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“ ‘To the Dishonor of God’ : Religious Roots for Puritan Morality Laws during the Interregnum”

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Professor Swedo; Professor Hsieh

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Introduction

By the seventeenth century, kings and occasional queens had ruled England for over seven hundred years. But England's monarchy was interrupted by a period called the Interregnum (1649-1660). Examining the term's Latin roots the definition presents itself; it is a period *in-between the kings*.¹ What is clear about the period is that England transitioned, briefly, away from a monarchy. What is less clear is what England transitioned *to*. An autocracy? A republican democracy? Many historians fall in line behind one of these two interpretations. However, not enough attention is paid to possibility that England was a theocracy during this period. The claim is not too bold given the evidence, but scholars have often stopped short of analyzing this period through this lens. However, the evidence does exist to frame at least part of the Interregnum as theocratic in nature. The Puritans, lead by Oliver Cromwell, attempted to operate England as a sort of theocracy. Morality laws demonstrate the intention by Cromwell and his fellow Puritans to rule England with the primary goal of achieving Puritan godliness.

The Protectorate was dominated by Puritans who had unique features in their religious ideology that had a marked effect on this era. Particularly, they had a desire to universalize their worldview and religious morality. This feature of their religion combined with their ascent to power in the 1650s. The period of the Protectorate represents the peak of Puritan hegemony. To create a framework for viewing primary sources, two laws -- "An Act for the Better Observation of the Lords Day" and "An Ordinance for the Prohibiting of Cock-Matches" serve as standards of two types of laws relating to morality: those which discouraged certain cultural practices and those the encouraged certain cultural practices. These two types of laws embody a core of rhetorical ideas prominent during the Protectorate. While the rhetoric exists, it is necessary to

¹ *Inter* (Between, Among); *Rex, Regis* (King).

also prove that these laws were not popular in order to appreciate what it reveals about the motivations of the Puritans. Namely, the Puritans pursued these morality policies not for political ends, but for genuine religious ends. Two types of accounts demonstrate the unpopularity of Puritan morality laws. First, accounts involving the common people and their perceptions of the laws reveals their lack of popularity outside of the governing circle. Second, the swift reversal of these laws and political punishment for their authors enacted shortly after the fall of the Protectorate offers another testament to the unpopularity of Puritan rule and their morality laws. Before addressing this claim, there will be a grounding in general shape of the historical narrative of the period, the nature of the Protectorate, who the Puritans were, and who the Puritans were in order to establish the necessary base of knowledge.

Historical Context

The English Civil War, which preceded the interregnum, was a conflict between Parliament and the king, Charles I (r. 1625-1649 CE) about who had more authority in England. Charles I wanted to rule with absolute authority, while the Parliament saw themselves as entitled to a share of the power. Unwilling to work with Parliament, Charles I pursued and milked dry unconventional revenue sources which further hurt his popularity. However, disagreements about cultural and religious issues also informed the battle lines of the civil war in 1642 CE, between the Parliamentarians and the crown and its allies, the royalists who were generally the landed elite. Charles I and his allies had lost by 1651 CE, and as a result, Charles I was executed under an order issued by the Rump Parliament in 1649. After the execution, the revolutionaries established a parliamentary government power slowly consolidated in one individual, Oliver Cromwell, culminating in a period known as the Protectorate (1653-1659). As Lord Protector, Cromwell had more king-like authority. This regime collapsed in 1659, and the royal Stuart

family, under Charles II, was brought back to rule as a monarchy again, with some changes in how power was shared between the Parliament and crown during the Restoration of 1660.

Because of the composition of government during the Protectorate, it is useful for studying the intentions and motivations of the Puritans. Roughly three years into the Interregnum, England saw further constrictions on the Parliament. After the victory of the Parliamentarians had ostensibly ended the civil war, Major Pride had purged the Parliament in 1648 of all members who did not want to execute the king. The remaining members, known as the Rump Parliament, ruled into the early 1650s, until they were dismissed by Oliver Cromwell. Following the Rump Parliament, Oliver Cromwell called the Nominated or Barebones Parliament for the last six months of 1653. During this time, Oliver Cromwell had considerable control over who was in Parliament. In December of 1653, a new government was instituted in England. The Instrument of Government gave Cromwell even more authority in the government. In this period there was less religious diversity in the government, which makes this period a more straightforward case for evaluating the role of Puritan religious beliefs in motivating political policy.² It is possible, specifically, to evaluate the Puritans and to discuss their motivations with less need to complicate and elongate the discussion by parsing the intricacies of interparliamentary politics.

Cromwell is the driving figure in the discussion of religious motivations during the Protectorate. Cromwell came from middling origins, born in 1599 to minor nobility and wealth, which was “founded on the spoliation of the Church.”³ English historian Christopher Hill insinuates that perhaps the source of his family’s wealth created a “vested interest” in

² Stuart E. Prall, *The Puritan Revolution: A Document History*, (Garden City, N.Y: Anchor Books, 1968), 250-262.

³ Christopher Hill, *God’s Englishman: Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970), 37.

Protestantism.⁴ He also developed strong Puritan values, especially anti-Catholicism, as a result of his schooling at the “very Puritan College of Sidney Sussex.”⁵ Much of Cromwell’s notoriety came from his successful military career. Cromwell was a political general but always a general. The Civil War gave him opportunities for promotion, and by 1642 he was lieutenant-general in the Parliamentarian Army against the King Charles I’s Royalist forces.⁶ By the execution of Charles I and the end of the Civil Wars, Cromwell was “the most powerful man in England.”⁷ Although Cromwell grappled with many difficult political issues and his outlook changed, Cromwell always maintained his loyalty to Puritanism.

At the forefront of the Interregnum experiments were the Puritans, including Cromwell, who formed much of the Parliamentary leadership. Who were the Puritans and what did they represent? Were they a radical wave of Protestantism? Were they themselves, as well as their experiments with government, indicative of larger trends, such as the rise of a modern, mercantile middle class? Were they representative of England as a whole or an empowered minority? The field of history has grappled with these interesting questions for a long time. Other questions still remained relatively untouched.

The Instrument of Government concentrated more power in one individual: the Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell.⁸ The “supreme legislative authority” was be assigned to the Lord Protector firstly, and the “people assembled in the Parliament,” secondly.⁹ Duties previously invested in the Parliament transitioned to the authority of the Lord Protector. These duties

⁴ Hill, *God’s Englishman*, 38.

⁵ Hill, *God’s Englishman*, 51

⁶ Prall, *The Puritan Revolution*, 307

⁷ Prall, *The Puritan Revolution*, 308.

⁸ And briefly, his son near the end of the Interregnum.

⁹ Stuart E. Prall, *The Puritan Revolution*, 250-262.

included “writs, processes, commissions, patents, grants” as well as the power of pardons.¹⁰

Additionally, the Lord Protector was the executive of the military and foreign affairs.¹¹

Ultimately, the Lord Protector functioned like a king. This final form of Interregnum government was a far more conservative arrangement than some of the radical models proposed and implemented earlier in this period. Parliament, which had grabbed a considerable governing authority in the wake of the execution of Charles I, by this point had officially handed it back to a single executive who already held de facto power as the leader of the military. Oliver Cromwell assumed the role of Lord Protectorate under the provisions of the *Instrument of Government* and ushered in the Protectorate. Cromwell also had the authority to nominate who could run for positions in Parliament. As a result, England functioned as a one-party state. That party was crafted largely in the image of Cromwell, who placed loyalists and ideological peers in the Parliament. Political parties, similar to modern ones with structure and codified platforms, were yet to exist, but there were strong ideological groupings which drove politics during the Interregnum. The group who held the most power during the Protectorate was the Puritans.

“Puritan” is a key term presented in this project. Who was a Puritan? What made them Puritans? Did they feel organized and unified as Puritans? These questions prove to be slippery. Renowned historian Christopher Hill attempts to pin down the moniker in the opening chapter of his book *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England*.¹² Christopher Hill is a Marxist/Social historian who did most of his work during the 1960s and focused on the English Civil War. Hill examines the Puritans within the framework of a social historian, exploring how

¹⁰ Stuart E. Prall, *The Puritan Revolution*, 250-262.

¹¹ Stuart E. Prall, *The Puritan Revolution*, 250-262.

¹² Christopher Hill, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1964).

the group identity was formed, and how it interacted with the larger society.¹³ He utilizes different genres of primary sources and strings together personal accounts (journals, sermons, etc.) to give the reader a sense of who the Puritans were, and by extension gives an account of who the non-Puritans, the eventual political outgroup, were.

The word Puritan, as Hill judges, was widely used as a pejorative.¹⁴ Thus, like all colloquialisms, its meaning was heavily reliant on its context. Who was calling whom a Puritan, and why they were doing so determined the meaning of the word. This variability adds confusion to the word and makes it very difficult to draw clear labels in seventeenth-century English society. Hill considers four types of Puritans: “Puritans in Church policy, Puritans in religion, Puritans in State, and Puritans in Morality.”¹⁵ The church policy nature of Puritanism is coincidentally the origin for the demonym. These Puritans worked within religious institutions to ‘purify’ them of Roman Catholic influences. They rejected the theology and the aesthetics as well as the Christian rituals which characterized the Roman Catholic mass. Puritans were congregationalist as well as Calvinist. Instead of a hierarchy of clergy, such as that present in the Catholic Church, the Puritans practiced a more egalitarian approach whereby members of the congregation preached with some individuals having more authority in practice. The Puritans, like other Calvinists, believed in predestination, the theological concept that people were born either saved or damned and that individuals could not do anything to change that designation. Material successes in life were considered signs of being a member of the elect, or the one’s God had predetermined to be saved. According to Hill, those who worked at the macro level, such as

¹³ Christopher Hill is a Marxist/Social historian who did most of his work during the 1960s and focused on the English Civil War.

¹⁴ Hill, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England*, 14.

¹⁵ Hill, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England*, 20.

those who attempted influence the policy and practice of the Church of England, can be considered “Puritans in Church [Policy],”¹⁶ while those who were lay practitioners are considered “Puritans in Religion.” Puritans who inhabited the government apparatus were, Hill contends, a distinct type of Puritan -- the “Puritans in State,” perhaps because of their overlapping political interests, which included republicanism or at least anti-Monarchical. Puritans in Morality were particularly concerned with morality as a public expression of Godliness. Not wishing to live in a society which, in their reckoning, had the characteristics of a society of the damned, “Puritans in Morality” attempted to universalize their moral principles within their community and if empowered, their realm. These moral principles included stripping away all sorts of elements of society considered frivolous distractions from God, beginning with the ceremony of a Catholic Mass, and extending broadly to cultural practices such as theater, sport, gambling, and drinking. The Puritans were interested in cultural reform as much as they were interested in personal interaction with the divine.

Therefore, Puritan is an intersectional term. Rather than seeing four different sorts of Puritans, another way of viewing the situation is that Hill’s four labels of Puritanism are four modalities of one Puritanism. Puritanism was rarely expressed narrowly as one type. Most Puritan figures in history demonstrate an involvement in all four of these modalities. In this case study, “Puritans in Morality” and “Puritans in State” are the central concern because they accrued political power during the Interregnum, especially during the period of the Protectorate. During this period, the “Puritans in State” also demonstrated the typified behavior of “Puritans in Morality” by pursuing policies of morality to influence broader society. Absent from the Historiography is the appreciating and valuation of the role of theology in Puritan legal rhetoric.

¹⁶ Puritans in Church Policy, however, they rejected this structure altogether and worked to dismantle it.

Historiographical Background

The subject of Puritan rule during the Interregnum is central to the work of many historical scholars. Large schools of historians are naturally attracted to this moment in history because of the unique intersection of political change, societal change, and religious ambition. In some senses, the Interregnum represents early modern experiments with republicanism and the growing stature of the English Parliament. Additionally, the history of the Interregnum is also a religious and societal one. Religious historians are therefore obviously engaged in the subject matter at hand but so too are those interested in social history and the popular opinions of the time.

This work utilizes all three of these perspectives -- Political, Social, Religious -- in concert when analyzing texts because that provides a fuller picture of the attitudes surrounding morality laws during the Protectorate. The Puritans present political questions, because Puritans used the existing state apparatus to implement their morality laws. Furthermore, debates about morality policies were subject to political differences and public debate in forums like Parliament. However, it is erroneous to ignore the genuinely held religious views of the Puritans and how their vision of society motivated them and drove their decisions while they were in government. Under more pragmatic regimes these policies would have been discarded quickly based on their unpopularity. An analysis which excluded discussion on the general motives of Puritans and an examination of their worldview would fall short in explaining the nature of Puritan moral policies as formulated and implemented during the Interregnum. The shortcomings of an analysis based solely on the political aspects also demonstrates a need to include the work of social historians on the subject. Policies and political figures did not exist in a vacuum. With a comprehensive look, a new picture emerges. Cromwell and Parliament attempted to enact moral

policies but reluctantly, had to temper their goals for a new society after being met by popular resistance.

This thesis especially asserts the idea that both Cromwell and Parliament, while morally ambitious, had to reconsider their goals in the face of an uncooperative general public. The common people had to live under a Puritan government, although a majority of them could be not classified as Puritan and did not hold the same vision of society that drove the laws about morality advanced by Cromwell and his Parliament during the Protectorate. The combined usage of religious, political, and social frameworks allows for a greater understanding of morality laws in Puritan, Interregnum England, the Puritan's inability to change behavior, and their drastic reversal after the collapse of the Puritan government and restoration of the monarchy. An analysis along political and societal lines support the argument that religion and religious beliefs are valuable to consider in this case.

Political historians focus instead on the interpretations of the actions of Cromwell and Parliament. Historians disagree about how to classify the government systems of the Interregnum which were dominated, in various capacities, by Oliver Cromwell. Leopold Von Ranke, whose contributions to history are foundational, even if modern historians dispute the merits of a pure historicist approach and the role of empiricism in history at the end of the nineteenth century, dubs Cromwell a tyrant; Ranke succinctly states, "Cromwell possessed absolute power."¹⁷ Over half a century later, Wilbur Cortez Abbott authored an extensive four-volume tome entitled *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, which offers transcriptions of a wide range of texts produced by Cromwell or by those in communication with him, accompanied by Abbott's

¹⁷ Leopold Von Ranke, *A History of England Principally in the Seventeenth Century*, Vol. 3 (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1875), 130.

analysis and contextualization.¹⁸ This analysis largely echoes Ranke's appraisal of Cromwell.¹⁹ For instance, Abbott notes with apparent dismay that Cromwell seemed to possess no remorse after disbanding Parliament and asserting the Protectorate, which Abbott characterizes as a military dictatorship.²⁰ Christopher Hill characterized Abbott's coverage of Cromwell as "distorting" and preoccupied with "labored comparisons between Cromwell and Hitler"; nevertheless, Hill labels *Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* as "indispensable."²¹ Abbott placed incredible value on analyzing the mountains of written primary sources regarding Cromwell in crafting his political history.

Woolrych's interpretations are a departure from several prominent historians who offered accounts of Cromwell in the early days of the formal academic field of history. Austin Woolrych evaluates the pervasive claim that Oliver Cromwell operated a military dictatorship.²² Woolrych begins the discussion by examining the term "dictator," which became a more extreme pejorative after the Second World War and was readily applied to the Protectorate "in the work journalists, publicists, and popular biographers [rather] than in that of academic historians..."²³ Although some historians have viewed Cromwell as a despot, Woolrych disagrees with this characterization.²⁴ He examines the way Cromwell exercised power during the Interregnum and

¹⁸ WC Abbott, *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*. 4 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1937).

¹⁹ Although, to some degree, Abbott attempts to paint himself as more neutral especially in the Preface section of the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th volumes. The entire work was published over the course of ten years (1937-1947) therefore allowing plenty of time for other scholars to render criticism which Abbott rebuffs in the preface section. Often, he is accused of falling into a condemnation of Cromwell, which he responded to by wavering between outright denying and admitting that, to him, the facts point that way.

²⁰ WC Abbott, Vol 2, 13.

²¹ Hill, *God's Englishman: Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution*, 269.

²² Austin Woolrych, "The Cromwellian Protectorate: A Military Dictatorship?" *History* 75, no. 244 (June 1990): 207-231. *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCOhost (accessed February 14, 2018).

²³ Woolrych, "The Cromwellian Protectorate," 207.

²⁴ Christopher Hill provides a comprehensive historiography of Cromwell related secondary sources which I certainly could not outdo, part two of the chapter "Oliver Cromwell and English History" provides a good

concludes that Cromwell does not fit the definition of a dictator, particularly because he did not rely on a large standing army. Woolrych contends that the size of the standing army decreased throughout the Interregnum.²⁵ Even in the face of the many external military engagements and the conflict in Ireland which characterized the era's military and foreign policy, it seems that the actual numbers of soldiers in the field decreased. According to Woolrych, the claim that Cromwell's political apparatus was sustained through perpetual state violence is weakened. Woolrych claims that Cromwell had more land to defend with the territorial acquisitions of Scotland and Ireland as well as international conflicts that were largely a political inheritance and therefore was justified in having a larger military.²⁶ A cursory examination of the Parliamentary minutes during the time of Cromwell's rule seems to indicate that the country was in dire need of more troops and that usually these troops seemed to be necessary in maintaining order.²⁷ Woolrych's use of cliometrics through an analysis of actual troop levels renders a new image of the political atmosphere of the Interregnum. Woolrych cannot and does not dodge the idea that Cromwell was interested in enacting and executing policies which were restrictive and aimed at limiting undesirable, immoral behavior.²⁸ This work provides an example of how Cromwell, as a political figure, utilized morality laws. Although he consistently advocated for morality policies, Cromwell also understood the resistance to these laws and the practical restrictions on enforcement.

recounting of the ways interpretations of Cromwell have changed over time. Christopher Hill, *God's Englishman: Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution*.

²⁵ Woolrych, "The Cromwellian Protectorate," 210.

²⁶ Woolrych, "The Cromwellian Protectorate," 210.

²⁷ *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660*. Edited by C H Firth and R S Rait. London: His Majesty's Stationery Office 1911. British History Online, accessed February 6, 2018, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/statutes-realm/vol5>.

²⁸ Woolrych, "The Cromwellian Protectorate," 221.

Social history represents two major shifts within the field of history, both relevant to this project. The first shift is the sorts of sources examined by the historian when formulating arguments. Generally, the social historian is more inclusive to a broader range of sources and therefore to more authors, including those who are underrepresented in more traditional sources (such as those documents examined by Abbott in *Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*). The second shift stems from the first. Whereas history was previously motivated by the historicist's approach of attempting to render a true-as-possible account of the past without bias, social history -- and its more specific forms (Marxist, gender, etc) -- produced arguments with consciously political conclusions. In this project, it is necessary to examine sources beyond the laws and the written works generated by the leading politicians of the Interregnum because these sources provide an inadequate picture of what the public reaction to Interregnum morality laws was. Without answering that question, we cannot evaluate the counterreaction to Cromwell and Parliament and judge the degree to which these morality laws were important to the key political figures of the Interregnum.

Although laws in England during the Interregnum originated with Cromwell and the Parliament, it was the duty of a group of military leaders stationed throughout the country to actually enforce these laws and thus affect daily life. Much of the responsibility for implementing these policies fell to the Major-Generals and an analysis of this level of the political system also yields insights. Historians have done a lot of work on this subject. Christopher Durston, in his article "'Settling the Hearts and Quieting the Minds of All Good People': The Major-Generals and the Puritan Minorities of Interregnum England" is one such

example.²⁹ The article concludes that the success of morality laws, such as those relating to theater, sport, and holidays, as well as other laws, relied partially on the ability of the particular Major-General appointed to the region, but to a greater extent, on the amenability of the people to the policies in question. Public amenability was a highly variable factor. Durston examines the middle level of the Interregnum government structure and draws comparisons of the successes and failures of these men in implementing the vision of the Puritan leadership elite. Using several representative case studies, he describes varied reactions to Cromwellian policies, including those relating to morality.

Bernard S. Capp is a contemporary historian of Early-Modern England with a particular interest in the cultural clash between those who wanted a radical application of religious thought in order to purify society (Puritans) and those who did not share that vision. Sharing considerable bibliographical links with Durston, Capp's *England's Culture Wars: Puritan Reformation and Its Enemies in the Interregnum* explores the career of Richard Culmer, a Puritan who preached his ideology before the Puritans came to power.³⁰ After bouncing unsuccessfully around several communities, the ideology of Culmner and his proposed policies for secular life did not take hold, and government officials took up his mission. Capp explores several cases outside of London where morality laws were be put into effect during the Protectorate. He looks at the examples of Kidderminster and Heaton. In Kidderminster, Major-General Richard Baxter was successful, but efforts by another Major-General in Heaton failed. In Kidderminster, as Capp notes, Baxter "enjoyed steady support from the bailiffs (the chief magistrates), and other

²⁹Christopher Durston, "Settling the Hearts and Quieting the Minds of All Good People!: The Major-Generals and the Puritan Minorities of Interregnum England" *History* 85, no. 278 (April 2000): 247, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCOhost (accessed October 31, 2015).

³⁰ B.S. Capp, *England's Culture Wars: Puritan Reformation and Its Enemies in the Interregnum, 1649-1660*. 221-230. 1st ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

officers.”³¹ Without local support, Puritan policies had no legs and were doomed to be ignored by an unimpressed public.

Bridging social and political history, Durston and Capp utilize a combination of official state documents, such as orders for the Major-Generals, as well as documents that tell history from the people’s perspective, such as personal journals and letters. A social analysis is useful for answering the central question about the efficacy and reasons for failure or shortcomings of Puritan theology-driven morality laws during the Interregnum in England. Although discussion of the political structures and motivations for these policies are important, most of the evidence results from the works of social historian. By trying to gauge popular reaction to the laws, it is possible to conclude that the Puritans in power continued to pursue these laws out of a genuine conviction, regardless of popular reaction.

Puritanism as a set of religious beliefs has been severely underrated by all the previously referenced authors. Hill, for all his usefulness in this project, often interprets the Puritans as a sort of proto-middle class beginning to emerge as a bourgeoisie. To discount the sincerity of the religious and societal beliefs of the Puritans is to miss an integral part of the Interregnum’s morality policies. Historian Peter Clark attempts to apply a class-driven analysis to the discourse surrounding alehouses before, during, and right after the Interregnum in a chapter he provided for a festschrift collection of essays in tribute to Christopher Hill.³² Clark makes the case that alehouses were targeted specifically by a bourgeois Parliament because of their association with

³¹ Capp, *England’s Culture Wars*, 227.

³² Tribute is not an embellishment or romanization; the book is dedicated “For Christopher with gratitude and affection” and is accompanied with a portrait of Hill inside the front cover. Although, many scholars in history regularly receive such adulation it is worth noting the influence Hill has on this topic, as evidenced by this document.

lower socio-economic populations.³³ Clark does not neglect the presence of genuinely held moral and religious beliefs which drove opinion towards alehouses.³⁴ Clark's approach of incorporating multiple angles of analysis including religious is a model for this project. The genuinely held religious beliefs of the Puritans provide an impetus for the morality laws of the Interregnum.

Therefore, the work of religious historians bears significant relevance to this discussion. Key to Puritan ideology is a resistance to complacency or a contentment with personal morality. It was necessary, according to historians, for the Puritans to remake society in their theology's image. James Spalding, a religious historian with a focus in England, writes about this feature of Puritanism in his work "Sermon's before Parliament."³⁵ Spalding uses records of speeches and prayers made by Puritans prior to the Interregnum to demonstrate a trend of militant Puritanism in English government. The folk making these speeches eventually comprised the center of Interregnum government.

However, other religious historians argue that Puritans who inhabited positions of power did not adopt such a hardline. In 2003, Sears McGee identified a degree of toleration in the Long Parliament, which preceded the Civil War and therefore the interregnum government, although also served as a foundation for it.³⁶ This account asserts that among hardliners, who advocated for persecution and universal application of Puritan societal ideals, there existed some more tolerant members. Woolrych likewise mentions strains of toleration present in the political

³³ Peter Clark, "The Alehouse and Alternative Society," In *Puritans and Revolutionaries: Essays Presented to Christopher Hill*, eds, Donald Pennington and Keith Thomas, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 49.

³⁴ Clarke, "The Alehouse and Alternative Society," 59.

³⁵ James C. Spalding, "Sermons Before Parliament (1640-1649) as a Public Puritan Diary". *Church History* 36. Cambridge University Press: (1967), 24-35.

³⁶ McGee, Sears, "Sir Simonds D'Ewes and 'the Poitovin Cholick': Persecution, Toleration, and the Mind of a Puritan Member of the Long Parliament", *Canadian Journal of History*, December 2003. 281-291.

discourses of Puritan leaders during the Interregnum.³⁷ Acknowledging both sides is important, but Woolrych and McGee seem to make their case as a way to chip away at the general thrust of historical interpretation presented by most scholars. They do not supplant the historical understanding which considers Cromwell's Protectorate Government to be dictatorial in nature and concerned with implementing a religious vision.

The historiographical approach of this work draws inspiration from three separate, but deeply interwoven, subfields of history. The social, religious, and political understanding of Interregnum England must work in tandem in order to give an adequate account of that era's morality laws and the ways they affected the people. Special attention must be paid to the interplay between these three threads of analysis. No one methodology holds the whole answer; instead, it is important to focus on how religious thought affects politics, how politics affects society, and how society affects politics. This project attempts to reconcile these concerns into one coherent account of the Interregnum morality politics.

The religious perspective demonstrates the central role religion played in the formulation of policy. The religious beliefs of the Puritans drove their politics, especially their morality policies. Meanwhile, the diverse religious beliefs of the people of England, as well as Scotland and Ireland, hampered the ability of those morality policies to make change in society. An understanding of the religious and cultural motivations of both the Puritans in power as well as the rest of society reveals the motivations of those Puritans. Cromwell and his mostly Puritan government operated under a genuine motivation to effect change in society along the lines of their idea of a godly society.

Religion in Law

³⁷ Woolrych, "The Cromwellian Protectorate," 212.

These attitudes are demonstrable in the consistency of Puritan efforts to change society through morality laws and in the consistent rhetoric present in their morality legislation. Speeches given by Oliver Cromwell as well as laws passed during the Protectorate provide the bulk of the relevant information about the Puritans in power and their efforts to pursue religiously-motivated policies. Certain patterns of rhetoric emerge through these documents. There is a strong linkage between Catholicism and subversive, treasonous behavior. By the same token, Protestantism, with an implied Puritan bent, was linked with patriotism. God, according to the Puritans, chose England to be a good bulwark of Christianity. Therefore, many of the policies expressed through laws, and the language present in speeches targeted and villainized Catholic elements of society while supporting Puritanism. In this discourse, certain activities, which by themselves may have been neutral, were rhetorically battered and banned by legislation. Such activities were targeted for their relationship to Catholicism.

The Puritan bent of the Interregnum legislation predated the Protectorate. In these five years, laws were especially motivated by Puritanism. Puritan rhetorical elements were present in both the Rump Parliament from 1649-1653 and the Barebones Parliament in 1653 including, “The Covenant to be Taken by the Whole Kingdom.”³⁸ This text demonstrates the zeal of the Puritans in power and a consistency of rhetoric throughout this period, even though it was little more than a resolution than a legally binding document.

“The Covenant to be taken by the whole Kingdom” affirms the consistent talking points present elsewhere in the Interregnum period. England is described as a haven for the “true Protestant Reformed Religion” which is always under threat from subversive Catholic elements

³⁸ "June 1643: The Covenant to be taken by the whole Kingdom," in *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660*, ed. C H Firth and R S Rait (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1911), 175-176. British History Online, accessed June 5, 2018, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/acts-ordinances-interregnum/pp175-176>.

internally and externally.³⁹ The text engages in fear-mongering, claiming that “Papists” intended to “to bring to utter Ruin and Destruction the Parliament and Kingdom, and, that which is dearest, the True Protestant Religion.”⁴⁰ Furthermore, the resolution urges the citizenry to band together so that they can be protected from this threat: it was “thought fit that all who are true-hearted, and Lovers of their Country, should bind themselves each to other, in a Sacred Vow and Covenant, in Manner and Form as followeth...”⁴¹ The text of this law made it clear that the problem in England was Catholics and the solution was to embrace Puritanism.

The Parliament attempted to use the language of God as a means of forging a united nation. According to the text, God is an actor in politics. The document praises God for helping to uncover a plot by Catholics to unseat the Parliament.⁴² The government seeks to glorify God and also goes further by making the claim that God and the Parliament are allies with unified interests. There are two logical reasons why Parliament would take this tact. On the one hand, it could be a realpolitik strategy to connect with a broadly Christian though diversely devout populace. This analysis is dubious, because a great deal of other sources refutes the idea that the Puritan regime had widespread popularity. Furthermore, the continued need to issue laws with this sort of language hints at the fact that these attitudes did not take hold in society and needed regular reinforcement. Therefore, it is possible that the use of this language and rationale reveals not a calculated use of rhetoric but rather a reflection of genuine religious beliefs.

This “Covenant” had dubious influence on the general population but is an incredible example of the rhetoric and abstract Puritan conversations about society. This law provides context for a Puritan legal tactic which permeated the Protectorate. The tactic was to take

³⁹ "June 1643: The Covenant to be taken by the whole Kingdom," Paragraph 1.

⁴⁰ "June 1643: The Covenant to be taken by the whole Kingdom," Paragraph 1.

⁴¹ "June 1643: The Covenant to be taken by the whole Kingdom," Paragraph 1.

⁴² "June 1643: The Covenant to be taken by the whole Kingdom," Paragraph 1.

activities that were deemed ungodly and contrast them with activities which were deemed godly. Hidden within the distinction between godly and ungodly behaviors was the Puritan ideology. Orbiting around this rhetorical core are two legal elements: laws that sought to diminish counter-ideological culture and laws that promote ideologically conforming culture. This dichotomy is noteworthy; both of these sorts of laws created clear expectations of which cultural practices were appropriate and which were not.

While Protectorate speeches and legislation are useful because of their explicit presentation of Puritan values and refutation of countervailing values, they do have gaps which make them limited historical sources. The voices of these political sources are singular. It is difficult to discern to what extent broader society held these views. Nevertheless, they represented the values of influential political leaders, including the most influential, Cromwell, as well as reflect what was made into policy during the time. Another problem with the political sources of the Protectorate, and the Interregnum generally, is their scarcity. While a complete record of the laws and ordinances passed during the period exists, record of the Parliamentary discussion surrounding this legislation are lacking. Particularly, the journals of Parliamentarians have glaring gaps during the scattered sessions that produced the morality laws of the Protectorate period. Both the journals of Guibon Goddard and Thomas Burton have no entries which correspond to the dates where a morality law was issued, despite the fact that both appear to have served for the bulk of the Protectorate period (1653-1657).⁴³ As a result, no sense of debate surrounds these pieces of legislation, creating barriers to a deeper analysis of these laws and the speeches; the type and volume of dissent or any additional motivation remains

⁴³ *Diary of Thomas Burton Esq: Volume 1, July 1653 - April 1657*, ed. John Towill Ruit. London: H Colburn 1828, British History Online, accessed April 16, 2018. www.british-history.ac.uk/burton-diaries/vol1
Note: Guibon Goddard's journal is contained within this larger document.

unapparent in the text of the legislation. Despite these limitations, the consistent rhetoric present in the legal texts themselves provides grounds for an argument that there existed a consistent religious motivation to reform society in the Protectorate government.

In the Autumn of 1656, well into the Protectorate, Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell delivered an address to the Parliament. Guibon Goddard recorded the texts of the speech; we know little about Goddard except that he was a member of Parliament at the time who kept a journal of Parliamentary affairs. His account appears in a larger diary written by Thomas Burton, a member of Parliament from Westmoreland at the same time as Goddard.⁴⁴ Neither of these individuals have the notoriety to help historians contextualize their writings. However, their positions in a Parliament largely selected by Oliver Cromwell makes it likely that their ideologies overlapped. Goddard and Burton presented the speech as a verbatim record of the Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell's own words, not a second-hand summary. This speech provides a snapshot of Commonwealth (England, Scotland, and Ireland) in the mind of Cromwell. Furthermore, this speech demonstrates the extent to which religious rhetoric is present in Cromwell's politics.

The modern editor, John Towill Ruit, provides little commentary on the recording methods of Goddard⁴⁵. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss the veracity of this source. Goddard's account is notable for its specificity. It is possible that Goddard had access to other written copies of the speech or efficient notetaking abilities. This source can be used a record of what Cromwell pontificated when he appeared in Parliament in September of 1656 because it is extremely unlikely that Goddard's account is a total fabrication, given his loyalty to Cromwell

⁴⁴ "Preface," in *Diary of Thomas Burton Esq: Volume 1, July 1653 - April 1657*, ed. John Towill Ruit (London: H Colburn, 1828), 214. British History Online, accessed April 29, 2018, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/burton-diaries/voll/preface>.

⁴⁵ "Preface," in *Diary of Thomas Burton Esq: Volume 1, July 1653 - April 1657*, Paragraph 1.

and his seat in a Cromwell-friendly Parliament. WC Abbott notes that over seventy people had been excluded from this session of Parliament in an attempt to have a more pro-Cromwell audience for the speech.⁴⁶ There is a reasonable assumption that Goddard, as a loyalist to Cromwell would accurately represent the speech.

Cromwell does not waste any time establishing the central role of God in his administration of the three kingdoms -- England, Scotland, and Ireland. In Cromwell's mind, it is his sacred duty to uphold the Commonwealth as a Protestant nation and defend it from external Catholic threats. In the first few paragraphs of his speech, Cromwell establishes the Commonwealth as the embodiment of Godliness on earth. Cromwell says of the Commonwealth, "Yet, whatsoever should serve the glory of God, and the interest of his people, which they see to be more eminently, yea more eminently patronized and professed in this nation, (we will not speak it with vanity) above all the nations in the world..."⁴⁷ Much of the speech concerns foreign policy; it specifically, designates Catholic Spain as the primary enemy of England, but also spends time highlighting the threat of domestic Royalists (Cavaliers) and Catholics (Papists) as well as the pope himself, who Cromwell notes is zealous and ambitious in his aim to bring all of Western Europe back into the fold of the Roman Catholic Church. Cromwell then interestingly links Spanish Catholics with domestic Catholics, which has implications for domestic morality laws. In Cromwell's reckoning, and presumably many of his colleagues, even the slightest bit of Catholic behavior or sympathies at home was related to this threat.

⁴⁶ Abbott, *Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, 282.

⁴⁷ "Guibon Goddard's Journal: The Protector's Speech at opening of Parliament (17th September 1656)," in "Diary of Thomas Burton Esq: Volume 1, July 1653 - April 1657, ed. John Towill Ruit (London: H Colburn, 1828), cxlviii-clxxiv, British History Online, accessed February 6, 2018. www.british-history.ac.uk/burton-diaries/vol1, Paragraph 6.

Oliver Cromwell engages in naked fear mongering in this 1656 speech. He recalls that 20,000 Protestants had been “massacred” since the reign of Queen Mary (1553-1558), who, Cromwell pointedly reminds the audience, had been married to a Spanish Catholic.⁴⁸ This figure is large and difficult to verify. Historians Bucholz and Key touch upon the Irish Rebellion of 1641 in their book *Early Modern England 1485-1714*, a narrative history of larger scope, and conclude that the number was closer to four thousand but that, “by the time that the news of the rebellion reached London, the number of Protestant dead had been inflated to 200,000.”⁴⁹ While Cromwell linked incidents like this revolt to a larger Catholic conspiracy, Buchholz and Key see the Irish Rebellion of 1641 as a set of localized reactions to systematic disenfranchisement of native Irish Catholics by English colonizers.⁵⁰ However, Cromwell and his contemporaries had a different view of these incidents. Uprisings of Catholics, like the 1641 uprising in Ireland, were a part of a larger fear that the government was in danger, “Can we think that Papists and Cavaliers shake not hands in England? It is unworthy, un-Christian, un-English-like.”⁵¹ Cromwell appeared to be very concerned that Catholics were linked to old royalist elements of society and that they had powerful foreign patrons in Spain.

Cromwell used this association to justify and advocate for a general crackdown on Catholics, and plausibly Catholic-like behavior, as a means of providing security for the longevity of the state, which was in turn linked to God’s will. Throughout this speech, Cromwell deploys religious rhetoric as justifications of his policies. Cromwell seems to demonstrate a genuine loathing of Catholic people and beliefs because of his staunch Puritan beliefs. This

⁴⁸ Guibon Goddard's Journal: The Protector's Speech at opening of Parliament (17th September 1656). Paragraph 20.

⁴⁹ Robert Bucholz and Newton Key, *Early Modern England, 1485-1714: A Narrative History*, Second ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2004, 248.

⁵⁰ Bulholz & Key, *Early Modern England*, 248.

⁵¹ “Guibon Goddard's Journal: The Protector's Speech at opening of Parliament (17th September 1656)”. Paragraph 19.

speech demonstrates both the consistency of the Puritan religious worldview and how that worldview appeared in the discussion on a diverse range of issues. The Puritans in power, led by Cromwell, continued this pattern until the bitter end.

Some historians have postulated that their bigoted attitude towards Catholics was merely an occasional rhetorical device, creating an enemy to rally against. Historians Woolrych and Abbott are in contention about the style and goals of Cromwell's Puritan government. Frustratingly, Abbott's account of this speech focuses on the question of who was included in Parliament.⁵² Their discussion starts at the effect of these laws and how they affect society to conclude whether or not Cromwell was an authoritarian leader from his methods. However, the question that Abbott and Woolrych do not broach is to what ends was Cromwell attempting to retain power. The text of the actual speech demonstrates the importance of Puritan religious ideology as an answer to that question.

Near the end of Oliver Cromwell's life, and indeed in the waning years of Puritan rule in England, the government demonstrated its continued dedication to upholding Puritan moral standards in general society with the law "An Act for the Better Observation of the Lord's Day."⁵³ This law, issued in June 1657, was intended to regulate behavior on Sunday and engaged in promotion and prohibition of specific activities in line with Puritan ideology. Prohibiting certain activities such as work, enumerating an inclusive list that most likely left few people with the license to work on a Sunday was part of a strategy to keep people focused on worship. Most trades people, it seems, were included on the list of prohibited activities as were those who

⁵² Abbot, *Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, 281-283.

⁵³ "June 1657: An Act for the better observation of the Lords Day," in *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660*, ed. C H Firth and R S Rait (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1911), 1162-1170, British History Online, accessed June 5, 2018, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/acts-ordinances-interregnum/pp1162-1170>.

engaged in finance, transportation, or hospitality.⁵⁴ Only those whose professions were innately religious, such as preachers, or those whose work ensured the continued operation of religious institutions were excused. This act is interesting because of specificity. Unlike other laws from this era, this Act included a fully fleshed-out procedure for enforcement with specific fines for specific infractions and even altered sentences for children under the age of fourteen.⁵⁵ This text, like other legislation, leaves some gaps in what can be analyzed and understood. For example, no indication of people breaking the sabbath being a widespread issue. Nor, do we get the sense from this document whether those charged with enforcing this law had the ability or will to do so because no part of the text comments on that feature of laws and their enforcement. This act demonstrates a clear intent from the Puritan leadership of Parliament to pursue their goals of creating a Godlier society.

Not only are many people prohibited from working under this 1657 law, but this law also targeted many other activities. Puritan laws during the Interregnum had already targeted activities such as gambling, drinking, dancing, or participating in revelries associated with old Catholic practice:

All persons keeping, using or being present upon the Day aforesaid at any Fairs, Markets, Wakes, Revels, Wrestlings, Shootings, Leaping, Bowling, Ringing of Bells for pleasure, or upon any other occasion, (saving for calling people together for the publique Worship) Feasts, Church-Ale, MayPoles, Gaming, Bear-Baiting, Bull-Baiting, or any other Sports and Pastimes.⁵⁶

This law also specifically targets those engaged in the purchase and consumption of alcohol and tobacco.⁵⁷ These features of the law can be considered part of a general campaign of moral reform by Puritan leadership because the rhetoric mirrors other discussions of these activities.

⁵⁴ "June 1657: An Act for the better observation of the Lords Day," Paragraph 2.

⁵⁵ "June 1657: An Act for the better observation of the Lords Day," Paragraph 3.

⁵⁶ "June 1657: An Act for the better observation of the Lords Day," Paragraph 1.

⁵⁷ "June 1657: An Act for the better observation of the Lords Day," Paragraph 1.

For example, this law employs similar rhetoric as the provision against Cock-Fighting a year earlier. Both laws link certain activities together, such as, in the case of this law, fairs with gaming (gambling), implying that gambling, a practice which has no place in proper Puritan morality, is present among the other activities listed which may on their own be less problematic such as fairs.

Another noteworthy feature of this law is who the law empowered to enforce it. This law lists specific civil positions, including sheriffs or bailiffs, as responsible for enforcing the law. These officials are to be expected, of course, but the law also empowers Church leaders to charge people who have violated this law.⁵⁸ This fascinating feature demonstrates the extent to which the authority of the government was linked with religion, not only in rhetoric, but in practice. It is hard to refute the notion that at the core of morality laws during the Interregnum were genuine religious beliefs which motivated morality laws and were purely motivated by a desire to live in a godlier society. This law clearly demonstrated what instead was the preferred activity for the Lord's Day: going to church. By outlining what activities were not allowed, the Puritans emphasized what was allowed. By outlawing alternatives, people might as well go to church. These features demonstrate the relationship between the laws that promote conformity to Puritan ideals and laws that persecute countervailing behavior. "June 1657: An Act for the better observation of the Lords Day" functions to describe certain godly activities as well as those which are ungodly.

In March 1654, Parliament passed an ordinance banning cockfighting, the sort of law which typifies Puritan social prohibitions. Simply, the ordinance prohibited assemblies "under [pretense] of Matches for Cock-Fighting" and charged "all Sheriffs, Justices of the Peace,

⁵⁸ "June 1657: An Act for the better observation of the Lords Day," Paragraph 10.

Mayors, Bayliffs, Constables and Headboroughs” with the task of enforcing this decree.⁵⁹ While this ordinance does not inform posterity of the prevalence of the problem, how truly concerned Parliament was about this activity, or whether this ordinance was enforced effectively, the language of the ordinance reveals the attitudes and goals of the Puritan regime during the Protectorate. The Puritans are not only interested in regulating a behavior but encouraging a godly existence.

The crafters of this piece of legislation decry “Cock-Fighting” on two grounds, both rooted in a sense of Puritan morality. Firstly, they charge “Cock-Fighting” as contributing to the “ruine of Persons and their Families.”⁶⁰ But more interestingly, Parliament links the behavior with other undesirable behaviors: “the disturbance of the Publique Peace, and are commonly accompanied with Gaming, Drinking, Swearing, Quarreling, and other dissolute Practices, to the Dishonor of God.”⁶¹ The Parliament overtly lumps the practice in with other activities which from a Puritan perspective were offensive to God. Puritans in power during the Protectorate had the desire to regulate morality with the expressed desire of bringing society more in line with their vision of godliness. The rhetoric present in this document mirrors some of the language present in “The Covenant to be Taken by the Whole Kingdom” but also demonstrates that the puritans in power were willing to legislate on specific issues as a way to move society towards their ideal. While policies such as this one relating to Cock-Fighting address specific and domestic issues, the same religious rhetoric also appears in documents relating to broader issues foreign affairs.

⁵⁹ "March 1654: An Ordinance for prohibiting Cock-matches," in *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660*, ed. C H Firth and R S Rait (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1911), 861. British History Online, accessed May 8, 2018, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/acts-ordinances-interregnum/p861>. Paragraph 1.

⁶⁰ "March 1654: An Ordinance for prohibiting Cock-matches," Paragraph 1.

⁶¹ "March 1654: An Ordinance for prohibiting Cock-matches," Paragraph 1.

Historian Peter Clarke discusses one possible motivation for placing tighter regulations on alehouses in his chapter entitled “The Alehouse and Alternative Society.”⁶² Many of Clarke’s conclusions were that regulations placed on alehouses were attempts to assert control on what may be a hotbed for dissident activity.⁶³ This activity could take several forms. One the one hand, it could be active political organizing against the government. Clarke details several minor political uprisings which were thought to be instigated or planned in an alehouse.⁶⁴ However, Clarke also concludes that alehouses failed, “to live up to their reputation as the command centers of popular revolution.”⁶⁵ Therefore, it is plausible that laws such as “An Ordinance Prohibiting Cock-Matches,” were intended to keep moral order rather than a political one,

The primary sources from the period demonstrate two reoccurring features of the Puritan legislation. One is the consistency with which the Puritans pursued their worldview throughout the entire period of the Protectorate and on a wide range of issues. This consistency strengthens the second prominent features of Puritan political documents: a genuine fervor to enact cultural change along religious lines. They were not simply interested in holding onto power for its own sake. The Puritans during the Protectorate demonstrated loyalty to fulfilling the goals of their moral worldview despite popular resistance.

Popular Resistance

Many documents suggest that Cromwell’s Puritan reforms were not popular with the general public. A political cartoon is referenced in a 1654 newsletter from an Englishman abroad who describes a Dutch political cartoon. At the time, the Dutch and the English were engaged in

⁶² Peter Clarke, “The Alehouse and Alternative Society,” In *Puritans and Revolutionaries: Essays Presented to Christopher Hill*. eds. Donald Pennington and Keith Thomas, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978).

⁶³ Clarke, “The Alehouse and Alternative Society,” 69.

⁶⁴ Clarke, “The Alehouse and Alternative Society,” 66.

⁶⁵ Clarke, “The Alehouse and Alternative Society,” 67.

the First Anglo-Dutch War that would conclude with a treaty by March of 1654.⁶⁶ Although the cartoon does not appear in Henderson's collection, the author of the newsletter describes the image, "an emblem pictured there where his Highness the Lord Protector is pictured treading with one foot on an Englishman another upon an Irishman and a Scotsman between his legs before a Dutch man, raising up with a cap in hand bowing for peace..."⁶⁷ Furthermore, Cromwell is depicted in a compromised state of dress with a caricature of France helping to fend off the advances of a caricature of Spain. The lack of respect for Oliver Cromwell is apparent, but there is also significant commentary about the nature of Cromwell's regime. Not only was he oppressive to the Scots and Irish, but also to his native English. This letter from WW, about whom the editor Henderson has little information, suggests that Cromwell's regime had an international reputation for repressiveness and unpopularity. A newsletter from Westminster earlier that year describes with frustration that "other congregational churches and all sober Christians support the government," while other areas needed more military reinforcements to keep order, illuminating the fact that plenty of people did not support the Government and its attitudes towards morality.⁶⁸ A letter written by Cromwell in 1654 reveals that even the Lord Protector understood that there was "people of God of differing judgements," suggesting that he was aware of the resistance to his policies.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ "Newsletter from Gilbert Mabbott, Westminster, 11 March 1654," in *The Clarke Papers: Further Selections from the Papers of William Clarke*, ed. Frances Henderson, Cambridge University Press: London, 2005, 161-162.

⁶⁷ "Newsletter from W.W.," in *The Clarke Papers: Further Selections from the Papers of William Clarke*, ed. Frances Henderson, (Cambridge University Press: London, 2005), 166-167.

⁶⁸ "Oliver Cromwell, Whitehall to Robert Lilburne, [Dalkeith], 7 March 1654," in *The Clarke Papers: Further Selections from the Papers of William Clarke*. ed. Frances Henderson, (Cambridge University Press: London, 2005), 159-160.

⁶⁹ "Newsletter from John Thurloe, Westminster, 26 January 1654," in *The Clarke Papers: Further Selections from the Papers of William Clarke*, ed. Frances Henderson, (Cambridge University Press: London, 2005), 146-147.

Force was used to back up unpopular Puritan laws. The Protectorate had mixed results using force to implement their policies. While the Protectorate government attempted to encourage a more Puritan celebration of the sabbath with laws including, "June 1657: An Act for the better observation of the Lord's Day," there was plenty of deviation from this expectation. While the law was clear, the outcomes were not.⁷⁰ Enforcement was hardly uniform and "pursued mainly outside the court-room," with cautions or minor punishments such as time in the stocks or fines.⁷¹ Stopping commerce was also difficult; Capp relates that on one occasion Puritan soldiers under the command of Major Pride (of the infamous Purge) fired open a group of tradesmen in London who disobeyed orders to cease commerce.⁷² While this instance of violence occurred within the city, Capp notes higher instances of disobedience in the sub-urban areas surrounding the city of London where central guilds had less influence over the proceedings.⁷³ Although Capp evaluates the Puritan reformers as relatively successful in regulating the Sabbath, this success did not come without effort and a considerable use of the government's force.⁷⁴

Part of the difficulty in constructing a religious utopia lay in the religious diversity of English society. This diversity rules out the explanation that the Protectorate government was simply enacting policies that reflected the will of the majority, instead these laws reflected the will of the Puritans who were in power. In "The Religious Marketplace: Public Disputations in Civil War and Interregnum England," Capp highlights the diversity of religious thought by examining several public disputations, which were open forums on religious subjects, often

⁷⁰ Capp, *England's Culture Wars*, 101.

⁷¹ Capp, *England's Culture Wars*, 101.

⁷² Capp, *England's Culture Wars*, 102.

⁷³ Capp, *England's Culture Wars*, 102.

⁷⁴ Capp, *England's Culture Wars*, 109.

structured as debates between two religious scholars.⁷⁵ The religious diversity of England as well as the records of rebellion and subversion of morality laws demonstrates two-fold that morality laws were not enacted by the Protectorate government for the sake of political expediency. Coupled with an analysis of the rhetoric present in the laws, this evidence strengthens the claim that religious motivations were central to the political activity of the Puritan leadership within the Protectorate government.

Even the accounts of the ideologically loyal Puritan citizen demonstrate the ways in which Puritan policies met resistance. *Wallington's World: A Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth-Century London*, edited by Paul Seaver, based almost entirely on a diary from an artisan living in London during the Interregnum.⁷⁶ Whereas journals and diaries of the elite are more prevalent, Nehemiah Wallington's account offers a glimpse into the perspective of a relatively common person. Wallington represents an individual who would be largely supportive of the sorts of morality laws instituted by Parliament. At one point in his texts, Wallingford railed against the local tap house and the menagerie of drunken characters milling in and about the institution.⁷⁷ This internal monologue echoes the often-silent sentiments held by political leaders who enacted morality laws during the Protectorate. Instances like these also illuminate what behaviors can be considered the norm. The fact that Wallington often feels as a minority among his peers demonstrates the fact that Puritan conceptions of morality cut against the grains of societal norms at the time.

⁷⁵ Bernard Capp, "The Religious Marketplace: Public Disputations in Civil War and Interregnum England," *English Historical Review* Vol. CXXIX No. 536 (2013): 47-78.

⁷⁶ Paul S. Seaver, *Wallington's World: A Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth-Century London*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1985).

⁷⁷ Seaver, *Wallington's World*, 55.

These arguments demonstrate the gulf between the Puritans who ruled during the Protectorate and the general populace. This gulf reveals the morality laws of the era were not simply extensions of the public will. Rather, the Puritans pursued an unpopular program of reform motivated by their extremist religious views. While moral regulation was certainly not new in England, the Puritans pushed that envelope. After the fall of the Protectorate and the return of the monarchy, a slew of laws was introduced to undo aspects of Puritan reforms.

Restoration Reversals

By the end of the 1650s, there was a great political shift in England which ousted the Puritans. In one of the great ironies of history, when Oliver Cromwell died in 1658, his son Richard succeeded him as Lord Protector. It is ironic because many people believe that one of the goals of the English Civil War was to get rid of a hereditary monarch. While Richard lacked some of the leadership qualities of his father, “the ruling elite had their fill of godly reformation...”⁷⁸ By 1660, the Protectorate collapsed, and the ruling elite brought back the Stuart dynasty, and Charles II ruled from 1660 to 1685. The factions which formed the convention that reinstated the monarchy included Parliamentary moderates and Presbyterians as well as a few staunch royalists.⁷⁹ While many historians focus on this period as a landmark in the development of constitutional monarchy, it is also important to consider all the laws which reversed the effects of Puritan rule. Parliament issued a decree outlining their own legitimacy and right to rule.⁸⁰ Most of the language in this document seems routine and straightforward with the exception of one-line referencing the current year as the sixteenth year of the reign of “the late King

⁷⁸ Bucholtz and Key, *Early Modern England*, 274.

⁷⁹ Bulcholz and Key, *Early Modern England*, 279.

⁸⁰ “Charles II, 1660: An Act for removing and preventing all Questions and Disputes concerning the Assembling and Sitting of this present Parliament,” in *Statutes of the Realm: Volume 5, 1628-80*, ed. John Raithby (s.l: Great Britain Record Commission, 1819), 179. British History Online, accessed April 30, 2018, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/statutes-realm/vol5/p179>.

Charles(I).”⁸¹ After establishing their own legitimacy, the Parliament in 1660 worked to to unravel the features of Puritan rule, by disbanding the standing army which effectively occupied large portions of England, repealing the prohibition of alcohol, and passing laws that restored ministers previously removed by the Puritans.

One feature of the Protectorate and the Interregnum is the role a standing army played in maintaining order, but the Restoration government did not feel the military needed to play that role. Although Woolrych disputes the conclusion that a large army was needed to administer the policy coming from Cromwell and Parliament in London, the prevailing notion among historians is that this standing army was a part of the heavy-handed rule of the Puritans.⁸² In 1660, Parliament passed legislation entitled, “An Act for the speedy disbanding of the Army and Garrisons of this Kingdom.”⁸³ This law describes the army as a “great burden” and sought send the troops back to their respective homes with a few exceptions such as in Scotland.⁸⁴ The Restoration Parliament had no need for such a military force, because it abandoned the costly enforcement of widely resisted morality laws. This piece of legislation represents a change in attitude between the government and the people but also accomplished another goal. Logically, the military were loyal to the Lord Protector and by disbanding them, the Parliament and King Charles II were removing these Puritan loyalists from position of power. The Restoration government apparently had an interest in seeing the army quickly ushered off the stage as a

⁸¹ Charles II, 1660: An Act for removing and preventing all Questions and Disputes concerning the Assembling and Sitting of this present Parliament," Paragraph 2; This line is puzzling because it is unclear what this is a reference to. When Charles was executed in 1649, he was in the twenty-fourth year of his reign which began in 1625. While this meaning is unclear, it is possible that this chronology discredited and delegitimizes the previous Interregnum government.

⁸² Woolrych, “Cromwellian Protectorate,” 207.

⁸³ "Charles II, 1660: An Act for the speedy disbanding of the Army and Garrisons of this Kingdome," in *Statutes of the Realm: Volume 5, 1628-80*, ed. John Raithby (s.l: Great Britain Record Commission, 1819), 238-241. British History Online, accessed April 30, 2018, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/statutes-realm/vol5/pp238-241>.

⁸⁴ "Charles II, 1660: An Act for the speedy disbanding of the Army and Garrisons of this Kingdome," Paragraph 1.

summary of the year's laws attests; it appeared to be one of the first items on the docket.

Although the collection of laws does not include a date for the passage of this particular law, it is near the top of the list which is chronological.⁸⁵ Many of the other acts taken by Parliament relate to the "speedy" disbanding of the Army and raising funds to pay for that process.⁸⁶ Those Puritans who had enforced the rule of the Protectorate were sent home.

The Restoration Government did not persecute alcohol like the Puritans did. In "Charles II, 1660: A Grant of certaine Impositions upon Beere Ale and other Liquors for the encrease of His Majestyes Revenue dureing His Life," there is nary a mention of moral and cultural associations with drinking alcohol.⁸⁷ Whereas in Puritan legislation, an activity like cock-fighting was bad because drunkenness was bad and more importantly it had associations with commonly Catholic social practices, this law makes no such judgement. Instead, this law is interested in the financial value of alcohol, rather than the moral value. Beer and ale were no longer subject of persecution but rather the subject of taxation.⁸⁸ Beer and ale were not labeled a societal evil but rather a key source of revenue for Charles II. The Puritans demonstrably sought to better society with their laws which conformed to their religious ideology; there is no such intention in Restoration legislation. The Puritans had a unique focus on promoting moral behavior through law.

⁸⁵ "Charles II, 1661: An Act for confirming Publique Acts," in *Statutes of the Realm: Volume 5, 1628-80*, ed. John Raithby (s.l: Great Britain Record Commission, 1819), 309-310. British History Online, accessed April 30, 2018, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/statutes-realm/vol5/pp309-310>.

⁸⁶ *Statutes of the Realm: Volume 5, 1628-80*, ed. John Raithby (s.l: Great Britain Record Commission, 1819), 238-241. British History Online, accessed April 30, 2018, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/statutes-realm/vol5/pp238-241>.

⁸⁷ "Charles II, 1660: A Grant of certaine Impositions upon Beere Ale and other Liquors for the encrease of His Majestyes Revenue dureing His Life," in *Statutes of the Realm: Volume 5, 1628-80*, ed. John Raithby (s.l: Great Britain Record Commission, 1819), 255-259. British History Online, accessed April 23, 2018, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/statutes-realm/vol5/pp255-259>.

⁸⁸ "Charles II, 1660: A Grant of certaine Impositions upon Beere Ale and other Liquors for the encrease of His Majestyes Revenue dureing His Life,"

The Restoration government addressed religion directly through “An Act for the confirming and Restoring of Ministers,” which restored ministers who were removed in the decades of turmoil as well.⁸⁹ This law sought to restore some of the older, pre-Puritan rule clergy to their positions. Broadly speaking, this law reasserted the clergy of the Church of England, describes compensation for those dispossessed of their parishes, and outlines some specific, special cases which are excluded from the general rule. The law makes sure to exclude people who opposed the Restoration: “That this Act shall not extend or be construed to confirme any Ecclesiasticall person that did appeare in Arms and march in a Troope in opposition to the intended restoring of his Majestie and a free Parliament” and “Provided alwayes that this Act nor any thing therein contained shall extend to the confirming or setleing any person in a Liveing that hath malitiously printed any Treatise, or preached against his Majestye that now is, his Right or Succession to the Crownes of these Realmes.”⁹⁰ These provisions seem to target Puritans specifically, deposing the Puritans from an institutional role in English religion and are a direct rejection of the ideology empowered by the Protectorate. These laws represent the extent to which gains made by the Puritans during the Interregnum were reversed during the Restoration and functions as a testament to the unpopularity of Puritan ideals.

Conclusion

The vast majority of the historiography of the period of the Interregnum has focused on the role of the Puritans. However, this historiography rarely includes discussions of the religious rhetoric present in this government’s documents, writing, laws, speeches, etc. Instead, historians often focused on the various features of the Puritans as a social group or on questions relating to

⁸⁹ "Charles II, 1660: An Act for the Confirming and Restoring of Ministers," in *Statutes of the Realm: Volume 5, 1628-80*, ed. John Raithby (s.l: Great Britain Record Commission, 1819), 242-246. British History Online, accessed April 23, 2018, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/statutes-realm/vol5/pp242-246>.

⁹⁰ "Charles II, 1660: An Act for the Confirming and Restoring of Ministers," Paragraph 32.

economics. They have sought to understand the role the Puritans played in the development of modern, capitalist Britain with its class structure. Meanwhile, other historians have focused intently on the political features of the Interregnum, particularly the role Cromwell as a political leader. All of these historians have therefore denatured the Puritans by ignoring what made them a distinct group: their religious beliefs.

This work adds to the discussion of the religious rhetoric present in morality laws of the Protectorate era. The rhetoric of this era is so consistent that it suggests that genuine religious belief was a primary motive for the Puritans in power. The language of the politicians as expressed in a speech or laws demonstrate a staunch anti-Catholic bent. To the Puritan leadership of the Protectorate, Catholicism was associated with both evil and foreignness while England was described as the land of a “chosen-people.” England therefore must embody perfect morality as prescribed by Puritan teachings. Laws, no matter how granular their focus, are all linked back to this broader theme. The consistency of these rhetorical links demonstrates motivation of Puritans.

The Puritans approached their relatively brief role as leaders of the government of England with self-destructive religious zeal. Hill critiques Abbott, suggesting that perhaps Abbott is too focused on Cromwell. Abbott, in Hill’s reckoning, spent too much time chasing Cromwell to determine when exactly Cromwell crossed the threshold into maniacal dictator. Abbott presupposes that Cromwell went off the rails. New scholars like Austin Woolrych dispute this presupposition, but it is hard to join the Cromwell revisionist/apologist camp in good faith. Cromwell did, after all, ride an anti-autocracy rebellion into a position as an autocrat. He used exaggerated fears of Irish-Catholics to justify what can only be described as a genocide, given both the relative ability of the Irish to resist Cromwell’s invasion and the extraordinary brutal

tactics that Cromwell's army used against the Irish. Rather than defend Oliver Cromwell, this paper focuses on the Lord Protectorate as an individual who was in line with more current Puritan ideology. Ultimately, the Puritan faction failed at governance because of its uncompromising values. Religious motivations drove the actions of Oliver Cromwell and the Puritans who formed his leadership clique to chase morality policies that were unpopular and ineffective. Despite awareness of popular protest and resistance to the laws, Puritans ignored the growing discontent with their vision for a godlier society, resulting in the destabilization and eventual collapse of their regime.

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