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CATEGORY ARCHIVES: PROPHECY

Materiality, Immateriality, and the Mediation of Millennium during the Revolution Controversy

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This paper will be presented at the Canadian Society for Eighteenth Century Studies Conference, Hamilton, Ontario, Oct. 28, 2011.

In his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Edmund Burke begins his polemic by likening prominent Dissenter Richard Price's sermon in favor of the French Revolution to the worst religious excesses of the English Civil War:

[That sermon](#) is in a strain which I believe has not been heard in this kingdom, in any of the pulpits which are tolerated or encouraged in it, since the year 1648, when a predecessor of Dr. Price, the Reverend Hugh Peters, made the vault of the king's own chapel at St. James's ring with the honour and privilege of the Saints, who, with the "high praises of God in their mouths, and a two edged sword in their hands, were to execute judgment on the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind

In rhetorically linking the Civil War to the French Revolution Burke thus calls up the ghosts of that turbulent time – ghosts that still haunted the public at large. More importantly, Burke suggests that part of the problem with the rhetoric of the Civil War was the blurring of the lines between preaching and prophecy – the overtaking of reasoned discourse and scholarly Biblical interpretation by ranting “enthusiasts,” who prophesied a world turned upside down. It was this threat that Burke saw threatening England once again.

This threat was exacerbated (in Burke’s mind) by the proliferation of cheap printed prophecies that were distributed to the general population. For Burke the mechanical printing press was dangerous in its ability to “[make a kind of electrick communication everywhere](#)” (380) thus facilitating, according to Jon Mee, “the ‘mechanic’ spasming of enthusiastic philosophers (91). Thus Burke’s harangue is also a testament to the long life of prophecy in print. By drawing up the specter of the Civil War prophets Burke is also drawing attention to the complex connections between printed prophecy then and the perseverance of those prophecies throughout the eighteenth century – prophecies like those of Lady Eleanor Davies that would be later be echoed in the millenarian works of people like Richard Brothers.

Furthermore if, as Siskin and Warner have recently argued, Enlightenment is an event in the history of mediation (1) then I would argue that its supposed opposite number, enthusiastic millenarianism, is also an event in the history of mediation. From the moment that Lady Eleanor Davies published her prophecies rather than spoke them publically, millenarianism was no longer the sole domain of the individual prophet in the wilderness – it had entered the complex and rapidly expanding network of print, publicity, and public sanction. Millenarianism was now as much the domain of printers, booksellers, and hawkers as it was of the religious mystic – it was something that could be commoditized, commercialized, and easily transmitted.

Thus, what I want to do here is trace the legacy of millenarianism in print from the Civil War to the Revolution controversy and detail some of the ways in which the new technologies of mediation shaped prophecy and how prophecy in turn shaped mediation technologies. In doing so I will focus on two exemplary prophets: Lady Eleanor Davies and Richard Brothers – both of whom used print in self-consciously new ways to promote their message and both of whom ultimately paid the penalty for it in court. More than that, though, I want to work to expose some of the networks of print that were born in the era of Lady Eleanor and endured through to the 1790’s – networks that included both the

professional printers and booksellers, and a more radical underground network among whom millenarian prophecy never lost currency during the eighteenth century (Makdisi 297). Finally, I want to consider some of the ways in which millenarianism has found outlet in our modern mediation technologies and what this might mean for how we interact with them and they in turn with us.

Lady Eleanor Davies

Lady Eleanor Davies (1590-1652) was the fifth daughter of Baron Audeley, the first earl of Castlehaven. She was married in 1609 to Sir John Davies, an attorney in the King's service. Until 1625 there was nothing particularly remarkable about her life. However on July 28, 1625 she heard the voice of the prophet Daniel from heaven saying, "There is Ninteene years and a halfe to the day of Judgement and you as the meek Virgin." She interpreted this as a prophetic call and began publishing prophecies proclaiming the impending judgment that specifically criticized both the King (who acceded to the throne the same year Lady Eleanor heard the voice from heaven) and the governance of the Church of England under Archbishop William Laud. She gained even more notoriety when she correctly predicted both the death of her husband in 1626 and the Duke of Buckingham in 1628. She quickly remarried Archibald Douglas, who claimed to be Charles II's older brother and thus the rightful heir to the throne (Cope xi-xii).

In 1633 Lady Eleanor was arrested and sent to prison by Archbishop Laud for the illicit publication of her prophecy, *Given to the Elector*, which he burnt in front of her. She remained imprisoned in the Gatehouse for two and a half years and upon her release she promptly destroyed the altar-hanging at Litchfield Cathedral and was committed to Bedlam. She was later transferred to the Tower of London and remained in prison until 1640 (Cope xv-xvii). In 1645 she interpreted the trial and execution of Archbishop Laud as the fulfillment of her prophecy of judgment made in 1625. She continued to prophesy the coming kingdom of God until her death in 1652 and the printed prophecies she left behind represent one of the largest collection of writing by a seventeenth century woman.

What is particularly interesting about Lady Eleanor's prophecies, however, is that they were *meant* for print. Unlike the other prophets of the Civil War Lady Eleanor did not prophesy on street corners, walk naked as a sign, or fall into prophetic trances. In fact her only real public demonstration (the destruction of the altar hanging at Litchfield) was largely a wordless event. Instead Lady Eleanor focused her attention on print and her books. However, as Lisa Maruca has pointed out, "print is a site in which the book as a

tangible object meets the meaningful text contained within its pages” (4). In other words, the production of print extends beyond the post-Romantic notion of the solitary genius author to the print technologies that made the book possible (the type, the press, etc) and the print workers that transferred words to type. In fact she argues that, prior to the mid-eighteenth century the author was equally important as the printer, bookseller, hawker, etc. In the case of Lady Eleanor, she and the printers she worked with took on substantial risk as, before the Civil War, it was illegal to print anything outside the Stationer’s Guild monopoly. For this reason Lady Eleanor travelled to Holland early on in her career to print her most controversial prophecy, *Given to the Elector*, an event she describes in *Everlasting Gospel*:

And so pursuing the Prophetical History in the next place, That it might be fulfilled out of the Low Countreys, &c. as the Virgin when undertook her voyage, she fleeing for the Babes preservation thither; also constrained for printing the same, to go into Holland, those plain swathing-bands for wrapping it in, pretending in her husbands behalf the Spaw obtained a License, since none for printing to be had here, inquisition and hold such, among them imprisoned about it formerly, till afterward all as free, Cum Privilegio out of date become (288).

This passage is particularly interesting in that, not only is she describing the “birth” of her most controversial prophecy – the one that got her imprisoned and condemned by Archbishop Laud – she is doing so in gendered terms and in the language of print. Her books are her “Babes” – a term that takes on special resonance considering her prophetic identification as a virgin. She goes to Holland because she cannot obtain a license to print in England and works with printers there to produce a religio-political text that lives on in print, despite being burned by the archbishop.

This gendered imagery of giving birth to the printed word also ties in closely to the physical production of her texts. As Lisa Maruca argues, seventeenth century printing manuals often described the printing process in embodied and gendered terms. So, for example, Joseph Moxon’s *Mechanick Exercises* describes the casting of letters thus: “[t]he *Female Block* is such another *Block* as the *Male Block*, only, instead of a *Tongue* running through the length of it a *Groove* is made to receive the *Tongue* of the *Male-Block*” (qtd. in Maruca 40). Thus the mechanistic work that these letters then perform, Maruca argues, “is an essential part of the creation of words.... So, apparently, from the sex of machinery, a unit of language is born” 40-41). In the case of Lady Eleanor, her printed works really are her “babes,” created through the illicit intercourse of radical prophet and underground printer. The printed text that results is dangerous and

destabilizing to the ruling hierarchy precisely because the prophetic message has found voice in the printed word.

All of these elements are on clear display in *Given to the Elector*, the only one of Lady Eleanor's prophecies written in ballad form. It was published in 1633 and then again in 1648 – on both occasions in sought to address specific socio-political circumstances. The content of the prophecy conflates the events of Daniel 5, specifically Belshazzar's feast, with what she sees (in 1633) as Charles I's impending doom. What is most interesting, however, is not so much the content of the text, but how it is printed. On either side of the main body of text, Lady Eleanor has had glosses printed that sometimes help interpret the prophecy and at others simply obscure it further. For example, the body of the text conflates the writing on the wall that disturbs Belshazzar's feast with the failure of Charles I to amend his ways. In two places the marginal notes repeat the three words written on the wall predicting Belshazzar's doom, "Mene Tekel Upharsin" and in one Lady Eleanor transfers the words to an anagram reading, "Parlement House King: in number about 666," thus further tying corrupt government to apocalyptic prediction.

This particular passage is significant in that it was precisely her Biblical interpretation applied to current events that got her in the most trouble. In fact when Lady Eleanor was brought before the Archbishop he overlooked her slights on King Charles and identified her most grievous offenses as claiming to be able to interpret prophecy and then (worst of all) having it *printed* without a license. This is the account Lady Eleanor gives of his accusations in her *Blasphemous Charge*:

That she had lately compiled and written, and caused to be printed and published, the three several Schedules annexed to the said Articles, some containing Expositions of divers parts of the Chapters of the Prophet Daniel, But forasmuch as she took upon her (which much unbeseemed her Sex) not only to interpret the Scriptures, and withal the most intricate and hard places of the Prophet Daniel, but also to be a Prophetess, falsely pretending to have received certain Revelations for God, and had compiled certain Books of such her fictions and false Prophecies or Revelations, which she had in person carried with her beyond the Seas, and had there procured them to be printed without License, and after brought them over here into England, and here without License, vented and dispersed them, or some of them, contrary to the Decree of Star-Chamber" (252-253).

That a woman would claim to be able to understand the prophecies of Daniel was bad

enough, but that she would dare to publish such prophecies in print and that there was a printer willing to do it testifies to the dangerous destabilizing effect such works could have. For once in the public space such work was uncontrollable – the Archbishop could burn all the books he could find, but copies still remained and Lady Eleanor herself survived long enough to have *Given to the Elector* printed again in 1648. Her work, then, is a testament not only to the power of prophetic discourse in the seventeenth century, but to the power of print technologies and printers in the turbulent times leading up to the Civil War.

Richard Brothers



Richard Brothers, "Prince of the Hebrews"

Richard Brothers (1757-1824) was a penniless former naval officer who, after being discharged for refusing to take the oath of loyalty, began to prophesy against war with France in 1792 (Paley 261). He quickly gained a following in London when several of his early prophecies seemingly came true and in 1794 he published the first book of his [*Revealed Knowledge of the Prophecies and Times*](#) followed by a longer second book in 1795. Both books worked to reinterpret Biblical prophecy to relate to the present situation in Europe and his own prophetic calling. They also predicted a new millennial kingdom to be established in Jerusalem with him as its king. Both books were severely critical of the government and the war with France, even going so far as to call for King George III to step down and be replaced by Brothers himself. On March 4, 1795 Brothers was arrested and examined by the Privy Council; unable to officially charge him with treason, they

nevertheless declared him insane and sent him to an asylum, where he remained until 1806 (Paley 261).

Unlike Davies, however, Brothers participated in the electrically charged and fully developed public sphere of the 1790's. He was immediately revelation, with acolytes flocking to his home and followers and critics battling it out in the popular press. It would be safe to say that everyone in London during 1794 and 1795 knew who Richard Brothers was and had an opinion on him. Print had truly come of age and Brothers realized that it was the ideal medium for prophecy. As Susan Juster argues, prophets like Brothers "were much more self-consciously immersed in the expanding world of print culture, which formed not only the medium but the message of their republican brand of prophecy" (160). This self-conscious awareness of the power of print is reflected in the *Revealed Knowledge* itself as, in several sections, Brothers reflects on the production, materiality, and transmissibility of his own text. Thus the millennial message is truly made possible by the radical re-envisioning of the medium of print.

An example of this self-consciousness occurs in the second book of the *Revealed Knowledge* in which Brothers recounts his prophetic call in terms of God's command to *print* his message: "The night before I had finished this book for the press," he writes, "the Lord God shewed it to me in a vision, ready printed, holding it up at the same time by one leaf, and shaking all the others open, while he pronounced, in strong clear words, and commanded me to write them down exactly as he spoke, for universal information" (101-102). Here prophecy has been transformed from the "voice of one calling in the wilderness," into a material object – the printed book as the medium of prophecy. Thus the printed word has been transformed from transmitter of millennium into the *creator* of millennium – it is through the medium of print that the millennial vision can be spoken into being in the first place.

Likewise in the preface to the second book, Brothers posits his prophetic call in terms of the command to write, and revise, "revealed knowledge":

The following are the words which the Lord God spoke to me in a vision, soon after I was commanded to write and make known his judgments, for the good of London and general benefits of all nations: There is no other man under the whole heaven that I discover the errors of the Bible to, and reveal a knowledge how to correct them, so that they may be restored as they were in the beginning, but yourself.

Here Brothers both reiterates his call to write, and by extension *print* his prophecies, but

he frames this call in terms of “correcting” or reinterpreting the “errors” in the Bible. By doing this Brothers performs a self-reflexive turn in which he reflects on the formal characteristics of his printed text. Much of the *Revealed Knowledge* is structured like Scripture – indeed much of it is direct quotations from prophetic passages like the ever popular Daniel 7 – however Brothers alters or “corrects” these already printed texts in order to shape them to his prophetic goal. In other words there is a kind of double act of mediation going on as Brothers both mediates God’s message in print and remediates passages of Scripture. In this, as with Lady Eleanor’s prophecies, the establishment objection to prophecy had as much to do with this unauthorized remediation as it did with the actual content of the prophecies.

It was within this context that Brothers, like Davies, faced the most serious threat of legal sanction for, though the licensing acts that bound Davies had long lapsed, the charged atmosphere of the revolution controversy brought new types of sanctions on radical print. In this context it was not only the individual prophet that faced prosecution, but publishers and booksellers as well. It was as much the *circulation* of print that the government feared as it was its radical content. Thus Godwin’s expensive edition of *Political Justice* was allowed to be distributed while Paine was run out of the country for *The Rights of Man*.

This was also a fact of which Brothers was self-consciously aware. In the second book of the *Revealed Knowledge* he comments that, “After the first division of this copy was sent to be printed, and even some of it done, the printer was advised not to do it according to my form; for, if he did, prosecution, imprisonment, and perhaps hanging, would be the consequence to him” (99). Indeed the threats of prosecution, imprisonment, or worse during the 1790’s were very real, as is evidenced by the trial and imprisonment of noted radical bookseller Joseph Johnson in 1798. And, even though Brothers’ works were not radical in the way Thelwall’s or Paine’s were the government had significant reason to worry radical printers disseminating both types of works.

It was this type of promiscuous reading that Edmund Burke most feared in inveighing against the “electrick communication” of print. As Juster argues, “this was “a moment when the acts of reading and writing became politicized to an unprecedented degree and the nation itself constructed along textual lines. Print was the primary medium of prophecy in the late eighteenth century, a fact of which prophets themselves were keenly aware as they sought to claim the privileges of authorship for themselves and instill the responsibilities of readership their audience” (143-144). In this Brothers participates in a

discourse that is both backwards looking, towards the ecstatic prophecy of the Civil War, and forwards looking, towards the rise of the Romantic author and the de-spiritualization of prophecy itself.

Millennial Mediations

It is here we come to some of the points of conversion between Davies and Brothers for, in addition to using print as the primary medium of prophecy, they both reference a very specific millennial genre. In offering interpretations of obscure scripture passages and envisioning a new millennial kingdom Brothers accesses a tradition that gained currency during the Civil War which over 100 years had never completely erased. Indeed scripture commentaries, especially the books of Daniel and Revelation remained popular throughout the eighteenth century, with even Sir Isaac Newton entering the fray towards the end of his life. Furthermore the, in Jon Mee's term "dangerous enthusiasm," of millenarian print never really went away over the course of the century, it just went underground in the form of Jacobitism, Muggletonianism, other radical movements that relied on millenarian visions. Playing on the public's unease over the Revolution, the wars on the continent, and the political unrest at home, then, prophets like Brothers resurrected this underground discourse of millennium to reflect the concerns of the populace in print. In fact, I would argue that *without* print, this fusion of millennial speculation and political radicalism would not have been possible in the first place.

But I want to go further and suggest that, for Davies and Brothers, mediation was not merely the *means* of transmitting millennial visions, but the actual space of millennium itself. Through the use of print, both writers attempted to create a critical distance from culture that allowed for the advent of the kingdom of God, if not in an actual political space, then in the minds and hearts of the populace at large. In tracing this millennial space prophets like Brothers used mediation technologies that existed largely outside the control of the state to access a subversive underground of prophetic rhetoric that had the power to apocalyptically shape reality. Thus the mediation of millennium that I have tracked from Davies to Brothers opens up a space that works to reveal the true nature of reality (apocalypse) and break down mental boundaries between the individual self and community.

Postscript: Millennial Mediation in the Age of WikiLeaks

Though the religious millenarianism of the eighteenth century has largely disappeared from modern culture, it still has currency in some corners of society. Radical

interpretations of premillennial dispensationalist theology by people like Harold Camping who started the May 21st doomsday movement still exist and their propagators shrewdly use the internet to spread their message. Likewise radical Islamic jihadism has effectively moved online – leading to the U.S. targeted killing of radical cleric Anwar al-Awlaki. That these movements gain any traction at all is an indication of the types of social unrest that characterize both our era and the 1790's. People naturally look for an ideological release valve and, for some, these millenarians provide it.

However in my mind true millenarianism has become largely de-secularized and is now located within the cyber-community of online hacktivists like Julian Assange of Wikileaks, Anonymous, and LulzSec. These groups have all articulated a millennial ideology of the free exchange of information and technology on the internet and have showed little compunction about breaking laws to make that happen. Indeed organizations like Anonymous have illustrated that they can launch targeted Denial-of-service (DoS) attacks against major corporations like VISA, Paypal, or Bank of America at will; while more recently LulzSec has demonstrated that it is possible to hack into the secure servers of almost any major corporation or government in the world.

On a more sinister level, the creators of the Conficker worm have demonstrated that it is possible to take down the internet altogether – thus creating a true apocalyptic scenario. All this is to say that mediation continues to be the outlet for millennium – a millenarianism that challenges the core institutions of the liberal democratic state and the capitalist class that supports it. The battle for control of the internet is still being fought, much as the battle for control of print was waged throughout the eighteenth century, and organizations like Wikileaks are articulating a vision of this technology that is not bounded by national borders or capital concerns. In this they echo the ethos of their millenarian predecessors in the eighteenth century and they too understand that it is on the battlefield of mediation technologies that their cause will be won or lost.

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17th Century Women and the Perserverance of Prophecy in Print

Posted on [June 5, 2011](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

In his [Reflections on the Revolution in France](#), [Edmund Burke](#) begins his polemic by likening prominent Dissenter [Richard Price](#)'s sermon in favor of the French Revolution to the worst religious excesses on the [English Civil War](#):

That sermon is in a strain which I believe has not been heard in this kingdom, in any of the pulpits which are tolerated or encouraged in it, since the year 1648, when a predecessor of Dr. Price, the Reverend Hugh Peters, made the vault of the king's own chapel at St. James's ring with the honour and privilege of the Saints, who, with the "high praises of God in their mouths, and a two edged sword in their hands, were to execute judgment on the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron." Few harangues from the pulpit, except in the days of your league in France, or in the days of our solemn league and covenant in England, have ever breathed less of the spirit of moderation than this lecture in Old Jewry.... This pulpit style, revived after so long a discontinuance, had to me the air of novelty, and of a novelty not wholly without danger ([13-14](#)).

In rhetorically linking the Civil War to the French Revolution Burke thus calls up the ghosts of that turbulent time – ghosts that still haunted the public at large. More importantly, Burke suggests that part of the problem with the rhetoric of the Civil War was the blurring of the lines between preaching and prophecy – the overtaking of reasoned discourse and scholarly Biblical interpretation by ranting “enthusiasts,” who prophesied a world turned upside down. It was this threat that Burke saw threatening England once again.

This threat was exacerbated (in Burke's mind) by the proliferation of cheap printed prophecies that were distributed to the general population. Thus Burke's harangue is also a testament to the long life of prophecy in print. By drawing up the specter of the Civil War prophets Burke is also drawing attention to the complex connections between printed prophecy then and the perseverance of those prophecies throughout the eighteenth century – prophecies that would be echoed in the millenarian works of people like Richard Brothers.

The millenarian prophecy of the Civil War has been amply examined by people like Christopher Hill who, in his foundational *The World Turned Upside Down*, illustrates that religious groups like the Familialists, Ranters, Quakers, and Diggers were an integral part of creating the political landscape of the 1640's and 50's. Absent from this work, however, is much recognition of prophetesses who proliferated during this time period. As Phyllis Mack puts it, Hill has a tendency to, “subsume the category of ‘woman’ within that of class and would interpret the prophet's attack on the enrobed Anglican priest as one aspect of a wider and more significant dynamic of class conflict” (3). This does not to say that class does not figure into the equation – during the turbulent 1640's this was unavoidable – but it is to say that many of these prophetic women have been overlooked as important

thinkers and writers of the time period. For example, one of the most prolific prophets of the time period, Lady Eleanor Davies, is practically relegated to a footnote in Hill’s book, where he notes that she was “an eccentric personality who regarded herself as a prophetess [and] deserves more space than she can be given here” (128).

Furthermore, though modern feminist scholarship has done much to rescue these important women from the dustbin of history, relatively little work has been done on women as prophetic printers and writers – women who used the medium of print (often illegally) to project a prophetic voice. In the case of Lady Eleanor Davies, her prophetic voice operated *only* through illicit print – print laden with her prophetic ideology. As such her vision of millennium was as much a product of its mediation technology as its actual prophetic content, a fact that she herself acknowledges. In the case of a prophetess like Fifth Monarchist Anna Trapnel, on the other hand, her prophecy undergoes multiple layers of outside mediation before reaching the printed page, thus calling into question the very notion of a stable authorial persona. As Lisa Maruca argues, in cases like this the printing process itself operated as a gendered space within which multiple subjectivities could be negotiated (15). It is within this space that the prophetesses Davies and Trapnel thrived, working to create an alternative, gendered, public space that was gradually regulated and shut down over the course of the century.



Anna Trapnel, Fifth Monarchist Prophetess, Misidentified here as a Quaker

Lady Eleanor Davies (1590-1652) was the fifth daughter of Baron Audeley, the first earl of Castlehaven. She was married in 1609 to Sir John Davies, an attorney in the King's service. Until 1625 there was nothing particularly remarkable about her life. However on July 28, 1625 she heard the voice of the prophet Daniel from heaven saying, "There is Ninteene years and a halfe to the day of Judgement and you as the meek Virgin." She interpreted this as a prophetic call and began publishing prophecies proclaiming the impending judgment that specifically criticized both the King (who acceded to the throne the same year Lady Eleanor heard the voice from heaven) and the governance of the Church of England under Archbishop William Laud. She gained even more notoriety when she correctly predicted both the death of her husband in 1626 and the Duke of Buckingham in 1628. She quickly remarried Archibald Douglas, who claimed to be Charles II's older brother and thus the rightful heir to the throne (Cope xi-xii).

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Given to the
ELECTOR
Prince CHARLS of the *Rhine*
from the Lady ELEANOR,
Anno 1633.
At Her being in *Holland or Belgia.*

Lamentation, Mourning and Wo.

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This gendered imagery of giving birth to the printed word also ties in closely to the physical production of her texts. As Lisa Maruca argues, seventeenth century printing manuals often described the printing process in embodied and gendered terms. For example, Joseph Moxon's *Mechanick Exercises* describes the casting of letters thus: "[t]he female Block is such another Block as the Male Block, only, instead of a Tongue running through the length of it a Groove is made to receive the Tongue of the Male-Block" (qtd. in Maruca 40). Thus the mechanistic work that these letters then perform, Maruca argues, "is an essential part of the creation of words.... So, apparently, from the sex of machinery, a unit of language is born" 40-41). In the case of Lady Eleanor, her printed works really are her "babes," created through the illicit intercourse of radical prophet and underground printer. The printed text that results is dangerous and destabilizing to the ruling hierarchy precisely because the prophetic message has found voice in the printed word.

All of these elements are on clear display in *Given to the Elector*, the only one of Lady Eleanor's prophecies written in ballad form. It was published in 1633 and then again in

1648 – on both occasions in sought to address specific socio-political circumstances. The content of the prophecy conflates the events of Daniel 5, specifically Belshazzar’s feast, with what she sees (in 1633) as Charles I’s impending doom. What is most interesting, however, is not so much the content of the text, but how it is printed. On either side of the main body of text, Lady Eleanor has had glosses printed that sometimes help interpret the prophecy and at others simply obscure it further (see below). For example, the body of the text conflates the writing on the wall that disturbs Belshazzar’s feast with the failure of Charles I to amend his ways. In two places the marginal notes repeat the three words written on the wall predicting Belshazzar’s doom, “Mene Tekel Upharsin” and in one Lady Eleanor transfers the words to an anagram reading, “Parlement House King: in number about 666,” thus further tying corrupt government to apocalyptic prediction.

(8)

15. Aged seven times seven, in 49. King and Queen of Scots both put to death of late. Render Himself a prisoner to the Scots. Promised or pretended.

Whose seven times till served forth,
in vain for rest to crave;
Whom Devils Legions do possess,
a Monarch turn'd a Slave.
Deposed thus thou knewest well,
Belshazzar, O his Son,
And renown'd so deliverance
voiced by every one.

16. Beside 1605. November the fifth, &c.

A day a Trumpet made to sound
for Generations all;
And with a Feast solemnized,
that no time might recal:
The memory of such an act,
yet as it had not been,
Thy Favorites who are more this day,
or marched to thy Kin.

17.

Then they adoring Wood and Stone,
Statutes forsake *Divine*,
Meditate carved Statutes on
in Faction do combine

The Stuarts
Arundel and
Wilton, &c.

With Enemies of God most high,
to thrust him from his Throne,
And his had piled over thy Col
so facile and so prone.

(9)

Against the Lord of Heaven thy King,
not humbling of thine heart,
But stiffned hast with pride thy neck
unto thy future smart.
Behold polluting holy things
with Sabbath so Divine,
Idolatry and Revels in
that day and night made thine.

But he in whose hands rests thy life,
even breath, and thy ways all,
Thou hast not glorified him
sent this wrote on the Wall.
God numbered thy Kingdom hath
ended; the Hand points here,
In Ballance his weighed thee too,
the set hour drawing neer.

How light soever set by thee,
thou as thy weightless Gold,
His Indignatione more
lighter then can be told.
Parce, divide thine Estate,
given to the Medes is
At hand as these bids it adieu,

18. He left those Cal Belshazzar (Anag Charles headed, g him, An

Altars adored.

19.

Transpos from Bal the Great Br Mene, M Law, T power of People.

20. Crowne married was defec 1645.

Revel O Daniel. (Anag Eleanor

This particular passage is significant in that it was precisely her Biblical ranting of pride much more applied to current events that got her on the most trouble. In fact, when Lady Eleanor was brought before the Archbishop piled over thy Col ked her slights on King Charles and identified

her most grievous offenses as claiming to be able to interpret prophecy and then (worst of all) having it *printed* without a license. This is the account Lady Eleanor gives of his accusations in her *Blasphemous Charge*:

That she had lately compiled and written, and caused to be printed and published, the three several Schedules annexed to the said Articles, some containing Expositions of divers parts of the Chapters of the Prophet Daniel, But forasmuch as she took upon her (which much unbeseemed her Sex) not only to interpret the Scriptures, and withal the most intricate and hard places of the Prophet Daniel, but also to be a Prophetess, falsely pretending to have received certain Revelations for God, and had compiled certain Books of such her fictions and false Prophecies or Revelations, which she had in person carried with her beyond the Seas, and had there procured them to be printed without License, and after brought them over here into England, and here without License, vented and dispersed them, or some of them, contrary to the Decree of Star-Chamber” (252-253).

That a woman would claim to be able to understand the prophecies of Daniel was bad enough, but that she would dare to publish such prophecies in print and that there was a printer willing to do it testifies to the dangerous destabilizing effect such works could have. For once in the public space such work was uncontrollable – the Archbishop could burn all the books he could find, but copies still remained and Lady Eleanor herself survived long enough to have *Given to the Elector* printed again in 1648. Her work, then, is a testament not only to the power of prophetic discourse in the seventeenth century, but to the power of print technologies and printers in the turbulent times leading up to the Civil War. During and after the War a new type of prophetic voice would arise, a voice that is best represented by Anna Trapnel.

Anna Trapnel

Anna Trapnel was the daughter of a shipwright. Her mother died when she was nine after praying that the Lord would “Double thy spirit upon my child” (Trapnel 7). Unlike Lady Eleanor, who was not associated with any of the major religious movements of the English Civil War, Anna Trapnel was one of the most prominent Fifth Monarchist prophets. The Fifth Monarchists interpreted the prophecies of the book of Daniel as predicting four successive corrupt empires to be succeeded by the glorious reign of King Jesus, who would come to earth to restore his kingdom (Hinds xxvii). As such, Fifth Monarchists welcomed the overthrow of the monarchy and initially embraced Oliver Cromwell as God’s chosen tool to restore his kingdom – many prominent Fifth Monarchists even served in the

Barebones Parliament. However, after Cromwell was named Lord Protector, many Fifth Monarchists became disillusioned and it was in this political atmosphere that Trapnel made her most famous prophecy, *The Cry of a Stone* (Hinds xxxi-xxxii).

Also unlike Lady Eleanor, Anna Trapnel did not write her prophecies; they were recorded as she spoke in a trance then edited and printed later. The particular trance that resulted in *The Cry of a Stone* occurred in January 1654 and lasted eleven days and twelve nights. The fact that it occurred in Whitehall (the center of government) is significant, as is the fact that the Barebones Parliament had been only recently dismissed and Cromwell made Lord Protector. In fact, Trapnel specifically singles out Cromwell, figuring him as the Biblical Gideon, for special condemnation for what she sees as his abdication of his divine role. Thus, though the prophecy is not written by Trapnel, it is clearly in her own voice and reflects her interpretation of current affairs. In fact, Trapnel was considered so disruptive that, while prophesying later in Cornwall, she was arrested and brought before the magistrates, a fascinating account that is laid out in her *Report and Plea*.

The co-construction of *A Cry of a Stone* by prophet, relator, editor, and printer allows the printed text to operate on multiple levels. At the same time that it engages in radical social critique of the Cromwell Protectorate it also carves out a gendered space in print and works to further elide the category of the author. Anna Trapnel is simultaneously the author and subject of her own text – it is within the editing and printing process that her subjectivity is recursively shaped just like the letters on the page.

The Cry of a Stone³

OR A RELATION

OF
Something spoken in *Whitehall*,
by *Anna Trapnel*, being in
the Visions of GOD.

RELATING
To the *Governors, Army, Churches,*
Ministry, Universities: And
the whole NATION.

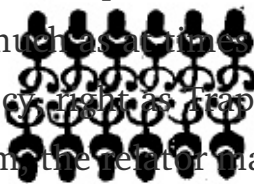
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The first level of mediation that occurs in *A Cry of the Stone* is between Trapnel herself and the (likely male) relator of the text who writes down her prophecy and ostensibly helps edit it for publication. This is a situation already fraught with interpretative difficulty as Trapnel was ostensibly not even conscious at the time of her speech. However the situation is further complicated by the fact that the relator's transcript of the prophecy is incomplete. He frequently comes into the room late, having missed part of the prophecy and at other times "because of the press of people in the chamber" (18) or Trapnel's dying voice he is unable to transcribe all of her words. At other times he seems to silently edit out passages that do not relate to the current political situation. This elision seemingly occurs at times of little importance as much as times of tremendous moment. For example towards the end of the prophecy, right as Trapnel is beginning to elaborate her magnificent vision of the New Jerusalem, the relator maddeningly writes, "Having uttered many other things, she sung of the glory of the New Jerusalem, which escaped the relator's pen, by reason of the lowness of her voice, and the noise of the people; only some pieces were taken here and there, but to the end, and imperfect here to relate" (63). Thus the

UTTERED

In Prayers and Spiritual Songs, by an Inspiration extraordinary, and full of wonder.

In the eleventh month, called January. 1653.



London Printed. 1654.

relator functions both to relate the prophecy and shape the reader's view of the prophet. This is not to say that his/her view is inaccurate, only that both are working to co-construct the text.

A further level of mediation occurs, however, at the level of printing the text. After the Civil War the monopoly of the Stationer's Guild was broken and pre-publication censorship fell to the wayside. This was not to say that a person could print anything without consequence, but in the chaos that followed the Civil War the amount of print exploded and became increasingly difficult to regulate. In the case of Trapnel there is no printer listed on her text, but it is clear that it was printed quickly and cheaply, that the printer had editorial input, and that the materiality of the text shapes the content.

Of particular interest is that way in which the printer navigates the multiple voices and genres of the text – shaping reader perception through his choices of font, type, and spacing. In the figure below, for example, we can see the printer navigating three very distinct textual spaces. The page to the left includes the end of one of Trapnel's prose prophecies, in this case one that includes biographical details. The text here is small, closely printed, and in a regular font type. On the top of the next page, however, the printer has to transition into the voice of the relator and for this he selects a larger font that frames the following section of Trapnel's verse prophecy. This prophecy in verse is printed in two columns of italic font which are roughly separated into stanzas of four – though this would seem to be primarily for ease of reading as the stanzas do not exhibit any consistent rhyme pattern.

Saints once again about these Gardens : let them now run after them no more, but be ashamed and abashed : we have hankered from mountain to hill, we have said salvation is in this hill and in that, but let us say so no longer : when we shall thus be drawn up to thee, then we shall prosper, and thou wilt give us Vineyards, and Gardens, and Trees of thine own, which shall abide. — Thou calledst thy servant to come sometimes near this place, to witness against some, who said that the Kingdom was already given up to the Father, and condemned the Man Christ : but now hast thou sent thy Servant again to witness for thee, for the Kingdom of thy Son.

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Each of these seemingly small details are nevertheless important to how we understand the text. Especially in the use of the italic stanzas the printer is clearly intervening in the text – suggesting how it should be read. As Lisa Maruca has illustrated, in the eighteenth century such italic fonts were considered more “feminine” (37). Thus even at the level of the printing process Trapnel’s gendered subjectivity is being shaped by forces outside her direct control. The fact that we do not notice these types of intervention itself indicates the extent to which our reading practices have been informed by the post-

Having uttered much more in Prayer, which Relator, because of the press of people in the Church could not take ; She delivered the further contents of her heart in a Song, so much whereof as she be taken, is presented to you as follows.

*When Babylon within, the great and tall,
With tumults shall come down :
Then that which is without shall fall,
And be laid flat on ground.*

*Oh King Jesus thou art longed for,
Oh take thy power and reign,
And let thy children see thy face,
Which with them shall remain.*

*Thy lovely looks will be so bright,
They will make them to sing,
They shall bring offerings unto thee,
And myrrhe unto their King.*

*For they know that thou dost delight
To hear their praising you,
They do rejoice in thy Marrow,
And as soon as they see thee gold.*

*Therefore thou hearing their hearts cry,
Thou sayest, Oh wait a while
And suddenly thou wilt draw near,
The Worlds glory to spoile.*

*Oh you shall have great Rols of writ
Concerning Babylons fall.*

*And the destruction of the
Which now seems spiritual*

*Come write down how thou
Christ,
That is so rigid here,
Shall fall down quite, when
comes forth,
Who suddenly will appear.*

*Come write down how thou
ling ones,
Which Antichrist are too :
Those Notioners, Oh do write
How he will make them run*

*Come write also that great
shall,
Even off their thrones be
Oh the Lord he will batt
Though they mount up so*

*Oh write that those great
Lors,
That now against Christ a
How Christ will never ow
Nor give them any see.*

*Write how that Promoters
And us selves
C 2*

Romantic theory of authorship. The material text has become transparent to us to the point that we find it difficult to read a text as it would have been read at the time. As Maruca points out, this transparency must be interrogated for, “that which is the most ‘internalized’ or ‘intuitive’ is that which is also the most ideological” (6).

In the case of Davies and Trapnel I am by no means suggesting that they lack their own agency or voice. Both women clearly had a distinct vision for their public role. In fact if at any time there was a relatively open space for women to express themselves publically it

was during the turbulent decades of the 1640's and 50's. In fact after the Restoration we see women's participation in print gradually diminishing – a story that is admirably related in Catherine Gallagher's *Nobody's Story*. Ultimately, though, I would argue that the modern difficulties that these texts produce in terms of understanding how these women thought, spoke, and acted reflects more on *our* culture than theirs. Religious and prophetic discourse was one of the dominant forms of public expression in the seventeenth century and it would not have seemed to strange at the time. Thus, as Paula McDowell suggests, “By pursuing what makes us uncomfortable in early modern print culture... we may begin to understand not only our own literary values and agendas, but also... those values' original socio-cultural functions and consequences” (16).

Furthermore, the perseverance of Davies and Trapnel's prophecies in print is a testament to the power of the medium. Despite attempts to limit, control, or destroy it these women's words lived on long enough in print that Edmund Burke could draw upon cultural memory to condemn them afresh in 1790 and worry over the return of enthusiast prophets to “England's green and pleasant land.”

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John Bunyan's Prophetic Vision and Pilgrim's Progress

Posted on [May 9, 2011](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

As I prepare for my qualifying exam this summer I will be blogging through some of the books I am reading as a means to clarifying my thinking. These posts are not intended to be terribly original or fully developed, but merely gesture towards some interesting lines of analysis.



John Bunyan

Continuing my journey through books I read in freshman survey Brit Lit. class and since forgot about, this weekend I moved from *Paradise Lost* to [John Bunyan](#)'s classic [Pilgrim's Progress](#). As with *Paradise Lost*, I was pleasantly surprised at how the fresh the text seemed to me and, especially given my religious studies bent, how much Bunyan's work foregrounds so much of the writing of the Evangelical Revival in the eighteenth century. Of particular interest, though, is the way Bunyan uses the "dreaming" device to frame his famous allegory of Christian life. By framing the bulk of his text as a vision or dream Bunyan thus performs a subtle rhetorical move that has significant resonances for the rest of the text. Specifically he is able to locate his vision within the realm of Old Testament visionary prophecy – a tradition that enjoyed a remarkable resurgence during and after the [English Civil War](#) – and the burgeoning print culture that disseminated radical ideas during the interregnum. In doing so he infuses the text with subtle social and political

commentary that both complicates and textures the overt evangelical and religious message of the allegory.

Pilgrim's Progress begins with a verse poem in which the narrator frames the story that he claims comes to him in a dream:

[And thus it was: I, writing of the way](#)

And race of saints, in this our gospel day,

Fell suddenly into an allegory

About their journey, and the way to glory,

In more than twenty things which I set down.

This done, I twenty more had in my crown;

And they again began to multiply,

Like sparks that from the coals of fire do fly.

Nay, then, thought I, if that you breed so fast,

I'll put you by yourselves, lest you at last

Should prove ad infinitum, and eat out

The book that I already am about.

These lines are crucial to the vision that follows in that Bunyan's language here is rich with prophetic resonances. For example in comparing the thoughts he has to set down to sparks and coals he clearly evokes [Isaiah 6](#), where the prophet falls into a sleep and is commissioned by God to go prophesy:

¹In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

²Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

³And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

⁴And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

⁵Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.

⁶Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:

⁷And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

⁸Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

Here the coals touched to the lips cleanses them and allows Isaiah to accept his prophetic calling. Likewise, the sparks of Bunyan's thoughts become the material of his prophetic book – the materiality of which he acknowledges upfront – writing that so many prophetic sparks threaten to “eat out” the book he is “already about.” Nevertheless the narrator feels compelled to prophetically confront culture with the overflow of his visionary ideas.



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This prophetic ~~one continues~~ throughout the verse introduction to the ~~By John Bunyan~~ ^{By John Bunyan} considers whether he ought to publish his words or not – some friends advise him ~~to do so~~ ^{according to Diver} while others advise against it. This debate indicates the extent to which, especially in the religious climate of the Restoration, publishing one's prophetic words was a potentially dangerous business. The events of the English Civil War and Restoration spawned a bevy of prophets like Anna Trapnel, Abiezer Coppe, and Gerard Winstanley, all of whom used the words of God call the world to repentance and true faith. Many of these prophets claimed to have received their messages in visions or dreams and then published them in cheap print editions for the general public. Anna Trapnel even performed her prophecies publically in a trance. Such “enthusiasm,” especially after the restoration was seen as potentially dangerous and seditious – threatening the newly restored political and religious order. Particularly when such prophecy ended up in print, it often took on a life of its own as print was notoriously difficult to police and could spread ideas like wildfire.

Ann THE palmer
Pilgrim's Progress
 FROM
 THIS WORLD,
 TO
 That which is to come:

Delivered under the Similitude of a

DREAM

Wherein is Discovered,
 The manner of his letting out,
 His Dangerous Journey; And safe
 Arrival at the Desired Country.

I have used Similitudes, Hof. 12. 10.

By ~~John Bunyan~~ ^{John Bunyan}
 Written and Corrected according to Divers

LONDON,
 Printed for ~~Walter Bower~~ ^{Walter Bower} at the Peacock
 in the Poultry near Cornhil, 1678.

What, then, was so potentially dangerous about Bunyan's prophetic vision? Why does his narrator debate over whether to publish it at large? The answers to these questions lie largely in the specificities of the religious climate in England during the Restoration and specifically Bunyan's status as a Baptist dissenter who refused to join the Church of England and often preached without a license. Likewise, the almost proto-Evangelical message of the text itself flies in the face of much of the accepted theology of the Restoration Church.

For example, some of Christian's greatest temptations come not from lust, greed, or avarice but from seemingly innocuous sources like Morality and Legality. In fact one of the first people Christian meets is Mr. Worldly Wisdom who advises him not to continue on to the narrow gate, but detour to the village named Morality where, "[dwells a gentleman whose name is Legality, a very judicious man, and a man of very good name, that has skill to help men off with such burdens as thine are from their shoulders.](#)" This is seemingly innocent enough fare but within this encounter is coded a harsh criticism of the Church of England which, after the Restoration moved increasingly towards a non-offensive, latitudinarian type of morality religion wherein true faith was determined by attending Church, living an upright moral life, and obeying the law. Thus in identifying Morality and Legality as snares to the true Christian life Bunyan is anticipating the critique of people like Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley, and George Whitefield who, during the eighteenth century Evangelical Revival, privileged the religion of the heart over the morality of the established order.

This theme is brought out in even more clearly when Christian is near the end of his journey. As he and Hopeful are walking together they meet Ignorance, who enters the King's Highway from a crooked byway. Ignorance, it turns out, is sure of his salvation because he affirms the gospel message to be true and has followed all the outward signs of religion. However, when Christian and Hopeful question him further, it becomes clear that he has not had a clear conversion of the heart. It is a crucial passage, so I will quote at length:

[IGNOR: But is not a good heart that hath good thoughts? And is not that a good life that is according to God's commandments?](#)

CHR. Yes, that is a good heart that hath good thoughts, and that is a good life that is according to God's commandments; but it is one thing, indeed to have these, and another thing only to think so.

...

IGNOR: I believe that Christ died for sinners, and that I shall be justified before God from the curse, through his gracious acceptance of my obedience to his law. Or thus, Christ makes my duties, that are religious, acceptable to his Father, by virtue of his merits; and so shall I be justified.

...

CHR. Ignorance is thy name, and as thy name is, so art thou; even this thy answer demonstrateth what I say. Ignorant though art of what justifying righteousness is, and as ignorant how to secure thy soul, through the faith of it, from the heavy wrath of God. Yea, thou also art ignorant of the true effects of saving faith in this righteousness of Christ, which is, to bow and win over the heart to God in Christ, to love his name, his word, ways, and people, and not as though ignorantly manifest.

In this exchange are echoed all the key concerns of Bunyan and the later Reformers – that religion has become a simple matter of outward practice, devoid of any inner transformation of heart and life. For Bunyan salvation was not a simple matter of acceding to a creed, it was an all encompassing encounter with the divine. Thus Ignorance ultimately meets his end at the gates of the Celestial City when he is denied entry and sent through the back door to Hell.

My ultimate point here is that if this seems rather mundane and commonplace fare, this is perhaps because the theology that Bunyan articulates here has become so foundational to modern day evangelical movements. The theology of grace and heart transformation that we can trace from Bunyan through to Wesley and Whitefield and on to the present day has come to dominate much of our religious discourse. This reading, however, overlooks the fundamentally radical and prophetic nature of the text. In articulating this viewpoint Bunyan was flying in the face of the political and religious order – an order that had been shaken to its very foundations by the events of the Civil War. By prophetically framing his dream vision in print Bunyan was wading into the waters of religious enthusiasm that were still roiling and inviting censure from both public and establishment. The fact that *Pilgrim's Progress* has been printed more times than any book except the Bible still does not obscure the fact that its message was radical and its author a revolutionary.

Uncategorized

Tagged Millennial, Print Culture, Prophetic, Seventeenth Century

Millennial Mediations in the Age of Wikileaks: Print Technologies, the Democratic State, and the Modern Subject

Posted on December 11, 2010 | 2 comments

The following is the introduction to an essay I am working on tracing subversive mediation technologies from 17th and 18th Century millenarian prophets to present day mediation technologies available on the internet.

On November 28, 2010 the online whistleblower Wikileaks began releasing over 250,000 secret U.S. State Department diplomatic cables. This followed on the heels of high profile releases of massive troves of top secret documents relating to the War in Afghanistan in July of 2010, and the War in Iraq in October, 2010. The reaction to the diplomatic cable leaks was swift and uncompromising. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton characterized the leak as an “[attack on the international community](#),” while Congressman Peter King, a member of the House Intelligence Committee called for classifying Wikileaks as a [terrorist organization](#). U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder announced that the Justice Department was investigating Wikileaks and its founder, Australian internet activist Julian Assange, in advance of a [possible criminal prosecution](#) under the Espionage Act of 1917. Meanwhile, [Interpol issued a warrant](#) for Assange’s arrest based on allegations of sexual assault in Sweden and Assange himself went into hiding. On December 7, 2010 he surrendered to British police and was [denied bail](#) while awaiting an extradition hearing.

Meanwhile the Wikileaks main site, wikileaks.org was subject to a [massive distributed denial of service \(DDOS\)](#) attack and the primary domain name was eventually taken down. Nevertheless thousands of mirror sites almost instantly appeared, thus providing continued access to the information. At the same time major U.S. corporations were carefully backing away from any association with Wikileaks. Online retailer Amazon.com denied the site space on its servers, while [Paypal froze Wikileaks’s account and Visa and Mastercard](#) suspended all payments to the organization, thus making it virtually impossible for any contributions to be made from the United States. Online activists fought back, however, with the online community Anonymous launching its own [DDOS attacks](#) against Paypal, Visa, and Mastercard, actually succeeding in taking down both the Visa and Mastercard sites on December 8, 2010. Despite this intense international pressure and scrutiny, Wikileaks continued to release documents even after Assange’s arrest, even

hinting at a massive trove of documents relating to a major U.S. bank to be released in early 2011.

Thus, in the space of a week a major international drama unfolded like a scene from a Hollywood political thriller. And yet, though on the surface the questions presented by this case are very new – what defines a journalist in the internet age? What is the role of secrets in a liberal democracy? How does the internet change the way information flows and is distributed? – nevertheless the core questions at stake are ultimately very old. For at the heart of the Wikileaks debate is really the question of the role of information mediation, and specifically the mediation of information that is potentially subversive to an ostensibly democratic state. This question is, of course, as old as the printing press and it is this question that vexed not only the America of the twenty-first century, but also the Britain of the seventeenth and eighteenth. Like America, the British government was unsure of how to deal with subversive political voices who distributed their ideas through the new medium of print and like America it often chose to persecute the offenders because ultimately it could not control the distribution of information once it was mediated through the technologies of print.

Furthermore, I would argue that the actual content of these “subversive” mediations has actually changed very little over the course of three centuries. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the most dangerous subversive voices were often religious millenarians who translated their political critiques into religious terms. Seventeenth century ranter Abiezer Coppe, for example was persecuted and imprisoned for his apocalyptic pamphlet the *Fiery Flying Role*, while eighteenth century millenarian prophet Richard Brothers was imprisoned for publishing his *Revealed Knowledge of the Prophecies and Times*. In both of these cases these men were imprisoned only *after* their ideas were put into print and released into the uncontrolled and uncontrollable public sphere. In fact, despite the government’s best attempts to suppress this information, pamphlets like Coppe’s *Fiery Flying Role* continued to surface long after their authors were dead, thus indicating that state authority could ultimately not control information once released.

Likewise Julian Assange, though clearly not a religious prophet, nevertheless espouses a very developed political philosophy that picks up many of the strands of seventeenth and eighteenth century millenarian philosophy. Like Coppe and Brothers, Assange’s philosophy is grounded in a deeply rooted suspicion that the liberal democratic state as we know it, founded on a sense of individual subjectivity and freedoms, will always end up serving the interests of those in power to the detriment of society at large. As he writes in his December 2006 essay “[Conspiracy as Governance](#),” “We must use these insights to inspire

within us and others a course of ennobling and effective action to replace the structures that lead to bad governance with something better” (1). He thus uses the language of collectivity to express the belief that, through the *revealing* (a very apocalyptic term) of the information guarded by the powerful we can thus hold government accountable and force change in the interests of the weak. Thus, what Wikileaks really illustrates is that by using the new online technologies of mediation in place of print technologies, information can be distributed far more widely and uncontrollably than it ever was before. Even with Assange behind bars and their primary domain taken down, Wikileaks continues to release documents via a vast network of mirror sites.

In thus tracing what I will term the “mediation of millennium” from the seventeenth century to the present day, I hope to illustrate that it is in and through these processes of mediation that a millennial space created that works to reveal the true nature of reality and break down boundaries between the individual self and community. Thus what I will argue is that both prophets like Coppe and Brothers and internet activists like Assange locate freedom not in the democratic individual subject but in a millennial community space that is created through mediation technologies that exist outside the control of the state and possess the potential to subversively surface at crucial cultural moments.

To Be Continued...

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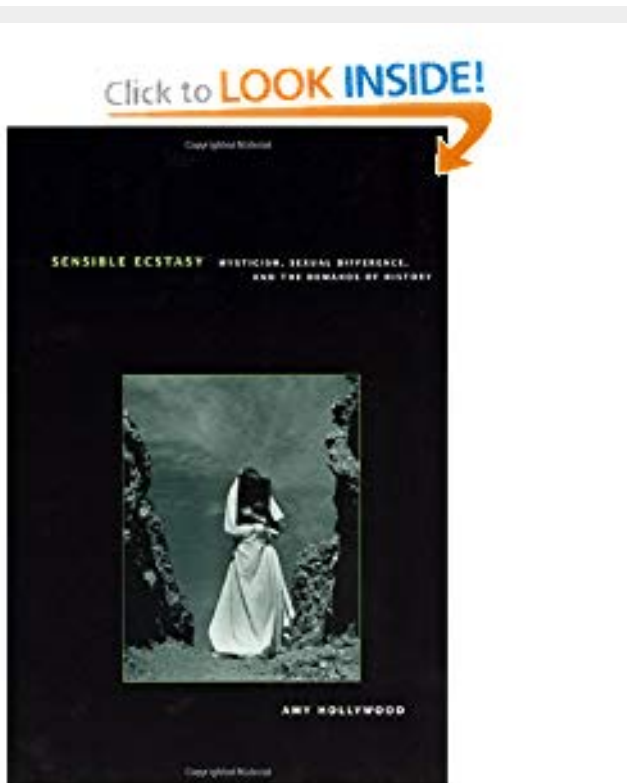
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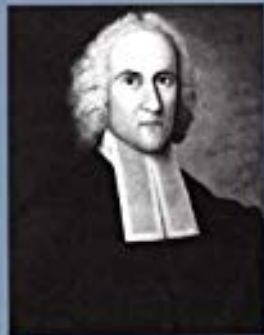
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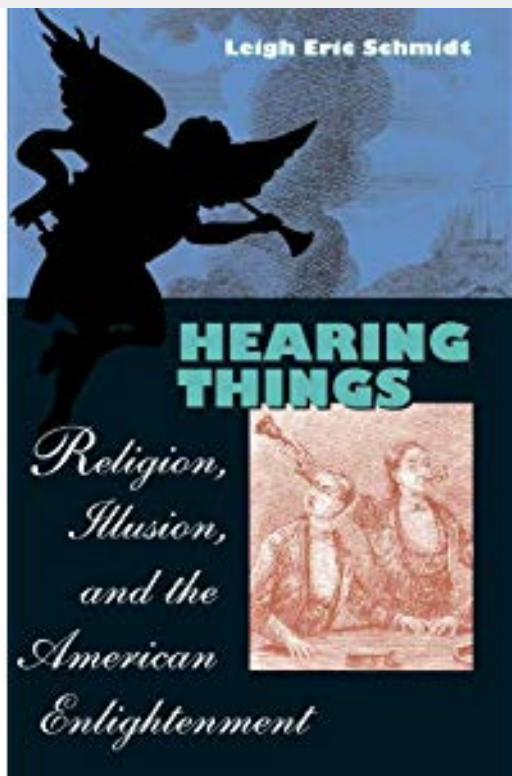
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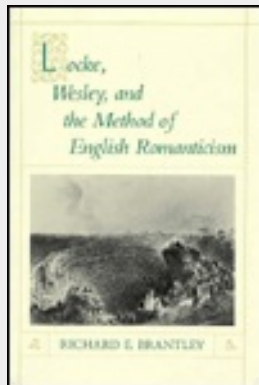


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