

# What is “Puritan Logic”?

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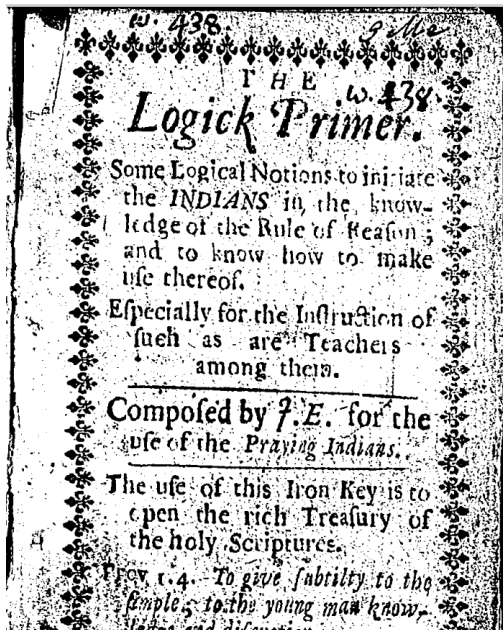
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## The big question

What (if anything) is “Puritan logic”?

Why do I want to answer this question?

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*Logick.*  
Anomayag.

*Logick the Rule, where*  
**A**Nomayag ne kukkuhwheg, ne  
*by every thing, every*  
 nafhpe nifhnoh teag, kah nifhnoh  
*Speech is composed, ana-*  
 keketookaonk moowamoo, kah kogáh-  
*lysed, or opened*  
 kenaanumoomoo, afuh wofhwunu-  
*to be known.*  
 mooco wahtamunak.

*Of Logick three parts.*  
 Anomayag nifhwe chippai.

*First part teach.*  
 1. Negonne chippai kukkuhkooto-

Eliot's Logic Primer

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*eth us single Notions.*  
 munkqun fyeumooe wahittumooafh.  
*Second part teach-*  
 2. Nahohtoeu chippai kukkuhkooto-  
*eth us bindingly to compose*  
 munkqun moappiffue moehteauunat  
*Notions, to make every*  
 wahittumoooukifh, ayimunat nifhnoh  
*kinde of Proposition.*  
 eiyane pakodtittumooonk.  
*Third part teach-*  
 3. Nifhwe chippai kukkuhkooto-  
*eth us to compose Proposition*  
 munkqun moehteauunat pakodtittu-  
*tions, by bonds,*  
 mooongafh, nafhpe moappiffuonafh,  
*binding words,*  
 kah moappiffue kuttoowongafh,  
*to make a Speech.*  
 ayimunat keketookontamoonk.

## John Eliot's *Logick Primer*

- Published in 1672.
- Bilingual English/Massachusetts textbook.
- Massachusetts: An Eastern Algonquian language spoken by tribes along the east coast of North America (called by its speakers today “Wôpanâak”.)
- A guide to the use of logic for Biblical interpretation.

# The contents of the *Primer*

- Definition of “logick”
- The three parts of logic
  - ① single notions
  - ② binding notions into propositions
  - ③ combining propositions into speech
    - ① syllogisms
    - ② methodical discourse
- Examples throughout.

## Reception of the *Primer*

- 1000 copies printed in 1672.
- Almost all destroyed in 1675 (in King Philip's War)
- One copy was photographed and a reprint made from the photograph in the mid 19th C.
- A newly typeset edition was made from that edition at the end of the 19th C.
- Rarely discussed in the 20th C, except by historians and linguists.
- (Eliot better known for his work in theoretical linguistics).



Back to the main question

What (if anything) is “Puritan logic”?

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Is Eliot’s *Primer* an example of Puritan  
logic?

## Two things that could be meant by “Puritan logic”

- A “way of thinking” or “mode of action” – not logic at all.
- Definitions or forms of reasoning specific to Puritans.

# Puritan as opposed to *what*

- Catholic
- Protestant

# Puritan vs. Catholic

- “Catholic” logic = Scholastic logic
- Puritan logic = non-Scholastic/post-Renaissance logic

# Puritan vs. Catholic

- “Catholic” logic = Scholastic logic
- Puritan logic = non-Scholastic/post-Renaissance logic
- What are the characteristics of post-Scholastic logic?

## Logic education in 16th and 17th C England (1)

- Teaching at Oxford and Cambridge shifted from university-wide to narrower, college-based teaching structures.
- Puritan influence, esp. in Cambridge, grew significantly, in particular in Jesus and Christ college.
- Statues of individual colleges: Traditional Aristotle; rejection of Scholasticism; plus emphasis on rhetoric.
- Reaction against Scholastic logic:
  - ▶ Agricola
  - ▶ Ramus

## Logic education in 16th and 17th C England (2)

- Renaissance humanism, typified by Rudolph Agricola, *De inventione dialectica* (1515), which focused on “applied argumentation”.
- Henry VIII’s Royal Injunction of 1535, which required:  
*students in arts should be instructed in the elements of logic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geography, music, and philosophy, and should read Aristotle, Rodolphus Agricola, Philip Melancthon [sic], Trapezuntius, &c. and not the frivolous questions and obscure glosses of Scotus, Burleus, Anthony Trombet, Bricot, Bruliferius, &c.*



## Logic education in 16th and 17th C England (3)

- Other significant influence: Ramism (Petrus Ramus / Pierre de la Ramée, 1515–1572).
- Two English translators of Ramus's *Dialecticae Libri Duo*
  - ▶ Roland Macllmaine (1574).
  - ▶ Dudley Fenner (1584) (published in the Netherlands after his expulsion from Cambridge)

## Puritan vs. Protestant

- Fenner and McIlmaine were both Puritans.
- Fenner adapted Ramus's examples to make them explicitly Christian. ("Dudley Fenner, in England, made Ramism the cornerstone of much (but certainly not all) future puritan thought by the extremely significant step of changing all Ramus' examples from classical to scriptural texts. The logic was in no way affected. . ." (Morgan, p. 109).)
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- But: No doctrinal difference *in the logic* between Puritans and Protestants.

So, *is* there such a thing as “Puritan logic”?

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Not really. At best, there is *Protestant* logic (and it’s probably Ramist rather than Agricolan).

Is Eliot's logic "Puritan logic"?

Or rather, *Is it Ramist?*

## Is Eliot's logic "Puritan logic"?

Or rather, *Is it Ramist?*

Lots of commentators think so, but opinion varies:

- Miller: the *Primer* an abridged translation of one of Peter Ramus's writings.
- Gray's description of the work as "a step-by-step approach to Ramean logical and syllogistical [sic] reasoning."
- Cogley notes that "Miner and Guice have explained that Eliot's *Logick Primer* was an original composition. . . and the linguists disagree as to how Ramist in influence the work is."

## Ramism in Eliot's *Grammar*

- “heavy reliance on a form of binary classification of features of grammar. . . in real contrast to Aristotelian practices” (Guice).
- The definition of “logic” and “rhetoric” in the *Grammar* “show a strong Ramistic pattern” (Guice):  
*The laying of Sentences together to make up a Speech is performed by Logick. . . The adorning of that Speech with Eloquence, is performed by Rhetoric.*



## Distinctive features of the *Primer*

- Tripartite account of logic (terms/propositions/arguments).
- The identification of the middle term with “reason” or the “light”.
- Aristotelian account of causes.
- Heavy use of scriptural examples.

## Ramism in the *Primer*?

- Conspicuous *lack* of the binary classification strategy.
- Definition of “logick” does not match either Fenner or Mcllmaine’s.
  - Eliot** Logic is a a rule “where by every thing, every Speech is composed, analysed or opened to be known.”
  - Mcllmaine** “Dialecticke otherwise called Logicke, is an arte which teachethe to dispute well. It is diuyded into two partes: Inuention, and iudgement or disposition.”
  - Fenner** “Logike is an arte of reasoning. Logike hath 2. partes, 1. The spring of reasons called Inuention. 2. Iudgement. (An arte is that orderlie placinge of rules, wherby the easiest being firste set down, and then the harder, the perfect way of learning anie thing, usfullie set downe.)”