



From the homepage of www.annotatedfall.doomby.com:

A Work in Progress

"I don't know what I'm writing about, I'm just writing. That's all I can say about it really." (Mark E. Smith, *Melody Maker*)

This site is dedicated to annotating the lyrics of The Fall (the vast majority of which are written by Mark E. Smith) and corrections and suggestions are always very welcome. A quick word about interpretation: many of The Fall's lyrics are resistant to a single reading, and none of the interpretations offered here are meant to be the final word or claim to be the only correct way to understand a lyric. I also encourage readers to freely use the comment section below each song to expound on the matter in any direction they choose, as well as to offer suggestions and corrections.

My primary source for these lyrics is the Lyrics Parade on The Fall Online. I have altered the lyrics when my ears contradict the testimony of the Lyrics Parade.

At the bottom of the page for each song, there is a section entitled "More Information." The first link there will take you to Fall Tracks A–Z on the Reformation site, which gives all recording information and lists every time each song has been played live, and also provides a lot of helpful commentary, some of which I have incorporated into my notes.

This site can be used as a resource for tracking down references in Fall lyrics, or a place to browse. However, anyone specifically interested in my interpretation of Fall lyrics should begin by reading the notes to "New Puritan."

I would like to acknowledge The Annotated Grateful Dead, which was the first site of its kind and inspired me to do something similar with The Fall.

Down the long, long days ...

R.I.P. Mark E. Smith (5 March 1957 – 24 January 2018)

Cover: MES photographed by Steve Double, London, 1997, www.double-whammy.com.

Back cover: William Blake, *Ancient of Days*, 1794, Relief and white-line etching with color printing and hand coloring, 36 × 25.7 cm. The "Ancient of Days" is described in Chapter 7 of the *Book of Daniel*. This image depicts Copy D of the illustration currently held at the British Museum, as used at the entrance to the Annotated Fall website.

I. Version from the album *Totale's Turns*:

Hail the new puritan¹
Maelstrom, cook one

And all hard-core fiends
Will die by me
And all decadent sins
Will reap discipline²

New puritan

This is the grim reefer
The snap at the end of the straw
With a high grim quota
Your star karma gin³

New puritan

In LA the window opener switch
Is like a dinosaur cackle
A pterodactyl cackle
Jet plane circle
Over imported trees
All the film ghosts will rise up
With the sexually abused and the new youth⁴

In Britain the scream of electric pumps in a renovated pub
Your stomach swells up before you get drunk⁵
Don't call me Peter I can't go⁶
Salem's just up the road
I've got work to do⁷

Hail the new puritan
Out of hovel-cum-coven-cum-oven

[spoken:] (right you go back to that riff)

Hail the new puritan
Out of hovel, cum-coven, cum-oven
And all hard-core fiends
Will die by me
And all decadent sins
Will reap discipline

New puritan

I curse your preoccupation
With your record collection
New puritan has no time
It's only music, John⁸

New puritan

Ungodly mass
Thick ass

...

II. Version from the Peel Session:

[Mark Riley:]

New Puritan *Et Domini*
New Puritan *Et Domini*⁹

[MES:]

The grotesque peasants stalk the land
And deep down inside you know everybody wants to like big companies
Bands send tapes to famous apes
Male slags, male slates, famous apes¹⁰
Water, cater
Now: great thoughts
The whole country is post-gramme¹¹
(Echoes of the past)
Hail the new puritan
Righteous maelstrom, cook one

And all hard-core fiends will die by me

All decadent sins will reap discipline
New puritan
This is the grim reefer
The snap at the end of the straw
With a high grim quota
Your star karma, Jim
New puritan
New puritan
The conventional is now experimental, the experimental is now conventional¹²
It's a dinosaur cackle
A pterodactyl cackle
In LA a drunk is sick on Gene Vincent's star on Hollywood Boulevard¹³

Ha-ha, ha-ha
Stripping takes off in Britain's black spots¹⁴
The Kensington white rastas run for cabs
This I have seen
New puritan in Britain
The scream of electric pumps in a renovated pub
Your stomach swells up before you get drunk
The bars are full of male slags
At 10:35 they play "Send in the Clowns"¹⁵
Why don't you ask your local record dealer how many bribes he took today?¹⁶
What do you mean "What's it mean? What's it mean?"
What's it mean? What's it mean?
New puritan
New puritan
Hail the new puritan
Out of hovel, cum-coven, cum-oven

And all hard-core fiends will die by me
And all decadent sins will reap discipline
New puritan new puritan new puritan

New puritan new puritan new puritan new puritan
New pur... it.h... an
I curse the self-copulation of your lousy record collection
New puritan says: "Coffee table LPs never breathe"
New puritan new puritan new puritan new puritan
new puritan says ...
New puritan
Discordian¹⁷
New puritan
New puritan
New puritan

...

NOTES

1. The two released versions are as different as can be, and both are indispensable. The version from *Totale's Turns*, which I have placed first here in deference to chronology, sounds and feels almost like some kind of Lomax field recording, despite being one of two studio tracks on an otherwise live album; MES claims the song was recorded "at home during which said home was attacked by a drunk, which accounts for the tension on that track." The Peel version is the more venerated of the two, and it is a fearsomely intense performance; one of the most intense of The Fall's career, in fact. Via Davelnut, in the comments below [on the website]: "In, I think, 1984 or 1985 John Peel gave this whole session a repeat play, which I recorded. The recording is long lost but I remember that after New Puritan was played Peel said something like: I always thought that was about me you know? Ah, vanity."

Lyrical, this is the single most foundational song for the interpretations I have (sporadically) assayed in the notes on this site, as far as getting at whatever it is that makes The Fall what they are; everything else they have done before and since seems to me to emanate from this like spokes from the hub of a wheel. This song is also the perfect exemplar of the kind of lyrical subtlety that has always set The Fall apart from the vast majority of bands associated with punk. Furthermore, this is the case despite the fact that the lyrics, on the face of it, seem to consist largely of the kind of hectoring cant which is common in punk songs and which is not, to say the least, distinctive for its subtlety. The fact that MES fashions THIS style of discourse into such a nuanced artifact is not only impressive, it is tempting to say that this blend of fury and ambivalence, which is The Fall's signature combination, is itself the message of the song, although of course there's much more to it than that. But the FORM of the song is by no means incidental to its meaning, as though the form were merely there to convey some sort of message. The IDEA of the New Puritan is elusive because, like all genuine Fall themes, the theme of the song exceeds its idea; the song does NOT have a message that could be paraphrased and thus explained. Rather, the song "says" more than it says; clearly, then, it says more than my commentary will be able to say on its behalf. One way to put it is that "New Puritan," like many of the best Fall songs, isn't content to say something, it must also BE something, and what it SAYS and what it IS maintain a somewhat dizzying running commentary on one another. It is when we analyze the song, which on its own functions as a unified whole, that this commentary will emerge. But that will also mean that the commentary, as opposed to the song itself, will only be able to appear in another medium—in this case, my words: the goal is for my comments to be a way in which the song (as opposed to just the LYRICS) is able to speak. And, for reasons established by the song itself, this can only happen insofar as my commentary permits itself to take the risk of presenting something new, something not found in the song.

"New Puritan" is riddled with ambiguity; if, as we will see, MES seems not to ever fully decide whether Puritanism is his credo or his target, that is because in a sense it is both, and the aim of the song's critique is to establish a distinction between these two senses of "Puritan," i.e. the one with which the voice of the song identifies, and the one which is the target of its puritanical wrath. Thus, while the song is narrated by the Puritan in his role as witch-hunter and avenging angel, some of the characters who have aroused his disdain seem fairly puritanical themselves. It becomes clear that the narrator has no patience for vegan, "straightedge" (although the term was not yet coined in 1980) and/or anarchist punks, or, for that matter, people who take their record collections

too seriously. The puritanical tendencies of such people are derided (actually, that's too mild: JUDGED is better, with "jury and executioner" perhaps implied); at the same time, the primary strategy of the lyrics is to insist on a stern Puritan work ethic in the face of punk decadence and dissoluteness (see also my remarks on *Live at the Witch Trials*.) In fact, as we will see, the basic philosophy of The Fall, if I can put it that way, is expounded in this song, in which Puritanism is "sublated," in the Hegelian sense—negated, but also preserved in modified form—in a kind of ecstatic vision that can only be attained through rigorous discipline.

We will soon see that sin is a path toward transcendence for the New Puritan—but sin that reaps only more sin (rather than "discipline"—see note 2 below) is to be condemned.

2. On the face of it, the point seems to be not that discipline is the reward of decadent sins, but that it is their punishment. Thus, the titular "Puritan" is a witch-hunter. However, there is a second way to take this line: the point could also be that, as Blake has it, "The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom." Excess in itself, however, yields nothing without the New Puritan ethic. The Puritan's targets, in that case, are those whose sins reap nothing but more sin, whose excess is meaningless and cannot be appropriated for the purposes of creativity.

Smith has always praised the virtue of work, both in songs and interviews. At the same time, if he does identify with the Puritan ethic (again, see *Live at the Witch Trials*), the goal is nevertheless what seems to be the opposite of discipline: the singer strives toward ecstasy, laboring to reach the point where language runs away with him, as it often does in this song. If a certain tense complementarity between discipline and ecstasy is one of the major themes of Smith's work, nowhere is it more richly exemplified than in his ambiguous treatment of the figure of the Puritan. Excess itself is a form of work, which must be undertaken in a disciplined manner, and the resulting ecstatic vision is neither work, insofar as it leaves the strictures of the latter behind, nor merely excess either, to the extent that it could not have arisen from a lazy or haphazard indiscipline. Fall lyrics often seem to walk a fine line between recondite and nonsensical, but what they aim at is, ultimately, neither. It is a shimmering vision that rises from the song, but this vision cannot be paraphrased or explained, which means that you, as listener, must work to allow the song to speak to you, or else the vision will appear as a senseless haze. The song demands that the listener submit to a kind of discipline, which is the work of interpretation.

3. Here in the second stanza, it seems like the avenging Puritan is associated with drugs in one way or another, and is perhaps expressing contempt for those who are too fastidious or teetotaling for Smith's taste (see also, for instance, "Sons of Temperance" and "(Jung Nev's) Antidotes"). At the same time, "the snap at the end of the straw" could be seen as cutting off someone's supply of dope before it reaches their nose. In that case, "the grim reefer" could be emphasizing the grimness rather than the reefer.

Here we have an opportunity to consider the ETHOS of the New Puritan, which is a kind of ironic contempt. The chief irony in the New Puritan's contempt is the fact that it IS ironic or ambiguous at all, as contemner usually eschews irony and ambiguity in favor of extra large portions of sound common sense. That is to say,

if the object of contempt cannot even understand what it is about itself that inspires contempt, the attitude risks the worst kind of failure: becoming incoherent or even ridiculous in the eyes of its intended target. This is especially so even in the case of contempt that is hurled from an elitist or supposedly intellectually superior position: the ignoramus has to know all too well what she is ignorant of, even if she couldn't say the first thing about it. If not, the contemner becomes at best an object of derisive amusement. In fact, contempt cannot allow itself to become objectified at all in the eyes of its target; it cannot become the passive partner in the relationship or it becomes a cartoon Oxford don, an out of touch patrician, or an inept politician. In other words, even if contempt is motivated by a supposedly superior intellect, possessed of powers of subtlety denied to the vulgar, as CONTEMPT it is almost always, necessarily, utterly simple and transparent. For this reason, the New Puritan's attitude, A SUBTLE CONTEMPT, is the most dangerous position a contemner can put himself in. And who's to say it is successful? This can't be an automatic assumption, but can only be earned, again and again, every time the needle drops, so to speak. The only way to do this is to demand that the listener vacate the position of the victim and scale the heights of contempt herself—i.e., to identify with the critique, rather than its target. Failure to do so also requires the recognition of this failure on the part of the one who fails, which is necessary in order for the contempt to strike its target. To have such a recognition, however, is already to begin to climb out of the hole. Thus, the ethos of the New Puritan is a surprisingly COMPASSIONATE contempt, since it frees those that it strikes to the heart of, and leaves the rest of us free to laugh it off.

4. It is Interesting that the “sexually abused” are lumped in with the “new youth”; the former seem an odd target for a puritanical attack, but “new youth” could never be a positive epithet in MES's lexicon, so we probably have to assume that the lyric is expressing contempt.

For some reason the sounds of technology are waking the dead and provoking quite a disparate horde. It's never easy to interpret passages like these, and as always there seems to be a will to let language and imagery run riot that keeps even MES's most virulent Jeremiahs from revealing an easily grasped agenda.

The rising of the “film ghosts” in LA reminds me of the mob scene at the end of Nathaniel West's *The Day of the Locust*, when Tod Hackett and Homer Simpson are swarmed by an angry mob outside the premiere of a movie. The mob at the theater has gathered in the hopes of seeing movie stars in the flesh, not satisfied with their “ghostly” appearance on the screen. A remarkable passage from the Wikipedia entry for the book could almost be a description of The Fall:

As some critics point out, West's novel was a radical challenge to modernist literature. Modernists set themselves up in opposition to mass culture; West depicts it and makes it an integral part of the novel. West's use of grotesque imagery and situations establishes the novel as a work of Juvenalian satire. His critique of Hollywood and the mentality of ‘the masses’ depicts an America sick with vanity and the harbor of a malignant sense of perversity.

According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, “Juvenalian satire: in literature, any bitter and ironic criticism of contemporary persons and institutions that is filled with personal invective, angry moral indignation, and pessimism.”

The proximity in which the “New Puritan” places himself to the subjects of his wrath is consonant, to me, with Wikipedia's description of West's adoption of mass culture as a topic of literature; even as he satirizes it, West elevates mass culture to the status of art by creating art that makes itself complicit with mass culture by writing in its idiom. The voice of a satirist is also the voice of his target, rendered grotesque (compare MES's diatribes about plagiarism, for instance, a topic which is addressed in the notes to “C ‘n’ C-S Mithering,” and which is one of many instances where MES is in some ways very close to his own description of the target of his invective).

5. From davedeath on *The Fall* online forum:

This line is all about how the breweries of Britain were at the time taking old pubs, with their gravity (read hand-pull) pumps selling real ale, ripping out what made these pubs unique, and replacing them with a generic one-size-fits-all lager palace, hence the “stomach swelling” line.

Joseph Holt, from the comments below:

The electric pumps bit is a reference to the growth of keg beer that was very prevalent around the late 70s early 80s. Basically, pubs were replacing hand drawn beers with those that could be dispensed quickly and easily under pressure via electric pumps. Needless to say, the “new” beer was nastier and gassier. Hence the stomach swelling. The UK's Campaign for Real Ale sum up the objection pretty well: “CAMRA's Internal Policy document states that real ale can only be served from cask without the use of additional carbonation. This policy means that ‘any beer brand which is produced in both cask and keg versions’ are not admitted to CAMRA festivals or supported by CAMRA ...”

6. This is, of course, a near-quote from “Sixteen Tons,” originally recorded and perhaps written by Merle Travis (the authorship is disputed), and turned into a number one song by Tennessee Ernie Ford. The song was also recorded by one of MES's heroes, Bo Diddley, on *Bo Diddley is a Gunslinger* (1960). The original line is “Saint Peter don't you call me ‘cause I can't go, I owe my soul to the company store.” Notably, this song also seems to take an ambiguous attitude toward work: the original recording by Travis contains a recited passage after the first chorus that proclaims:

Yes, sir, there's many a Kentucky coal miner that pretty near owes his soul to the company store. He gets so far in debt to the coal company he's a-working for that sometimes he goes for years without being paid one red cent in real honest-to-goodness money. But he can always go to the company store and draw flickers or scrip: you know, that's little brass coins that you can't spend nowhere, only at the company store. So they add that against his account, and every day he gets a little farther in debt. That sounds pretty bad but even that's got a brighter side to it.

Unfortunately, Travis never makes clear what this brighter side is, and one's imagination struggles to fill in the blanks. Nevertheless, the miner is portrayed not as bitter, but as hardened and proud (Ford's version omits this interlude altogether). Like “New Puritan,” “Sixteen Tons” closely identifies the discipline of work with a kind of righteous violence: “Well, If you see me comin', you better step aside / A lotta men didn't, and a lotta men died / One fist of iron and the other one of steel / If the right one don't get you, then the left one will.” The life of a miner is portrayed

as brutal and unfair, but it has shaped the narrator's character in a way of which he is quite proud. This attitude is as common as it is hard to explain—I think that for many people, the mere fact that we are what we are is seen as a source of pride, even as we despise the hardships that have made us this way. Those who brag about being “working class” exemplify this phenomenon.

The New Puritan, unlike the miner, is hardly concerned with the coercion of others—with what Isaiah Berlin called “negative liberty”—at all, but is occupied entirely with the pursuit of a kind of “positive liberty,” the emancipation work brings not from financial servitude but from “mind forg’d manacles,” to quote Blake, who is a major touchstone for MES. For Travis’s miner, work is a burden, but one that frees him and delivers him to his truest nature—a nature that, however, is only meaningful in terms of the imposition of others, and the triumph over this imposition by an identity that is largely formed in the course of this struggle. Take away the company store, unfortunately, and there is nothing left of the miner, and however much we admire his independence, this independence is thoroughly ironic insofar as it is itself a form of dependence (the miner depends on the company’s oppression to make him what he is). Perhaps despite himself, then, MES has something like a Communist notion of work—in other words, work is seen as a source of freedom rather than merely a means to an end (see also “Blindness”). Whatever the limitations of this latter notion of work, they are of an entirely different kind than the limitations that form the miner’s character. While the miner, in Loverboy’s memorable phrase, is working for the weekend, for the New Puritan the weekend itself is work. In the case of the miner, work defines him, and for that very reason he is alienated from his work—which is to say, from himself, as his character is forged in opposition. At the same time, the New Puritan least of all seeks work for work’s sake—he remains in his deepest essence separate from it and, perhaps paradoxically, this is his triumph over alienation. Or, to back up for a moment, work is after all a vehicle of transcendence for the Puritan, but it is not a mere means to an external end, it does not lead to an end that is separate from itself; means and end, if the distinction still holds, occupy the same space, whereas the illusory weekend of the miner (and the decadent sinner, who is the sort of flipside of the miner) is a prison from which there is no escape. For the New Puritan, “work” can mean taking drugs and drinking oneself into a stupor as much as it means anything else: these activities seem to be part of the New Puritan’s job description, but this type of work isn’t confined to any single identifiable process and, in fact, the DETAILS are perhaps almost indifferent. For the New Puritan, only in the process of working is there freedom, but work IS NOT THE GOAL. The goal is the ecstatic moment of realization that cannot be separated from the work because it can be found nowhere else but in the work—it is not modular, it cannot be removed or disassembled, but it happens as it were ALONGSIDE work. The goal is not the work, but neither does it have an independent meaning separable from work. In other words, “discipline” means that the New Puritan works toward a kind of transcendence, one that is not defined by its opposition to the (immanent) sphere of work, but emerges from the enactment of the work. The miner and the decadent sinner, on the other hand, being defined by their relation to work, lack the necessary discipline—the capacity to transmute toil into creativity—and cannot achieve transcendence.

7. Once again, the title character dons the black hat of a witch-hunter, heading to Salem to clean up the trash. A possible inspiration is Robert E. Howard’s Solomon Kane; although he’s no witch hunter—theologically, he seems a bit confused, as one

of his allies is an African witch doctor, whose methods Kane gladly adopts—Kane is a black-clad Puritan who grimly stalks the land, avenging various wrongs. Kane’s adoption of heathen methods for puritanical aims is quite consistent with the type of Puritanism proclaimed by MES in this song (see particularly notes 2 and 4 above).

8. This is another instance of the song’s ambiguity, as one can imagine it is at least in part the po-faced earnestness of the (puritanical) record collector that raises the Puritan’s ire. It isn’t certain who “John” the record collector is; John Peel would be an obvious candidate if this remark were from the Peel version. As it is, I have not uncovered any clues, and it is possible that “John” is intended as a generic form of address like “Mac.” The line is also reminiscent of the David Bowie song “John, I’m Only Dancing.”

9. This is from Marc Riley on Twitter:

david cavanagh @davidcavanagh24h
@marcrileydj Settle an argument. What exactly do you sing on New Puritan? “New Puritan will dominate” ...? “New Puritan has come of age ...”

marc riley @marcrileydj2h
@davidcavanagh2 Et Domini!

Domini is either the genitive form of the nominative *Dominus* or the nominative plural, hence “New Puritan Et Domini” is either the ungrammatical “New Puritan and the Lord’s...” or the grammatically correct but perhaps polytheistic “New Puritan and the Lords” (although *Dominus* doesn’t have to mean God, but has all the connotations of the English “Lord”).

On at least one live version (1980/6/13) MES seems to sing MALE Puritan et domini... see note 10 below.

10. “Male slags, male slates” echoes “Slates, Slags, Etc.” On his 4 March 1986 show, John Peel said the following: “[I’ve] always thought they were having a go at me in that you know, all that sending tapes to famous apes. Vanity though, why should they? That’s The Fall...”

Thanks to davelnut and Dan.

Grimo suggests this line alludes to *The Apes of God* by one of MES’s literary heroes, Wyndham Lewis:

The novel is set in 1926, leading up to the General Strike in May. It has an episodic structure, following a young simpleton called Dan Boleyn from one encounter with the literati to another. Dan follows the directions of an infatuated sixty-year-old albino, Horace Zagreus, who believes him to be a genius. The “Apes of God” that he meets are imitators of true creators; they are characterised as ‘prosperous mountebanks who alternately imitate and mock at and traduce those figures they at once admire and hate.’ (Wikipedia)

From Dan: “It occurs to me that Gibraltar is home to some famous apes—the Barbary Macaques, who live on ‘the Rock.’ Might there have been somewhere in Gibraltar where bands were sending demo tapes at the time?”

11. A reference to speed, as with the album *Grotesque: After the Gramme* and the song “Gramme Friday.” Again there is ambiguity: how much MES identifies with his narrator is in question, since it is the singer’s own documented drug habits that ought to spring to mind at the mention of speed. At the same time, the New Puritan ethic seems to be about a way of doing things (such as drugs) rather than containing a proscription of, or a prescription for, drug use.

12. This line also turns up in “C’n’C-S Mithering.”

13. The rockabilly pioneer Gene Vincent is one of MES’s most frequently-mentioned musical heroes. Songs Vincent recorded that were covered by The Fall include “Rollin’ Dany,” “Say Mama,” “Race With the Devil,” and “White Lightning.” Vincent indeed has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, but it is on Vine Street rather than nearby Hollywood Boulevard (thanks to Martin for pointing this out). The Walk of Fame occupies 15 blocks of Hollywood Boulevard and three blocks of Vine Street.

14. Dan: “STRIPPING TAKES OFF IN BRITAIN’S BLACK-SPOTS appears (typed in capitals like that) in the press statement/rant for *Grotesque*.” And: “Released in 1980 was a film called *The Great British Striptease*, which seems to have been a documentary about Bernard Manning hosting a striptease competition in Blackpool. Maybe the line is inspired by the film, or draws on a line in the film, or on comments made in the press either on the occasion of the film’s release or hanging a feature on it’s release; and, it was the supporting feature in cinemas showing George Romero’s *Dawn of the Dead*, which MES would be quite likely to go and see.”

15. “Send in the Clowns” is a song by Stephen Sondheim, from the musical *A Little Night Music* (1973), and later recorded by Judy Collins, Frank Sinatra, and Barbra Streisand, among others. Sondheim has averred that the “clowns” in question are intended to be garden-variety idiots rather than circus clowns. MES actually sings “Send in the Clow ... ones,” or something like that. The Lyrics Parade opts for “Send in the Clowns’ once,” but this doesn’t seem right to me. The vocal track seems to cut out in the middle of the word, and it doesn’t cut back in on “wns” but rather something like “one.”

According to davedeath on The Fall online forum, “[A]t the time this was written, all pubs in the UK had to stop serving alcohol at 10:30pm, Monday to Thursday, 11:00 on Friday and Saturday, and 10:00 on Sundays; the customers were allowed 10 minutes drinking up time and then they had to leave. Had to. The police checked. A lot of pubs had “goodbye” songs to indicate to the customers it was time to bugger off. In this case it was ‘Send In The Clowns.’”

16. From dannyno in the comments below:

The Peel session version was recorded 16 September 1980. [...] On 18 August 1980, Granada TV’s *World in Action* programme alleged that some record companies were falsifying the charts, by obtaining faked sales returns from record shops. [...] According to The Times of 19 August 1980, bribes of free records,

satin jackets, and bottles of wine, among other things, were being offered to shops. [...] WEA were among the companies accused of this.

John Fruin, the head of both WEA (Warner Music Group’s manufacturing division) and BPI (British Phonographic Industry, the British record industry’s trade association), had to resign as a result of the scandal, which mostly involved directly bribing the chart compilers. At the time, however, it seems to have been common for record dealers to overreport sales in exchange for free or discounted merchandise. Although I have not tracked down the original Times report cited by dannyno, I have found ample corroborating anecdotal evidence on the internet; whether or not these are reliable, what is important is that MES was presumably aware of the PERCEPTION that these practices were widespread when he included this line in the recording.

17. Discordianism would seem, at first blush, to be more or less the opposite of Puritanism. Based on the text *Principia Discordia*, or *How the West was Lost* by Malaclypse the Younger (Gregory Hill) and Omar Khayyam Ravenhurst (Kerry Wendell Thornley), and (somewhat) popularized by Robert Anton Wilson, Discordianism claims to venerate the goddess Eris, Greek deity of chaos and discord, although how seriously the whole thing is meant to be taken is an open question. Indeed, the Puritan arguably resembles one of the sect’s primary cosmic villains, “Greyface,” who preached the virtues of order and taking life seriously. At the same time, however, if we examine the targets of the narrator’s Puritan rage, it is arguable that the New Puritan does indeed resemble a properly Discordian character. For instance, “A Discordian is required to, the first Friday after his illumination, Go Off Alone & Partake Joyously of a Hot Dog; this Devotive Ceremony to Remonstrate against the popular Paganisms of the Day: of Roman Catholic Christendom (no meat on Friday), of Judaism (no meat of Pork), of Hindic Peoples (no meat of Beef), of Buddhists (no meat of animal), and of Discordians (no Hot Dog Buns)” (Wikipedia). This sort of antinomian ritual, which imposes form on excess, is right in line with New Puritanism as it is presented in this song. It is a testament to the song’s subtlety (much more subtle, it must be noted, than *Principia Discordia*) that New Puritanism is difficult to pin down ideologically, and yet the picture that emerges is by no means incoherent; rather, it is the mystery of The Fall itself that is propounded here, and many of MES’s half-serious screeds in interviews and lyrics over the years should be referred back to this song. Any time one is tempted to dismiss him as a self-parodying pub ranter, go back and look at the blueprint, which is indeed what we have here—the song is nothing short of a manifesto, but it is one that, like most good Fall lyrics, refuses to be translated into slogans or principles to put into practice: it is the polysemous and beating heart of The Fall, both the ecstasy of discipline and finally, above all else, the discipline of ecstasy, that one encounters here. While the song insists that genuine illumination is denied to the lazy, the illumination it promises is by no means grim. And here we also see the limits of annotation and commentary: paraphrase and explanation can never cross the final threshold of genuine Fallness. Here, then, I must leave you.

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