elizabethan Puritans Richard Rogers and Samuel Ward, and the later diary of Lady Margaret Hoby discuss not only the

meditation upon certain portions of scripture, but point to the keeping of a diary itself and the exchanging these diaries between brethren as significant to attaining their spiritual goals (Knappen, 2,8). Rogers, for instance, in an excerpt dated July 9, 1589, wrote, “Reading the writeinges of an other brother about his estat an houre and longer, I was moved to write, and to bring my hart into a better frame, which in the beginning was impos [sible] to me, but, I thanck god, I feel a sensibl chaung of that, and will set downe after how myne hart groweth better seasoned” (84).

And though it is tempting to divide one epoch from another -- Elizabethan Puritanism from Commonwealth from New English -- or to want to keep distinct what transpires in England from what takes place in the Massachusetts Bay Colony (and Separatist Plymouth separate from all these), there are too many similar traits running through all of these. New England was hardly the isolated wilderness that American folk history would claim. Letters were constantly moving back and forth with trade. In fact, the trans-Atlantic discourse was extremely important and much of what was written in New England was for the home country’s consumption, such as John Cotton’s defense of the New England churches *The Way of the Churches of Christ in New-England Cleared*, or Thomas Morton’s unsympathetic view in *New English Canaan*. But there were also letters between friends and family, not always with the political undertone of supporting or denouncing the colonies, as in the Winthrops’ letters to each other and to their son John and sundry others. It is reasonable then to want to get a view of this textual terrain as a whole or at least mark out its broad frontiers which extend back to the Elizabethan compromise (and truly into the Middle Ages) and forward into the colonial period; and how it exists on both sides of the

Atlantic, where it will develop differently due to the different exigencies imposed upon it.

Puritan “scripturalism” is well known but the Puritan relationship to texts, as I have just noted, goes beyond the Bible and texts based upon it. True, their histories are imbued with it, so that there is no mistaking the real hero of Edward Johnson’s history *Wonder-working Providence of Sions Saviour in New-England: 1628-1651*. William Bradford’s “Of Plimoth Plantation” as well sees its history as being fundamentally set amidst the conflict between Satan and God’s “Saints” (3). This is the dominant strand in the Puritan text, but by no means the only one. In the work of William Walwyn, for instance, we find social contract theory that predates Locke by a hundred years. In Sir Henry Wotton’s *Elements of Architecture* we find theories of architecture based upon the Puritan ideal of “plainness”. Rather than treat the Puritan relationship to texts as being purely a matter of Biblical exegesis and sermons based upon it (and histories strangely warped – to modern ways of thinking, at least -- to support it), it may be better to look for a wider approach to the Puritan project itself, of which textuality would form a significant part.

The Puritan culture, according to this approach, forms a coherent system that can be examined semiotically. By marking out what is constitutive of this system as a whole, we can then find a place for textuality within that system and then work our way back to John Trumbull’s anguish over the handling of texts. It is the ultimate goal of this paper to explore the role of printed text itself in this system as a conditioning factor for that system. In other words, Puritans did not merely produce printed text; they were, in turn, produced by it. Thus, the theories of “plainness” that

characterized all aspects of the Puritan culture can, I think, be linked to their relationship to print. This is not so startling as the influence of a technology on a culture is a commonplace in material cultures study. In this instance in particular, the work of Marshall McLuhan has provided a guidepost for the influence of printed text on cultures. But what makes the Puritan project of especial note is the mixture of technology and the sacred, democratic ideal and colonialism. Not only were texts produced at a rate hitherto unknown in England (and ultimately in New England, as well) during the beginning of the Seventeenth century, but the Puritans seized the opportunity this afforded to try to reconstruct society as a whole using the ideal of the “sacred text”. Thus a connection can be made between Oliver Cromwell’s New Model Army and John Eliot’s praying towns in New England, between minimalist architecture and the *Bay Psalm Book*, between iconoclasm and Puritan textuality. In his book *A Rational Millenium: Puritan Utopias of Seventeenth-Century England and America*, James Holstun will make Print one of the elements of the “utopian technological trinity” along with Gunpowder and Magnet (51). The mass-production of texts accounted for the pamphlet wars during the pre-revolution and the incessant battling of theological texts via “accountings,” “defenses,” “replies” that occurred in England and then trans-Atlantically once the colonies had been established. At the same time there are the beginnings of “scientific” discourse (where a *plain* statement of observed phenomena is privileged) in the newly-founded Royal Society and the downfall of the divine right of Kings (maintained in the semiotically rich *Eikon Basilike*).

Since I've used the term "semiotic" twice now, it is advisable that I clarify what it is I mean, and what the uses and the limitations of this vocabulary are. My intent is to offer a brief examination of Puritanism as sign system, following the thought of Umberto Eco that cultures ought to be examined in such a manner. This will provide a framework or, at least, a starting place for this discussion. Then the focus will narrow as we follow the one strand of textuality out of the semiotic construct. I use the term "construct" because I am wary about the semiotic approach. I believe it is serviceable, providing a way of talking about a large mixture of materials to look for ways in which they function as a systematic entity; yet the likelihood of imposing an artificial rationality upon organic phenomena (such as human culture) makes me hesitant to use it whole-heartedly. I realize that the work of Thomas Sebeok has gone far in trying to incorporate that very organicism into the semiotic project, but I worry about what Lyotard (to whom we shall return later) refers to as semiotics' "imperialism" in his essay "The tensor" (7). This will to a system is suspect in my eyes. In other words, I think it advisable to note that in using this tool of examination we may end up only seeing the tool itself.

Fundamentally, semiotics, from the Greek σήμειον meaning sign, is the study of signs and sign-systems. Charles Peirce and Ferdinand Saussure are the recognized originators of modern sign theory, though the study, in a rather piecemeal manner, has been around since classical philosophy and rhetoric. Tzvetan Todorov, for instance, begins his *Theories of the Symbol* with a discussion of Aristotle's *On Interpretation* and Plato's *Cratylus* and the arguments of Sextus Empiricus with the Stoics. But these are preliminary to the discussion of Augustine, who, according to

Todorov, articulates a theory of signs as communication. From the beginning, then, the approach to semiotics has been a linguistic one. Saussure, a Swiss linguist, was primarily concerned with systems that establish communication through arbitrary signs, the relationship between signifier and signified, *langue* (the complete structure of a living language) and *parole* (an individual's language activity within that system), the study of which he termed "semiology".

Charles Peirce, a logician, spent a lifetime developing a formal theory of semiotics with a central idea of the tripartite nature of the sign as he states in his *Logic as Semiotic: The Theory of Signs*, where "signs are divisible by three trichotomies" (7). The importance of this sort of quasi-Scholastic differentiation is that the theory of signs is a scientific, therefore systematic approach. But whereas Saussure tended to leave the role of sign theory in its linguistic framework, Peirce broadens its application. Robert Innis, in his introduction of Peircean sign theory for his semiotic anthology, quotes the following:

There is no element whatever of man's consciousness that has not something corresponding to it in the world; and the reason is obvious. It is that the word or sign that man uses *is* the man himself. For, as the fact that every thought is a sign, taken in conjunction with the fact that life is a train of thought, proves that man is a sign; so, that every thought is an *external* sign, proves that man is an external sign. That is to say, the man and the external sign are identical, in the same sense in which the words *homo* and

man are identical. Thus my language is the sum total of myself; for the man is the thought. (2)

Thus, as Innis points out, “semiosis is the key anthropological fact” (2). The theories of such people as Lacan, Derrida, and Kristeva have built upon this initial idea. Barthes’ *Mythologies*, of course, follows along this line as well. The transference of linguistic terms to cultural activity provides an excellent vocabulary for the discussion of varied forms of “collective representations”. Many of the ideas concerning Puritanism that are presented in this paper can be developed from these ideas. The initial impetus of this paper was to examine the Puritan sign-self as suggested by Peirce’s comments.

Thomas Sebeok’s theories of biosemiotics also intermingle linguistic and/or logically derived sign theory and culture. In his book *A Sign is Just a Sign*, Sebeok explores the web of significance found in a cultural artifact, seeing the level of anthropological semiosis as being directly comparable to other zoösemiotic activity, such as the “dancing” of bees. Man is seen as an animal that engages in semiotic activity biologically, and to a certain degree this is a very useful idea. What we are dealing with when we are discussing semiotics is not an abstract, rationally constructed system (which the linguistic paradigm can insinuate) but a natural, organic phenomenon (like natural languages). In his final chapter, “The Sign Science and the Life Science”, Sebeok ties communicative relationships between the individual and the Other back to such biologically motivated semiotic facts as secretions in fungi when interacting with other life forms. But if any causal

relationship creates effects that are *signs* of that relationship, so that weather is fraught with semiotic relationships, etc., then the question becomes, of course, at what point has semiotics become a catch-all phrase for *all* activity in existence? Todorov will come to this point when he concludes his analysis of Augustinian sign theory with the idea that “. . . the only thing that is absolutely not a sign . . . is God” (41).

We can accept that semiotic activity is a biological fact, though to point to “biology” as a cause gives rise to several problems. First of all, to my mind, is the taint such an argument has from Darwinism. Too many social systems have found their justification in claiming to be a “natural order”. Therefore, to say that a certain approach to human activity is “biological” or “natural” implies that it is the “right” way to look at this material. To want to look at organic activity within the schema of a scientific system conditions the perception of that activity. It privileges itself as “objective” when what it is is another sign system where the terms are arrived at conventionally and therefore no more nearer to an understanding of reality than the first set of terms. Thus the only way to jump out of the cycle of substitutable frameworks is, as Augustine does (and, of course, this was his goal all along) is to cite the divine as the authentic position from which to break the cycle of self-referentiality. And that starts a whole new series of questions.

The next step is to investigate the framework of religion itself. Here I feel obliged to point out that I am not investigating any religious doctrine as to its truth or validity. I am examining, ultimately, Puritan modes of expression, and these are modes that made certain religious assumptions. I shall not examine these

assumptions as religious *per se* but as modes, frameworks, or, as they are discussed in semiotic terminology, modeling systems.

It may seem as if we are going far afield to now turn to Soviet semiotic theory, but an essay written by A. A. Zaliznjak, V. V. Ivanov and V. N. Toporov entitled “Structural-Typological Study of Semiotic Modeling Systems” written in 1962 provides a valuable initial step in the possibility of a semiotic approach to Puritanism. As was just stated, Puritanism, investigated as a mode of expression, betokens Puritanism as a mode of experience. That this mode is a religious one (at least in its primary intent, all cynicism aside) seems reasonable. It is the thesis of their essay that religious systems should be analyzed as sign systems and semiotic theory should therefore be applied to them: “Traditional modes of examining religious and mythological phenomena are inadequate for describing a system’s functioning,” they write, “hence the need to apply methods of semiotic analysis patterned on the innovations of contemporary linguistics” (48).

Religion, then, can be discerned as an organizing framework with certain internal tendencies that, as the essay points out, create a “striking resemblance between situations observed the most diverse religions, even in the complete absence of historical contact between their cultures; there is an analogous resemblance between situations used as plots in diverse literatures” (48). This is an outgrowth of Vladimir Propp’s work with fairytales and correlates with the anthropological work of Lévi-Strauss. Higher order narratives such as myths and religious texts are seen as examples of linguistic expression and therefore capable of being examined by the modes of modern linguistic analysis. “A language system in linguistics is constructed

by the researcher on the basis of a text that is really given; similarly, religious and mythological systems can be constructed on the basis of directly observed facts that we can call a text in the broad sense of the word” (49).

In other words, a religion is a text because it is composed of entities that have meaning to those capable of interpreting them as having meaning. Ritual, or the absence of it; specific clothing or the use of specific colors; acceptance or the prohibition of certain behavior (consumption of food or regulation of the manner of consumption); all such issues form texts, some of which are cultural, others which are further rarified into what is termed religious. It should be obvious from this brief list that what may be religious for one group is not so for another and, indeed, may fall under the category of the most irreligious behavior. When we begin examining certain facets of Puritanism itself, one of the first things we must deal with is its avowed iconoclasm. The iconoclastic act is the violent overthrow of what is regarded as sacred by another group, replacing it with what is acceptable. This act is a re-inscription of text, a cleansing erasure. But for now, what is important is to draw the parallel between the linguistic analysis of natural languages and the religious expression of the collective, whether that expression is a book of sacred stories, codes of behavior, and even the use of everyday articles that would not seem to have special significance.

The text, then, is not a linear entity but rather something that infuses the life of the collective. In D. M. Segal’s essay, “Problems in the Semiotic Study of Mythology”, for instance, he states that “the semiotic approach to the study of mythology examines myth in the general context of human group behavior as a

system that models the surrounding world or portions of it in the minds of individuals belonging to the group” and further that “the modeling capacity of myth and its influence on behavior are defined by the collective character of the mythological system” (59). Like language we have a system that individuals use as a tool for modeling the outside world but which also, by that very modeling, influences the behavior of the individuals, helping them cohere into a group.

This approach to religion sees any particular instance of a religion as comparable to the situation of a language that is an off-shoot of an older language. Linguistically, two related languages can be compared to a linguistically prior language, even if that prior language may no longer be in existence. Thus languages B and C are seen as degenerate forms of the language *A because each shares in some aspect of the parent language but not in the totality. *A is a language proposed theoretically even though there is no concrete evidence of its existence.

With this approach, Catholicism would be the parent religion to Protestantism, a “degenerate” form because it does not contain all aspects of the prior religion. Taken further back, Catholicism (or Christianity, in general) would then be seen as a degenerate form of Judaism, one of its branches. There are many possibilities of mapping the relationships between whole religions. This is the route that Zaliznjak, et al., pursue in their structural-typological study of religion where “methods of comparative linguistics and of the comparative study of religion must be assimilated” (56). With this in mind, a comparison of content may be proposed that focuses on the various contents of religious systems on a “semantic” level (55).

Such a typology would presuppose constructing a system of elementary semantic units or factors, for example “good”—“evil,” “death”—“resurrection,” “higher world” (heaven)—“lower world” (hell) (55).

Segal, as well, sees this as one of the preliminary steps in the typology of religion and myth. “Just as the study of language in the history of linguistics began with the study of units possessing meaning, i.e., with words; so, too, the study of the syntax of myth in myth scholarship began with the study of units to which meaning could most easily be attributed” (60).

Approaching Puritanism from this angle is useful since it provides for a way to discuss one of its major tendencies: iconoclasm, or the willful destruction of a sign system. The iconoclasts sought to eradicate the images of veneration that were tied to the idolatrous tendencies of the Catholic church. This line of thought was not singularly Puritan since it had roots through the Middle Ages, even back to the Byzantine schism (if only in retrospect), but Puritans were the arch-iconoclasts, folk history making of Oliver Cromwell an insatiable destroyer of venerated objects. But what is most Puritanical (and this word must, for the purposes of this paper, be stripped of its pejorative overtones) is the erasure of the sign system of images that had prevailed for centuries, to be replaced by nothing more than text. As was seen in the opening of this section, John Trumbull was not asked to genuflect to a patron saint or kiss some venerated object, but to demonstrate in what way he was fit for admittance into the Puritan congregation. That fitness lay in his relationship to texts, and not only the sacred words of Scripture.

In examining, then, Puritan textuality and the role that text assumed amidst the Puritan collective, it is necessary to begin with the break from (and breaking of) the system that obtained prior.

"ORDERED EIGHTEEN ANGELS OFF THE ROOF:" ICONOCLASM'S IMAGE VS. WORD

"The variety of apparel, buildings, utensils and other objects
invented by pride constitutes the book or graven image of the devil,
by which mammon or another is worshipped in the image."

--- John Wycliffe, *De Mandatis Divinis*

As Margaret Aston points out with the above quote from Wycliffe, opposition to the use of images in the church (if not the actual destruction of those images) had been an element of English religion even prior to the Reformation reaching its shores (102-3). Lollards and Wycliffites had evinced an *iconomachia* (to follow Aston's use of contemporaneous terminology) as early as the fourteenth century. The history of iconoclasm itself goes back far beyond that, having, for our purposes, its root in the Second Commandment of the Decalogue. The word itself is Greek, pointing to the original controversy concerning the use of images in the Christian church, at the dawning of the Middle Ages. Edward James Martin in his history of the Iconoclastic Controversy marks the captures of Constantinople in 1453 (following Gibbon) as the clear end of an era, with the Renaissance and Reformation forming a new Europe thereafter (1). But it is the Byzantine controversy over the veneration of images that Martin sees as inaugurating the Middle Ages, escalating through the 700s (16-17). It is Martin's theory that the Papacy was "the embodiment of Christian thought that gives homogeneity to the Middle Ages" and therefore provided the "standard of thought to which new ideas must relate" (1). It is notable, therefore, that the new

epoch defined by the preeminence of the Papacy is inaugurated by an iconoclastic impulse and ended by one as well. In fact, Martin notes that "Protestants . . . credit Iconoclasm with a noble anticipation of the principles of the Reformation" (2).

Martin's is not an unbiased account of the Orthodox Eastern Church's development from the West, but his determination of what constitutes the Middle Ages, at least chronologically, is useful. And when he writes that "Iconoclasm was a mixture of religion and politics, for in Constantinople the two were inseparable" (3), it seems reasonable to bear this in mind when looking at the recurrence of iconoclasm almost a thousand years later.

A much more in-depth approach toward icons was used by Hans Belting in his volume *Likeness and Presence*, where he examined the role of images in society prior to the secular world of Art. He broadens the implication of images:

Holy images were never the affair of religion alone, but also always of society, which expressed itself in and through religion. Religion was far too central a reality to be, as in our day, merely a personal matter or an affair of the churches. The real role of religious images (for a long time, there were no other kinds of images) thus cannot be understood solely in terms of theological content. (3)

Nor, accordingly can their destruction. If an existent sign system is manifest throughout the different strata of society, then the disavowal of that system, and the subsequent destruction of it, will revolutionize that society. Thus whether or not the Reformation will tolerate the use (even in a limited sense, as Luther supported) of images was critical. Aston, for instance, rightly points out that iconoclasm was not

merely the removal of sacred images from churches, after which worship would renew unimpeded by the diversion of idols. The destruction of images was a violent break with a past that was made manifest physically by the objects of "popery". But more than this, "The presence of absence of imagery profoundly affected the way in which people worshipped and were taught to believe. It also affected the ways in which they thought and created. . . . When the iconoclasts went to work they were concerned with attitudes as well as objects" (2).

In the present day, after all the revolutions and counter-revolutions of the twentieth century, this idea is all too familiar. The belief that the edifices of the old system were erected not only as government buildings, palaces, churches, but as ways of habit, thoughts, attitudes generated much iconoclastic fervor in the Russian communist and Chinese cultural revolutions.

But when such a sign system is erased, when a language, as it were, is made dumb, something must take its place. Thus "the faith was remade from what believers were shut off from, as well as by the new certainties they bumped into" (Aston, 2). If a given system is formed to be expressly *not* the system that obtained previously, the second system, in some measure, must bear the mark -- if only in outline -- of the first.

As has been stated, the semiotic system that the Puritans instantiated was not simply a refusal to partake of the prior system. Rather, it was an attempt to erase the previous system physically, to shatter the language of "popery" spoken for centuries. As Volosinov wrote in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, "The domain of ideology coincides with the domain of signs. They equate one another. Whenever a

sign is present, ideology is present, too. *Everything ideological possesses semiotic value.*" (10). Even more so one can say that the destruction of a sign system that "debases the soul" (as the Puritan theologian William Ames wrote in *The Marrow of Theology*) is ideological. Such a diseased language of image and ceremony had to be extirpated prior to any construction (ideological or otherwise) being put forth in its place. The way of true religion had to be cleared -- physically.

The destruction of images, furniture, textiles, ritual foods, became, in fact, a religious ritual of its own ¹. William Dowsing's journal of image-breaking, quoted in *England's Iconoclasts*, offers a sense of the thoroughness of the cleansing and in its sheer magnitude of detail, a thrill of its zealotry:

In the chancel, as it was called, we took up twenty brazen
superstitious inscriptions, *Ora pro nobis*, &c.; broke
twenty apostles, carved in wood, and cherubims, and a lamb with a
cross; and took up four superstitious inscriptions in brass, in the
north chancel, *Jesu filii Dei miserere mei*, &c.; broke in pieces the
rails, and broke down twenty-two popish pictures of angels and
saints. We did deface the font and a cross on the font; and took up
a brass inscription there, with *Cujus animae propitietur Deus*, and
'Pray for the soul', &c., in English. We took up thirteen
superstitious brasses. Ordered Moses with his rod and Aaron with

¹ Aston sees the satire and mockery that accompanied instances of iconoclasm (mock processions, Carnavalesque donning of clerical attire to debunk the superstitious rituals of the old religion) as forming a religious ceremony for the participants, but her text on these "rites of fire" is still forthcoming. (70).

his mitre, to be taken down. Ordered eighteen angels off the roof, and cherubims to be taken down, and nineteen pictures on the windows. The organ I brake; and we brake seven popish pictures on the chancel window, -- one of Christ, another of St. Andrew, another of St. James, &c. We ordered the steps to be levelled by the parson of the town; and brake the popish inscription, *My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed*. I gave orders to break in pieces the carved work, which I have seen done. There were six superstitious pictures, one crucifix, and the Virgin Mary with the infant Jesus in her arms, and Christ lying in a manger, and the three kings coming to Christ with presents, and three bishops with their mitres and crosier staffs, and eighteen Jesuses written in capital letters, which we gave orders to do out. A picture of St. George, and many others which I remember not, with divers pictures in the windows, which we could not reach, neither would they help us to raise ladders; so we left a warrant with the constable to do it in fourteen days. We brake down a pot of holy water, St. Andrew with his cross, and St. Catherine with her wheel; and we took down the cover of the font, and the four evangelists, and a triangle for the Trinity, a superstitious picture of St. Peter and his keys, an eagle, and a lion with wings. In Bacon's aisle was friar with a shaven crown, praying to God in these words, *Miserere mei Deus*, -- which we brake down. We brake a holy water font in the chancel. We

rent to pieces a hood and surplices. In the chancel was Peter pictures in the windows, with his heels upwards, and John Baptist, and twenty more superstitious pictures, which we brake; and HIS the Jesuit's badge, in the chancel window. In Bacon's aisle, twelve superstitious pictures of angels with crosses, and a holy water font, and brasses with superstitious inscriptions. And in the cross alley we took up brazen figures and inscriptions, *Ora pro nobis*. We brake down a cross on the steeple, and three stone crosses in the chancel, and a stone cross in the porch.

"I find it hard to sympathize with the reformers' zeal for destruction," Aston confesses early on in her volume (16) and such a melancholy list as the foregoing has too much of the *Kristallnacht* for modern minds. It is as if language is being scraped from the tongue. But why? Why could images not exist alongside Reformation emphasis on textuality? Revelation through the word had always been at the core of Christianity, and it was to discovering that core that iconoclasm moved. But by eradicating the previous sign system, the word (and the means by which the word was conveyed) became paramount. "After all," as Hans Belting writes, "the new preachers had only the word of Holy Scripture and no other authority in practicing a religion without the institution of the church" (465). But there is something more to what we find in Dowsing's journal than a search for authority. Belting continues: "[The new preachers] wanted, as it were, to rediscover the primal sound of the word, free of all the dross and errors of papism, and to teach it to the congregations" (465).

For the reformers, the relationship between signifier, signified and interpretant (to use Peirce's terminology) in the case of the image was too amorphous. Not only is it a matter of the likelihood of shifting the intent of worship from God to the man-made device (though this is a major issue), but the inability to adequately control the image. Images asserted a dynamic quality that extended out beyond their static being. Cults formed around particular icons because of the image's ability to directly interact with a member of the faithful by the sheer presence of it in a material form. This is not to say that those venerating images were incapable of discerning the difference between St. Joseph and the husband of Mary, Jesus' mother. Rather, the image acted as a conduit of supernatural power. The problems such a relationship could create were evident in the Catholic church centuries before the Reformation (and such questions as authenticity of healings attributed to icons continue today). But the unswerving dictum of Judaic law against the making of graven images could not withstand the exigencies of adapting to the Greco-Roman culture with its long-standing inter-relationship of art and religion. The church adopted the use of images to assert its claims to universality within the Roman Empire (Belting, 7).

It is beyond the scope of this paper to treat in detail the stages by which images were adopted into the Catholic church or the various arguments raised for or against their acceptance by the Patriarchs. But if we are to accept Martin's decision to see the Middle Ages as that time in history marked by the ascendancy of the Papacy, and Belting's argument that images were adopted by the church as a means of securing a power base, then the use of this medium by the church signals a transference of some power from the Imperial family of the Empire to the Pope. Now

the sign of the eagle, once the standard for the Roman legions throughout the Empire, becomes the ensign of the Gospel.

Looked at in this manner, iconoclasm, which started out as obedience to the will of God proclaimed in the Ten Commandments, also was politically motivated. By overthrowing the authority of the old hierarchy, the reformers took control over that political base. But theology and politics do not fully explain the issue. During the reign of Elizabeth I the churches had been reformed and all "thinges superstitious" removed by royal injunction in 1559¹.

What took place in England was a shift, according to Clifford Davidson, from the medieval emphasis on sight as the principal medium for a relationship with God to that of the ear, with its movement from sacred drama (morality and miracle plays, church ritual, extensive use of color and visual textures in worship) to the emphasis on didactic sermons: "Instead of originating in the sense of sight, therefore, any religious experience involving the imagination must have its origin in the experience of the Word, the Scriptures, principally as these sacred writings are pre-digested in sermons and heard by those in attendance" (36).

¹ Elizabeth announced in a proclamation of 27 December, 1558, "Prohibiting Unlicensed Preaching; Regulating Ceremonies", that all must "forbear to preach or teach or to give audience to any manner of doctrine or preaching other than to the Gospels and Epistles, commonly called the Gospel and Epistle of the day, and to the Tene Commandments in the vulgar tongue without exposition (or addition of any manner, sense, or meaning) to be applied or added; or to use any other manner of public prayer, rite, or ceremony in the Church but that which is already used by law received, or the common litany used at this present in her majesty's own chapel . . ." (see *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, vol. 2, 102). Yet a proclamation dated 10 December 1641 by Charles I states, "[T]he present division, separation and disorder about the Worship and Service of God, as it is established by the Laws and Statutes of this Kingdom, in the Church of England, tendeth to great distraction and confusion, and may endanger the subversion [sic] of the very essence and substance of true Religion" when it was Parliament and the Puritans (not Spain or the Vatican) that pressed upon the established customs of the English church. (see *Stuart Royal Proclamations*, vol. 2, 753)

The conflict of iconoclasm, therefore, is not only about theology and politics (though none the less about these) but also about different ways of sensually experiencing religion, God and Truth. Belting quotes Martin Luther: "For on words rests all our ground, protection, and defense against all errors and temptation," and again: "The kingdom of God is a kingdom of hearing, not of seeing" (465).

Looking becomes an avenue of deception then, except if one is looking at a text (and then, presumably, only if it is appropriate: i.e., *not* illuminated). The uncontrollable dynamic of the visual had to be erased.

"Sight," Davidson argues,

devoted therefore to false shadows instead of the inward reality established by the Word which is received through hearing, becomes a threat to the spiritual life that can only be overcome by the iconoclastic cleansing of churches, by the prohibition of quasi-dramatic and dramatic ceremonies on the feast days of the Church such as Easter, Christmas, Palm Sunday, and Pentecost, and by the suppression of the vernacular drama associated with the older Catholic visual traditions (41).

The extension to the theater is a reasonable extension of the process begun in the church. Society as a whole must be cleansed of the impurity that the visual displays had enacted.

The virulence of the anti-visual prejudice described by Davidson seems open to question, however; particularly if Marshall McLuhan's famous analysis is brought in. It is also worthwhile noting that this age develops the empirical study of nature with a heavy emphasis on data received through sight. Granted the Puritans were not the Royal Society, but that the two streams are emerging simultaneously ought not to be ignored. The Puritan emphasis on text (spoken as well as written) does not necessarily bespeak an anti-visual prejudice. Certainly they were suspicious of all the senses as possible worldly traps, and sight, being the dominant sense, would naturally require the more regulation.

Hans Belting, citing a report of a Dutch triptych of the Crucifixion by Hugo Van der Goes which was painted over with the Ten Commandments, and which demonstrates "graphically the antithesis between text and image"(467), gives this perfect example of the new attitude:

In the Spitalskirche at Dinkelsbühl a plain written panel, one of the first altarpieces serving the new doctrine, was commissioned in 1537 . . . The triptych form comes from the tradition of the painted image, the absence of which is polemically underlined by the text replacing it. Texts previously read in books are now displayed in the place formerly occupied by the image -- the altar -- and demand the same kind of veneration. (467)

"A NATION OF PROPHETS:" PRINT CULTURE AND PURITANISM

With the overthrow of the old religious sign system of imagery, a new text-based system emerged which coincided with the gradual technological transition from manuscripts to printed books. N. F. Blake in his *William Caxton and English Literary Culture* has shown how printed books of the fifteenth century were "finished" by illuminators and scribes who would illustrate and provide the capital letters for the text, neither of which could be reproduced mechanically (277). According to Blake, the distinction between manuscript and printed books (such as keeping them in separate areas of a library) was not typical of Caxton's time¹. For fifteenth century printers and readers "the two ways of committing language to paper . . . must have seemed similar; both could be referred to as *ars artificialiter scribendi* by contemporaries" (275).

Such authors as Marshall McLuhan in *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, Elizabeth L. Eisenstein in her two-volume account of "communications and cultural transformations in early-modern Europe", and, recently, Adrian Johns in *The Nature of the Book* have all explored the effect of print technology on cognition and the cultural changes it has engendered.

Walter J. Ong, for instance, has contrasted orality and literacy in his book of the same name. He, too, like Davidson, perceives a radical difference between

¹ Elizabeth Eisenstein, on the other hand, believes this opinion to be unsubstantiated by the data and that "it is not necessarily prudent and may even be rash to insist on gradual and evolutionary change when dealing with the shift from script to print" (39).

hearing-dominated society and sight-dominated. Contrary to Davidson, however, but in agreement with McLuhan and Eisenstein, Ong characterizes the era prior to the advent of the printing press as the oral-aural world of hearing and the world of print as the sight-dominated. "Hearing, rather than sight, had dominated the older noetic world in significant ways, even long after writing was deeply interiorized.

Manuscript culture in the west remained always marginally oral" (Ong, 119).

Contrary to the beliefs of certain unnamed "semiotic structuralists", it was the advent of print -- not writing itself -- that "effectively reified the word, and, with it, noetic activity" (Ong, 119).

Ong gives a quick nod to McLuhan's *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962) and *Understanding Media* (1964) but cites Eisenstein's 1979 book *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* as authoritative (118, 117). Perhaps this is not surprising as Eisenstein acknowledges in her own book that while McLuhan provided the impetus for her approach, to be associated with his work made one's own research suspect, inviting being labelled as "McLuhanite" (xvii). She is concerned that her project overcome this prejudice and show that "the topic is not incompatible with respect for the historian's craft" (xvii). Obviously this hesitancy to embrace McLuhan comes from his own success as a "personality" much as Derrida has in our own day. McLuhan's sibylline phrases and attempts to construct "cool" texts are off-putting to mainstream historians worried about the respect accorded their field. What is more, Eisenstein admits that her own work suffers from being "based on monographic literature not archival research" and that it "reflects very uneven acquaintance with relevant data" (xvi). These, as well, are the defects of the present work. In

attempting to broach such a large-scale topic as the shift from image and ritual-based religious practices to the radical presence and veneration of the text in Puritanism, especially basing much of the analysis on what has heretofore been a marginal theory (at least to mainstream academics), this research is necessarily synthetic. Like Eisenstein I have collected materials from various fields and brought them together in order to look at the use of text by the Puritan collective in a certain light. In order to construct the chain from religion to semiotic system to contrasted systems to iconoclasm to text, it was necessary to employ theories of cultural reconfiguration based on technological innovations. By citing Davidson's theories of hearing vs. seeing and noting how they seemingly contradicted Ong's statements, I hoped to indicate that this analysis is provisional, just as the semiotic analysis of religion was merely an approach to foster speculation concerning the topic as a whole.

Eisenstein comments on the reluctance to approach this material:

Save for occasional references to the "rise" of the "reading public" and the emergence of "professional" authors in the eighteenth century, to the role of "press" and of "public opinion" in the nineteenth century, one might conclude from the vast bulk of current history books, that the social and intellectual transformations introduced by printing had petered out with the last Reformation broadside. That the new presses disseminated Protestant views is, probably, the only aspect of the impact of printing which is familiar to most historians of modern Europe. In

accounts of the Reformation as in accounts of other movements, the effects produced by printing tend to be drastically curtailed and restricted to the single function of "spreading" ideas. That new issues were posed for churchmen when the scriptural tradition "went to press", and that print contributed to dividing Christendom before spreading Protestantism are possibilities that have gone unexplored. (29)

For the present work, not only is this significant because of its relevance to history and its assessment of different periods of human activity, but also to literature. The literature that the Puritans created is something caught between nonfiction and religious fantasy. To our secular age, for instance, the statements of William Bradford or Edward Johnson concerning Providence in Puritan history are seen as rhetorical effects or instances of the psychology (or pathology) of the Puritan mind. The majority of Puritan work has been discarded except for the stereotypical rhetoric of Jonathan Edwards. I say stereotypical because he is our sample Puritan, as literary studies once had a sample black dialect author. An oddity, a pet exotic, nothing more. Yet looked at in the light of the transition from orality to print, from images to text, the Puritan text is the text that best reflects the inauguration of modern textuality.

Religion, as has been pointed out earlier, was the main discourse of culture at the advent of printing. That this discourse was also used for political purposes does not change the fact that the discourse was one based upon religion. In fact, the two aspects, as has been seen, go hand in hand. So it was with the first uses of print. The

Reformation was "the first movement of any kind, religious or secular, to use the new presses for overt propaganda and agitation against an established institution (Eisenstein, 304). Eisenstein quotes Dickens' *Reformation and society*: "Lutheranism was from the first the child of the printed book, and through this vehicle Luther was able to make exact, standardized and ineradicable impressions on the mind of Europe" (303). This poetic image is the one most often associated with the theory of print: a physical shaping of the "mind". This is the basic assumption of Eisenstein's book and the ultimate meaning of many of McLuhan's more sybilline utterances. Print itself causes changes in the perception of the world beyond its effect on more evident phenomena as the dissemination and archiving of information. The mind nurtured in the culture affected by print technology is markedly different from that of a non-print culture. "The interiorization of the technology of the phonetic alphabet translates man from the magical world of the ear to the neutral visual world" states McLuhan (18). The quotes above suggest that this was a factor in the establishment of the Reformation. Or, perhaps, that the Reformation itself--the kind of thinking that produced its re-evaluation of religious institutions, rituals, etc.--was a product of that thinking or, at least, intricately bound up in it.

For instance, Adrian Johns, in a chapter of *The Nature of the Book* devoted to "The Physiology of Reading", argues that

the powerful effects of reading . . . were not only widely attested,
but supported by contemporary knowledge about human beings and
the physical world they inhabited. In consequence, accounts of the

practical experience of reading came to play a central role in arguments about the status of claims to knowledge, especially when such claims came to be controverted. In a Protestant nation, defining itself substantially through the collective and individual experiences of reading Scripture, such a conclusion was of particular importance. . . [A]rgument centering on professed religious knowledge became a peculiarly intense site for discussions of the nature, role, and consequences of reading.

(384)

"The practical experience of reading" or the moment of confrontation between reader and text is what is involved here. What is suggested that the act of reading, the focusing of the eyes on a page of (more or less) uniform graphic letters is of prime importance. The linearity of the printed text, its uniformity, condition the mind through the physical act of reading. The utilitarian black on white of the typography, the steady rate of processing the text through the sight, the exchange of a visual structure for a mental phonetic "voice" created by the text, these and the sundry other aspects of the act of reading alter the thought-processes. The question then becomes whether or not there is some sort of technological determinism at work here, for it seems that print technology, on this view, is something that arrives like the monolith at the beginning of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, altering the reality into which it is suddenly plunged. Again McLuhan: "When technology extends one of our senses, a new translation of culture occurs as swiftly as the new technology is interiorized"

(40). This is what Johns argues against when she insists that "texts, printed or not, cannot compel readers to react in specific ways, but that they must be interpreted in cultural spaces" (22).

But it seems a fair way to approach the problem, and it is why I have attempted to bring in iconoclasm and contrasting religious sign systems as tools to explore the cultural space of Puritanism. The argument (essentially McLuhan's, supported by Ong and Eisenstein) that technology affected this cultural space is reasonable, but just how far that argument should be pushed is difficult to determine. What is evident is that the advent of "print culture" (however we determine the scope of that appellation) affected the cultural practice of religion, replacing, as far as Reformation practices, the image and ritual-based (and hierarchically solidified) traditions of the Catholic church with one developed from the interaction with readily producible and widespread text.

That the accessibility of texts had radically increased, and that this promulgated a new attitude towards religious practice -- one bent upon text as its most characteristic mode of sacred activity -- is demonstrated by a sermon of Rev. Thomas Watson, A.M. from the second volume of *Puritan Sermons: 1659 - 1689* entitled "How We May Read the Scriptures with Most Spiritual Profit." This text has all the hallmarks of a Puritan sermon, some of which we will examine later as possible by products of the Puritan relationship to text. Briefly let us here note that it is neatly divided into topics and subtopics, with numbered lists of each section, following the Ramist tradition of rhetoric. It emphasizes ethical behavior on the part of the Puritan, rather than relying on liturgical formulae. And it is told in a "plain

style" without elaborate embellishments. After the quote of the scripture that is to be opened (in this case, Deuteronomy xvii. 19: "*And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of his law and these statutes, to do them.*") the beginning line is simply, "What Cicero said of Aristotle's Politics, may not unfitly be said of this Book of Deuteronomy: 'It is full of golden eloquence.'" (57). The tying of the political rhetoric of Cicero and Aristotle and what this implies concerning the Puritan project will be discussed later, but here let us simply note the spare style. A simple comparison connected by a double negative introduces a thirteen-page sermon. The author then launches into an exegesis -- an "unfolding" -- of the chosen text phrase by phrase.

This sermon then goes on to declare that "Reading of the word is the best means to usher-in the fear of the Lord" (58) and suggests that Christians should read it over with the diligence of a "child reading over his father's will and testament, and a citizen peruse his charter! With the like diligence should we read God's word, which is our Magna Charta for heaven" 958). Again the reference to a political document is telling, particularly in Commonwealth England, the reference to the Magna Charta. A relation between texts is being built as is the relationship to a particular text. The initial gesture here is of someone reading over a sacred text as if it contained relevant political information. Only secondly, under the heading "Direct. II." do we find the requirement of approaching the book with veneration.

After many exhortations to read diligently, with veneration, seriousness, an open heart, with a multitude of quotes, subheadings, even questions and replies, Rev.

Watson, under heading "Direct. XVII." declares: "*Compare yourselves with the word.*" where the reader is asked "Is the word copied out into your hearts?" and "[H]ave you the signature and engraving of the Holy Ghost upon You?" (66).

Suddenly the human is the page, the heart is the site of inscription of the text. Just as with a printing press, the human stock is impressed with the type of the Holy Spirit. Watson will emphasize this in "Direct. XXI:" "Christians should be walking Bibles" (68). And later: "These rules observed, the word written would . . . be . . . 'an engrafted word'."

Much of this rhetoric is familiar and is all the more deserving to be accentuated for that. There is no reason to disregard these formulae as uninteresting because of their familiarity for they are problematic modes of thought. Why should the reader or auditor of this sermon regard sacred text as if it were a utilitarian civil document like a will or a political document like the Magna Charta. Certainly the two metaphors are not unintelligible. The first because the New Covenant concerns the patrimony Christ has left upon his death for our sakes. The second concerns the freedoms we have by right as citizens of the New Jerusalem even as the nobles claimed their natural rights under King John. There is no real difficulty here. But that this should be the initial response to the Word of God (rather than veneration, obeisance, etc. is important). Add to this then the notion that people should become "walking bibles" and the issue is more complicated. The relationship to sacred text becomes a complex of responses that are only partially driven by the religious response to the Word of God (which can be manifest in statues, vestments, stained glass windows, etc.). This sermon, seen in the light of the iconoclasm we have

examined and the advent of the printing press, should give the reader pause. It is important to hear the call to become "walking Bibles" amidst the shattering of glass in William Dowsing's journal.

THE PRESS OF REVOLUTION

(John Lilburne speaks to the Porter of the Fleet prison after being publicly whipped through town and left in the pillory, now returned to the prison.)

. . . after I was in bedd, he came to me againe, and said thus unto me: *Mr. Lilburne* I have one suite to you. What is that, said I? It is this, said he, that you would helpe me to one of those Books that you threw abroad at the *Pillary*, that I might reade it, for I never read any of them; I speake not for it to doe you any hurt, only I have a great desire to reade one of them. *Sir*, I thinke you doe not (said I) but I cannot satisfie your desire, for if I had had more of them; they should yesterday have all gone. I verily beleeeve you, said he, and so we parted.

(John Lilburne speaks to the Warden of the prison soon after.)

I assure you, said he, I was exceedingly chidd about thee; and also there were old businesses rubd up against mee concerning *Dr. Laiton* and *Mr. Burton*, for that Liberty that they had. Wherefore were you chidd for me, said I? About the Bookes, said he, that you threw abroad, in regard you were close Prisoner, and yet had those Bookes about you; I would aske you one question: Did you bring those Bookes to the Fleete with you or were they

since brought to you by any other? I beseech you Sir pardon me for revealing that said I. Then he would have knowne who they were that most resorted to me. I desired *I* might be excused in that also. Ey, but you must give me an answer, said hee, for I must certifie the Lords thereof. Then, said I, I pray you tell their Honours, I am unwilling to tell you. What were those Bookes, said he, that you threw abroad, were they all of one sort? Those that have them, said I, can certifie you of that.

----John Lilburne, *A Worke of the Beast, or A Relation of a most unchristian Censure, executed upon JOHN LILBURNE, (Now prisoner in the fleet) the 18. of Aprill 1638 with the heavenly speech utter by him at the time of his suffering*

The radical Puritan William Prynne, along with John Bastwick and Henry Burton, was convicted by the Court of Star Chamber in 1637 of publishing unlicensed pamphlets attacking the prelacy of the Church of England and was sentenced to be fined, pilloried, and to have his ears sliced off -- for the second time. In his volume of commentary on the two volume set of facsimiles, *Tracts on Liberty in the Puritan Revolution, 1638 - 1647*, William Haller describes Prynne's career as a pamphleteer, culminating in the writing of *Histrio-Mastix* in 1633 which, as a vitriolic attack on stage plays, was seen as an attack on the king and queen, their court and the established church. "He was condemed in Star Chamber in the early months of 1634, degraded from his academic degrees, expelled from Lincoln's Inn, fined,

pilloried, deprived of his ears, and sent to the Tower for life. To deprive the man of books and writing materials was, however, regarded by Bishop Laud as unchristian" (Haller, 10). From prison, Prynne would continue his career of violent assaults against the institution of bishops. His *News from Ipswich* (1636) brought him before Star Chamber again.

At the same time, Henry Burton was expounding anti-prelacy from his pulpit at St. Matthews. "With the pursuivants pounding at his door, he wrote out what he had said and dispatched it to the printer. It appeared as an unlicensed pamphlet, called *For God and the King*, 1636" (Haller, 10).

John Bastwick, at the time of the 1637 sentencing, was already in prison for publishing treatises in Latin and, while in prison, writing *sive Apologeticus ad Praesules Anglicanos* in 1636, followed by an attack directly against Bishop Laud, this time in English: *The Letany of John Bastwick*. For refusing to recant, he joined Prynne and Burton in Star Chamber.

Haller describes the results of their condemnation and punishment:

There appeared in London, almost immediately, *A Briefe Relation of certain speciall and most materiall passages, and speeches in the Starre Chamber occasioned and delivered . . . at the censure of those three worthy Gentlemen, Dr. Bastwicke, Mr. Burton and Mr. Prynne, as it hath been truly and faithfully gathered from their owne mouthes by one present at the said Censure*. This pamphlet was an omen of the time to come. In its

pages, the illicit press brought before the London populace the scenes, characters and very words of the drama which had just taken place in Star Chamber and Palace Yard. Almost the first act of the Long Parliament, when it assembled in 1640, was to release the heroes of the occasion. They were brought home from their prisons in triumph, and fell to again in the war of pamphlets against prelates. (11)

As suggested by the sermon by Watson quoted above, the discourses of religion and politics were anything but distinct in the seventeenth century. For the people of that time, the two were most often thought of as the same. The state *was* a religious body. James I and, even more to the point, his successor Charles I ruled by divine right. Thus it is no surprise that the body of literature aimed at dismantling the social conventions behind that "right" are grounded in religious thought. This can leave the modern reader with the thought that the literature of the Puritan revolution and migration (aside from the overtly aesthetic works of Milton, Marvell, Cowley, Bradstreet, Taylor, et al.) is little more than the quibbling of old men over nice distinctions of theology. That these quibbles ended with war, torture, and mass migration makes the history interesting, but not the texts that fomented it. This paper rests upon the thesis that there is a deep connection between the advent of print technology, iconoclasm, the "plain style" of Puritanism as a semiotic endeavor, their primitivism and the ultimate violence surrounding these factors. To this point we have discussed the relationship between iconoclasm and the beginnings of print

culture. The spread of the Reformation was inextricably linked to the spread of print. But a revolution in religion was, at this time, *sui generis* a political revolution as well.

"The advancement of printing and the spread of literacy made the Bible above all the book, and theology the science, of the people. Consequently, discontent first expressed itself in religious terms. Liberty was conceived first as religious, and as appertaining especially to the church, and the doctrine of liberty was expressed in Biblical images and theological formulas," notes Haller in his introduction (4). Currents from the Renaissance and its humanism were already flowing into the Reformation (e.g. Milton), and the movement of the times was towards the secular. As the era progressed, what started out as church reform irresistibly turned towards not only civil and political reform, but revolution.

As we have seen, the introduction of the printing press into England and the resultant increase in reproducible texts had a profound affect on the English culture, even if we limit the role of print as physiological catalyst *à la* McLuhan. The ease of dissemination *without regard to royal licensing* (though dangerous) orchestrated lasting effects along class lines. If the upper middle-class gentry benefited most from the redistribution of land and political privileges during the Commonwealth, the ability to produce texts and thereby own words via authorship had, as Nigel Smith puts it, gone "considerably down the social scale" where "all but the poorest had the possibility of authorship" (6).

Smith rightly emphasizes the creation and production of texts as *action* which should be viewed alongside any other historical act. In view of the conflicts in religion, particularly iconoclasm, and the use of a new technology to influence events,

then seeing the production of texts at this time as *act* is particularly significant. He also recognizes the importance of the Puritan sermon (as Haller did): "The situation we have to imagine is one where people are motivated, often to considerable degrees of intensity, by the sense and sound of the words of the Bible, as they were rearranged and selected by the art of preaching" (7). With the availability of the printed sermon or disputation, this "motivation" went even further. Add to this the possibility of discourse from below, rather than from the elect pens of the aristocracy, then it is little wonder that "there was a sense -- from all quarters -- that the world had been destabilised by a printing surfeit" (Smith, 24).

This is overstatement to be sure. The world had been destabilizing as the old unities crumbled under the weight of the Renaissance and the Reformation. The advent of print contributed to this to no small degree. It had helped codify (if not produce) a revolution in religion (text over image) and now was one of the main arteries of political discourse leading up to the Civil War (text, or Parliamentary law, over image, or the icon of the king and his Divine Right). And now that so many once voiceless members of society had direct access to a growing readership, the levels of discourse in society passed through what once were insurmountable barriers.

Nigel Smith's book *Literature & Revolution in England, 1640 - 1660* follows the political conflict between republicanism and royalist loyalty that led to regicide and the use of literary genres by each party. Smith notes several changes in literary activity during this period, including the end of royal censorship and the resultant increase in publication, which he sees as "providing the possibility of a full-fledged pamphlet war"; the closing of the theatres and the use of the dramatic in the

pamphlets; the end of the "Cavalier" court and its literary practices by "literal military defeat"--especially the downfall of the epic narrative; and (what is most important to this study) "[g]reater freedom of religious worship resulted in the rise of new literary forms as part of new practices of worship" (11). This last statement certainly must be qualified by the reminder of Dowsing's zealous destruction of centuries old religious statuary and the double-ending of Prynne's ears. "Greater freedom" does not necessarily betoken freedom. What is salient, however, is that a literary revolution was naturally occurring alongside a cultural one and that this literature was, more often than not, religious (though it becomes increasingly less so as the Enlightenment centers its discourse on rationalism and the secular).

"If religious publication prior to 1640 was largely in the hands of the clergy, so that even the most popular holy broadsheets were an attempt to make the alehouses in which they were posted holy, the 1640s and 1650s saw the emergence of lay religious authorship on an unprecedented scale" (Smith, 23). With the emphasis on text that was one of the main thrusts of the Reformation and the tools of textual production more available to people from varying classes of society, and add to this "the pervasive assumption in the seventeenth century that if society was not ordered by religion, and that order was unified, anarchy would ensue, and the souls of the people endangered" (Smith, 115), then the argument over whether or not there is Pauline precedent for the institution of bishops in church government (the crux of much of the argument between Puritans and the established Church of England) becomes not merely an abstract theological argument over church regulation but a contention over the sinews of society.

My Lords,

I shall not need to speake of the infamous course of *Libelling* in any kind: Nor of the punishment of it, which in some cases was Capitall by the Imperiall Lawes. As appeares:

Nor how patiently some great Men, very great Men indeed, have borne *Animo civili* (that's *Sueton*: his word) *laceratam existimationem*, The tearing and rending of their credit and reputaion, with a gently, nay, a generous minde.

But of al *Libels*, they are most odious which pretend to *Religion*: As if that of all things did desire to bee defended by a *Mouth that is like an open Sepulcher*, or by a Pen that is made of a sicke and a loathsome Quill.

Thus does Archbishop William Laud's *A Speech Concerning Innovations in the Church* (1637) begin. But the argument is not only in the import of the words. The very forms of the arguments, the material ways in which they are conveyed, are arguments in themselves.

For instance, the titlepage of the facsimile of *His Maiesties Declaration to All His louing Subiects, Of the causes which moued him to dissolve the last Parliament* has the royal seal imprinted on it. The seal bears the crowned lion, the chained unicorn, the slogan of the Order of the Garter "Honi Soit Qui Mal Y Pense" and, in larger letters, "DIEV ET MON DROIT" across the bottom. Both the thistle and the

rose, signifying the united kingdoms of England and Scotland, a crowned C and R for Carolus Rex, and a large crown over the royal crest. All of this before one even reads a word of the argument that might be entailed. And the reader sees right above this the note: "Published by his Maiesties speciall command." At the bottom it is noted that this particular text was "Imprinted at London by *Bonham Norton* and *Iohn Bill*, Printers to the Kings most Excellent Maiestie. 1628." There is no room for argument here. The word "Maiesties" in the title is a full inch tall in dark block letters. This is spoken to his "louing Subiects." It is a pity that we cannot see this as it was undoubtedly produced, with whatever seals and ribands, or flourishes of proclamation that attended it. The most important thing (and the most obvious thing) is that this is from the King. No one at that time, even if they could not read a single word, would have been in doubt of its import.

If there were any doubt, the first page indicates the value of the text: "By the King" it proclaims, set apart from anything else. This is followed by "A Proclamation about the *Dissolving of the Parliament*" and only then does the argument proper begin. "Whereas Wee, for the general good of Our Kingdome," Charles I writes. In the facsimile *His Majesties Declaration, concerning His Proceedings with His Subjects of Scotland, Since the Pacification in the camp neere Berwick*, there is an engraving of "Charles by the Grace of God" preceding it. The long, flowing hair, the luxurious moustache and beard, the lace collar, all speak as much as any proclamation.

I have gone into some detail here because I wish to contrast the sign system in place here with that used by the Puritan revolutionaries. Just as the images used in

the churches incited the ire of the Puritans, so, too, did the imagery at work in Royalist documents. William Haller always gives a brief summary of the documents he is providing in facsimile. For instance, concerning *Observations Upon Some of his Majesties Late Answers and Expresses* by Henry Parker (1642), Haller notes: "*Observations* was first published anonymously in 1642 without separate title-page, date or imprint" (165). Haller even discusses the notes that have been made on the copies in the British Museum of these artifacts. What we see when we are confronted by one of these texts is often a minute type that goes on for page after page of dense writing, as if the more words were occupied on the page, the better. There is a drive to use the fullness of the page, to be complete. Even more important are the citations of scripture that banner the title-pages and offer a continual refrain throughout the texts. The authority referred to in texts such as *Liberty of Conscience* (published anonymously without license in 1643) is Scripture; that is, other texts. As we have seen with Charles' proclamations, they rest on the authority that they are declared *by Him* ("Dieu et Mon Droit"). There is no need to seek any outside authority. But when Charles feels a need to apply outside of his own regal essence, as when Parliament has denied him money from the duties on "Tonnage and Poundage," he turns to tradition (the very tradition his enemies wished to break):

Wee thought it so farre from the wisdom and dutie of a House of Parliament, as Wee could not thinke, that any moderate and discreet man (vpon composed thoughts, setting aside passion and distemper) could bee against receiuing of Tonnage and

Poundage; especially since Wee dow, and still must pursue those ends, and vundergoe that Charge, for which it was first granted to the Crowne; it having beene so long and constantly continued to Our Predecessours, as that in foure seuerall Acts of Parliament, for the granting thereof, to King *Edward* the Sixth, Queene *Mary*, Queene *Elizabeth*, and Our blessed Father, it is in expresse termes mentioned, to haue beene had an enioyed by the seuerall Kings, named in those Actes, time out of mind, by authoritie of Parliament. And therefore, vpon these reasons, Wee hold it agreeable to Our Kingly Honour, and necessary for the safetie and good of Our Kingdome, to continue the receipt thereof, as so many of Our Predecessours had done.

(18 -19)

It is hard not to imagine the King's enemies hooting and fairly rolling in the aisles of Parliament at this. So, too, it is likely that the poor quality of the pamphlets churned out by the Puritans and others of the lower classes incited contempt from the Royalists.

The war of words of the pamphlets, then, involved more than the arguments made on either side -- especially as neither side was particularly able to hear the argument of the other -- but was an argument of worldviews. To the Puritans, the Cavaliers were as decadent in their imagery as an stained glass window. Just as the stained glass windows were smashed, the icons of the State were destroyed. The

question begins to arise: is there something about the physical destruction of images that is linked to Puritan reliance on text, printed text in particular? Before this can be examined it would be to the point to discuss what it was the Puritans wanted (instead of what they obviously did not: church or civil hierarchy, religious ritual, etc.) or, rather, how they saw themselves. We have already seen their reliance on text, but there is something else in their modeling system (as the Soviet semioticians had it) that is an important facet to this question.

"MOST OF GOD, LEAST OF MAN:" SIMPLICITY, PLAINNESS, PRIMITIVISM

I think I should not say that in two words which may be said in
one, and that that key is to be chosen which doth open best,
although it be of wood, if there be not a golden key of the same
efficacy.

--William Ames, *The Marrow of Sacred Divinity*

To this point this paper has dealt with early Reformation Protestantism as a sign system raised up in defiance of another sign system. Unsatisfied with the extent of the Reformation in England, the Puritan revolution that ensued was fought under the aegis of iconoclasm which attempted to extirpate any vestiges of "Popery." One of the main weapons of early Protestantism was the printed text. Puritanism turned the use of text into the absolute center of their system. We have also seen that, since religion was interwoven with the civil and political entities of England, the purification of the religion of England also involved a political revolution. The beheading of Charles I could be seen as the ultimate example of iconoclasm.

The last section of this paper proposed that the arguments involved in the texts leading up to the English Civil War were as much an argument of signs as of reasonings. The flourishes of lace and curled hair of Charles' portrait said as much or more than his proclamations. Likewise the density of text of the Puritan pamphlets indicated what they conceived to be their source of authority. It is the purpose of this

section to examine more closely that "authority" to which the Puritans pointed. That is not to say that it is apropos of this project to examine the truthfulness of Puritan dogma or the evidence of the Bible. Rather, what bears examining is the quality of the Puritan sign system that is regarded as "plainness," which was held up as the ideal. With what we have so far discussed, it is evident that plainness, to a large degree, was a reaction against the pomp and lavishness of the Catholic church. And this carried over into the political sphere as well. The stripping of the church of images of God led to the stripping of the court of the image of the King in regicide. But what guiding principle was behind this activity? Yes, there was the role of the Reformation that sought to conform the religious practices with scriptural precedent, but there is quite a difference in degree if not kind taking place by the time of the Puritan revolution and the mass migration to the New World.

It is a commonplace to regard the Puritans as the prototype of the fire-and-brimstone evangelist with Jonathan Edwards being the stock character in that play. Other than this, we have the red herring of the witch hunts. That is not to say that that is an unimportant event, but it is no more important than the Pequod War, the regicide, or the destruction of forms in the churches. These several events have many things in common and point to something deeper in the Puritan consciousness of reality than the stereotypical intolerance.

In the introduction to his book *To Live Ancient Lives*, Theodore Dwight Bozeman quotes from John Cotton's *A Practical Commentary . . . upon the First Epistle Generall of John* which Cotton delivered to his congregation probably in the 1620s but was later printed in London in 1656:

... if [a religious form] have no higher rise than the [early]
 Fathers, it is too young a device, no other writings besides the
 Scripture can plead true Antiquity, ... Look whatever comes from
 God ... is always new, and never waxeth old, and as it is new, so it
 is always old, ... All errors ... are aberrations from the first good
 estate. ... [In sum], *live antient lives*; your obedience must be
 swayed by an old rule, walk in the old way.

(10-11)

What Bozeman sees here in Cotton's emphasis on antiquity and the new as old and vice versa, is *primitivism*: "a reversion, undercutting both Catholic and Anglican appeals to a continuity of tradition, to the first, or primitive, order of things narrated in the Protestant Scriptures" (11). There was once a heroic time where the true measure of human life was set forth, and set forth for all time. This Golden Age is the time of the Early Church when first instituted by Christ. With other Christians, the Puritans saw the Jewish scriptures as leading up to and indicating the New Testament, which fulfills the prophecies of the Old Testament. Both books form one dispensation from God and create a paradigm for human existence within the realm of God's Providence.

To live in accordance with the example of this First Time is the "old rule" that Cotton speaks of. It creates a model of the world by which the Puritans sought to live and, ultimately, experience God. In order to do so, one must "walk in the old way,"

of trying to return to that original pattern in whatever way possible. The Puritans created a sign system that did not directly imitate the Early Christians or the Israelites, but they appropriated from that narrative elements that suited their primitivist and reductionist needs. Nigel Smith acknowledges this in his study of the English Civil War: "the dominant unifying image used by puritan writers, especially ministers, during the Civil War, was of the English as the Israelites on their journey out of Egypt into Israel" (123)¹.

In this system, then, history is something other than what is normally understood by that term. What is being unfolded in history is God's will, yes, but it is also a steady decline of the church away from the immediate manifestation of that will. There is a direct link between the past and the present, and it is the purpose of the present to rectify itself in accordance with that past. There is no "progress" only a humble regress to the ultimate time. Anything that obscures or hinders that motion of return to the primitive purity of that time must be eliminated.

A way of looking at this might be as if some actors were given a play to perform. Over time the actors had forgotten some lines, added some of their own, and changed the ending to suit their temperament. Via the Reformation, the original play had been revived as the ultimate test, and, accordingly, the decadent version was found severely wanting. The stage must be cleared to re-establish the original in all its truth. This metaphor of the stage works not only for the staged ritual in the church or in civil life, but for the Puritan understanding of existence in general. "Sacred writ

¹ This, of course, will bear even greater importance for the Separatists who will leave for the New World so that, in the words of William Bradford, "the churches of God revert to their ancient purity, and recover their primitive order, liberty and beauty" (3).

was therefore experienced as a kind of living theater . . . a continual theophany. . . a parade of religious heroics suffused with supernatural presence and power" that promoted complete identification by the elect with the mythic and universal drama of the biblical world (Bozeman, 16-17). To get back to the stark originals, the archetypal pattern that God had established was the duty of the Puritan (hence the name given them).

As noted, William Bradford's *Of Plimoth Plantation* makes clear that the historic rationale for the Puritan endeavor was the rooting out of "vile ceremonies" that had "no ground in the word" and "to establish the right worship of God and the discipline of Christ in the Church according to the simplicity of the gospel and without the mixture of men's inventions . . ." (6,7).

The aforementioned speech of Archbishop William Laud was a defense and counter-attack concerning this very matter:

And in the meane time, they [the Puritans] which are only, or the chief *Innovators* of the *Christian world*, having nothing to say, accuse us of *Innovation*; *They themselves* and their *Complices* in the meane time being the greatest *Innovators* that the *Christian world* hath almost ever known. I deny not but others have spread more dangerous *Errors* in the *Church of Christ*; but no men, in any age of it, have been more guilty of *Innovation* than they . . .

Even if we take Laud's speech as an "I know you are but what am I?" retort, the fact that this speech before the Star Chamber could use the argument that *the Puritans* were the innovators shows that the idea of innovation was a negative for this culture, at least concerning religious practices.

The dread of innovation, of obscuring the sacred archetype of the apostolic era, brought along a concomitant ardor for plainness and simplicity. "Dress, behavior, doctrine, church order, and, above all, the forms of worship of the primitive times embodied the natural simplicity of divine originals" (Bozeman, 16). Although such concerns as dress arose primarily as a contention over the use of vestments by the clergy during church, it also opens up to the Puritan world at large. For, as just noted, the Puritan mind did not accept the arbitrary distinction between church and world. Forms of worship were not simple matters of rules for behavior when in a certain discrete environment (church) but carried significance for everyday activities. Haller pointed out that what started as a religious revolution became progressively more secular in its reach, but this is in part due to the fact that there was little division in the sixteenth century mind between the political and the religious. In fact, the Puritan mind would deliberately synthesize the two as Augustine had done twelve hundred years previous.¹

The result was that a drive for simplicity in the church also propelled a drive for the same in other aspects of the Puritan life. The most obvious translation of the desire for simplicity comes in the rhetorical stance of the Puritan text: the Plain style. William Bradford promises to "unfold the causes" that led to the settlement of

¹ Although there was much debate as to when the influence of the Apostolic Age came to an end and the steady decline began, the church of the second through the fifth centuries was held to be normative.

Plymouth "in a plain style" (3) and the Preface to *The Bay Psalm Book* will defend the translation (much maligned even to this day) in these words:

If therefore the verses are not alwayes so smooth and elegant as some may desire or expect; let them consider that Gods Altar needs not our pollishings: Ex. 20. for wee have respected rather a plaine translation, then to smooth our verses with the sweetness of any paraphrase, and soe have attended Conscience rather then Elegance, fidelity rather then poetry, in translating the hebrew words into english language, and Davids poetry into english meetre; that soe wee may sing in Sion the Lords song of prayse according to his owne will;

In this short quote we see the various ideas surrounding what Bozeman calls "primitivism:" the desire for a plainness, even at the expense of cultural aesthetics, the abhorrence of human invention ("our pollishings"), and the desire to parallel as much as possible the original patterns set forth by God ("the Lords song of prayse according to his owne will").

Plainness was a rhetorical device set up against the Baroque styles of such High Church preachers as Donne and Andrewes¹ and influenced by the theories of Petrus Ramus, the sixteenth century rhetorician. Perry Miller and Walter J. Ong have both

¹ Miller, in comparing Donne and Andrewes with Cotton or Thomas Hooker in his essay "The Plain Style" for Stanley Fish's *Seventeenth Century Prose*, says that while a glance at the former works reveal them to be orations, the latter "is mechanically and rigidly divided into sections and subheads, and appears on the *printed* page more like a lawyer's brief than a work of art" (149) (My emphasis).

discussed the Ramist parameters in Puritan rhetoric: The emphasis on logic over symbolism, for example., "[s]een as the outgrowth of a kind of simplified logic which imposed itself by implication on the external world to make this simple, too, Ramism here is correlated also with the Puritan preference for the plain style and hence with a good many virtues and vices associated with a *simpliste* view of things" (Ong, 4). This "simpliste" view of things is what Bozeman is calling "primitivist."

In their attempt to tear down the overly-hierarchical and, to their mind, idolatrous church, interwoven as it was with the decadent and elaborate court of the Cavalier, the Puritans as well refused the very language of the adversary, preferring the simplicity of a rhetorical theory that eschewed rhetoric. "Differences between sermons," notes Nigel Smith, "formed part of the politics of religious difference in the period: between, on the one hand, the ornate and highly learned episcopal sermon, and on the other hand, simple puritan 'plain style' (and the gestural styles of preaching that accompanied sermon delivery)" (7). Thus the adoption of this plain style was a political statement as well.

But it was more than that, of course, and this is what Bozeman is aiming at. Bozeman is also anxious to distance the Puritan from the criticism that, because they divorced themselves from the iconography of the established church, they were therefore merely abstractionists, removed from any sensually generated religious experience. Certainly the Puritans repudiated the Catholic worship to the point, as we have seen, of physical destruction of statuary, stained glass, and vestments, and to performances of extreme satirical mocking of sacred rites.¹ But this void created by

¹ Smith quotes Bishop Joseph Hall's description of iconoclasm at Norwich Cathedral where he witnessed, "A lewd Wretch walking before the Train, in his Cope trailing in the Dirt, with a Service

iconophobia is filled by a return "to the intense, richly imagined world of the biblical primordium" in which the elect dramatically participate via memory and imagination (Bozeman, 33-34). Before we consider this participation in dramatic narrative (and its possible relationship to printed text), it is worthwhile to continue a look at Puritan plainness in an area outside of rhetorical style.

Book in his Hand, imitating in an impious scam the Tune, and usurping the words of the Litany used formerly in the Church" (116).

NISI DOMINUS AEDIFIC FRUSTRA: IN VAIN UNLESS THE LORD BUILDS

In exploring the idea of plainness outside manners of speech and literary style, I am hoping that the semiotics introduction to this paper will have afforded me enough leeway to venture to bring in Puritan architecture as a parallel to Puritan texts. I could have used several examples from material culture, such as costume, but since much of the iconoclastic passion of the Puritans involved buildings, as in Dowsing's journal, it seemed that architecture, the creation of space through structures, was best suited for the argument I wish to make.

I have already discussed how Puritanism was a sign system based on a primitivist understanding of the Bible as a Golden Time. In the attempt to mirror that Sacred Age, the Puritans methodically extirpated traditional ritual and use of imagery from the collective. Filling the vacuum thus created with text and the individual's personal relationship with that text (and, of course, the events described in it), the Puritans were deeply influenced by the technology of the printing press¹. Plainness became the watchword for the collective not only in speaking things plainly but in material culture as well, such as clothing and, in this instance, architecture. Just as the Puritan wished to order things of the spirit according to the primitivist doctrine of simplicity (recoiling from "human invention," as in Bradford), so did they wish to order the outside world. Even as the page from the printing press was simple, orderly, attuned to primitivist beliefs and a plain conduit for God's truth (at least this

¹ Phillip H. Round puts this quite succinctly when discussing Puritan textual discourse: "We now acknowledge that every text's meaning is deeply involved in the formal properties of its medium" (7).

they supposed), so too did they seek to make the physical world comport with the influence of printed text. The printed text, held up as the new icon in the religious system that motivated the Puritan mind, could not help but be the standard for other aspects of their lives as well.

In their brilliant analysis of architecture during the Puritan Commonwealth, *Architecture Without Kings: The Rise of Puritan Classicism under Cromwell*, Timothy Mowl and Brian Earnshaw look for what they term Puritan "minimalism" in architecture beginning with the Elizabethan Puritan (and architect to the Cavaliers) Inigo Jones. According to Mowl and Earnshaw, the Puritans could come up with no definite vision of architecture any more than Cromwell could come up with a definite constitutional solution to the nation's crises (18). But it was also a matter of physical materials as well as influence from continental Palladian architecture via Jones: the "problem of the iconography of a style has arisen partly from the wider use of bricks as a building medium and partly from the innovations of Inigo Jones" (8). An interesting paper could be written comparing the use of bricks in buildings and the building of texts with type.

"A village building in addition to its practical functions has other functions as well, as, for example, aesthetic, magic, regional, social, and so on. A building is not only an object but also a sign" (Bogatyrev, 18). By now this is a familiar concept, especially when we look at the architecture of such buildings as churches, which hold their religious (magical) intent as concomitant with their practical function of enclosing space from the weather. During the Puritan revolution, the churches were stripped of their traditional regalia -- statues, stained glass, vestments -- but they still,

for the Puritans, were tainted by the idolatrous intent of those who built them. The Puritan had to enclose space in a particular way that emphasized utilitarianism and simplicity.

John Summerson's *Architecture in Britain 1530 to 1830* refers neither to Puritanism nor minimalism in its index. The book barely refers to the Commonwealth but rather proceeds hurriedly from Inigo Jones to Christopher Wren, offering only two paragraphs on Henry Wotton's *The Elements of Architecture* (141), about whom Mowl and Earnshaw write: " . . . [I]f anyone ever exemplified the *Zeitgeist* of sophisticated Puritanism it was Wotton" (67). What Summerson does offer, however, is a chapter on the relationship between architecture and the artisan.

The style is essentially that of the best London craftsmen -- joiners, carpenters, masons, bricklayers. It is hard not to recognize. In feeling, it is broad and coarse and has none of the naïf intensity or exciting contrasts of the preceding style, nor the fine taste and exquisite balance of Jones.

(142)

Obviously there is a difference in perception of the ultimate allegiance of Jones between the two texts, but that is largely immaterial to this study. What is of note is that what Summerson sees is an unnamed style, notable for its "broad and coarse" character -- it's primitivism -- and ascribes this character to the fact that it is

manufactured by the abler craftsmen, but notes no masters of this style, if such it can even be called (141).

Mowl and Earnshaw have already mentioned their belief that the rise of brick as a material was shaping the architectural work of this period. Summerson, too, writes that "The advent of the new style coincided with the greatly increased use of brick, and many of its earlier manifestations are entirely in this material" (144).

When Summerson does treat the architecture during the Civil War and Commonwealth he is anxious to distance Jones from the buildings described. In describing Thorpe Hall, Cambridgeshire (a house built by Chief Justice under Cromwell Oliver St John, 1653-6), Summerson remarks that in the "great rectangular block . . . so thickened as to be nearly square . . . there is none of the Jonesian feeling for profile and proportion" (153). Summerson concludes that "we are dealing with a building for which nobody in full sympathy with Inigo could have been responsible" (154).

There is an air of distaste not only for this particular structure (which Mowl and Earnshaw will admit has its problems, but for the intent of the building as well. What Summerson sees at work here is a style from below and he ends his brief discussion of this unnamed, masterless style by suggesting it comes from artisan influence derived from the Continent. "Nicholas Stone's training in Amsterdam is the classic instance of such contacts" (156).

Mowl and Earnshaw, meanwhile, contend that Jones was a Puritan in a Cavalier court and, like Marvell, adapted. Henry Wotton is seen as the source of Puritan Minimalism and, echoing Summerson's admiration for Jones, they offer this

anecdote: "Wotton ignores Philibert de l'Orme's palaces but praises his chimenys and debates his recipe for lime mortar. Practicalities, not decorative details, attract Wotton" (68-9).

The emphasis upon astylar proportion of parts, cuboid or rectangular simplicities of plan, moulded brickwork and this scorn for ornament suggests that Wotton's *Elements*, for all its lack of illustration, was the true source-book for Puritan Minimalism. No Puritan, particularly an economically-minded Puritan, could resist the appeal of a pure and Godly aesthetic, free from Catholic taint: "there may be a Lacivious, and there may be likewise a Superstitious use, both of Picture and of Sculpture . . . what ART can be more pernicious, than even RELIGION itself; if itself be converted into an Instrument of Art'. Suspicion is at the heart of Wotton's judgements, nervous suspicion of the lure of Catholicism.

(69)

According to Mowl and Earnshaw, Puritan Minimalism with its simple geometric forms (the "great rectangular block" scorned by Summerson) would overtake the Palladian classicism of Jones and the artisan work of the bricklayers, absorbing them both. Mowl and Earnshaw agree with Summerson, however, on the Dutch influence. They will also agree that Thorpe House is not the exemplar of simple, reserved Puritan style (they call it "schizoid" (112)) but they offer St. Giles House, Wimborne

St Giles, Dorset, and Moyles Court, Hampshire, in its stead. These two buildings were not by the same architect, though proximate in time and place, but from the same school of design. And they were "both built for sincere religious zealots and what makes them significant is that they both pointed the way firmly towards a rectangular pattern of house design as being appropriate to gentlemen of power, wealth and principle" (102).

Although this digression on architecture may seem far afield from our analysis of text, there is a telling point later on the same page concerning this style of building.

The amorous antics of Charles II and the cynical wit of Restoration drama endure in historical memory but they were upper-class exceptions to the prevailing sobriety and general religious temper of the age. *Paradise Lost*, a devout epic written in retirement by a pillar of the Commonwealth establishment, is the real key to popular taste. It became immediately revered and widely read after publication in 1667. So too did Bunyan's simple epic of the Christian soul.

(102)

It is important that the image Mowl and Earnshaw use is of a sober populace reading a religiously inspired text. It is as if these houses were stages set for the drama of reading these texts. These buildings were stages constructed for the Puritan activity, which, as we have seen, and which the passage alludes to, is deeply involved

with text. The emphasis falls on functionalism and simplicity just as it did when looking at Bozeman's understanding of primitivism. The Puritans iconoclastically cleared the dramatic stage and erected a new one, imbued with semiotic value, as Bogatyrev argued. The construction of space here manifests a specifically Puritan space just as the structure of the Puritan pamphlet or sermon manifested Puritan space, prior to any transmission of "what is being said."

In fact, Robert Blair St. George in his *Conversing By Signs* has a fascinating approach to "what is said" through the cultural manifestation of a house. According to St. George, "Place . . . always involves an appropriation and transformation of space and nature that is inseparable from the reproduction and transformation of society in time and space" (9). The construction of a building is a cultural extension of the society producing it. How one controls space (or one's inability to do so) is implicit in both architecture and text-creation (a modern expression of this is in Virginia Woolfe, for example). In both instances an earlier, more ornamentalized style was removed, and a minimalist, primitivist, simple, or *plain* organizational principle was then imposed. Both then could become sites for Puritan cultural performance. And both, in the Puritan mind, were places wherein "two planes of material reality coexisted, one in this world and one in the next" (St. George, 9). St. George points out that we are dealing with a world where "God's providence still worked through conflagration, disease, hailstorms, thunder and lightning" (6). The relationship between the physical setting of primitivism, whether in minimalist architecture or plain-style text, and the world of religion and spirituality -- or Bogatyrev's "magic" -- is interwoven.

That the Puritans saw the building as more than the merely functional is evident by their iconoclasm and their endeavor to build in a style that was "proper." Marian Card Donnelly, in *The New England Meeting Houses of the Seventeenth Century*, notes that the Puritans typically had met for religious services in one another's homes since the mid-1500s and that it is not until Winthrop's *Journal* that we come across the term "meeting house" (10). Thus the Puritans were utilitarian in their outlook concerning buildings, as in most things, and when places had to be constructed in New England, "meeting houses" were constructed and that these were rectangular, or, on occasion, square (Donnelly, 15). This information is in accord with their animosity toward Catholic belief in the ability to "bless" a site or render a building more holy by ornamentation and statuary. If anything, man is more likely to blight than to bless if he attempts to usurp God's grace, and his attempts at ornamentation lead steadily down to idolatry.

But it is not simply an analogy between the controlled space of the text and the space of architecture that needs to be made. St. George, in his analysis of the "poetics of implication" in colonial New England, makes a strong argument for the relationship in the Puritan mind between houses and bodies. This is not so startling when we think of the long-standing metaphor of a city or state being likened to a human body, as in Hobbes' *Leviathan*. It is only a matter of degree that this metaphor be extended to homes and the domestic world. In his book, St. George discusses "the diffusion into ordinary houses of the 'living' architecture of the Puritan meeting house, itself suffused with the anthropomorphic task given it by Saint Paul, and the diffusion

of the aesthetics of communion into consumption, labor actions, and the horrors of colonized peoples and monstrous births" (5).

As beside the point as this may sound, it bears upon the ideas we have been following. Iconoclasm, with these ideas in mind, was not simply the removal and destruction of objects from a shell which then could be refilled with pious men and women, reading, learning and speaking of scripture. They were actions upon material bodies that the revolutionaries sought to bring within the realm of conduct as shown by text -- not merely that enjoined by Scripture, though that is, of course, paramount - - but by the physical manifestation of text itself. Places, therefore, were straitened, "textualized." It is within this possible relationship of text-house-body that I will further explore Rev. Watson's exhortation for Christians to become "walking Bibles."

"SO ARCHITECTS DO SQUARE AND HEW:" THE BODY IN (CON)TEXT

"I had rather see you buried in your Grave, than grow light,
loose, wanton, or prophane."

--Thomas Shepard, in a letter to his son

As Theodore Dwight Bozeman argues, the driving force behind Puritan primitivism was not enlargement or expansion of the Christian life, but a program of reduction, to undo the obfuscations of Popery and the established Church of England, "to prune and contract the inherited body of doctrine and liturgy" (136). This desire was carried throughout the cultural system of the Puritans, as in the architecture discussed in the last section, and is deeply tied to the Puritan approach to text. The reference to buildings is also instructive because it is against buildings that Puritans exerted much of their iconoclastic rage and, as Robert Blair St. George points out, buildings which stood as an extension of the body. "Beyond the metaphoric treatment of skeleton (frame), the analogies that tie the form of the body -- its limbs, organs, and features -- to architectural models are detailed and systematically precise from the late sixteenth century through the early eighteenth" (126). St. George also notes the custom of ritual house attacks, "a form of festive violence intended to shame targeted individuals for moral transgression, the house attack was a complex blend of inherited custom and participants with different reasons for joining the fray. Its historical roots extend back in Anglo-American culture at least to 1612, when angry London mobs attacked a Shoreditch brothel on Shrove Tuesday" (242).

The possibility of violence has been an undercurrent throughout this paper. The revolution of sign systems that occurred in the Reformation allowed for the physical removal of idolatrous imagery from the churches, which became, in itself, a ritualized destruction, as in the Dowsing narrative. This worked alongside the need for a return to the primordial purity of the church via text. "It has been widely recognized," Thomas H. Luxon writes in *Literal Figures: Puritan Allegory and the Reformation Crisis in Representation*, "that Protestants and Puritans most commonly understood self-knowledge as something achieved by reading and exegesis. . . . The Protestant self is both reader and text" (102-3). While the outside world was being stripped of "the folly and froth of mans brain" as Thomas Hooker described attempts too augment Christianity, the individual himself was being pruned and aligned in a mimetic relationship to text.

There are many conceivable avenues by which to approach this subject. I chose the relationship of houses to texts because of the long-standing involvement of house (church) with text (Scripture). In this view, both are made simple, minimal, primitive and then are reflected back upon the individual. A house-attack, for instance, was meant to shame the internal (the resident) into moral rectitude. The constant use of sacred text was meant to do the same, according to Luxon.

The relationship between material shapes (houses, house, bodies, humans) and texts is complex and one that often erupts into violence. Even the "simple" act of reading becomes an act of erasure: "Reading the self correctly, as it turns out, is also a process of reading an old self out of existence" (Luxon, 104). Just as buildings had to be scraped clean via iconoclasm, the reader must read himself anew, must internalize

text with all the possible ramifications of print media on the psyche that have been suggested throughout this paper. Thus the Puritan text will join John Cotton and Marshall McLuhan in "Linearity." "Straight is the gate" and the world must be straightened in accordance with this.

This straightening, according to Bozeman, is a return to the pattern of originals. "Primitive antiquity must stand forth as the unmoved center" (246), and Bozeman repeats this idea throughout his volume. But he does not discuss the ramifications of a radical fundamentalist group finding itself in a situation that does not reflect its beliefs, such as the Puritans in the Cavalier court of Charles I. There is not, for example, a chapter that discusses possible relationships between primitivism and regicide. There is quite a bit of discussion concerning the desire to return to the ideal state of the Biblical Primordium, but not much discussion of the fact that this setting of the stage for the divine drama required the extirpation of the previous setting -- and that that setting was physical. Certainly Puritan culture had an essence all its own; it formed, as this paper attempts to show, a coherent sign system, characterized by the values of simplicity and minimalism. It would be a mistake, however, to regard these in isolation.

But first let us examine how the "reading out of the former self," as Luxon puts it (which we might term the iconoclasm in the mind, the rectification of internal space), occurs. Not only were the Puritans desirous of studying the Bible until they should be able to repeat it at length from memory so that we find every few lines of text being a quotation from Scripture, but the manner in which they approached text, meditation, and memory was disciplined, rigid and systematic. Leonard Hoar,

President of Harvard, admonished his nephew in a letter dated March 27, 1661, to catalogue his reading of the Bible and his other studies.

Nextly as you must read much that your head may be stored with notion so you must be free and much in all kinds of discourse of what you read: that your tongue may be apt to a good expression of what you doe understand. And further; of most things you must wr[ite] to; wherby you may render yourself exact in judging of what you hear or read and faithfull in remembering of what you once have known. Touching your writing take a few hints of many which I had thought to have given you. I. let it not be in loose papers for it will prove for the most part lost labour. Secondly, nor in a fortuitous vagrant way But in distinct bookes designed for every severall purpose. And the heads of all, wrote aforehand in every page with intermediate spaces left (as well as you can guesse) proportionable to the matter they are like to contain.

3. Let all those heads be in the method of the incomparable P. Ramus, as to every art which he hath wrot upon. Get his definitions and distributions into your mind and memory.
(Then Hoar instructs his nephew how to devise such a "booke")

And for the entrance I shall shew it easy. For if you take but one quire of paper and divide the first 2 sheets into 24 narrow columnes, and every page of the rest into two; which also must be

paged. Then mark the narrow columns each with one letter of the Alphabet. And it is ready for use: for tis but to write the name of seid place or person that next occurs into your index with the letter J at it: and again that name, with what is there said of it in your first page of the quire, with the author whence you had it, and its done. And the like of the second in the second. When the index shall grow full tis but write it over again leaving larger spaces where needed. And when that quire shall grow full tis but to take up another and carry on the same columns and numbers. And when they grow to be five or 6 quires to this one index, why then, if that on any name swell to big for its column, tis but to refer it to some other column further forwards. On the contrary if any others have not nor are not like to yeild any thing much upon them, when more titles occur tis but croud those into them, referring them also, as the former, by the index and its figures. Thus I think I have made it facile and plain enough. And believ me you will find it beyond your estimation, both pleasant and profitable.

(709-11)

I have quoted Hoar at length to give a feeling of the incomprehensible detail he goes into in describing to his nephew how to build an extension of his mind in a notebook. It is assumed in this passage that Josiah Flynt, his nephew, is there to make his mind just as Henry Wotton designed his buildings. It may be argued that

any education is meant to mould the mind, and this is obviously true. What I wish to emphasize is the use of books *as one is likely to find them printed*, in columns and bound (Hoar advises his nephew to stitch the sheets together) and the drive towards regularity. That is what McLuhan found most influential about the affect of the printing press, after all, was its assembly-line regularity. The technology of the printing press is being used here to rectify the internal space of the reader's mind.

Luxon quotes from Thomas Cranmer's *Book of Homilies* where "the Bible reader who most profits is not 'he that is moste ready in turnyng of the boke, or in saying of it without the boke, but he that is most turned into it, that is most inspired with the holy ghost most in his harte and life, altered and transformed into that thing, which he readeth'" (6). To be "transformed into that thing, which he readeth" would, on the face of it, mean only that one follow the precepts contained in the book, not be as the book itself, but the passage from Hoar suggests that there is more to it than that. Once the interior has been "read into" its proper form, and the proof of that is offered in the performance of the confession (as with Trumbull's "handling" of texts that might, he fears, have driven him mad--disorder rather than order his mind) then the primordial drama that is central to the Puritan understanding of reality may take place.

But as suggested above, the restructuring of internal space through text also manifests itself physically. Once the Puritans have transformed themselves into "that thing, which he readeth," the physical world must also be transformed to set the primitivist stage, at least as far as one's clothing, houses, or body. Here is where Dowsing's journal resonates.

For instance, when Robert Blair St. George quotes Cotton Mather's approbation of John Eliot's view that "for men to wear their hair with a luxurious, delicate, feminine prolixity; or for them to preserve no plain distinction of their sex by the hair of their head and face; and much more for men to disfigure themselves with hair that is *none of their own*" is a sin, it requires us as well to remember the living symbol of those lascivious locks -- Charles I (147)¹.

It is grim humor to muse on the haircut of Charles as it was to think of how William Prynne might lose his ears a second time. But these things are not isolated incidents. In fact, Ann Kibbey's *The interpretation of material shapes in Puritanism* studies the relationship between Puritan rhetoric and violence. Kibbey realizes that

the Puritan belief in the necessity and righteousness of deliberate physical harm was deeply indebted to the ideology of Protestant iconoclasm in Reformation Europe. The violent destruction of artistic images of people developed into a mandate for sancrosanct violence against human beings, especially against people whose material "image," whose physical characteristics, differed from the Puritan man's own.

(2)

Much of Robert Blair St. George's *Conversing with Signs* deals with the Puritan relation to the "deformed" native populace and their fear of "monstrous

¹ And, in this world of texts, it is not insignificant that the murdered King is resurrected as a text: the *Eikon Basilike*.

births." "A number of early reporters agreed that the bodies of Native Americans were deformed, prone to violent and contortive gestures, and only drawn into acceptable form when disciplined by Christian conversion" (St. George, 158). And as we have seen, that discipline and conversion is accomplished through text.

But can text, printed material, be the engine of this, or is it merely the use to which it is put? During the pamphlet wars, when access to text was available for most anyone interested in entering the fray, all sides were using the same weapon, and distinctions came in how one used it and who could gain control of the other's ability to disseminate literature (remember the warden's perplexity at just how Lilburne could have books to throw to the crowds). In the New World, however, the printing press itself became a machine of colonization. As the quote from St. George suggests, the press was used to straighten out the contorted bodies of the "savages." Whereas in Luxon the text was used to read one's self a new self, in the New World it is used to read the other into "acceptable form."

MAMUSSE WUNNEETUPANATAMWE

In 1640 the first book printed in the New World was a translation of the Book of Psalms, now known as *The Bay Psalm Book*. That this translation might raise some controversy (as suggested at the end of an earlier section) must have been predicted by its authors for its preface is in the form of questions and answers defending the book from various objections. Among other reasons given for this new text, the preface cites the corruptive additions and paraphrasing of earlier versions. The Puritans would sing psalms

whereupon it hath bin generally desired, that as wee doe inioye
other, soe (if it were the Lords will) wee might inioye this
ordinance also in its native purity: wee have therefore done our
indeavour to make a plaine and familiar translation of the psalmes
and words of David into english metre.

The idea is familiar enough by now -- the native purity must be regained. But in so doing, the translators came up against another problem: how to keep the ornament of meter from overwhelming the sense of the psalm, and therefore its efficacy as acceptable response to God's will? Since the Old Testament says that David sang the psalms, it was therefore lawful to use English meter -- but certainly not at the expense of sense. In fact the opposite is true, the sense and purpose of the psalms must be

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paramount, even at the expense of meter, and the final paragraph of the Preface, quoted earlier in Bozeman, reads almost like a warning for those who would criticize the book for its infelicities:

If therefore the verses are not always so smooth and elegant as some may desire or expect; let them consider that Gods Altar needs not our polishings: Ex. 20. for wee have respected rather a plaine translation, then to smooth our verses with the sweetnes of an paraphrase, and soe have attended Conscience rather than Elegance, fidelity rather than poetry, in translating the hebrew words into english language, and Davids poetry into english meetre; that soe wee may sing in Sion the Lords songs of prayse according to his owne will; untill hee take us from hence, and wipe away all our teares, & bid us enter into our masters ioye to sing eternall Halleluiahs.

From a position unsympathetic with the Puritan project, there is much to condemn in *The Bay Psalm Book's* translations. The psalms are marred by unnatural sentence structures, often characterized by verb/object inversions such as in Psalm II:

But I annoynted have my King
upon my holy hill

of Zion: The established
counsell declare I will.

at times the constructions challenge intelligibility:

Helpe Lord: for godly men doe cease:
faithfull faile men among.

or

Hee from above sent hee me took:
me out of waters-great he draw:
Hee from mine enemies-strong, & from
them which me hated did rescue:

Finally here are the first two lines of the 23rd Psalm:

The Lord to mee a shepherd is,
want therefore shall not I.

There is little wonder why Cotton would find it necessary to defend the New England psalms in a preface. It is not merely that the Puritans did not have the poetic technique to compose translations of beauty and elegance (for they realize that the

poems can be said to lack these, and rather than apologize for the coarseness of the translations actually defend it). Also, many texts already existed against which they were comparing their own versions and which they had been forced to use prior to devising their own. It is obvious that another matter entirely motivated them. Rather, what we have here is a prime example of what has been suggested all along -- the Puritans were willing to break the icons of the Psalms and reset them as plain text with lineaments more in keeping with their harsh linearity. Even if the sense, which they profess to honor above all, is obscured, what mattered more was the fitting of the language physically into a just proportion. The Puritans used their printing press as a Procrustean bed.

Ann Kibbey links "the shapes of speech, icons, and the shapes of people" (4) in an iconoclastic approach to the "figure." For instance, she sees a direct relationship between the Antinomian crisis engendered by Anne Hutchinson (her "misshapen" opinions) and the genocidal war initiated against the Pequots in 1637 (4). In supporting her argument she cites John Underhill's 1638 *Newes from America* with its mixture of Christianity, advertisement for the colonies, and graphic account of the war against the natives.

Captain Mason entring into a Wigwam, brought out a fire-brand,
 after hee had wounded many in the house, then hee set fire on the
 West-side where he entered, my selfe set fire on the South end with
 a traine of Powder, the fires of both meeting in the center of the
 Fort blazed most terribly, and burnt all in the space of half an

houre; many courageous fellowes were unwilling to come out, and fought most desperately through the Palisadoes, so as they were scorched and burnt with the very flame, and were deprived of their armes, in regard the fire burnt their very bowstrings, and so perished valiantly: mercy they did deserve for their valour, could we have had opportunitie to have bestowed it; many were burnt in the Fort, both men, women, and children, others forced out, and came in troops to the Indians, twentie, and thirtie at a time, which our souldiers received and entertained with the point of the sword; downe fell men, women, and children, those that scaped us, fell into the hands of the Indians, that were in the reere of us; it is reported by themselves, that there were about foure hundred soules in this Fort, and not above five of them escaped out of our hands. Great and dolefull was the bloody sight to the view of young souldiers that never been in Warre, to see so many soules lie gasping on the ground so thicke in some places, that you could hardly passe along.

(39-40)

Underhill realizes that some may not find his victory so glorious, but counters any possible argument against this massacre by observing that "sometimes the Scripture declareth women and children must perish with their parents" and that "We had sufficient light from the word of God for our proceedings" (40).

Other descriptions from the time, such as Reverend William Hubbard's from his *Narrative of the Troubles with the Indians*, published in 1677, are just as bloody. The Pequots are surrounded at night in a swamp where the soldiers, "standing at a twelve Foot Distance" are firing upon them. Though some violently broke through and made a run for it,

some of whome notwithstanding were killed in the Pursuit; the Rest were left to the Mercy of the Conquerors, of which many were killed in the Swamp like sullen Dogs, that would rather in their Self-willedness and Madness sit still to be shot through or cut in Pieces, than receive their lives for the asking at the Hand of those into whose Power they were now fallen. . . . [I]n the Morning entring into the Swamp, they saw several Heaps of them sitting close together, upon whom they discharged their Peices laden with ten or twelve Pistol-bullets at a Time, putting the Muzles of their Pieces under the Boughs with a few yards of them; so, as besides those that were found Dead (near twenty) it was judged many more were killed and sunk into the Mire, and never were minded more by Friend or Fo: Of those who were not so desperate or sullen to sell their Lives for Nothing, but yeilded in Time, the male Children were sent to the Bermudas; of the Females, some were distributed to the English Towns, some were disposed of among the other Indians, to whom they were deadly Enemies as well as to ourselves.

In iconoclasm, the physical image was replaced by a text. Something similar takes place in the wilderness of the New World. Called out from among nations even as the ancient Israelites had been, the Puritans sought to reduce their reality to the strictures of the sacred text. Thus they could see the destruction of the Native American as a necessary and God-sanctioned violence. The ideology inherent in Puritan iconoclasm, the destruction of images as divine ordinance, allows for the destruction of the human "image," here represented by the "deformed" natives. The natives become for the Puritans another form of statuary. Note the similarities between Dowsing's narrative and Hubbard's: both are dealing with "several Heaps of them" that must be destroyed. Both Doswin's and Hubbard's narratives end the same way.

And just as the English Church, once stripped of the physical objects that align it with Satan and the Anti-Christ of the Catholic Church, can be filled with the Holy Word, so, too, can the New English Canaan, once stripped of the physical remnants of the "deformed" (non-White, non-English, non-Christian) Satanic natives, be filled with Holy Writ. To know that the Puritans themselves saw it in these terms, one only has to look at the title page of Hubbard's *Narrative*:

And the Lord said unto Moses, write this for a Memoriall in a Book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua; for I will utterly put out the Remembrance of Amelek from under heaven Exod. 17 14.

The image, once destroyed, can be replaced by text, as in John Eliot's *The Indian Grammar begun: or, An essay to bring the Indian language into rules, for the help of such as desire to learn the same, for the furtherance of the Gospel among them*. If we consider the way *The Bay Psalm Book* broke the language of the psalms upon the rack of the Puritan press for much the same purposes, then this is something of the same. If, as Thomas Luxon wrote, "The Early Reformers had removed the body of Christ from the altar and relocated it in the Scriptures, redefining Christ's true body as a discursive body -- the Word" (5), then what are we to make of the pinning down of the native discursive body into the typeset of the Puritans? What do we make of the intent "to bring the Indian language into rules" so that the colonizers may, via the Indian's own language, better colonize them?

In 1663, even as the Church of the Wilderness is being swept clean of the forms that defile it, John Eliot produced a complete version of the Bible in the native language: *Mamusse wunneetupanatamwe*. The book becomes, a translation that destroys an oral, native language by reproducing it in the colonizer's print, thereby prejudicing it (in the true Puritan sense of the word). Eliot's Native Bible becomes the ultimate iconoclastic text, a conflation of text and body, sign and sacrifice.

CONCLUSION

The Puritan relationship between image and word led not only to the overthrow of one religious system by another (followed by a political revolution) but also a particular approach to the colonization of the New World. The use of print in each of these instances is essential. Coming from a worldview that saw the fundamental fact of reality as textual, the Puritans consciously set about restoring an ancient purity to their lives.

Using the technology of print, the Puritans not only gained for themselves a voice via pamphleting, they also restructured their understanding of themselves. The printed Bible in English and the multitude of pamphlets, sermons, and books that emanated from it served as a binding force for not only their spiritual lives but for their lives as a whole. John Trumbull's narrative of himself on a pitching boat wrestling with texts is not merely an allegory any more than is a man in search of fresh water to drink before he perishes. Language, bound as it is in printed texts, or generated in sermons or confessions of faith, is the key to salvation, in partaking of the true communion with the discursive body of Christ. In order to create that textual communion, the Puritans must become "walking Bibles," i.e., become texts themselves. In the sending of letters between John Winthrop and his wife there is the use of sacred text as exchange. Both are familiar with the references, both have incorporated them into themselves as individuals, so offering them to one another becomes an act of the greatest intimacy since they live in Christ together. In many of the Puritan texts, the sublime act of language is quotation (which Bozeman indicates in his theory of Puritan primitivism), so that one could imagine the highest

achievement would be communicating only in quotes from sacred text (as in the Jewish tradition of *melizat*).

But the Puritan project was not merely a restructuring of the consciousness via reading (as Luxon states), or if it were, that restructuring then caused the Puritans to restructure the outside world according to what had been modified within them. The myriad political and economic reasons for social revolution in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England are beyond the scope of this paper. The focus was on the relationship between Puritan religious conviction and their relationship to text. This necessitated an examination of iconoclasm, for text became the new medium through which one worshipped, the new icon.

The destruction of images and the use of the printing press were evolving together. Just how broadly one should accept the claims that print technology itself -- and its effect on human consciousness -- were at the root of this cultural revolution -- or how much should be granted to those effects -- is difficult to say. On the face of it, it seems that a certain technological determinism is inescapable here. The Puritans accepted the new technology, used it upon themselves, then used it upon others. This is, of course, simplistic. It does not take into account factors like an expanding global market, the ability of sovereigns to become independent of the Pope (which carries the seed of subjects becoming more independent), or the increased realization of an increasingly educated middle class of the power it wielded.

Also, as pointed out in the introduction, to approach this material semiotically (even if only provisionally) raises certain questions. How literally should we accept the possibility of an abstract "system" as being capable of truly accounting for

something like human cultures, as Eco bids us do? Certainly one can describe a culture as a sign system and foster valid discussion, but to impose the rigors of a system seems reductive and bespeaks more of the accepted social constraints of the analyst than that which is being analyzed. This seems especially true when dealing with Puritanism, which used its own "lens" so self-blindingly.

That being said, the semiotic approach can be used like barium -- an alien admixture used to trace the involutions of a greater body. Using this approach allows for the discussion of Puritanism as a sign system among other sign systems. As an examination of conflicting sign systems, then, it is valuable in that what is being examined becomes applicable to current history. For instance, the overthrow of the Czar by the Bolsheviks -- complete with the tearing down of statues -- or the ritualized destruction of the Berlin Wall in 1989 are comparable to the semiotic revolutions pursued by the Puritans.

The Puritan revolution is also valuable because it introduces new technology: the printing press (the medium through which the sign is conveyed, the *sacred* sign) is knowingly used as a method in constructing the social self. Francis Bacon wrote that the magnet, gunpowder, and the printing press were the triumvirate that set Europeans above the rest of the world, and James Holstun explored this "trinity" in his book on the Puritan utopias of seventeenth-century England and America (51). There is little question that the Puritans used the printing press to restructure their consciousnesses using the resultant texts. What the exact relationship is, however, is uncertain.

That the ideas inherent in Puritan Protestantism involved transforming the outside world is obvious. Through iconoclasm the Puritans stripped the house of the Lord. They destroyed exuberantly as a ritual act of cleansing. When they traveled to the Promised Land of the Americas, they re-enacted not only what they had experienced in England, but also the primordial drama that was set forth (according to their understanding) in the Old and New Testament. Not only did they have the example of the Hebrews destroying with God's sanction the inhabitant tribes of Canaan, they also had the physical existence of the Jew as Chosen People being removed from the divine dispensation. Jews had become a fallen race due to the crucifixion and their continued unbelief and, therefore, had become subject to God's revenge. Of course these ideas were used to justify the prevailing anti-Semitism and, once transferred upon the Native Americans, a rationalization for colonization.¹

The Puritans, therefore, had a history of replacing image/body with text, and this was serviceable when it came to their confrontation with the native population. It is difficult to use the simple term "irony" when considering such an artifact as Eliot's Indian Bible. To think of a people destroyed and their language preserved -- and preserved mouthing the doctrines that the conquerors used to foster that destruction -- is something beyond irony.

¹ See Thomas Thorowgood's *Jew in America, or, Probabilities, that those Indians are Judaical, made more probable by some additional to the former conjectures. An accurate discourse is premised of Mr. John Elliot, (who first preached the gospel to the natives in their own language) touching their origination, and his vindication of the planters.*

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Derek Thomas Smith was born in Provincetown, Massachusetts, on January 7, 1962. He graduated from Delta High School while living on his own in Colorado in 1980. In 1981 he attended a year of college at Adams State College in Alamosa, Colorado. After many vicissitudes, he attended the University of St. Thomas in Houston, Texas, where he graduated summa cum laude in 1998 with a Bachelor's degree in English. He returned to Maine where he had once lived and entered the English graduate program at The University of Maine in the fall of 1999.

After receiving his degree, Derek hopes to teach, enjoy more time with his family, finally publish his writing, and eventually receive his doctorate. Derek is a candidate for the Master of Arts degree in English from The University of Maine in May, 2001.