

Between Words: Popular Culture and the Rise of Print in Seventeenth Century England

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BETWEEN WORDS:
POPULAR CULTURE AND THE RISE OF PRINT
IN SEVENTEENTH CENTURY ENGLAND

by

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B.A. Florida State University, 2006

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

Seventeenth century England was forced to come to terms with events such as the Civil War and the regicide of King Charles I, in the midst of contending with the cultural changes brought upon by print culture, the effects of which appeared throughout all aspects of English society. These changes helped form a relationship between print and oral culture, one of negotiation among the producers and regulators of work and the society consuming the works. The discussion of this negotiation has led to varying conclusions concerning the true impact of printed materials on English society and culture, all of which tend to see the relationship in one of two ways: print's undeniable and unprecedented influence on culture, or its function as supplement to oral and visual communication. The latter conclusion helped form the foundation of this study, which aims to further understand the negotiation between print and English society. The close analysis of recurring themes of the supernatural, specifically prophecy, witchcraft, regicide, and the natural world, will show unmistakable similarities between popular entertainment and written works. Through the examination of these themes, this thesis will illustrate the extent to which common imagery and wording appeared in newsbooks and what this says about oral communication and culture in early modern England.

To those who gave me constant support and infinite confidence,
my parents Glenn and Diane, my brother Glenn Jr., my Grandmother Lois Brittain
and for my love of history, my Grandfather, Manley Gordon Brittain, Jr.
August 13, 1927 – June 28, 2005

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The publication of one of the first popular printed works, *Mercurius Gallobellicus*, in 1594 ushered in a new era of the printed word to England in the form of pamphlets and newsbooks. These works quickly gained popularity by the middle of the seventeenth century, amplifying communication among all levels of society.¹ Oral, visual and written communication shared certain commonalities concerning the presentation of themes and ideas making the relationship between these forms increasingly important and very symbiotic. Newsbook editors and authors wrote a number of articles concerned with the topics of interest to English society – from local gossip to politics – creating traditional articles, as well as ballads, libels, woodcuts and short plays. The form the news took varied greatly; the stories presented, however, shared many of the same elements including the visual portrayal, descriptors, and dialogue. Equally important to the form and portrayal of the news is the dissemination of that information, beginning with the story's origin to its final incarnation. The close ties between printed works, those meant for spoken delivery, and the popular entertainment of the time shows the importance of oral communication in conjunction with print in the circulation, distribution, and discussion of the news.

¹ Joad Raymond, *The Invention of the English Newspaper: English Newsbooks, 1641-1649* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 6.

The influence of the coffeehouse and print, the brief closure of the theatres, and the political upheaval of the sixteenth century influenced all aspects of English society and communication, including the presentation, dissemination and general interest in, the news and information available; coffeehouses brought people of all classes together, serving as a central piece of the communication network early on; an increased focus on print and education led to a society speculated to have a literacy rate of approximately 44 percent by the mid-seventeenth century.² While the political issues – the overthrow of King Charles I and Cromwell’s subsequent claim to the power of the crown – providing the topics for the news, rumor and gossip discussed by all levels of English society, in all social settings possible.

The introduction of print as a common medium for information occurred around the middle of the fifteenth century with the invention of the printing press; by the middle of the sixteenth century, government intervention in the printing and trade began with the 1586 decree, “which prohibited the printing of any book until it had been licensed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, or the Bishop of London.”³ This and other laws, though delaying the influx of news, did not stop it all together: “despite the proliferation of licensers for the prosecution, the total number of titles printed each year rose steadily from 149 in 1560 to 259 in 1600 to 577 in 1640.”⁴ Government intervention in the

² David Cressy, “Literacy in Seventeenth-Century England: More Evidence” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 8 (Summer, 1977): 150.

³ H.S. Bennett, *English Books and Readers 1603 to 1640: Being a Study in the History of the Book Trade in the Reigns of James I and Charles I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 40.

⁴ F.J. Levy, “How Information Spread Among the Gentry, 1550-1640” *Journal of British Studies* 21 (Spring, 1982), 13.

printing industry continued sporadically throughout the seventeenth century, though did not always take the form of legal proclamations, it also occurred in the use of print as government propaganda. The Thirty Years War increased reliance on newsbooks, pamphlets and print, which in turn increased the dissemination of information to all areas of English society as “from its very beginnings the conflict between England and Scotland was accompanied by a wave of propaganda pamphlets struggling to win English sympathies for the Covenanters’ cause.”⁵

Despite the government’s concern with written word the majority of the English population suffered from illiteracy, since “educational opportunities were rarely intended for the poor, and even those that were often appropriated by the well-born or the wealthy.”⁶ Though illiterate, English society of all class levels “were not unaware of the course of political events and could express opinions based upon understanding” as written sources such as ballads, libels and newsletters “also entered into oral circulation and were regularly posted or hawked across the country.”⁷ The publication of the first corantos in 1621 saw a simultaneous rise in the “flow of printed government propaganda”.⁸ The English government sporadically banned all printing except

⁵ Dagmar Freist, *Governed by Opinion: Politics, Religion and the Dynamics of Communication in Stuart London, 1637-1645* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1997), 220

⁶ David Cressy, “Educational Opportunity in Tudor and Stuart England” *History of Education Quarterly* 16 (Autumn, 1976), 307.

⁷ Adam Fox, “Rumour, News and Popular Political Opinion in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England” *The Historical Journal* 40 (Sep., 1997), 620, 611, 610.

⁸ A coranto is a short, easy to publish printed material, usually covering a single topic of foreign news and which were cheap to print, making little profit.

government decrees as coffeehouses grew in popularity and “[encouraged] free-floating and open-ended discussion.”⁹

Coffeehouses numbered in the thousands at their height of popularity, eventually replacing the previously established and socially influential businesses including taverns, inns and alehouses, as the premier place to “gather news or political gossip and criticize or celebrate the actions of the government.”¹⁰ Where alehouses and taverns served as the most popular places for socialization, coffeehouses rapidly grew in popularity and importance, joining an already expansive and established communication network – a network that spanned England. Merging oral and written communication, just like its predecessors, the major difference between these businesses was the very reason for their existence: coffeehouses provided the first place “available for sober debate and discussion...open to anyone and everyone...who paid a penny at the bar and agreed to observe certain values of conduct and behavior,” becoming known as “the Citizens Academy” and “penny university.”¹¹

Coffeehouses attracted all levels of society as a news outlet but also as the location for education talk about highly varying topics between a socially diverse country, as noted in John Houghton’s 1699 *A Discourse of Coffee Read at a Meeting of*

⁹ Fox, “Rumour, News and Popular Political Opinion in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England”, 612; Lawrence E. Klein, “Coffeehouse Civility, 1660-1714: An Aspect of Post-Courtly in England,” *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 59 (1996), 37.

¹⁰ Steve Pincus, “‘Coffee Politicians Does Create’: Coffeehouses and Restoration Political Culture” *The Journal of Modern History* 67 (Dec., 1995), 822.

¹¹ Aytoun Ellis, *The Penny Universities: A History of the Coffee-Houses* (London: Secker + Warburg, 1956), xv; *The Mens Answer to the Womens Petition Against Coffee, Vindicating Their Own Performances, and the Vertues of that Liquor, from the Undeserved Aspersion lately cast upon them by their SCANDALOUS PAMPHLET* (London: 1674), 5.

the Royal Society. Houghton defends coffee-houses, citing the positive benefits including: “[making] all sorts of People sociable, they improve Arts, and Merchandice, and all other Knowledge; and a worthy number of this Society (now departed) had thought coffee-houses had improved useful knowledge very much.”¹² Printed works – pamphlets, newsbooks, corantos, separates and other varying forms – also affected this public knowledge, whether in coffeehouses when “[he] who happened to be reading the *Government’s Gazette* would read it out for the benefit of the illiterate” or “circulating in ballads and songs” and performed by minstrels, poets or dramatists.¹³ Written and oral communication often shared such elements as imagery, format, dialogue and themes with popular culture, “[providing] political education for the wider populace.”¹⁴ Print continued to gain popularity throughout the seventeenth century worked in conjunction with, and further encouraged verbal communication – in the eighty years following Queen Elizabeth’s ascension in 1533, the total number of books originating in England rose, along with an increase in imported works.¹⁵ This rising popularity of print and its influence, while easily exaggerated, was still significant; pamphlets as a group are clearly aimed at a popular audience. Influenced by the persistence of “a wide popular knowledge of Shakespeare’s and Jonson’s work continues to be a safe

¹² Pincus, 820; John Houghton, ‘A Discourse of Coffee Read at a Meeting of the Royal Society, by Mr. John Houghton, F.R.S.’ *Philosophical Transactions (1683 – 1775)* 21 (1699), 317.

¹³ Aytoun Ellis, 46.

¹⁴ Fox, “Rumour, News and Popular Political Opinion in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England”, 617.

¹⁵ Fox, “Rumour, News and Popular Political Opinion in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England”, 620.

assumption, we may even be sure that the pamphleteers are not relying on faded memories of stage performances.”¹⁶

Public desire for information and a vast, pre-existing network for the transmission of information worked together, connecting print and oral communication throughout England. When a written work might lack certain specific details an English citizen obtained these details from anyone he asked in lieu of reliable access to written sources.¹⁷ Printed material often contained woodcuts which were images general in nature, but which could convey a specific meaning or idea, while authors constructed their works based on a “recognized narrative pattern, trickling down from the upper class to the general public through the numerous forms”.¹⁸ Picking an absolute and dominant form of communication incurs numerous difficulties; “despite the enormous amount of paper in circulation, most news still spread by word of mouth”. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, however, print encouraged new forms of communication as well as alterations to those already in existence.¹⁹ Instead of categorizing the seventeenth century as either an oral or print based society, a relationship formed between them, working together to disseminate the news, rumors, gossip and important social information of the times.

¹⁶ Ernest Sirluck, “Shakespeare and Jonson among the Pamphleteers of the First Civil War: Some Unreported Seventeenth-Century Allusions” *Modern Philology* 53 (Nov., 1955), 89.

¹⁷ Fox, “Rumour, News and Popular Political Opinion in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England”, 600.

¹⁸ Fox, “Rumour, News and Popular Political Opinion in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England”, 616.

¹⁹ Levy, 21.

The analysis of these consistent and clearly repeated images, themes, dialogue and ideas illustrates this relationship, showing one based in symbiosis and negotiation. These new stories, both those well thought-out and created real-time, shows the path these works took through English society. These specific paths serve to shed light on numerous aspects of English culture and society at all levels – from the topic and form to the transmission of the information – showing how these worked together, altering the every-day life in seventeenth-century England including social interaction, culture, politics, and education.

Historiography

The diverse historiography of print illustrates the various ways, both positive and negative, print altered the economic, political, social, and cultural landscapes of sixteenth and seventeenth century England. J.B. Williams' broad approach looked at the difference between "newsbooks" and "letters of news" – the former being cheaply made and sold works, subjected to Parliamentary law and published anywhere from a week to months old, after the event occurred, while the latter, published more often, cost more but contained significantly more up-to-date information.²⁰ The importance in clarifying these terms, according to Williams, lies in the way English society utilized these printed works to help change and form public opinion. Williams notes that letters of news cost substantially more, priced at five pounds a year for a subscription, leading to restrictions on the social classes capable of obtaining these works on a regular basis,

²⁰ J.B. Williams, "The Newsbooks and Letters of News of the Restoration" *The English Historical Review* 23 (1908), 252.

and the constraints this placed on the educational and cultural diversity of its reading audience. Focusing his study on newsbooks, this printed form, costing a penny an issue, appealed to a much larger section of seventeenth century English society; social standing, or educational background mattered much less than previous centuries. According to Williams, government authorities “anxious to suppress seditious pamphlets and unlicensed printing”, created the position “Surveyorship of the Press”, empowering the person in office “to seize seditious books and their writers” and “draw up proposals for the regulation of the press.”²¹ These instances of government interaction show the weight attributed to newsbook influence on public thought and opinion concerning political events of the time; all government sanctioned newsbooks essentially functioned as propaganda, and were most likely censored by the government, which only increased the overall desire for information among the general public.

Elaborating on the main idea outlined in Williams’ article, Joseph Frank posited that while newspapers, pamphlets, ballads and other forms of popular communication served as the “immediate predecessors” to the newspaper, as a tool for government propaganda and functioned both to “[gratify] and wet the public appetite for news,” it also works as a measure of how important education and literacy became to English society. Using the printed materials as a reference for his work, Frank concludes that the literate, adult male population residing in England numbered at approximately 60,000.²² Frank’s work focuses on the popular newsbooks of the time, providing a

²¹ Williams, 261, 260.

²² Joseph Frank, *The Beginnings of the English Newspaper, 1620-1660* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 18.

detailed account of English newsbooks from 1620 to 1660, highlighting the initial negotiations between print and English culture.

Lois Schwoerer introduced coffeehouses' influence on English society, beginning in the 1970s, added another level to the debate concerning print: the role of coffeehouses in English literacy and communication. Conclusions concerning the coffeehouses include their profound affect on the growth of literacy among all levels of society, though the content of its influence caused disagreement among scholars, such as R.B. Walker and Lois Schwoerer. Walker believed coffeehouses significantly influenced literacy in a positive way; Schwoerer believed they perpetuated oral communication. Overall, both scholars agree that newsbooks not only "[informed] a wider public than otherwise could have known about Parliamentary affairs, but they also helped to shape public opinion of that reading public."²³

Understanding the role print played on the communication channels and patterns formed an integral part of the historiography beginning in the mid-1980s with Richard Cust's investigation into the circulation and presentation of the information, as well as the reception of these works and information by English society.²⁴ The analysis, consisting of a close look at ballads and verses – items of entertainment to the upper class and information to the lower – shows emphasis placed on popular, current, cultural knowledge and that these popular forms actually limit the use of print as an accurate measure of literacy. According to Cust, in order for someone to be an active

²³ Lois G. Schwoerer, "Press and Parliament in the Revolution of 1689" *The Historical Journal* 20 (1977), 567.

²⁴ Richard Cust, "News and Politics in Early Seventeenth-Century England" *Past and Present* 112 (Aug., 1986), 61.

member of English society, literacy was not a requirement. One did not necessarily need a formal education to participate in an education discussion, a concept further illustrated in works published in the following decades by historians such as Adam Fox and Elizabeth Sauer.

The late 1980s and early 1990s saw an alternate approach to understanding the rise in print and its role in society and culture, functioning as an important aspect to increased literacy and education in English society. Elizabeth Skerpan suggested the “early decades [of the seventeenth century] saw growing numbers of people entering and remaining in some sort of school”, emphasizing the likelihood for children of all social classes to attend school and receive, at the very least, a basic education, which often included instruction in reading.²⁵ Educational changes, in attendance and curriculum, altered the way newsbook authors and writers presented the material, as well as the way the readers perceived these works. Pamphlet and pamphlet writers, formalized by 1642, also played an important role in the public political discourse of the time, helping to shape political decisions, easily manipulating the English populace as they looked to understand the events unfolding around them.²⁶ Slightly overemphasizing the actual influence education and print had on each other, Skerpan’s work shifts historiographical focus for a time.

The availability of cheap newsbooks, even with the most conservative estimate of their publication and readership numbers, transformed the English lower classes,

²⁵ Elizabeth Skerpan, *The Rhetoric of Politics in the English Revolution, 1642-1660* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 5.

²⁶ These formalized approaches include specific literary genres – epideictic, forensic, and deliberative – as well as literary techniques and theories.

making the general public more malleable to outside influence and information. The government's recognition of print's affect on society becomes clear – even if a person did not possess the ability to read, finding a fellow townsman who could was not a difficult task. Only when politics began to encroach on the everyday life of an ordinary London (and, in a larger capacity England), did the concept of a “public sphere” emerge and, thus formed, persuade community debates.²⁷ All of those involved in the print industry during the seventeenth century - authors, writers, editors and booksellers - overcame censorship laws, illegally producing and distributing their printed works in conjunction with the previously established communication network.

Adam Fox, looking at this idea further, focuses much of his study on the lower classes and their “fantastical” tales; contending these presented the news in a context those of that class related to and understood.²⁸ Alternate versions of the news allowed for those living in England to make an informed decision on where to place their support during the Civil War, and even helped feed the War as the “apparently mounting tide of popular criticism directed at royal personnel and policies during these years contributed to the general climate of discontent which made possible the breakdown of order in the 1640s.”²⁹ These “fantastical” stories provide further insight into English society than the means of dissemination – they also show the cultural interest in, and desire for, these tales. Fantastical stories and folklore allowed writers and authors to utilize the vernacular and images of the lower classes in smaller, cheaper formats known as

²⁷ Freist, 21.

²⁸ Fox, “Rumour, News and Popular Political Opinion in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England”, 616.

²⁹ Fox, “Rumour, News and Popular Political Opinion in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England”, 620.

pamphlets, all of these factors enticed the lower class participation in political and social issues. The importance of these stories and their use in society, specifically during the propaganda wars of 1637-42, show that King Charles I could have possibly saved himself if he had thought to use these pamphlets to guide public opinion in his favor.³⁰

Further analysis of the commonalities between oral (theatre productions, ballads and libels, and public debates/discussions) and written (newsbooks and pamphlets) works, more specifically those concerned with portraying witches/witchcraft or the act of regicide, in relation to the political, cultural and educational changes of England, reveal the relationship among all levels of English society. These popular forms of entertainment and print materials expose the negotiation between these versions of communication, the most effective way for the presentation of information to the whole society, and the reaction of that public to the changes occurring in numerous aspects of all English lives. Looking at those pamphlets and newsbooks published between 1620 and 1700, and those plays and ballads produced beginning in the late 1500s through 1700, commonalities in the representation of contemporary events show clearly. Government documents, popular folklore, religious sermons and personal correspondence serve as a basis for the interpretation of these themes – how they functioned in society, their prevalence, and practical application – and help illustrate the relationship between these varying forms of communication. Just as witchcraft “extensively [...] prevailed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries” the idea of

³⁰ Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 108, 149.

regicide “hardly...struck them [the people of England] as inconceivable,” though they did not necessarily believe that the act was without immorality.³¹

Organized thematically, this work aims to look at these themes and ideas closely to understand the function of print among society, concentrating specifically on the interwoven themes of prophecy and the supernatural. Chapter two of this work expands upon the previously established political, social, cultural and economic changes and concerns occurring in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in order to illustrate the public desire for information and the ways in which printers and authors catered to their audience. Events such as the Thirty Years War, from 1618 to 1648, the introduction of coffee and coffeehouses, the educational system and curriculum, and, most importantly, the governmental turmoil, reaching its height with the trial and execution of King Charles I and Cromwell’s rise to power. These events, and public reaction to them, shows how and why English society allowed the political and governmental concerns to reach the levels it did, especially with the regicide of King Charles I.

Chapter three, “Shakespeare, Print and Popular Culture”, looks at the portrayal of regicide and the supernatural in popular theatrical and printed works of the seventeenth century, both the malicious, as well as benign portrayals of witches/witchcraft and the supernatural among current popular knowledge. The analysis focuses heavily on Shakespeare’s work as popular beliefs and folklore of previous centuries were intricately woven into his tales, just as the same themes and concepts were woven into

³¹ Rev. T. F. Thiselton Dyer, *Folk-Lore of Shakespeare* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1966 (1883), 24; Fox, “Rumour, News and Popular Political Opinion in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England”, 616.

later works of popular culture. This chapter illustrates that the concept of regicide, and supernatural forces came to full form long before print entered mass society; those in the print trade simply borrowed these images for use in their stories, altering character names and other minor details as needed.

Chapter four, “Animals and Allegory in Seventeenth-Century Popular Culture”, illustrates the use of nature in its broadest terms, and the more specific use of animals, whether by anthropomorphizing them, humans illustrating the characteristics of animals, as commentary on the act of regicide as well as regicides themselves. Looking at the way ballads and pamphlets discuss those that played a major role in the Civil War, and the effect previous culture and popular understanding of these animals had on the dissemination of ideas and images, transcending class, education and literacy levels and bringing a wider audience to the works.

The final chapter of this study synthesizes the commonalities of these themes and the form they took when presented to society. Similarities in these works make the transmission and manipulation of any means necessary far easier than prior years.³² The on-going negotiation between print and oral communication, and the culture it helped create and form, worked together to inform, involve, and encourage all forms of change, and at all levels of society. Print, though important to sixteenth and seventeenth century society, never completely dominated as the most popular or preferred method of communication; oral communication networks remained the most important form for the dissemination of news.

³² Including, but not limited to forms such as: newsbooks, pamphlets, ballads/libels, plays/theatre, print, and markets/fairs.

CHAPTER TWO: PRINT, EDUCATION, SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Early modern English society suffered myriad political, social, religious and cultural problems, from attempts (and sporadic successes) at overthrowing the monarchy to religious differences fueling wars domestically and internationally, as well as education and curriculum reform; all of which dealt with action, inaction and intervention from a government in turmoil. Concerns over the inheritance of the crown began anew during the Tudor reign with the ascension of Queen Elizabeth I in 1558. That same year, Mary, Queen of Scots helped devise a plot for Queen Elizabeth's overthrow, in order to take control of the crown herself. Unsuccessful in her attempt, Queen Elizabeth deposed Mary in 1558, eventually executing Mary for her role in the conspiracy. Queen Elizabeth focused a good portion of her efforts during her reign toward controlling her outward, public appearance, taking precautions and carefully monitoring all printed and visual works produced featuring her likeness. The Queen's fervent control of her image began immediately upon beginning her reign, issuing a "1558 proclamation, concerned with the import of Catholic propaganda into England," censoring the works potentially harmful to her reign; this proclamation authorized government officials to inspect all printed works created in, or circulating throughout England.¹ Queen Elizabeth understood the importance of maintaining control over her public image, and the effectiveness of using established symbolism in maintaining this

¹ Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering*, 9.

control. Disseminating concepts and current events through visual or oral works continued to increase throughout the seventeenth century.

Queen Elizabeth's death in 1603 gave rise to King James I, previously James VI of Scotland. King James, a devout Presbyterian, caused strife among English society when he took a neutral stance concerning religious matters and the division of religious groups; he made enemies when he authorized an official translation of the Bible – the King James Bible – in 1604. Complicating domestic religious divisions further was the Thirty Years' War on the Continent, fought between Catholics and Protestants, both foreign and domestic. Starting around 1618 and ending around 1648, it brought religious and social upheaval across Western Europe; information of international events arrived by traveler or government official stationed out of country, though “there is no proof of a news service”, or even minimally regulated works specific to communicating news, until 1620.² As the Thirty Years' War waged on, public desire for news continued to grow, information and news passed on to English society through the oral communication routes, by personal correspondence, or everyday gossip.

During King James I's reign, the popularity of printed material grew steadily throughout all levels of society, while theatrical production and songs continued to work as both popular entertainment and important vehicles for the dissemination of news. The death of King James I and ascension of King Charles I in 1625 brought quick and considerable alterations to the English landscape, including the levying of varying taxes and disagreements between the King and Parliament concerning the role and rights of

² Elmer A. Beller, “Contemporary English Printed Sources for the Thirty Years' War”, *The American Historical Review* 32 (Jan., 1927): 276-7.

the monarchy over the governing body and subjects. Four years into his reign King Charles dissolved Parliament, ruling without them until 1640, one of the major events leading up to the start of the Civil War in 1642 between the Parliamentarians and the Royalists. Charles I and his methods for governing caused political issues and social strife throughout England, providing topics for public debate and discussion, simultaneously fueling the growing print culture while flowing through all of the various oral and visual communication routes.

Defeating the King's forces in 1646, Oliver Cromwell, the now governing head and leader of the Parliamentarians, exiled the heir to the throne and King Charles I's eldest son, the future King Charles II, who remained out of the country until the Restoration of the monarchy, almost a decade later. Providing fodder for news stories, whether oral or written accounts, King Charles I's imprisonment in 1647 helped increase circulation of rumors and gossip, as well as printed tales. In 1649, just one year after the end of the Thirty Years' War, the Parliamentarians tried, and eventually executed, King Charles I on 30 January 1649. Cromwell abolished the monarchy soon after the execution, but not before King Charles II ascended to the throne despite his exiled status. The level of government interest in education often directly correlated with the current political, economic, and social events occurring throughout the country, just as the various other changes occurring throughout the country during this time. After the regicide of King Charles I and the political turmoil leading up to and resonating after the event, Parliament issued a Resolve in 1651 "that all Primers formerly used in the time of Kingship in this Nation, be suppressed, and shall from henceforth be no further used in

any school, either Publique or Private, within this Commonwealth.”³ Suppressing all textbooks concerned with the former kingship served the best interest of the new system of governing, and Cromwell in particular, as the Resolve helped alter the collective memory of previous events, allowing Cromwell to maintain power.

The Scots, refusing to accept Cromwell’s government and claim to power, named Charles II King of Scotland in February 1649. Raising armies, both England (under Cromwell’s leadership) and Scotland (under Charles II’s leadership) prepared to battle for the English throne once again. As the war in Scotland continued, pamphlets and newsbooks carrying news and information of the war and political events in Scotland to the rest of England, garnering support and perpetuating the choices made by the government. Maintaining his power during the war, Cromwell and the Parliamentary army over-powered King Charles II and his army in 1651.

Victorious in defeating the monarchy, Cromwell seized total control of England as Lord Protector in 1653. By 1654, rumors circulated in Paris concerning Cromwell and his desire to hold the title “emperor of the seas”. Though not actually vocalized by Cromwell, this rumor and its international reach illustrate the continued power of oral communication and the extent of the established network. Under the leadership of Cromwell, the Parliamentarians and English government deteriorated throughout the seventeenth century, including the dissolution of the Rump Parliament and the establishment of the Barebones Parliament, or Nominated Assembly in 1653.

³ England and Wales. *Resolved by the Parliament that all primers formerly used in the time of kingship in this nation be suppressed, and shall from henceforth be no further used in any school, either publique or private, within this commonwealth...* Printed by John Field..., 1651. Reproduction of the original in the Union Theological Seminary Library, New York. http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&res_dat=xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:23209302

Cromwell's death left his son Richard to inherit the title and position of Lord Protector in 1658, a matter heavily discussed both in print and through public gatherings, including fairs, markets, taverns, and coffeehouses. Richard, unable to succeed in this role, resigned in 1660, allowing for the subsequent restoration of the monarchy and King Charles II's return to the throne. Cromwell's time in power and the fracturing of the government and political powers provided many opportunities for public opinion and discussion, affecting not only the political landscape, these events brought social and cultural changes to England as well. No matter the event or change, two constants remained throughout England during the seventeenth century: the personal desire for news and information, and the symbolism and importance behind certain images, ideas or characters from English religious and popular culture.

Communication and Information Among Society

News and information in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries flowed two ways: into London as personal correspondence, government and official records or manuscript, and out from London to the surrounding cities and towns. Manuscript news circulated swiftly and without problem, relying on the current oral communication network. These works were sent by weekly carrier from London to the outlying areas and sometimes joined by the latest printed book of news, though the expense of that particular service assured a certain level of exclusivity among patrons and readers.⁴ Conversely, handwritten letters of news passed by travelers, family and friends were

⁴ Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering*, 99.

personal correspondence; any news included in them was most likely a second thought. Their content, personal in nature, was limited to the information the writer found relevant, or was able to recall, but provided another written vehicle for the dissemination of rumors which could go on to enjoy the widest currency.⁵

Flowing in through official channels or as observation by the upper classes, and disseminated in any format possible – oral or print - a story was often altered, sometimes significantly, though never enough for the majority of the audience to misunderstand. Until the late sixteenth-century “printed news was scarce, and, with the exception of ballads offering superficial coverage of recent affairs, was exclusively for the elite,” leaving few options outside of oral communication for those in the middle- to lower-classes.⁶ Government restrictions on the publication of published works limited circulation of printed material, but not the news itself. Manuscript newsletters persisted, providing “extensive coverage of domestic news, including parliamentary debate and even opinion (or reports of domestic opinion), and occasionally criticism of government policy.”⁷

Ballads, libels and theatrical works comprised these earlier forms of oral work, and were easy to manipulate and an established part of English society. Songs worked particularly well in disseminating news and information since they were easy to remember and distribute (sometimes even unconsciously), and embraced by all levels of society. These works also perpetuated false information found in gossip and rumors.

⁵ Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England 1500-1700* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 45.

⁶ Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering*, 99.

⁷ Markman Ellis, *The Coffee House: A Cultural History* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2004), 71.

While publicly considered the providence of females alone, public gatherings and institutions allowed gossip to flow freely, and often, among all social levels and no matter the gender. As common as gossip was, many ballads and songs written and distributed note:

what an excellent thing it would be
if people would mind their own business...
of all the wives that plague man's lives
And keep them from there rest,
A gossiping wife'

makes the top of the list.⁸

Various institutions and social activities, including alehouses, inns, taverns and, in the mid-seventeenth century, the coffeehouse, comprised the communication network previously established across England, bringing in all manner of news and information, rumors and gossip, to all areas of the country, including the more rural, less educated towns. Lining the highways and city streets, these institutions changed how people interacted with each other, both personally and professionally; they also provided a place for free, open discussion between all men, and acted as impromptu playhouses and lecture halls. Already well established by 1636, this network estimated between 25,000 and 26,000 open alehouses; this number continued to grow as the events of the seventeenth century occurred around English citizens.⁹ Increasing even further with the introduction of the coffeehouse – an institution imported from the Ottoman Empire in 1651.

⁸ Anon. *MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS*. Ryle and Co. Printers, 2 & 3, Monmouth Court, Seven Dials (London, 1845-1859). Reproduction of the Original in the Bodleian Library.; Anon. *The Gossiping Wife*. [s.n.] [s.a.] Reproduction of the Original in the Bodleian Library.

⁹ Fox, "Rumour, News and Popular Political Opinion in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England", 608.

Print and coffeehouses grew together, working with each other, just as all cultural and social institutions worked with each other, catering to the needs of the society they supported. Inns, taverns and alehouses allowed “travellers with tales [a place to rest] overnight”, coffeehouses provided printed material for their customers enjoyment, and “[made] it their business to keep abreast of the latest reports’, local or otherwise.¹⁰ In these shops, people from all levels and areas of life converged and news constantly re-circulated by word of mouth and in fresh newsletters. Propagating print throughout England, these institutions encouraged, rather than discouraged, oral communication, despite the fact that “verbal intelligence was highly prone to distortions and inaccuracies,” and though admittedly “the written news, upon which so much discussion was ultimately based could scarcely be more reliable at this time” causing “little qualitative difference between the sources of the educated elite and those readily available to the lower orders.”¹¹

Ballads, for example, “vividly [demonstrate] the way in which people at this time composed and had written out extempore songs in order to publicize news or rumor, information, or entertainment.” The convenience of molding current events into a written song complimented oral communication, and the emerging print culture and the channels they passed through illustrate “the value of couching a message in verse or song”, an idea resting on the fact that “rhymes passed around quickly by word of mouth, tripping easily off the tongue, and lodging firmly in the memory.”¹² Ballads containing

¹⁰ Fox, “Rumour, News and Popular Political Opinion in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England”, 608.

¹¹ Fox, “Rumour, News and Popular Political Opinion in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England”, 598.

¹² Fox, *Oral and Literature Culture*, 304.

specific bits of news and information organically grew from the cultural tendency in England to sing and hum during all tasks; singing helped pass time during tedious daily tasks, or teach young children lessons. Their versatility, especially as entertainment and satire “[performance] in taverns, homes, or fairs”, permeating all areas of English life and culture in which “a group of people gathered to discuss the day’s events or to tell tales of heroes and villains.”¹³ These works also supplemented the circulation of political or social news, most important at the times of theatre closures and print restrictions. Broadside ballads and their importance extend into other forms of communication, as a number of authors “appeared to have copied directly from favorite items of popular literature.”¹⁴

Prior to the introduction of the printing press, woodcuts circulated throughout England, accompanying ballads and libels. Evolving with the introduction of print, engravings became the most popular way to create an image.¹⁵ Images overall served as an identifier for businesses and trade, even for families in the form of crests, “indeed, as in all societies in which literacy is limited, the influence of graphic representation, and of all imagery and symbolism, could have a powerful communicating effect.”¹⁶ Visual

¹³ Bodleian Library, “Bodleian Library Broadside Ballads,” <http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/ballads/ballads.htm> (accessed 24 March 2008)

¹⁴ Adam Fox, “Ballads, Libels and Popular Ridicule in Jacobean England.” *Past and Present* 145 (November 1994): 67.

¹⁵ The process of engraving could be completed two ways, both of which utilized a metal plate (oftentimes copper). The image could be hand cut into the plate with a special tool called a burin, or etched by placing an acid-resistant wax or resin in the desired shape of the image. An acid is then used to create valleys and grooves in the areas around this compound. Finally, the valleys created by the carving away are inked; woodcuts also use carved images, but the ink is printed to the raised areas, not the valleys of the image.

¹⁶ Fox, “Ballads, Libels and Popular Ridicule in Jacobean England”, 61-2.

imagery generally joined the written word, these representations aided storytellers “at a time when images could be more successful than words in communicating to the people, the drawing of pictures provided a powerful auxiliary to the written word.”¹⁷

Whether woodcut or engraving, authors and writers, realizing the importance of images “lavishly illustrated [ballads]” with images indicating the topic or events of that particular ballad.¹⁸ Images maintained their importance in news circulation with the introduction of pamphlets and newsbooks and sales of printed material relied heavily on these visual aids. The printers of *Mercurius Civicus* realized the importance of images to their firsthand after experiencing the negative effects of not including them when they editors “temporarily dropped [the] illustrations” a choice “[which] adversely affected the sales”. The editors reversed this decision several issues later.¹⁹ Removing images proved detrimental to sales, implying a significant portion of illiterate, or semi-literate, customers among their readers. Once printed news flourished as a means of communication, the format of the works changed. While the concept of works remained the same, the changing formats opened news markets to the printers, authors and booksellers, altering the formats to work cohesively within lower social levels.

¹⁷ Fox, *Oral and Literature Culture in England*, 304.

¹⁸ Bodleian Library, ‘Bodleian Library Broadside Ballads,’ <http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/ballads/ballads.htm> (accessed 24 March 2008).

¹⁹ Raymond, *The Invention of the English Newsbooks*, 42.

Education, Literacy and Printing Houses

As the amount of printed material increased, so too did the number of people employed in printing houses. Printing houses, small in size, often possessed no more than two printing presses, limiting other aspects of the process and business and, by extension, the amount of printing capable for the printer to produce. Staffing early printing houses suffered limitations due to the smaller size as well, comprised of a master printer, very few journeymen, and compositors, as well as apprentices, who were bound to a master printer for a period of time. Some apprentices likely “had about seven years’ education in a grammar school”, though “such an education stressed Latin rather than English”, thus not always providing the apprentice with an advantage.²⁰ Either way, the limitations suffered by the printing houses concerning the number of journeymen and compositors affordable by printers left several spaces available for apprenticeships and “suggests that [the apprentices] learnt composing under the guidance of a senior compositor, the master himself, or a journeyman.”²¹ Just as tradesmen and merchants of other established professions learned the skills, ideas and concepts specific to their work, so too did those working in a printing house.

Not all of those employed in the printing houses or involved in the process lacked even basic literacy skills. Scribal ability, however, did not automatically indicate

²⁰ T.H. Howard-Hill, "Early Modern Printers and the Standardization of English Spelling" *The Modern Language Review* 101 (Jan., 2006): 19.

²¹ Cust, 20.

a “learned” man, evidenced by the writing masters adverts highlighting “their technical knowledge and talent rather than classical learning,” teaching their pupils “a manual skill, not Latin grammar and rhetoric”, such that they received in an established school or from a traditional schoolmaster. Self-taught scribes embraced “not a balanced ideal [of education] but a specialized understanding of and dexterity with the pen, apparently the sole attributes necessary for writing instruction.”²² Marketing their wares as many ways as possible, and to the largest group of people, writing masters emerged “not as typical schoolmasters but as zealous entrepreneurs and skilled artisans”, looking to illustrate these skills whenever and where an opportunity presented them.²³

Successfully working for a printing press required either the previous possession of, or ability to quickly learn, a specific skill set. One vitally important skill, speed reading, “requires rapid recognition of word-shapes as a whole, and there is no time to map individual letters onto the sounds of speech.”²⁴ Possessing this skill, specifically, allowed those working at the printing press to train “their eidetic memories to remember the individual spellings of the lines they were assigned to distribute and visualized the combinations of sorts (ligatures etc.) that made up the line of type”, implying printing house workers – from apprentices to senior compositors – need only recognize the shapes of independent letters or whole words, without understanding what those letters

²² Richard S. Christen, “Boundaries between Liberal and Technical Learning: Images of Seventeenth-Century English Writing Masters” *History of Education Quarterly* 39 (Spring, 1999): 36.

²³ Christen, 36.

²⁴ Howard-Hill, 23.

actually meant.²⁵ This training and ability suggests a rather limited level of education and literacy among print house workers, a trend witnessed throughout all levels of society.

Lack of advanced education extended to the general public, even sometimes the elite, though illiteracy among the upper levels of society only minimally hindered them. Those illiterate members successfully maintained their position, “status and power despite this handicap.”²⁶ This same opportunity vanished for illiterate members of the other social levels, a fact not lost to them. Literate members of the lower- to middle-classes realized the expanded opportunities for advancement provided them, which encouraged them to actively seek educational reforms, calling for an increase in public, or free education. Equally, this realization among the literate upper strata of society discouraged these reforms, in an attempt to maintain their place in society and force the lower classes to stay in their lower class places. As noted, changing educational values certainly increased during the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries, resulting in

two general categories of institutions and practitioners...on one hand, the grammar schools, universities, and related purveyors of liberal learning, which in Tudor and Stuart England, consisted primarily of the classical languages and literature deemed necessary for the ‘learned professions’ of law, religion, and medicine, and more generally, for gentility, virtue and public service; on the other, the many technical schools and pedagogues offering tuition in mathematics, bookkeeping, handwriting, modern languages, and other specialized skills associated with commerce and the trades.²⁷

²⁵ Howard-Hill, 23

²⁶ David Cressy, "Levels of Illiteracy in England, 1530-1730" *The Historical Journal* 20 (1977), 7.

²⁷ Christen, 32.

Numerous printed works encouraged the public debate concerning education throughout the mid-sixteenth and into the seventeenth centuries, joining the various other debates circulating in print during this time.²⁸ The benefits or drawbacks of public education served as the main point of focus for a number of these printed works. Often these works cited benefits of education for members of the noble and elite classes and drawbacks concerning, advanced education of the laity. Acting as vessels for the dissemination of educational importance, they also provided an outline of the desired curriculum, as well as the order children should attain these skills: “After the Childe hath learned perfectlie the eight partes of speech, let him then learne the right ioyning together of substantives with adjectives, the nowne with the verbe, the relative with the antecedent”, etc.²⁹ All of these skills aim at teaching children not simply the proper way to read and write, but also religious, moral and ethical lessons; important information concerning proper behavior among society.

Consistently, works concerning education indicate its necessity for children to receive a well-rounded education, but a secondary debate concerning the concept of education among all levels of English society involved the level of reach education made down into society. *Positions vverhin those primitiue circumstances be examined,*

²⁸ Topics of debate included (but were not limited to): magic and reason, education and society, coffeehouses and its effect on people/society, political events, etc.

²⁹ Ascham, Roger. *The scholemaster or plaine and perfite way of teaching children, to vnderstand, write, and speake, the Latin tong but specially purposed for the priuate bringing vp of youth in ientlemen and noble mens houses, and commodious also for all such, as haue forgot the Latin tonge...* At London: Printed by Iohn Daye, dwelling ouer Aldersgate Cum gratia a priuilegio Regiae Maiestatis, per decennium [1571]. Reproductions of the originals in the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery and the Pierpont Morgan Library. http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&res_dat=xri:pqiil:res_ver=0.2&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99836107

which are necessarie for the training vp of children, either for skill in their booke, or health in their bodie, first printed in London in 1581, and written by Richard Mulcaster, provided information and suggestions concerning every aspect of education in England, including the age boys should be sent to school, the subjects they should be required to learn, and the logic behind increased education. Re-printed in 1588 under the name *The education of children in learning declared by the dignitie, vtilitie, and method thereof. Meete to be knowne, and practiced aswell of parents as schoolmaisters*, both pamphlets suggested the curriculum consist of everything from grammar to physical exercise in pursuit of good health, to “lowd speaking...lowd singing...[and] lowed and soft reading.”³⁰ *The ground of artes teaching the woorke and practise of arithmetike, both in whole numbers and fractions, after a more easyer and exacter sorte than any lyke hath hitherto beene set forth: with diuers news additions*, provides the literate elite and, more specifically, the Queen, an explanation of the importance of education, for moral and ethical lessons. These debates took a variety of forms, not just in books, to disseminate information and news to the masses. A 1590 broadside advertises schoolmaster services, open to “such as are desirous, eyther themselues to learne, or to haue theyr children or seruants instructed” with the means to pay for the lesson, no matter the social standing.³¹ By 1612, the general belief towards educating the lower

³⁰ Mulcaster, Richard. *Positions vverhin those primitiue circumstances be examined, which are necessarie for the training vp of children, either for skill in their booke, or health in their bodie. VVritten by Richard Mulcaster, master of the schoole erected in London anno. 1561. in the parish of Sainct Laurence Povvntneie, by the vvorshipfull companie of the merchaunt tailers of the said citie...* Printed at London: By Thomas Vautrollier for Thomas Chare, 1581. Reproduction of the original in the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery. http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&res_dat=xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99848169

³¹ Baker, Humfrey. *Such as are desirous, eyther themselues to learne, or to haue theyr children or seruants instructed in any of these artes and faculties heer vnder named, it may please them to repayre*

classes did not “omit anytime or opportunity” provided to anyone, since the “hope therefore of your poore servuant is, that your Highness and Excellency will not impute anie presumption to this indeuor,” perpetuating the debate concerning the attendance of grammar and university schools by citizens of all levels.³²

Far from a one-sided debate favoring mass public educational opportunities for all citizens, some believed that educating the lower classes hurt them more than it helped them, since “it would make them unsuited for the long, hard, boring, manual work upon which the smooth working of all societies have hitherto depended.”³³ A 1640 pamphlet, *THE COVNTRY-MANS CARE, And the Citizens feare, In bringing up their Children in good Education. Set forth in a Dialogue betweene a Citizen and Country-Man*, illustrates this alternate side of the debate. While not directly discouraging the lower class from attaining some form of education, it did work to discourage them from seeking out highly advanced education. Rather, this pamphlet sought to encourage them into a mercantile or trade position, receiving their education through their apprenticeships – the traditional form of education throughout society. The Citizen

vnto the house of Humfry Baker. [S.l. : T. Purfoot?, ca. 1590]. Reproduction of original in the Society of Antiquaries. http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&res_dat=xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:29900268

³² Brinsley, John. *Ludus literarius: or, the grammar schoole shewing how to proceede from the first entrance into learning, to the highest perfection required in the grammar schooles, with ease, certainty and delight both to masters and schollars; onely according to our common grammar, and ordinary classical authours: begun to be sought out at the desire of some worthy faouers of learning, by searching the experiments of sundry most profitable schoolemasters and other learned, and confirmed by tryall: intended for the helping of the younger sort of teachers, and of all schollars ...* London: Printed [by Humphrey Lownes] for Thomas Man, 1612. Reproduction of the original in the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery. http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&res_dat=xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99842309, 4.

³³ Lawrence Stone, "Literacy and Education in England 1640-1900" *Past and Present* 42 (Feb., 1969): 86.

achieved this goal by claiming “that the Vniversity is much polluted, and contaminated with Popish superstitions, which if” the Countryman’s son “should be seduced into, perhaps it will cause both his utter ruine, and the Countryman’s perpetuall sorrow.”³⁴ Further illustrating his point, the Citizen notes that the Countryman “may see Coblers and Tinkers rising from the very Dunghill, beating the Pulpits as conformably as if they were the Kinges professors of Divinity, scattering their new doctrine and discipline in the Church, and are accounted great divine too of the vulgar” though, while this thought might please the Countryman, “In the meane while revolve all, and you shall finde Scholler-ship most shamefully despised”, concerned “that it would make them unsuited for the long, hard, boring, manual work upon which the smooth working of all societies have hitherto depended.”³⁵ Providing an alternate option the Citizen, a Vitner by trade, convinces the Countryman to allow him to “take [his son] under [his] Tuition,” awarding the boy an apprenticeship with the assurance that “he shall be both kindly kept, and religiously instructed.”³⁶

These works represent the importance placed on education as “the quickest way for a man to climb the social ladder”, and a service “parents, quite generally, if they had the means, were ready to pay local schoolmasters feeds to instruct their children” to

³⁴ Anon. *The country-mans care, and the citizens feare, in bringing up their children in good education. Set forth in a dialogue betweene a citizen and country-man.* Printed at London: for T.B., 1641. Reproduction of the original in the British Library. http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&res_dat=xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99858834

³⁵ Anon. *The country-mans care...*

³⁶ Anon. *The country-mans care...*

ensure their children all the advantages possible at the time.³⁷ Overall, “the main streams of educational thought at any one time were intertwined with older outmoded views of prophetic fringe propaganda” though “intellectual currents are in any case a poor guide to the actualities of educational provision. Ideas in the minds of educational commentators did not necessarily have any impact on schools.”³⁸ Public concern with education was not always an accurate indication of the actual reforms; in reality they often only minimally affected the actual system. Government interest in education – from specific curriculum to the overall system – of public and private institutions, fluctuated throughout the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries. As interest in higher education increased among the elite, the government carried out certain measures of assurance concerning “the Foundations of the saids Universities, Colledges and Schools, with the Rents and Revenues thereof, and how the same have been Administered and managed, and to set down such Rules and methods, for the good management thereof, for hereafter.”³⁹

Just as important as the curriculum, and desire for higher learning to the growth of education and, by extension, literacy throughout England, was the delivery of the lecture itself. Textbooks in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries existed though

³⁷ A.J. Fletcher, "The Expansion of Education in Berkshire and Oxfordshire, 1500-1670" *British Journal of Educational Studies* 15 (Feb., 1967): 51 & Lynn Thorndike, "Elementary and Secondary Education in the Middle Ages" *Speculum* 15 (Oct., 1940): 402-3.

³⁸ Cressy, "Levels of Illiteracy in England, 1530-1730", 14.

³⁹ Scotland. Convention of Estates. *Act for visitation of universities, colledges and schools. At Edinburgh, the fourth day of July, one thousand six hundred and ninety years.* Edinburgh, : Printed by the heir of Andrew Anderson ..., Anno Dom. 1690. Reproduction of original in: National Library of Scotland. http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&res_dat=xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:52614928

they played a relatively smaller role in education overall as spoken letters remained the primary method of instruction. Even lectures utilizing printed works “consisted of the reading aloud” of these works, “with commentary provided by the master” – not wholly unlike modern day classroom instruction, in some ways.⁴⁰ Universities of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries “provided a more textually oriented education than classical antiquity had...but for all their textuality, medieval universities were radically oral...there were no written examinations or exercises.”⁴¹

Taking into account London’s place as the centre, and sometimes catalyst, for this evolution, the education and, by extension, literacy levels of the majority of English citizens remained fairly low, hovering at no more than 40 percent for the entire male population by the end of the seventeenth century, an increase of just 20 percent since the beginning of the century. Historian David Cressy postulates “the massive illiteracy of the labouring poor may have depressed the literacy level of the region as a whole”, others believe that “education at any one level always whets the appetite for more among a minority of gifted children, and an efficiently stratified society always makes allowances for upward mobility by a handful of lower class children.”⁴² Fluctuating in sync with educational thought and reform, various political and economic issues caused an “abrupt halt in the reduction of illiteracy at the beginning of Edward’s reign”, and

⁴⁰ Joyce Coleman, "Interactive Parliament: The Theory and Practice of Medieval English Authority" *The Yearbook of English Studies* 25 *Non-Standard Englishes and the New Media Special Number* (1995): 74.

⁴¹ Walter J. Ong, "Orality, Literacy, and Medieval Textualization" *New Literary History* 16 *Oral and Written Traditions in the Middle Ages* (Autumn, 1984): 3.

⁴² Cressy, "Levels of Illiteracy in England, 1530-1730", 4; Stone, 73.

“stagnating or deteriorating in the second half of Elizabeth’s reign.”⁴³ Cressy claims his choice for the measurement of literacy is the “only one...directly measurable, the ability or inability to write a signature.”⁴⁴ Included in his measurements are the “crude scrawls” made by the laboring poor – the ability to hold a pen signified at minimum a grammar school education. Noting issues in this traditional form of measurement – Cressy’s scrawls – Keith Thomas indicates the importance of numerical literacy when considering the measurement of literacy.

While education occurred in one of two forms - either public or private - literacy entertains three forms: the ability to read, scribal ability, or numeracy. Possessing any or all of these abilities relied heavily on the trade or profession, as well as the age and sex of the citizens. Males were more likely to be literate than literate females, and elites more likely to possess two or more of these abilities, while those in trade and mercantile positions were more likely to be completely literate in mathematics and numbers, but not necessarily traditional writing. Rooted in English culture, numeracy presented in many facets of everyday life, with both practical and supernatural applications, all of which requires an understanding of numbers throughout the general population. Numbers always had a special and significant purpose “in religious symbolism and allegory or of numerology in poetry and philosophical speculation”, and eventually

⁴³ Cressy, "Levels of Illiteracy in England, 1530-1730", 17, 19.

⁴⁴ Cressy, "Levels of Illiteracy in England, 1530-1730", 7.

England “saw the rise of political arithmetic, with its faith in the power of statistics to resolve the problems of government and administration.”⁴⁵

Merchant classes and traders quickly emerged as the group most likely literate in arithmetic, often helping “the supposedly educated classes”.⁴⁶ Their ability to perform calculations came from necessity – without this they would be unable to balance their accounts, properly deal with payments and credits, and otherwise run a successful business. Since mathematical computation rarely concerned the elite classes, “numeration and ‘ciphering’ came a bad third after reading and writing” in the poorer grammar schools. Very few schools across England “before 1660 seem to have taught arithmetic, and then only as an extra to be done on half-days and holidays or by poor boys destined for apprenticeships.”⁴⁷ What these studies share, however, proves most important: no matter what version of literacy measured, an agreeable answer may never appear.

Lower-Class Print Culture: Ballads, Corantoes, and Pamphlets

Difficulty in firmly establishing literacy levels among the majority of English society stems from its relationship with a large variety of cultural aspects, and the even greater number of sub-groups within those aspects. Experience with the printing press, the evolution of print, and a growing adeptness at disseminating news and information,

⁴⁵ Keith Thomas, “Numeracy in Early Modern England.” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5, 37. (1987): 103-104

⁴⁶ Thomas, 111.

⁴⁷ Thomas, 111.

printers successfully produced and sold works at a cheaper rate. These works, including corantos, printed ballads libels, and most importantly, pamphlets, proliferated among the lower levels of society due to these changes.

Understanding the potential limitations of readers, whether in London or the countryside, writers created pamphlets and other printed works significantly more conducive to the abilities, and sensibilities, of the lower classes. The changing style occurred simultaneously with the content of the works – corantos, the earliest predecessors to the newsbook “dealt purely with exaggerated facts maybe, but facts nonetheless”; pamphlets generally published fantastical stories and rumors.⁴⁸ Infiltrating all aspects of English life and culture possible, pamphlet writers often focused their stories on tales and myths of the fantastical genre and benefitted those occupying the lower stations of society. Pamphlet writers conveyed “the experience of battle to English readers by means of preexisting textual discourses of warfare,” using not only the fantastical genre, but also “history, chronicle, ballad, and chivalric romance to provide ways of writing” about current events as early as 1570.⁴⁹

Rather than overpowering oral communication, the two entities worked in conjunction with each other. This relationship, one of compromise instead of resistance, allowed for a larger dispersal area of all news and information, including the more rural areas of the country. Print borrowed more than the communication route and general format of works from popular entertainment they also borrowed the images and

⁴⁸ Bob Clarke, *From Grub Street to Fleet Street: An Illustrated History of English Newsbooks to 1899* (Great Britain: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2004), 36.

⁴⁹ David Randall, “Providence, Fortune, and the Experience of Combat: English Printed Battlefield Reports, circa 1570-1637” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 35 (Winter, 2004), 1053.

symbols, and the popular understanding accompanying them. Verbal and visual imagery supported the written word, and the written word supported images. The entertainment value measured one of the most important factors in these works and often used common tales of fantasy and myths as their base. Differences in perception and social understanding emerged when considering the use of pamphlets between the lower class and the educated/elite; the latter “relaxed by reading undermining or sensational pamphlets” while the former received their news and information as well.⁵⁰

Generally containing the same ratio of accurate information to inaccurate information, pamphlet, newsbook, and ballad alike directly attributed to the process of filtering these stories and myths. Most often created by, and for, the upper and educated elite, these works eventually funneled down into the lower classes of society. Oral communication remained the most effective, and most popular, form of communication, despite prints growing importance and functionality in the daily activities of the majority of the citizens, regardless of their social status.

Calling upon previous understandings of events and actions, works – and specifically the pamphlet and its many variations – authors and writers utilized specific words and phrases as cues in understanding the main idea of the work. The connotations and understanding attached to these aspects ensured the dissemination of, at the very least, the main idea of the works, also the most important factor of all communication. These works also relied less on an educational, literate, or elite background amongst their readership. Ballads, libels, songs and pamphlets “were the

⁵⁰ Nigel Wheale, *Writing and Society: Literacy, print and politics in Britain 1590-1660* (Routledge: London, 1999), 87.

products of an environment in which literacy was not expected.”⁵¹ Purely verbal communication remained the norm, introduced to society through folktales, nursery rhymes, and “superstitions.” Originally these works, passed down in various communities in various forms across the whole of England, helped “mothers and nursemaids [nurture] particular ways of seeing and believing”, detaching children from participating in specific activities, or illustrating certain characteristics – the similarities and most importantly differences between good and evil.⁵²

Adult versions of these tales filtered through society as well, most recognizably the legends of King Arthur and Robin Hood. Permeating all levels of society and relied almost solely on aural transmission; “sufficient allusions to such tales in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries make it clear that they were then well known to contemporaries, but apparently almost no one thought them worth writing down or printing.”⁵³ Certain objects, images, situations and characters carry specific and universal meaning among society. Ultimately, folktales and myths such as these served as important elements in “the literature of social protest and concern.”⁵⁴

Many of the stories, fantastical and supernatural, began as Greek or Roman myths passed along by the educated or travelers, both political and recreational, as well as pagan and other religious symbols and stories (such as those found in the Bible and

⁵¹ Fox, “Ballads, Libels and Popular Ridicule in Jacobean England”, 63.

⁵² Fox, *Oral and Literature Culture*, 179.

⁵³ Fox, *Oral and Literature Culture*, 201.

⁵⁴ P. R. Coss, “Aspects of Cultural Diffusion in Medieval England: The Early Romances, Local Society and Robin Hood” *Past & Present* 108 (Aug., 1985): 36.

its many story variations). Concerns of the educated elite arose as they believed “the classical allusion and sophisticated Renaissance psychology passed over the heads of the groundlings, leaving not only the humor but also the lechery, adultery, murder and illicit passion to wield their powerful influence” among the crowd.⁵⁵ Plays and performances popular during the beginnings of the century rarely fell out of public consciousness; writers and printers alluded to the works of Shakespeare and Jonson, even in the later sixteenth century. Utilizing these allusions “presupposes a fairly detailed knowledge of their plays despite the many years between the works performance and the circulation of printed material.”⁵⁶

Reprints and English Society

Almost immediately upon the introduction of print to general society the government founded the Stationers’ Company, the sole purpose of which was to oversee all published content, acting as a sieve censoring written works openly against the government and/or country’s political and economic affairs. This oversight included acting as the main hub for the registration of all publicly circulated printed works, though a large portion of writers and publishers skipped registration, publishing their works illegally. The reach print achieved throughout England, while extensive, suffers from the same flaws of measurement literacy suffers from the best available data is not necessarily the most accurate. Stationer’s Company records provide information

⁵⁵ Kenneth Charlton, “False Fonde Bookes, Ballades and Rimes’: An Aspect of Informal Education in Early Modern England” *History of Education Quarterly* 27 (Winter, 1987): 470.

⁵⁶ Sirluck, 89.

concerning first publication editions of legally registered and licensed printed works, of various topics and subjects. What these documents lack, however, becomes far more important, as these records missed illegal works as well as reprint pamphlets. Reprints on their own likely comprised a minimum of one-quarter of the book trade. Difficulties of arriving at a total number of reprints stem, in part, from the rules of the Stationer's Company – an officially licensed work “could be reprinted without further Company licensing or entry,” whether the work was entered in the Register' initially or not.⁵⁷ Reprints usually came in three varieties: exact duplication of the entire original work, a piece of the original work now sold as a single paper, or a combination of separates now published and sold as a full collection. These variations appear among educational works of scientists, mathematicians, and historians as well as fantastical stories of monstrous births and yearly almanacs, “many of them being reprints or even reprints of reprints.”⁵⁸ The reprints falling into the latter two categories shared certain commonalities with the original, either in title, content, or visual imagery – or any combination thereof – circulating as early as the sixteenth century.

Robin Hood and his tales appear sporadically in pamphlets and ballads, “such as *A ballet of Robyn Hood* (1562)” as well as “play books informing mummings and [specifics of the] May games.”⁵⁹ The number of reprints in a year varied based on the printers and publishers, as well as the specific content – some printers generally

⁵⁷ Cyndia Susan Clegg, *Press Censorship in Elizabethan England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 61.

⁵⁸ Bennett, 138.

⁵⁹ Fox, *Oral and Literature Culture*, 250.

published more reprints while some stories and topics resonated enough to warrant reprinting by the majority of printers and publishers. As late as 1689, reprints numbered at 101 for a single year all of which “connected with the Revolution.” Publishers “[issued] them in batches under the titles: *A First Collection of papers relating to the present juncture of affairs in England, A Second Collection...*and so on up to a *Twelfth Collection.*”⁶⁰ Not surprisingly, reprints spiked when the content focused on events such as regicide, or supernatural occurrences. John Milton’s 1649 pamphlet, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates Proving, That it is Lawfull, and hath been held so through all Ages, for any, who had the Power, to cal to account a Tyrant, or wicked KING, and after due conviction, to depose, and put him to death*; condoning the regicide of a tyrannical king, found a second life as a reprint in 1689 under the title *Pro Populo Tyrannos: or the Sovereign Right and Power of the People over Tyrants, Clearly Stated, and plainly Proved*. This work delivered the same message, using the same content and format as the pamphlet published forty years prior; messages and ideas with ample time to circulate and filter through all levels, whether verbally or otherwise.

Reprints and alternate versions and forms of the news allowed those living in England to make informed decisions, especially concerning the placement of political and religious support during these events. Channeling popular opinion, these works created a “mounting tide of popular criticism directed at royal personnel and policies during these years’ and contributed to the general climate of discontent which made possible the breakdown of order in the 1640’s.”⁶¹

⁶⁰ Schwoerer, 556.

⁶¹ Fox, “Rumour, News and Popular Political Opinion in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England”, 620.

Fantasy and Reality in Oral and Print Culture

Further analysis of the commonalities between popular culture (theatrical productions, ballads, libels, and public debate/discussion) and popular printed works (engravings, woodcuts, pamphlets, and corantos) illustrates the importance of fantastical stories in news and its dissemination. These stories also provide insight into English culture and social beliefs, specifically concerning witches, witchcraft, other supernatural occurrences and forces, and the overthrow and/or regicide of the monarchy. In addition to taking on a similar format, and utilizing communication routes, print also used the vernacular of the lower classes and arrived in smaller, cheaper to print and sell copies – all aspects aimed at enticing those people to buy a copy who would not otherwise.

The prevalence of these works illustrates contemporary cultural and social interest in, and a desire for, these types of supernatural stories, combining real-life, current events with the mythical and mystical. Images – whether verbal or visual – from popular culture provided an effective framework for current events, serving a two-fold purpose, circulating important information in a manner most likely understood by a larger majority of society, keeping many of the potential circulation and readership problems to as much of a minimum as possible.

Working together, these two different forms of communication shared more than a few similarities – they were inherently linked to each other through theme, format, imagery, and motif, all versions relying on established symbols and their

interpretations among society. Comparing popular oral works produced in the late 1500s through 1700 with those pamphlets and newsbooks published between 1620 and 1700, the shared attributes in the representation of contemporary events shows clearly. Serving as the basis for the symbol or ideas and their subsequent interpretation, the choice to use popular myths, folklore, religious sermons, and personal correspondence in printed works illustrates the way these images functioned in society, their prevalence, and their practical application. The images occurring most often among the works include witchcraft and its practitioners, as well as other supernatural forces and, most importantly, tyranny, traitors, and regicide – the latter an idea which “hardly...struck [the English] as inconceivable”, though not necessarily amoral.⁶²

Some contemporary pamphleteers believed in the sovereignty of the King and his place as God on earth, others wrote of the citizens' right to take action against tyranny by any means necessary, including overthrowing the head of the government, punishing him in any way they believed acceptable – including regicide. Sentencing King Charles I to execution “was by no means a foregone conclusion” at the start of his trial. Opinion amongst the judges – and general public – varied from those who “may indeed have seen an opportunity to expiate the guilt of shedding innocent blood by sacrificing the ‘capital author’ of England’s troubles”, while “others perhaps believed that regicide would be the prelude to the abolition of regal tyranny itself and the liberation of the freeborn all around the world.”⁶³ Regicide successfully achieves two goals at once:

⁶² Fox, “Rumour, News and Popular Political Opinion in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England”, 615-16.

⁶³ Sean Kelsey, “Politics and Procedure in the Trial of Charles I” *Law and History Review* 22 (Spring, 2004): 8.

it rids the country of the actual, physical King, as well as the figurative concept of inheritance or divine right.⁶⁴

Punishment of the monarchy occurred throughout the popular entertainment of the late sixteenth century and, by extension, regicide was not unheard. While some believed popular entertainment desensitized viewers to evil, others believed it provided opportunities for discussion and teaching of the repercussions. Characters committing the act eventually find themselves afflicted with such guilt it manifests as physical or psychological illness, as well as supernatural instances in the world surrounding those people. Harmful supernatural events commonly occur simultaneously with events generally agreed as socially unacceptable.

“Supernatural” in the strictest definition consists of the manifestation of an event appears to have no normal or reasonable explanation. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries this included natural disasters, easily explained through scientific principles today. These events and manifestations spanned all ranges of contemporary supernatural occurrences – from ghosts and faeries, to classical myths, natural disasters and astronomical moments such as eclipses and comets traversing Earth’s skies. Witches and witchcraft also featured prominently among all generations and throughout all forms of entertainment and literature. Supernatural events and entities played a role in culture long before print became popular; their role and meaning became fixed in society centuries prior to these works. Popular, well known items such as the Bible served as important sources for the moral teaching of society, usually through the use of supernatural symbolism and representation of events, in turn based

⁶⁴ Kelsey, 5.

on previously popular mythology and religions, including those of Greek and Roman mythology, as well as paganism. Due to the prevalence and consistency of these symbols and their meanings throughout society, all of these signaled coming events or tragedy – witchcraft, ghosts, earthquakes, eclipses, “monstrous births” (deformed or genetically mutated births), comets, meteors, shooting stars and others – occurred frequently among both popular entertainment and printed works.

These symbols and images overwhelmingly signaled the coming of tragic events, served as warnings, acted as punishment, or external representation of guilt – whether it’s the guilt of the involved parties, or being legally guilty. Shakespeare and many writers – amateur and professional – of popular entertainment works utilized specific stereotypes and connotations within their works, a practice carried over into print; familiars always aided in witches’ biddings, usually in the form of a dog, or a black cat, ghosts and those trapped in purgatory emerged trying to exact revenge, justify their living actions, or seek forgiveness for those same actions.

CHAPTER THREE: SHAKESPEARE, PRINT AND POPULAR CULTURE

These culturally ubiquitous images and accompanying connotations proved especially advantageous to the printers, publishers and booksellers as the aforementioned images and ideas easily transmitted across all demographics of seventeenth century England. While both print and oral communication shared these images and ideas, printed works benefited slightly more from the relationship with oral works than oral works did from print. The comparison of printed works to popular theatrical and musical works concerned with the events of the seventeenth century, including tyranny, war and regicide, illustrates the negotiation between oral and print occurring as print rose in popularity and convenience - just as writers borrowed from popular entertainment, so too did contemporary authors of oral works take aspects from their predecessors, whether in print or through oral communication. One such playwright, still popular and well known, is William Shakespeare, whose work *Macbeth*, first performed in 1605, was inspired by Ralph Holinshed's 1587 edition of *Chronicles*.¹ In utilizing the works of previous centuries, *Macbeth*, and the vast majority of Shakespeare's theatrical works, utilized many popular works of earlier centuries, providing the basis for public opinion and commentary concerning the regicides and the English Civil War. Quickly gaining popularity and notoriety among English society,

¹ Holinshed's work was, itself, based on a number of previous works including Hector Bocce's *Sotorium Historiae* (1526-1527), John of Fordun, a fourteenth century priest, and a fifteenth century chronicler, Andrew of Wyntoun, as discussed in William Shakespeare, *Four Great Tragedies*, edited by Sylvan Barnet, Alvin Kernan, and Russell Fraser (New York: New American Library, 1982), 715.

Macbeth was performed and reprinted numerous times after Shakespeare's death in 1616. Despite the reprints and their subjection to edits by other contemporary writers, such as playwright Thomas Middleton, author of the popular theatrical work, *The Witch*, the overall storyline remains the same.

Originally written as homage to King James I, and in his honor as the alleged progeny of Banquo, the similarities in story, characters, situations and events of *Macbeth* also coincide with the events of the Civil War, regicide of King Charles in the middle of the seventeenth century, and the Restoration of the monarchy in later seventeenth century. Just as Shakespeare utilized previous version of stories, altering them as needed to fit the situation, many of the writers and publishers of pamphlets and ballads relied on prior works when relaying the specific messages or events depicted in their works, also altered the works as needed, portraying the actual events while maintaining a level of familiarity amongst the readers and/or audience of their printed material. Shakespeare's version of *Macbeth* work chronicles the nefarious rise and rapid descent of the Scottish monarch Macbeth as he as his wife, Lady Macbeth, formulate and implement a plan to murder the current monarch, King Duncan, in his sleep, using Duncan's own guards as their scapegoats.² The availability and obviousness of utilizing many of the same elements, including characters, dialogue, ideas and thematic aspects, encouraged successful, and easy dissemination of information through printed works, whether fact, fiction, or opinion, concerning current events. The major participants in these events illustrated a variety of personality traits

² The real Macbeth most likely lived in the early ninth century, ruling between 1040 and 1057; in reality, he did not murder the preceding King in cold blood, instead he defeated the King in a war.

coinciding with these popular literary and theatrical characters, giving printers and publishers a plethora of established, well-known stories and plays to draw from, placing these contemporary people and events into a context understood throughout the majority of society.

Supernatural Regicide: Plotting the Death of a King

The play opens to the Three Weird Sisters concocting a potion and a plot to use Macbeth's ambition as his own undoing. They achieve their mischievous ends through a mixture of specific and generalized premonitions of Macbeth's potential future; guiding him to what they make him believe is his destiny, they create a distinct situation that allows his own personal ambition and arrogance effectuate his downfall. Initially disbelieving the Three Weird Sisters, Macbeth realizes that the premonitions are true when they become reality almost immediately - King Duncan rewards Macbeth's bravery and loyalty in the recent battle by bestowing upon him the titles of Thane of Glamis and Cawdor, just as the sisters cried out:

First Witch: All Hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!

Second Witch: All Hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!³

The caveat to gaining these titles lies in the fact that those previously holding them were killed by Macbeth's own hand. The final prophecy, "All Hail, Macbeth! Thou shalt be king hereafter!", made my the Third Witch, foreshadows all of the events – the current King will die (by Macbeth's own hand, again), and he will again gain the title,

³ William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, Edited by Barbara A Mowat and Paul Werstine (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2009), Act I, Scene 3, lines 48-49.

only to be brought down by his own desires and ambition. Upon the receipt of a letter from her husband outlining the unusual and auspicious events of the day, Lady Macbeth immediately formulates a plan, attempting to speed up her husband's and, by extension her own, rise to power.

Macbeth believes that the Three Weird Sisters interest lies in helping him achieve his work, and is further convinced (and, in some ways, manipulated) by his wife, that his fate lies in becoming King. Together, they devise and carry out the plot to murder King Duncan, who arrives as an honoured guest in their home, as he slept. Lady Macbeth, initially in charge of carrying out the actual murder, finds herself unable to complete the task, forcing Macbeth to action while she frames the King's watchmen. Upon the successful completion of their plan, Shakespeare writes a scene in which the two characters wash the blood off of their hands, only to quickly discover that the residual guilt for their actions will never wash away; Macbeth wonders:

Will all great Neptune's oceans wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red.

while Lady Macbeth, after returning from killing the King's guards, proclaims:

My hands are of your color, but I shame
To wear a heart so white.⁴

Despite the relative ease of Macbeth's rise to power, and the nonchalance Macbeth initially approaches the idea and action, keeping this title proved far more difficult as obstacles continually appear. These obstacles, in some cases at the very

⁴ Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, Act II Scene 2, lines 78-84.

least the perceived obstacles, cause Macbeth to use drastic measures as assurance that his power would not be taken away. These obstacles and new enemies are shown to Macbeth throughout the play, either by Lady Macbeth or the Three Weird sisters. Throughout the play, Macbeth continues gathering information from the Weird Sisters concerning his kingship; in the second meeting between the Sisters and Macbeth, they show him a procession of eight kings descended from Banquo. Implying Banquo's progeny will ultimately hold the crown and not Macbeth's descendants, he believes that he will be able to put a stop to these events before they actually begin and Macbeth permanently loses his already tenuous grasp on this coveted position of power.

Macbeth believed that maintaining this power required immediate and drastic action, ordering the assassination of both his good friend Banquo, as well as Banquo's son, Fleance. His decision for this action was solely due to the visions shown to him by the Three Weird Sisters who:

...prophet-like,
They hailed him father to a line of kings.
Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown
And put a barren sceptre in my grip,
Thence to be wrenched with an unlineal hand
No son of mine succeeding.⁵

The one thing Macbeth does not do, and the one thing he should do, was stop to evaluate the potential ramifications of his actions and their effect on either himself or the country as a whole, instead focusing on the immediate benefits to himself and his wife. Instead, Macbeth decides that Banquo is his enemy, rather than friend,

...and in such bloody distance
That every minute of his being thursts

⁵ Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, Act III, Scene 1, lines 64-69.

Against my near'st of life.⁶

The conscious participation of the Macbeth family in the unnecessary murder of their friend (such as Banquo) and, more importantly, their King, quickly affect Macbeth and Lady Macbeth as the guilt and shame of their actions begin to negatively affect every aspect of their carefully constructed public image, as well as their ability to maintain mental clarity. Just as Macbeth killed all he believed stood in his way, Cromwell kills Dr. Hewett, against his daughter's wish, believing that

The man you praise thus, is our chiefest Foe;
One that upholds Charles Stuarts Interest
More than another single man could do...⁷

Successfully controlling themselves at first, their emotional turmoil overpowers them in the end as they suffer from delusions, hallucinations, and/or bouts of sleepwalking. During Macbeth's speech at a dinner party thrown in honour of Banquo, by Macbeth on the same night of his murder and used as Macbeth's alibi, Banquo's ghost enters the banquet hall and seats himself at the head of the table – the symbolic and actual leader of the crowd. Visible only to Macbeth, who has yet to fully understand how or why Banquo arrived after receiving confirmation of his successful murder, Macbeth reacts to the ghost. As the other party guests cannot see Banquo's ghost, nor are they aware of his death at that time, these reactions cause everyone else to take notice that something is significantly wrong with their current King, though they do not

⁶ Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, Act III, Scene 1, lines 132-134.

⁷ Person of quality. *Cromwell's conspiracy. A tragy-comedy, relating to our latter times. Beginning at the death of King Charles the First, and ending with the happy restauration of King Charles the Second. Written by a person of quality...* London: printed for the author, in the year, 1660. Reproduction of the original in the British Library. http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&res_dat=xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&ft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99866886, Act IV, Scene 2

know what exactly is causing these strange reactions. Lady Macbeth, only slightly more in control of her own thoughts and actions, convinces their confused guests that her husband is simply ill as she removes him from the hall and, once out of range from the other guests, scolds him for his behaviour in front of their guests. Macbeth defends himself, explaining to his wife that

I am in blood
Steeped in so far that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er.
Strange things I have in head, that will to hand,
Which must be acted ere they may be scanned.⁸

According to numerous pamphlets, newsbooks, ballads and other printed works from the seventeenth century, Cromwell similarly suffers from the aftereffects caused by his participation in the death of King Charles I and his loyal followers. Plagued by visions and visits from ghosts and apparitions, Cromwell appears insane toward the end of his reign, tormented by a guilty mind he exclaims he

...cannot live,
Horrors and strange amazements seize upon me,
And now the blood that I have caus'd to flow
From several bodies, appears all at once,
And threatens for to drown me;

and visions of those he killed “come tumbling from the Gallows” as his tortured mind forces him to relive the moment of his greatest treason.⁹

Macbeth, though disturbed by these events and visions he suffers and what they indicated for his future, he continues his path of destruction through the loyal followers of King Duncan (much like Cromwell through the Royalists), and those who question his

⁸ Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, Act III, Scene 4, lines 168-172.

⁹ *Cromwell's conspiracy...*, Act IV, Scene 2

validity and authority, despite the mental torture and anguish caused by his actions. Macbeth orders the seizure of Macduff's castle and assassination of his family upon hearing the news of Macduff's trip to England and audience with the rightful heir to the throne, King Duncan's son Malcolm, in an attempt to restore Malcolm to the Scottish throne (much like General Monk approached Charles II in an effort to restore the English throne). While Macbeth's guilt visibly manifests earlier in the play, he successfully hurdles over the barrier, replacing guilt with new levels of amorality. In order to help himself through the psychologically problems he encounters, Macbeth actively seeks out the Three Weird Sisters for their final meeting. Arriving in their cave he implores them to further inform him of future events in hopes of staving off the potential loss of his kingdom and ease his mind concerning recent events.

The sisters, enjoying their trickery and manipulation, provide him with vague and seemingly innocuous clues to his demise: he should "beware Macduff", cannot be harmed by a man borne of a woman, and will be safe until Birnam Woods comes to Dunsinane Castle. These images and statements give Macbeth a sense of comfort and security, as he believed all men were borne of a woman and knows that the elements comprising the woods can never, of their volition, approach anyone or anything, especially Macbeth, or any other castle. By the end of the work, the Three Weird Sisters final prophecies come true – Macduff's army used the surrounding forest, the woods of Dunsinane Hill, as cover for their advance toward the castle, and Macduff, who was born by caesarean section, which means he was not technically born of a woman, a fact he reveals to Macbeth just before besting him. In the end, Macduff and Macbeth fight off stage, where Macduff triumphs over the tyrant and returns to stage,

holding Macbeth's head in his hand as Malcolm makes a speech to his followers and takes his place as King of Scotland.

The events of seventeenth century England, from the start of the Civil War and the usurpation of the government by Cromwell and his supporters through the trial and execution of King Charles I and the exile of the Queen and her sons, provided printers, publishers and writers myriad topics for discussion. This, in turn provided numerous works of popular oral entertainment and material from which they could easily co-opt storylines, images, phrases and other easily identifiable aspects and formats, disseminating the printed material quicker and easier to the largest possible audience. Several of the printed works appearing in print after the regicide of the king in early 1642, provided commentary on the events, their orchestrator and leader of the Parliamentarians, Oliver Cromwell, as well as his followers. Pamphlets, newsbooks, almanacs, ballads, plays and other works alike approached the factual topic of Oliver Cromwell, his conspirators, and their actions, through fictional images and events. Many of these works replicated prevalent images from popular oral entertainment, including those found in Shakespeare's works – most specifically his tragedies revolving around the themes of regicide, tyranny, greed and treason.¹⁰

One specific pamphlet, *The English Devil: or, Cromwel and his monstrous witch discover'd at White-Hall...*, printed in 1660, recounts the story of Oliver Cromwell and his rise to power. According to the author of this work, Cromwell hired a woman to act as a messenger of god, also referred to in the pamphlet as a witch. This witch arrives at the camp of Cromwell's army proclaiming

¹⁰ Including *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, *Julius Caesar* and *Macbeth*.

That the glorious time of setting up Christs Kingdom was near at hand, and that Anti-christ must be speedily thrown down, and that they were the Instruments that were by God ordained to throw him down, and how they were about the great work, and that if they would prosper in it, they must first remove the KING out of the way, which they must do first by proceeding to Try him, and then to Condemn him, and then to Depose him, but now to put hi to Death¹¹

Orchestrating the entire plot, Cromwell headed up the resistance against King Charles I and, by doing so, “[washe’d] his accused hands in the Blood of his Royal Sovereign...,” just as the Macbeths did when they killed King Duncan. The author discusses the events leading up to the regicide, listing the variety of ills taken against England by Cromwell and his fellow Parliamentarians, in a further attempt to illustrate the negative impact of the vents on society and the evils lurking behind these traitorous leaders. Macbeth’s morals become truly and irreversibly compromised when he orders the murder of Lady Macduff and son, decided that

The castle of Macduff I will surprise,
Seize upon Fife, give to th’edge o’th’ sword
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls
That trace him in his line

Eliminating all threats against his personal power. Cromwell had the same ideas according to *The English Devil*, “What he could not by Flattery, he did by Threats; but could not in the least terrifie the Presbyterians, who declared against his vvicked and

¹¹ Anon. *The English devil: or, Cromwel and his monstrous witch discover'd at White-Hall: With the strange and damnable speech of this hellish monster, by way of revelation, touching king and kingdom; and a narrative of the infernal plots, inhumane actings, and barbarous conspiracies of this grand impostor, and most audacious rebel, that durst aspire from a brew-house to the throne, washing his accursed hands in the blood of his royal sovereign; and trampling over the heads of the most loyal subjects, making a foot-ball of a crown, and endeavouring utterly to extirpate the royal progeny, root and kinde, stem and stock.* London : printed by Robert Wood, for George Horton; and are to be sold at the Royal Exchange in Cornhill, 1660. Reproduction of the original in the British Library.
http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&res_dat=xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99867965,7

open Rebellion, detesting those illegal proceedings of the Army, in offering violence to the Parliament, and going about to overthrow the King.”¹²

Play-pamphlets, longer printed works written in the form of theatrical plays and concerned with contemporary events also appeared on the market, such as *Cromwell's Conspiracy: A Tragy-Comedy, relating to our latter times*. This play-pamphlet, printed August 1660, opens with the trial of King Charles and concludes just after the death of Oliver Cromwell in 1658, has commonalities with Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, including plot, themes and over-arching concepts of regicide, tyranny and traitors. *Macbeth* and Cromwell share a fatal character flaw, which ultimately causes their downfalls – for *Macbeth* his

Vaulting ambition, which o'erlaps itself
And falls on th'other'

Just as Cromwell believes

...I am born for ends
Much beyond common aim, shall I pursue then,
My first ambitious ends.¹³

Possessing this ambitious nature and obsessive need for power, both *Macbeth* and Cromwell successfully killed the current king and took his place, partly by causing the rightful heir to the throne, the King's son, run to a loyal ally or territory – Malcolm, King Duncan's heir, fled from Scotland to England while Charles II fled from England to Scotland. These specific flaws shared between the fictional *Macbeth* and the actual

¹² Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, Act IV, Scene 1, lines 171-4; Anon. *The English devil: or, Cromwel and his monstrous witch...*, 8.

¹³ Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, Act I, Scene 7 lines 27-8; Person of quality. *Cromwell's conspiracy....*, 3.

Cromwell gives this work and their characters well-understood and widely known traits, common images the authors knew would easily translate to all levels and members of society. This gave the authors a much larger audience, and the audience an opportunity for more intelligent participation in the social and political discussions and debates of contemporary England.

In *Macbeth*, his wife, Lady Macbeth, thinking she possessed the same ambition, begins by successfully ignoring her feelings of betrayal and guilt over her pivotal role in the plot and successfully functions outwardly longer than her husband. This ability to keep her composure eventually dissipates, however, as the realization of her actions overwhelm her, causing her to sleepwalk and talk. Recreating the moments immediately following the murder of King Duncan, Lady Macbeth exclaims:

Out, damned spot, out, I say! One. Two.
Why then, 'tis time to do 't. Hell is murky. Fie, my
lord, fie, a soldier and afeared? What need we fear
who knows it, when none can call our power to
account? Yet who would have thought the old man
to have had so much blood in him?...
The Thane of Fife had a wife. Where is
she now? What, will these hands ne'er be clean? No
more o' that, my lord, no more o' that. You mar all
with this starting.

incessantly attempting to rid her hands of the blood she perceives still stains them. Lady Macbeth's nurse, concerned for her mistresses' physical and supernatural (psychological) well-being, requests the doctor examine the Lady who concludes that "this disease is beyond [his] practice," noting that

Foul whisp'rings are abroad. Unnatural deeds
Do breed unnatural troubles. Infected minds
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets.
More needs she the divine than the physician.

God, God forgive us all.

the same conclusions the doctor arrives at later in the play when he took note of Macbeth's odd behaviour.¹⁴ Ultimately, Lady Macbeth makes the decision to end her own life instead of suffering further from her personal torment; when the Doctor delivers what should be tragic news, Macbeth calmly and simply states "she should have died hereafter", then continues planning his defensive strategy against Malcolm's forces, led by Macduff, as they gather in Dunsinane Woods surrounding Macbeth's castle.¹⁵ The doctor, noticing his distinct lack of a reaction to the death of his wife, realizes that, just as his wife, Macbeth suffers from a sickness beyond his ability to care. Unrelenting, tyrannous, and without pause at the idea of assassinating all those in opposition to their goal in waking life, Cromwell, according to some, suffered from highly disrupted sleep and hallucinations because of the negative effects of his actions causing psychological issues. According to his servants, Cromwell told them he was "haunted with evil spirits" while other "reports flie about that Cromwell cannot sleep."¹⁶ In the play-pamphlet *Cromwell's Conspiracy*, one of the Physicians attending to a dying Cromwell notes

There's something in it more than ordinary,
That thus disturbs his Reason.

¹⁴ Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, Act V, Scene 1, lines 62-64, 75-79.

¹⁵ Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, Act V, Scene 5, line 20.

¹⁶ John Crouch, *The Man in the Moon, Discovering a World of Knavery Vnder the Sunne; Both in the Parliament, the Council of State, the Army, the City and the Country. With Intelligence from all Parts of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, London, 1649. Thomason Tracts E.550[26]; E.551[10]; E.552[8]; E.554[4]. Reproduction of the Original in the British Library. http://gateway.com.ucfproxy.fcla.edu/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&red_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:5340387 (accessed 26 April 2008)

just as the Doctor in *Macbeth* noted the otherworldly issues plaguing the lead characters.¹⁷

Signs, Omens, and Supernatural Vengeance

The believed cause of hallucinations on such a grand scale was usually one associated with the supernatural – either as an after affect of willing participation in especially horrible atrocities, or as a warning to others who stood idly by allowing the occurrence of the events. Long ingrained in English culture, a large variety of supernatural events dominated popular oral and written works. In turn, these images were well known among society, from the most educated, those living in London, or within the immediate vicinity of the actual events, to the less educated, or far removed from the epicentre. This accessibility provided writers and publishers a certain level of freedom in their writing concerning the format and concepts illustrated, as well as and a level of assurance that the majority of society will successfully interpret the meaning of the works, despite their chosen medium. Hallucinations of a guilt ridden mind is just one of the numerous correlations between printed and theatrical works during the time. Writers utilized these many supernatural occurrences and the traditional characters found in works ranging from children’s fairy tales, fables, ghost stories, and popular culture. These characters and images included hallucinations, natural disasters, and witchcraft, and provided a simplicity of understanding for a largely spread out and overwhelmingly illiterate society.

¹⁷ *Cromwell's conspiracy....*, 29.

As previously demonstrated, witches and the use of witchcraft played a prominent role in the works of popular culture and print. The pamphlet *The English Devil: Or Cromwel And His Monstrous Witch...* melds the concepts and images of this popular supernatural force with current events, portraying Cromwell as a man desperate for power, willing to orchestrate the murder of their King, the leader of their country and anyone who attempted to get in his path of destruction. He is joined and assisted by his loyal follower and son-in-law, Henry Ireton. As the pamphlet recounts the story, together Cromwell and Ireton

provided a Monstrous Witch full of all deceitful craft, who being put into brave cloaths, pretended she was a Lady come from a far Country, being sent by God to the Army with a Revelation, which she must make known to the Army, for necessity was laid upon her.¹⁸

The Three Weird Sisters in *Macbeth*, while not as outwardly hostile toward King Duncan, used many of the same manipulation techniques when convincing Macbeth to take the specific actions without stating the action outright.

While *The English Devil...* primarily incorporated aspects of witchcraft and sorcery into the retelling of Cromwell's actions against the kingdom, other authors utilized the alternate forms of mystical or magical events, all of which were common throughout society. Newsbooks reported on the "monstrous" births of horrifyingly deformed children, prophetic tales of tragic storms wiping out sailors' and coastal villages without warning, instances of the dead rising from their graves (in both corporeal and non-corporeal forms) and solar and lunar eclipses. All of these images successfully conveyed the writers desired messages in their own right, as well as just

¹⁸ *The English devil: or, Cromwel and his monstrous witch....*

one part of a whole series of events. This malleability and cohesiveness among the supernatural imagery allowed newsbook and pamphlets writers to reach a much wider audience. These images and beliefs were long ingrained in the culture of seventeenth century society. Eclipses and natural disasters appear in numerous works of the early modern era, many of which echo works largely circulated in story and ballad for centuries previous to the increased use of print. Eclipses, storms, and the terror and panic they invoke were generally attributed to the physical manifestation of god's wrath, and could simultaneously serve as the punishment for the events allowed to transpire.

Almanacs, Eclipses and Natural Disasters

Almanacs prevailed among English culture long before the events of the English Civil War; "many households, as a matter of course, bought the almanacs for weather forecast, predictions, and astronomical data (phases of the moon, sunrise and sunset, eclipses, etc)." ¹⁹ Their practicality among a variety of social classes made them excellent vehicles for social commentary, while their use of natural events and predictions gave writers a starting point for commentary of the events of the Civil War; they had an ease of comprehension and an already widely established audience. The Civil War created a new form of the almanac focusing on Merlin and his prophecies, as a way for modern writers to comment on current events using a method and characters long ingrained in the contemporary mind. Instances of perceived supernatural events indicates that "in such eclipses, surely if we would observe God's threatening hand over

¹⁹ Harry Rusche, "Merlini Anglici: Astrology and Propaganda from 1644 to 1651", *The English Historical Review* 80, 315 (Apr. 1965): 322.

us, we might see how God forwarns us by his instruments.”²⁰ Written in 1652, the pamphlet *Black Munday: OR, A full and exact description of that great and terrible Eclipse of the Sun...* tells of the righteous indignation of God toward the English people as a response to their behaviour, either directly or as careless observers to Cromwell’s actions.

In the 1683 work *THE CRY OF Royal Innocent Blood Heard and Answered Being a True and Impartial Account of God’s extraordinary and Signal Judgments upon REGICIDE*, the unrighteous, unceremonious death of a King historically causes natural and supernatural events specifically aimed at punishing those directly involved and, in some cases, those indirectly involved, those who allowed the events to transpire by not acting or reacting. This work opens with a letter to the reader, as many works of the time, telling the audience that “what ever thou art, consider well this Treatise, in which as in a Mirrour, you may behold the Ma-chivilian Policies of Wicked and desperate Men, formed to bring about their Diabolical purposes, and at the same time observe how the unerring hand of Divine Vengeance has over-whelmed them with swift de-struction.”²¹

²⁰ Anon. *Black Munday: or, A full and exact description of that great and terrible eclipse of the sun which will happen on the 29. day of March 1652 beginning 48. minutes after 8. a clock in the forenoon, and ending 17. minutes after 11. in which time the sun will be almost totally darkened (as at the passion of our Savior) and the stars appear in the firmament in the day time. Also as astrologically conjecture of the terrible effects that will probably follow thereupon, according to the judgment of the best astrologers: it threatens the fall of some famous kings or princes, and men in authority malice, hatred, uncharitableness, cruell wars and bloodshed, house-burnings, great robberies, thefts, plundering and pillaging, rapes, depopulation, violent and unexpected deaths, famine, plague, &c.* London: printed for William Ley, at Pauls Chain, 1652. Reproduction of original in the Bodleian Library. http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&res_dat=xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99895884

²¹ Assheton, William. *The cry of royal innocent blood heard and answered being a true and impartial account of Gods extraordinary and signal judgments upon regicides : with an historical relation of the deposing, murthering, and assasinating of several kings of England, Scotland, France, &c. ...* London: Printed for Daniel Brown, 1683. Reproduction of original in the British Library.

This work publicises itself as “An Historical Account of the Deposing, Murthering, &c. of several *KINGS of England, &c.* and of Gods severe Venge-ance on the Regicides.”²²

The author’s aim in writing this work was to

make it the subsequent discourse of [the] Treatise to lay open the nature and manner of those a-mazing Tragedies, by what means and treason-able divers, the Regicides of almost all Ages have accomplished their most pernicious Enter-prizes; and how Heavens vengeance with a level aim, at first or last has hit them sure, and brought them to destruction.²³

Once the author introduces the reason for the work, he then discusses several Kings throughout English history who were unceremoniously overthrown or killed for the power the individual and their throne possessed. Among the Kings murdered, *THE CRY OF ROYAL Innocent Blood...* tells how the proponents of King Henry VI’s death were “continually infested with troubles.” It then Describes the widespread catastrophes caused by their actions and interpreted as a response from god concerning the events; England “[suffered] through storms, pestilence, and losses by sea and land.”²⁴ As the proponents of King Henry VI’s death suffered such supernatural vengeance, so did the Scottish people in Macbeth immediately after the death of King Duncan, as the Scottish nobleman Lennox tells

The night has been unruly. Where we lay,
Our chimneys were blown down, and, as they say,
Lamentings heard l’ th’ air, strange screams of death,
And prophesying with accents terrible

http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&res_dat=xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:7869634, A2.

²² Assheton, A.

²³ Assheton, 2.

²⁴ Assheton, 74.

Of dire combustion and confused events
New hatched to the woeful time. The obscure bird
Clamored the livelong night. Some say the earth
Was feverous and did shake.²⁵

Lennox notes that the earthquake and other problems suffered across the country were due to the unnatural circumstances surrounding the King's death.

Prophecy and natural disaster as the framework for printed works and ballads remained a common practice during the seventeenth-century, appearing among many fictional, as well as non-fictional works of the time. These works satisfied many needs and desires of those living in English society, allowing the authors simultaneously act as commentator and valid source of information to a larger audience, melding factual ideas and stories with fictional events and pseudo-supernatural events just as they melded popular oral entertainment with print. The events of the mid-seventeenth century provided writers, astrologers, and others many possible options when looking for corresponding natural events. Discussed in *Macbeth* by the Old Man and Ross, another Scottish nobleman, they mention that

Ross: Ha, good father,
Thou seest the heavens, as troubled with man's act,
Threatens his bloody stage. By th' clock 'tis day,
And yet dark night strangles the traveling lamp.
Is 't night's predominance of the day's shame
That darkness does the face of earth entomb
When living light should kiss it?
Old Man: 'Tis unnatural,
Even like the dee that's done.²⁶

The meanings eclipses conveyed were echoed in the 1652 ballad *England New*

²⁵ Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, Act II, Scene 3, lines 61-69.

²⁶ Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, Act II, Scene 4, lines 6-14.

Bell-man: Ringing into all peoples ears God's dreadful Judgements against this Land and Kingdom, Prognosticated by the great Eclipse of the Sun, March 29, 1652, the strange Effects to continue 1654, 1655, 1656, to the amazement of the whole world, imploring that England

Awake, awake O England
Sweet England now awake,
And to thy prayers speedily
Do thou thy self betake,
The Lord thy God is coming
Within the Day so clear,
Repent therefore O England,
The day it draweth neere.²⁷

The following years were eventful in English political, military and cultural history; in 1653 Cromwell dissolves the Rump Parliament in April, the uprising against the Commonwealth of Scotland began and the Nominated Assembly (also known as the Barebones Parliament) first meets in July and, by December the Barebones Parliament surrenders their power to Cromwell, who officially becomes Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England on 16 December. Just as the pamphlet claimed the eclipse prophesized, in 1654, General Monck, who would later become the driving force behind the Restoration, was appointed as commander of the Commonwealth forces in Scotland, while 1655 saw the dissolution of the First Protectorate Parliament; early 1656 Charles II signed a treaty with Spain against the Protectorate and just a few months later the Second Protectorate Parliament assembled and approved the war with Spain.

²⁷ Anon. *England new bell-man: ringing into all peoples ears Gods dreadful judgements against this land and kingdom prognosticated by the great eclipse of the sun. March 29. 1652. the strange effects to continue 1654, 1655, 1656. to the amazement of the whole world. The tune is, O man in desperation.* London: printed for F. Coles, T. Vere and W. Gilbertson, [1660?]. Reproduction of original in the Bodleian Library. http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&res_dat=xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99899777

Royalist propaganda and commentary concerned with the Rump Parliament's action as a whole, as well as the separate members, appeared throughout the Civil War, just as Loyalist propaganda against the supporters of the monarchy appeared on the market. Both of these works utilized all manner of symbols and ideas to illustrate their feelings concerning the events occurring around them. As the war between the Royalists and the Rump was fought with swords and bloodshed, it was also fought on paper and in ballad. Both sides utilized whatever imagery and ideas they felt would grant them the largest audience; one 1644 pamphlet explains to the audience that

The Common-wealth may most fitly be compared to the Globe of the Heavens. The King is the Sun, the Parliament are the bright stars; Malignant Councillors to the King, are the evil aspected Planets, such as Bristoll, Cottington, Lord Keeper's Littleton, Digby, Fermyn, and others, whereby the King hath been Eclipsed, and hath lost that Light which should render him Glorious in the eyes of his People, and brought himself to the lowest degree of respect amongst his subjects.²⁸

In this case, an eclipse is used to explain why Charles I was successfully overthrown, that the malignant advisors were the cause for the event, overshadowing the kings' judgement as well as the country's ability to see the truth.

What all of these works illustrate is the continuity in images and ideas in contemporary material, whether print or popular oral works. Prophetic events, such as eclipses, worked in both media because they were easily recognizable, and linked to traditions already embedded in English culture. Natural disaster as phenomena and its prophetic qualities formed the framework of popular culture throughout English history,

²⁸ Lodge, Thomas. *VVits miserie, and the vvorlds madnesse discovering the deuils incarnat of this age*. London: Printed by Adam Islip, and are to be sold by Cutbert Burby, at his shop by the Roiall-Exchange, 1596. Reproduction of the original in the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery. http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&res_dat=xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99845282

and its use in ballad and print remained common throughout the seventeenth century. Appearing among many fiction and non-fiction works of the time, these elements satisfied the many needs and information desires of those living in England, giving an audience of any education or literacy level an equal opportunity to understand the main ideas of the work and participate in current day political and social events without the specific need to attend school, or the knowledge of advanced literary techniques.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANIMALS AND ALLEGORY IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY POPULAR CULTURE

Melding factual ideas and stories with fictional and pseudo-supernatural events, authors simultaneously acted as a commentator and a valid source of information to the greater public. Combining these elements with the popular oral entertainment works allows authors many possible options for themes, images and ideas for the dissemination of their material. The story of Julius Caesar and his assassination by the Senate was well-known during the Middle Ages and was further popularised in the early modern era by Shakespeare whose play *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*, first performed between 1599 and 1600, and first printed in 1623. Shakespeare chronicles the story of the Roman Senate's decision to assassinate Julius Caesar, this work looks at both parties involved – Julius Caesar and the Senators – as interpreted by Shakespeare, providing his rationale for the events leading up to and following the assassination.

More so than *Macbeth*, the story of Julius Caesar, as told by Shakespeare, provides a large variety of events and situations writers could utilize within their own works. Writers could make use of this work due in large part to the similarities between the events occurring in Julius Caesar and those surrounding the regicide of King Charles I and Cromwell's desire for the throne. One such work, the ballad *The Loyal PROTESTANT Or, A Defiance to Traytors, being a most pleasant and delightful new Play Song*, written in 1680, proclaims that

Ambition, like Wine, does the sense confound

...
For Charles's long reign let each subject now dain
To express a good wish in a Brimmer;
Then trowel his health round while our doys do abound
Whilst the Stars in the Frimament glimmer
Let honour and fame still crown his great name

with a chorus of

Let Caesar live long, let Caesar live long,
For ever be happy and ever be young,
And he that does hope to change King for a Pope,
Let him die, let him die, whilst Caesar lives long.¹

Since the same playwright penned both *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* and *Macbeth*, similarities in storyline and images undoubtedly and obviously exist between these works. Both works include elements of prophecy, secret plots to murder the country's leader, and events of nature serving as signs of the evil things to come.² Prophecy served as one of the major elements within these works, made famous by Merlin, the trusted advisor to Arthur Pendragon, more commonly known as King Arthur. Popularized by Geoffrey of Monmouth's twelfth century work *The History of the Kings of Britain*, the idea of Merlin and his prophetic abilities was so well-known among English society it encouraged an abundance of copycat Merlin's to appear in works concerned with the social, political and religious events of the seventeenth century. *Merlin Reviv'd; OR, An Old PROPHECY Lately found in a Manuscript in Pontefract – castle in York-Shire* noted that

¹ D'Ufrey, Thomas. *The Loyal PROTESTANT Or, A defiance to Traytors, being a most pleasant and delightful new Play Song...* London, 1680. Pepys Ballad 2.215.

² The main difference in the story line between these works lies in the use of prophecy – in *Macbeth* the witches show Macbeth his fate to manipulate the situation toward disaster, while the Soothsayer in *Julius Caesar* was determined to save Caesar from his impending doom.

The *Sun* eclipsed from our sight,
Shall give a weak and sickly light;
The *Moon* shall be bestain'd with blood,
And Venus by the Sun be trod
Then from these three there shall arise
A flaming Meteor in the Skies,
Which shall to *England* threat much woe,
And down the Miter overthrow.³

Prophecies, illustrated through eclipses, meteors, floods and storms were not the only aspects of nature that successfully worked in conjunction with supernatural elements. Animals also served as excellent conduits for writers and publishers of popular oral and printed works, relaying specific concepts, ideas and personality traits.

Animal Symbolism and Human Counterparts

In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, talking animals are most commonly relegated to the realm of children's entertainment and the newspaper's funny pages, but in the early modern era, however, animals served a very important purpose in the actual and fictional world. They offered a different perspective on contemporary events, animals, natural and unnatural alike, provided seventeenth century writers a useful vessel for story telling, using an animal with corresponding personality traits and characteristics in place of the actual subject. The animal served as an emblem, or allegory, of all that is good and evil about the people or events, especially in their anthropomorphised form. Popular among the literate and educated were Bestiaries, or book of beasts, which are encyclopaedias created to specifically and clearly document

³ Anon. *Merlin reviv'd: or, An old prophecy found in a manuscript in Pontefract Castle in York-shire*. London: Printed for S.S., 1681. Reproduction of original in the British Library. http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&res_dat=xri:pqi:res_ver=0.2&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99882711

the natural, moral and mystical meanings attached to animals. The ideas and associations found in the bestiaries circulated throughout numerous European societies, both in print and through oral circulation, causing the animals included in these works to become intrinsically connected with the characterizations given in these works. Throughout society, and across all age and education levels, animals represent specific characterisations and, even in an entirely animal state, exhibited specific and distinct moral and mystical meanings, as well as personality traits. According to the introduction to one Bestiary, the writers of these works believed that “everything in Creation had a purpose, and that the Creator had made nothing without an ulterior aim in mind...[the animal's] purpose was the edification and instruction of sinful man.”⁴ Bestiaries and their content were common enough throughout society that the members of seventeenth-century England would almost instantaneously recognize the animal and its human characteristics, whether in print, as a woodcut, or aurally through song or story.

The influence of bestiaries can still be seen, as modern day concepts and understandings of animals and their representations of traits hail from this genre.⁵ In these works, some animals possessed the ability to be both good and bad (such as cats), while others were intrinsically either good (the lion) or bad (the dragon, hyena, etc.). Many of the associations between animals and their human counterparts made in

⁴ *Bestiary: Being an English Version of the Bodleian Library, Oxford M.S. Bodley 764: With All the Original Miniatures Reproduced in Facsimile*. Trans. Barber, Richard W. (Woodbridge [England], Boydell + Brewer Ltd., 1992), 7.

⁵ These works derive from second and fifth century works such as *Physiologus*, a widely translated and well-known work, originally in Latin.

the works of the late sixteenth- and through seventeenth-centuries were generally satirical in nature, and likely derived from the bestiaries of the previous centuries. Animals in these works constantly carried with them a hint of the supernatural, or mystical, at the very least, while some were made up entirely of the supernatural or mystical elements, such as dragons or the hydra.

By the middle ages these associations and concepts could be considered as general knowledge to the greater public; writers and artists of popular works, realizing the effectiveness and ubiquity of these symbols, incorporated them into their works, making the animals the carriers of the works message. As early as the fourteenth-century animal symbolism was most overtly linked to political prophecy, the authors of these works “fully cognizant of both how to use animal symbolism in their poems, and how to take advantage of its two most important qualities, obscurity and adaptability.”⁶ Antecedent to the popular works of the early modern era, Geoffrey of Monmouth’s impressive and highly popular work *The History of the Kings of Britain*, imparts these same connections between animals and their representation of humans throughout his work. This shows most clearly, and serves the greatest importance, in Part Five, “The Prophecies of Merlin.” In this chapter, Geoffrey of Monmouth relates the prophecies framed in generalities; his use of animals in the place of the actual leaders or countries allowed these prophecies to be extensively re-interpreted and applied to a wide variety of events unfolding around them. This work influenced later generations of authors, artists and poets who “incorporated the lessons they learned from Geoffrey of

⁶ Karen R. Moranski, “The ‘Prophetie Merlini’, Animal Symbolism, and the Development of Political Prophecy in Late Medieval England and Scotland” *Arthuriana* 8,4 *Theoretical Approaches to Geoffrey of Monmouth* (Winter 1998), p 62.

Monmouth into texts that used animal symbolism to comment on the political, social and moral problems of contemporary society.”⁷

While the use of animals remained most popular among political prophecy, later writers also recognized the advantages of these symbols and the wide range of options they provided, incorporating them into a variety of other works including theatrical productions. Though these images became common among works other than prophecies, they almost always retained some sort of relationship with supernatural forces and elements, as the mystical or mythological origins of these symbols inclined them to successfully work with the many different forms supernatural concepts take. Calling upon these associations, Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, first performed some time between 1595 and 1596, and first printed in 1660, portrays one such event of human transformation, in part, into an animal. The character Bottom, a weaver, serves as the stereotypical representation of the uneducated, lower classes. In the work, Oberon, the king of the Faeries, orders another fairy, Puck, to trick the Queen of the Fairies, his wife through the use of a magical flower which forces the recipient to temporarily fall in love with the first creature she sees; this happens to be a transformed Bottom, who now has the head of an ass, also courteous of the mischievous Puck. Representing the foolish, senseless and hedonistic, the ass is “useful and tolerates work, not complaining even if it is badly neglected,” just as Bottom, the lower-class tailor, is portrayed as foolish and uneducated in human form, becoming the actual animal representation of the human personality traits he possesses.

These allegories infiltrated popular entertainment in many ways, not only as

⁷ Moranski, 58.

comedic relief. Many of the contemporary writers found the personification of animals and their symbols beneficial to their stories, they were also just as important in their original habitats, as animals. Altering the animal slightly, such as making a dog quack, or live in a tree, illustrated to the reader that things in nature, and by extension the human realm, are not entirely right. In *Macbeth* the characters note a variety of odd behaviour exhibited by the animals, as the Old Man tells Ross that

On Tuesday last
A falcon, tow'ring in her pride of place,
Was by a mousing owl hawked at and killed.⁸

In the *Tragedy of Julius Caesar*, Casca, a conspirator against Caesar, notes that

Against the Capitol I met a lion,
Who glaz'd upon me and went surly by
Without annoying me
...
And yesterday the bird of night did sit
Even at noonday upon the marketplace,
Hooting and shrieking.⁹

Animals acting against their nature were a way to signify that something was amiss throughout society, and were easily and commonly understood among all social levels.

Animals and the Parliamentarians

Animals represented specific social constructs and classes, also served as reflections of their owners – which is most often the case with dogs – or as insults or punishments against the person associated with the animal. This pliability appealed to

⁸ Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, Act II, Scene 4, lines 14-16.

⁹ William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*, edited by Barbara A Mowat and Paul Werstine (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2009), Act IV, Scene 3, lines 20-22, 26-28.

writers because of the diverse use of these images and their greater understanding among an audience just as diverse. The animals used in popular works include both the real – dogs, cats, bears, swine, donkeys (ass) – as well as the mystical – centaur, mermaid, hydra, and the most popular among writers and entertainers, dragons. The availability of both real and imagined animals expanded the authors options in the portrayal of specific social concepts and ideas, and acted as a way to blend the natural and supernatural, such as humans turning into animals, humans and animals conversing, and as symbols in prophecy, especially as they embodied both positive and negative human traits. As previously illustrated, these practices were not new to seventeenth century society; rather they flowed into contemporary society from previous centuries, such as Geoffrey of Monmouth's *The History of the Kings of Britain* and, most importantly, the bestiaries. Bestiaries did not have approved, or required, animal listings to include but the most common or those considered most important were generally found in its pages.

The personalities of the participants of the English Civil War and their loyalties, Royalist and Parliamentarian alike, matched in many ways with popular animals whom outwardly display those traits humans long believed the animals possessed. In the 1660 ballad *The Tryall of TRAYTORS, Or, The Rump in The Pound*, specific participants among the regicide are associated with animals in all three possible mediums – image, print and verse. In this work, the authors' opinion of the regicides and their actions are clear in the animals chosen to represent the actual people; William Lenthall served as Cromwell's Speaker of the House of Lords is portrayed in this work as an Ass. As seen with Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the ass is considered

ignorant, sluggish, and easy to abuse, with little to no complaint from the creature. Lenthall, according to the work, maintains loyalty to Cromwell simply

To fill his Coffers, 'twas no other thing
For which he fram'd that Act 'gainst Lords & King.¹⁰

Sir Arthur Haselrig, a young Member of Parliament (MP) at the beginning of the war, made a name for himself among the Parliamentarians as a resourceful and very clever man. Haselrig earned this reputation during the trial of Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford in 1641, which was most likely going to end in Strafford's favour until Haselrig took interest in the case. Parliament wished to impeach Strafford, a major supporter of King Charles, but had scant evidence to successfully try him. Impeachment was an extensive process requiring "tiresome amounts of proof"; Haselrig instead suggested the use of a Bill of Attainder which would allow a Commons vote to find Strafford guilty without having to go through the process of trying him.¹¹ Finding a quicker, easier, and sneakier way of attaining what he wanted indicates these traits as running deep in Haselrig's nature. *The Tryall of TRAYTORS* likens him to the devious and devilish fox.

Eight other key members of Cromwell's cabinet are linked to a specific animal and their accompanying personality traits; all of them were anthropomorphised by the illustrator of the ballad. This same image appearing alongside other ballads from the

¹⁰ Anon. *The tryall of traytors, or, The rump in the pound. Wherein is presented the lively shapes, and bloody actings of the chief of those grand traytors who subscribed to the horrid murder of that blessed martyr Charles the First, of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, King, &c.* London: Printed for John Clowes and John Jones, 1660. Reproduction of the original in the British Library. http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&res_dat=xri:pqi:res_ver=0.2&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99869567

¹¹ Diane Purkiss, *The English Civil War: Papists, Gentlewomen, Soldiers, and Witchfinders in the Birth of Modern Britain.* (Basic Books: New York, 2006), 123-4.

time, including the 1660 work, *The DRAGONS Forces totally Routed by the ROYAL SHEPHERD*.... Labelled more generically, by military rank or government title, the image is an exact copy of that found in *The TRYALL of Traytors*..., all animals match in placement and physical characteristics, as well as the background items and placement of letters, words and names of animals. While the image matches, the ballad itself does not as *The DRAGONS Forces*... focused on some of the more prominent members of the Rump government, most importantly Cromwell who is signified by the Dragon, as well as the Royalists and Parliamentarians, symbolised by lambkins, or lambs, and beasts, respectively. The success of the dragon to overtake its enemy was due to the strength and tactical advantage its tail provides – “it harms more by blows than by force of impact,” therefore “it is said that it does not need poison in order to kill” because, much like the human counterpart this creature “slays anything which it embraces.”¹² Similarly, Cromwell and the Parliamentarians succeeded, in part, due to his policies towards those he believed were working against him and “arrived at General of the Army, having first supplanted or undermined all honest men that stood in his way, wading to the Government of these Nations over head and ears in blood.”¹³

Writers and booksellers of this, and other ballads relied on the link between animal and human, and general knowledge of the political situation in England by the majority of those in society, whether literate or not. Evident in the animal the author

¹² *Bestiary: Being an English Version of the Bodleian Library*, 183.

¹³ George Bates, *THE LIVES, ACTIONS AND EXECUTION OF The prime Actors, and principall Contrivers of that horrid Murder of our late pious and Sacred Sovereigne King CHARLES the first, of Ever blessed memory. WITH Severall Remarkable Passages in the Lives of others, their Assistants, who died before they could be brought to Justice. By GEORGE BATES, an observer of those Transactions.* London, 1661.

chose as representative of the person, or group of people, such as Colonel Silly Asse, the most ignorant and foolish of the Parliamentarians cast “his simple Vote....”¹⁴ Each of the animals chosen come with specific associations, which proved particularly beneficial to the authors of these works. Rather than having to provide an extensive explanation, or reason, for associating specific actions, personality traits or actual people, they instead relied on the universality of these images and the meanings they easily, and automatically, conveyed to a large, mostly uneducated society. In both *The Tryall of TRAYTORS...* and *The DRAGONS Forces...* the animals representing the Parliamentarians are linked to the devil, either as a servant, the devil himself, or as an animal most susceptible to falling for the devil’s tricks.

John Desborough (spelled Dishbrow in this particular ballad), who married Oliver Cromwell’s sister Eltisley Jane, and actively participated in the English Civil War on the side of the Parliamentarians, was linked to the Boar. A major-general in the New Model Army Desborough avoided the trial of Charles I purely due to circumstances, was unable to be in London as he was in the midst of fighting Charles’ army at Worcester, where he almost captured the future Charles II. Arriving after the conclusion of King Charles I’s trial and execution by Cromwell and the Parliamentarians, Desborough, along with three other direct relatives of Cromwell including Valentine Walton,

¹⁴ Anon. *The dragons forces totally routed by the royal shepherd wherein is laid open, a horrid and bloody plot, as it was contrived, fomented and acted against the harmless lambs, with the cruel proceedings of the dragon and his wicked council, viz. General Ram, Col. Bear, Col. Asse, Col. Wolf, Col. Fox, Col. Buck, Col. Bore, Col. Cock, Col. Goat, and Col. Catt secr. against their lawful Sovereign King Leonis. Also the manner how they drew in all other beasts of prey to the destruction of many thousands of the poor Lambkins; and afterwards how these rebels were subdued by the young Lyon, and the lambs restored to their ancient liberties, &c.* London: s.n., 1660. Reproduction of the original in the British Library. http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&res_dat=xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99869613

Cromwell's nephew, Edward Whalley, his cousin, and his future son-in-law Henry Ireton, served as the leaders of Cromwell's first Ironsides, or personal army. Like the Boar portrayed in both works, Desborough, late to the start of the organisation of Cromwell's government,

...did grunt, for fear he came too late
To sit amongst the rest in pomp and State

and was a rural, wild, and unruly leader of his people and lord of his lands.¹⁵ Similarly, the bear, according to tradition, has a weak head, carrying all their power in their limbs and usually represent an unjust ruler, a ravage of the Lords flocks; John Hewson a colonel in Cromwell's New Model Army played a prominent role in the majority of the battles between Parliamentarians and Royalists, as well as the conflicts between the New Model Army and Parliament. Accepting a seat in the Upper House in January 1658, John Hewson transformed into Lord Hewson. Just like "the blind, cobbling Bear" Hewson achieved status and power through strength, radicalism and oppression rather than wits.¹⁶

Judge John Cook spent his first few years of service as a prosecutor in Ireland, returning to England in August 1649 with Cromwell, and by March 1650 was appointed Chief Justice of Munster. Referred to as

...the Cruel Ram...
their Generall;
who soon set forward with a might force,
Both waggons and Guns, great store of foot & horse

¹⁵ Anon. *The dragons forces totally routed by the royal shepherd wherein is laid open, a horrid and bloody plot, as it was contrived, fomented and acted against the harmless lambs, with the cruel proceedings of the dragon and his wicked council...*

¹⁶ Anon. *The tryall of traytors, or, The rump in the pound....*

the ram is an animal with a “powerful forehead [that] always over-throw whatever they strike.”¹⁷ Cook, a radical, committed member of the Parliamentarians, was responsible for drafting the indictment against the King and actively participating in Charles I’s trial. During the trial Cook portrayed the characteristics of the ram when he refused to stop reading the indictment against Charles, even as the King tapped Cook on the shoulder with his silver-tipped cane. When the tip fell from the cane and rolled across the floor, Charles waited for Cook, or anyone else in the courtroom, to retrieve it for him. Cook and the other Parliamentarians, however, refused to comply, simply continuing with the proceedings instead.

Just as John Cook was stubborn, Henry Vane and a fellow Parliamentarian, Oliver St. John, “came to be regarded as the leaders of the ‘War Party’” and, in *The Tryall of TRAYTORS...*, was represented by the Wolf, an animal that kills “everything they find when they are ravenous...nothing on which they trample can survive.”¹⁸ Vane worked to “replace the Committee of Safety with the more powerful Committee for Both Kingdoms in February 1644 and regularly acted as its spokesman” though he did not always take the lead, rather served as the spokesman for the Committee for Both Kingdoms.¹⁹ He “regularly conveyed the orders sent from the committee to the commanders of the armies; completing such a task in June 1644 when he informed the

¹⁷ Anon. *The dragons forces totally routed by the royal shepherd wherein is laid open, a horrid and bloody plot, as it was contrived, fomented and acted against the harmless lambs, with the cruel proceedings of the dragon and his wicked council...*

¹⁸ *Bestiary: Being an English Version of the Bodleian Library*, 70.

¹⁹ David Plant, “Biography of Sir Henry Vane”, British Civil Wars and Commonwealth website <http://www.british-civil-wars.co.uk/biog/vane.htm> (accessed 22 March 2011)

allied Scottish and Parliamentary armies at the siege of York...to abandon the siege and march to counter Prince Rupert's campaign in Lancashire."²⁰ When the generals vocalised their disagreement in abandoning the siege, Vane, the Wolf

for a time in ambush lay
With Noll's curs'd Council watching for a Prey

realized the benefit of retreat, voicing his agreement with the Generals instead of trying to force them into a decision they did not want to make. When the wolf "thinks it has been seen first [and] loses its wildness and cannot run away" making a quick tactical decision based on the current situation.²¹

As Vane was clever as the Wolf, Hugh Peter, "that running *Buck*", was "one of the few clergymen to support the Army's occupation of London and Pride's Purge, which led to the trial and execution of King Charles in 1649." A devout Presbyterian and talented public speaker, Peter's "preaching inspired the soldiers and drew many recruits to the cause...He frequently acted as an Army spokesman at Westminster both in delivering reports and in requesting money or aid."²² Noting the advantages of the newest form of media, print, a large number of his reports were published, providing many written accounts of events he witnessed while on a campaign. Peter spent his early life moving around Europe and the recently settled American colonies, first in the Netherlands in 1633, where he served as a pastor at Rotterdam. After two years he migrated to New England with Sir Henry Vane, his stepdaughter Elizabeth and her

²⁰ David Plant, "Biography of Sir Henry Vane"

²¹ Anon. *The tryall of traytors, or, The rump in the pound....; Bestiary: Being an English Version of the Bodleian Library*, 70.

²² David Plant, "Biography of Hugh Peter"

husband John Winthrop midway through 1635. Settling as a minister in Salem, Massachusetts he participated in town activities and events, and was one of the first governors of Harvard College. Peter's activity in support of Cromwell and the Parliamentarians was in hopes of successfully reforming the English church. Absent from the actual execution of King Charles due to illness, Peter became an honorary colonel in Cromwell's army,

Then said the Buck, what need I to despair
Who one of your most Royal Counsel are.²³

Peter could not remain stationary long and moved around Europe and America often in his pursuit of a Puritan life for himself and the rest of society, moved around often, one of many traits shared with the deer which "by nature like to change their homeland, and for this reason seek new pastures, helping each other on the journey." Like Peter, who worked to serve the New Model Army and inspire them to greater pastures,

the nature of deer is like that of the members of Holy Church who leave this homeland (that is, this world) because they prefer the new pastures of heaven, and support each other on the way; those who are more perfect help their lesser brethren through their example and good works, and support them.²⁴

Where Hugh Peter spent his life in front of the army, and in print, with his ideas and thoughts open for the world, Thomas Scot found his place behind the scenes. As previous government realized the importance of information networks, Thomas Scot was commissioned by the Council of State in July 1649 specifically to "manage the

²³ Anon. *The dragons forces totally routed by the royal shepherd wherein is laid open, a horrid and bloody plot, as it was contrived, fomented and acted against the harmless lambs, with the cruel proceedings of the dragon and his wicked council...*

²⁴ *Bestiary: Being an English Version of the Bodleian Library*, 51-2.

governments' spying and intelligence network". Together with the "aid of Captain George Bishop, Scot built up a formidable intelligence organization, employing agents provocateurs, cryptographers, and a network of agents in foreign courts and among Royalist exiles."²⁵ Thomas Scot, as the goat,

...did our Laws entrench,
As he at *Lambeth* did the *Begger-senth*
These Traytors all who had the World at will,
Have now their *Scout* continues with them still.²⁶

According to the bestiaries the goat has "keen sight [and] an ability to see far off people and objects, giving them the upper-hand when devising strategies."²⁷ Scot clearly emulated these traits in his creation and use of the Parliamentary intelligence network, using more than just his eyes to see what events were occurring around them, giving Scot the belief that

That they would in the Dragon's Counsel sit,
And justifie all Murder he'd commit.

would have no issue with the murders he committed, as he did so simply to take control of the higher ground, like goats do.²⁸

Cromwell the Devil and Monk the Valiant Knight

Whether the animal was real or mythological did not affect its inclusion and, in

²⁵ David Plant, "Biography of Thomas Scot"

²⁶ Anon. *The tryall of traytors, or, The rump in the pound...*

²⁷ *Bestiary: Being an English Version of the Bodleian Library*, 54.

²⁸ Anon. *The dragons forces totally routed by the royal shepherd wherein is laid open, a horrid and bloody plot, as it was contrived, fomented and acted against the harmless lambs, with the cruel proceedings of the dragon and his wicked council...*

fact, one of the most likely animals to make the pages of the bestiary was a purely mythical dragon. A creature of pure imagination, dragons were said to be encountered commonly, and were known in every region of the world. Bestiaries describe the dragon as the largest creature of the animal kingdom, who “rise from the abyss and transforms himself into an angel of light, deceiving fools with hopes of vain glory and human pleasures.”²⁹ Dragons, innately supernatural and incredibly powerful, are also perfectly tailored for use in prophecy and featured prominently in Geoffrey of Monmouth’s work. As the largest member of the animal kingdom, and a member of the serpent family, these mythological creatures pervaded every aspect of English culture; their meaning and place in the world were illustrated clearly through their actions and physical appearance. The 1614 pamphlet *True and Wonderfull. A Discourse relating a strange and mon-strous Serpent (of Dragon) lately discovered, and yet liuing, to the great annoyance and diuers slaughters both of Men and Cattell, by his strong and violent poison, In Sussex two miles from Horsam, in a woode called S. Leonards Forrest, and thirtie miles from London, this present month of August. 1614. With the true Generation of Serpents.* reports that

...the mother of Claudius in Hyturia, brought forth a serpent insteade of a Childe [and] Faustina the Emperesse dreamed, when she was with child but very prodigiously, that she brought forth two serpents, and one of them seemed to be more fiercer of the two, which proved allegorically true: for Comodus afterwards her youngest sonne was to tiranicall and barbarous, that seemed to be borne a prodigie to the destruction of mankind: and thus much for their original, natural and prodigious.

As was common among the majority of written work – manuscript, ballad and pamphlet alike – the more involved paragraphs that contain extended, specific

²⁹ *Bestiary: Being an English Version of the Bodleian Library*, 183.

examples that are also accompanied by various notes and summaries as well as explanations as to the meaning of the visions and dreams or events. These notes acted as a way for the work to disseminate among a larger audience, despite the education level of that audience. On such marginal note concerning the above events says: “A wo-man that brought forth a Serpent...Prodigious dreams of Dragons.”³⁰

Wreaking havoc on the helpless countryside, these creatures consistently appear throughout folklore and literature, becoming one of the most popular creatures claimed to exist yet never actually witnessed. These same pamphlets provides a variety of stories recounting the way Dragon’s appeared in men’s lives at their very lowest moments, prominent players in stories concerned with sin, poison and death. When given the chance, dragons will slither in, doing whatever is necessary to benefit from the situation, writers seamlessly transitioning from the actual creature to using that creature as a stand in for town gossips and those who manipulate a situation or person to their advantage, with no thought to how the events could negatively affect society, focusing instead on how they situation could work in their favour.

Stories of heroic knights battling evil dragons wreaking havoc on the helpless countryside pervaded throughout folk lore and literature; dragons became among one of the most popular creatures claimed to exist yet never actually witnessed first hand by the early modern era. Universally described, Dragons were also the best creatures to

³⁰ A.R. *True and wonderfull A discourse relating to a strange and monstrous serpent (or dragon) lately discovered, and yet liuing, to the great annoyance and diuers slaughters both of men and cattell, by his strong and violent poyson, in Sussex two miles from Horsam, in a woode called S. Leonards Forrest, and thirtie miles from London, this present month of August. 1614. With the true generation of serpents.* Printed at London: by Iohn Trundle, [1614]. Reproduction of the original in the Bodleian Library. http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&res_dat=xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99840317

use in a wide variety of events – these creatures strike a balance between the natural animal and supernatural worlds. As many other supernatural elements popular during the seventeenth century animals, real or imagined, played an integral role in the process of communication, these same concepts present in early works make appearances in both oral and written culture of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Courage Crowned with Conquest; OR, A brief Relation, how that Valiant Knight, and Heroick Champion Sir Eglamore, bravely fought with, and manfully slew, a terrible, huge great Monstrous Dragon (1672) further expresses this sentiment, relating the story of how Sir Elgamore, a knight, bravely fought a terrible Dragon, even as

All the Trees in the Wood did shake
 with his fa la lancastre, etc.
Stars did tremble, and men did quake,
 with his fa la lancastre, etc.
But had you seen how the birds lay peeping
'Twould have made a mans heart to fall a weeping
 with his fa la lancastre, etc.

and ends with a call to arms

Now God preserve our King and Queen,
 with his fa la lancastre, etc.
And eke in London may be seen,
 with his fa la lancastre, etc.
As many Knights, and as many more,
And all so good as Sir Elgamore.
 *with his fa la lancastre, down dilly.*³¹

This ballad appeared repeatedly throughout English history, constantly reprinted

³¹ Anon. *Courage crowned with conquest; or, A brief relation, how that valiant knight, and heroick champion Sir Eglamore, bravely fought with, and manfully slew, a terrible, huge great monstrous dragon. To a pleasant new tune.* London: Printed for F. Coles, T. Vere, and J. Wright, 1672. Reproduction of original in the Harvard University, Houghton Library and the British Library.
http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&res_dat=xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99887072

and circulated among society and this consistent association of a knight called George slaying an evil Dragon provided a convenient starting point for printers and publishers to discuss the events of the Civil War. General George Monk was a career military man, fighting for King Charles' forces in the early seventeenth century. After refusing to recite an oath of loyalty in Ireland, he returned to England and successfully convinced King Charles of his loyalty despite his refusal for taking the oath. Proving his loyalty to King Charles and England, Monk spent the First Civil War imprisoned in the Tower of London after refusing to join the Parliamentarians when captured in Ireland by Sir Thomas Fairfax. Only after the defeat of the Royalists in England did Monk officially pledge his loyalty to Parliament through an oath; released in 1646 Monk spent the majority of the Second Civil War serving Cromwell in the Parliamentary army, becoming General by Cromwell's death in 1658.

Initially aligning himself with Richard Cromwell, who took the place of Lord Protector from his father, Monk continued to serve the Parliamentary cause at the start of Richard's protectorate. Approached in 1659 by Royalists hoping for the restoration of the monarchy and placement of Charles II upon the throne, Monk initially denied their advances, until realizing the unpopularity of the Rump in the first few months of 1660. Cromwell's death and the unsuccessful attempt at succession made by his son, Richard, allowed Monk the opportunity to affect the political landscape of England, secretly manipulating the situation whenever possible. Monk's main role in the Restoration led to a large variety of works circulating, concerned with his heroism and strength at successfully defeating the Parliamentarians.

Capitalizing on the matching names between Sir George Elgamore and General

George Monk, writers and printers relayed the events of the end of the Civil War and Cromwell's Protectorate by making obvious, oftentimes specifically referenced, instances of Monk's bravery against Cromwell and his forces, likening the events to those believed affected Sir Elgamore when fighting the dragon. Beginning their relation of the events surrounding Cromwell's defeat by Monck, *An Evedent BALLAD of St. GEORGE and the DRAGON*. wonders

WHY should we boast
Of Arthur and his Knights,
Knowing how many Men
Have perform'd fights?
Or why should we speak
Of Sir *Lancelot du Lake*?
Or Sir Tristan du Leon,
That fought for ladies sake?
Read but old Stories,
And there you shall see,
How St. *George*, St. *George*,
He made the dragon flee.³²

Just as the work *A New BALLAD of St. GEORGE and the DRAGON* concludes

Mark Antony, I'll warrant ye, play'd feats with AEgypt's Queen;
Sir Elgamore that valiant knight, the like was never seen
Grim Gorgon's might was known in fight, old Beus most men frighted,
The Mirnidois and Prester Johns, why were not these men knighted?
Brave Spinda took in Breds, Naussen did it recover;
But St. George, St. George, turned the dragon over & over
St. George was for England, &c.³³

George Monck, just as St. George of Elgamore, became the protector of England when he defeated Cromwell the Dragon, illustrated in *A Song to his Excellency THE LD. GENERAL MONCK, AT Skinners-Hall on Wednesday April 4. 1660. At which time he*

³² Anon. *An Evcellent BALLAD of St. GEORGE and the DRAGON*. [s.n.] [s.l.] [s.a.]

³³ Anon. *A New BALLAD of St. GEORGE and the DRAGON*. [s.n.] [s.l.] [s.a.]

was entertained by that honourable COMPANY.

Triumph'd one by our foes, when now we see
England restored to its Liberty
By this your prudence nothing now remains
But that you recompence our other pains,
And Crown your merits, whilst you and our strife
By giving Head as well as Body life.
The Members you have joyn'd, yet they're but dead,
Whilst thus they stand dissever'd from the Head
Procyed then George, and as thou hast brought down
The Traytors, so restore the lawfull Crown,
That after ages may thee justly call
Restorer of they Country, KING and all.

George Monk, honoured as the only one who could restore the rightful heir to the throne, this ballad was not billed as just a ballad, rather the printer clearly notes at the bottom of the work that “The Reader may take notice that this is the right Speech, sung by W. Yeokney.”³⁴

In *ENGLAND'S JOY Expressed in an 'ENINI'KION, To the most Renowned Man of Honor, and Temporal Redeemer of the PRINCE, PEERS, and PEOPLE of this Land, his EXCELLENCY The Lord General Monck* (1660), the author describes the event surrounding the Restoration, paying special specific attention to Monk's role in the process. The author, relying on the use of the ballad for format, uses images and ideas seen in earlier works; he tells of how

Others have oft attempted to defeat,
This many headed Hydra, but the cheat
O'th Good old Cause, reviv'd the heads,
...

³⁴ Anon. *A Song to His Excellency the Ld. General Monck at Skinners-Hall on Wednesday April 4, 1660 at which time he was entertained by that honourable company : to the tune of I'll never leave thee more.* London: Printed for William Anderson, 1660. Reproduction of original in the Harvard University Library. http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&res_dat=xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:9402732

So Dragon like it death about it's blows,
That were immur'd, and fenc'd with Iron Chaines,
Post, and Portcullices The City Veines
were bloodless grown, to see their Parts beat down,
And Tayles with many Heads usurp a crown.

Despite Cromwell's death and Richard's ineffectiveness the Rump Parliament continued to function, according to the ballad

Thy hand
Has from that creeping vermin cleer'd the Land.
Thou canst as easily kill such Snakes as He.
That in his Cradle, strangled two or three.
None but our George could kill this Dragon dead,
And make Romance for History be read.³⁵

Written in the margin of the same ballad is a brief note, summarizing these lines and providing a clear and easy to understand example of General Monk's heroism against Oliver Cromwell, the powerful Dragon terrorizing England's innocent lambs; "St. George in story killed the Dragon."³⁶ While not an actual piece of the ballad itself, this note provides insight into the dissemination of ideas and information at the beginning of prints use in popularity, the author provides a well-known frame of reference to the audience, whether reading the ballad to themselves or to a group.

The use of nature and animals in prophecy, whether supernatural or not, prevailed amongst works of the seventeenth century, as the writers were easily able to build off of previously understood concepts and ideas concerned with these characters.

³⁵ J.H. *Englands joy, expressed in an epinikion, to the most renowned man of honor, and temporal redeemer of the prince, peers, and people of this land, his excellency the Lord General Monck*. London: Printed for M.B., 1660. Reproduction of the original in the British Library..http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&res_dat=xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99871073

³⁶ Anon. *Courage crowned with conquest; or, A brief relation, how that valiant knight, and heroick champion Sir Eglamore, bravely fought with, and manfully slew, a terrible, huge great monstrous dragon...*

These images and ideas had a significant effect on the ease with which these concepts were disseminated throughout society. These natural ideas and specific use of animal traits and characteristics transcended class, education and literacy levels and brought a wider audience to the works.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

The English Civil War seriously, and in many ways negatively, affected the landscape of English society during the seventeenth century; Cromwell introduced the idea of a society in which the leaders should be held responsible for their actions whether elected official or chosen by divine providence. Ideas and concepts found in popular works of previous centuries, such as those in folklore, everyday gossip, and theatrical works, pervaded English society and provided writers of newsbooks a solid basis with which to disseminate their concepts and ideas. From the first publication of a newsbook, print and oral culture relied on each other to consistently and successfully work together. Without working together, print would likely not have made such a rapid ascent to the forefront of popular culture. Oral and visual communication, such as ballads, libels, woodcuts, plays, and even gossip, came to rely on print just as print relied on the extensive network of oral communication already established throughout England. This network ranged from businessmen, tavern, ale- (and later, coffee-) house owners, and general travelers, all of whom provided a way to openly discuss the ideas of the time, as well as to distribute printed material to those who received a high enough level of education to read these works.

Printed works were not, however, limited to just those who could read, which is why the shared themes, ideas and images became increasingly important to writers and publishers. As the amount of news and the publics' desire for up-to-date information

continued to grow, so too did the way in which printed works were disseminated among society. Generally, only one person in town needed to successfully read, as the works produced were not only traditional articles, but also ballads, libels, woodcuts and short plays, which more likely made them a work read out loud to a group, then discussed, than read alone. No matter how the information was received, however, the news was important to all citizens alike. The close ties between printed works, those meant for spoken delivery, and the popular entertainment of the time shows the importance of oral communication in conjunction with print in the circulation, distribution, and eventual discussion of the news.

Many of the actual events leading up to the regicide of Charles I, and the people at the forefront of the Parliamentary movement, were concentrated far outside of London; as the political issues grew in prominence and moved into the city, news and an awareness of the incidents and events occurring across the country grew in importance – especially when these events end with the death of their rightful monarch. These events influenced all aspects of English society, and the allusions made in previous works helped influence all aspects of communication, including the presentation, dissemination, and general interest in, the news and information available. This desire for the news did not lend itself to one form of culture overtaking another; rather it forced these two seemingly different forms to work together, finding a balance between the previously dominant oral entertainment and popular work, and the new, printed form. This study is by no means extensive, nor is it all inclusive, but what it aimed to prove is that these forms required working together, required print to jump start

its popularity through the use of images and ideas that were already largely disseminated and understood throughout the whole of English society.

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- Anon. *A declaration and resolution of the sheriffes, justices of the peace, and other of His Majesties well affected subjects, in the counties of Flint and Denbigh, at a generall meeting in Wexham, the 9. of this instant May, 1648. Wherein, they declare their resolution, touching the solemn League and Covenant, and to oppose all forces whatsoever, that shall enter the said counties, for the disturbance of the publike peace of England and Wales. Resolved and agreed upon, that this declaration be published throughout the sixe counties of Northwales, together with our desires, concerning the peace of the kingdome.* London: Printed for R.W., MDCXLVIII [1648]. Reproduction of the original in the British Library. http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&res_dat=xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99864191
- Anon. *The dragons forces totally routed by the royal shepherd wherein is laid open, a horrid and bloody plot, as it was contrived, fomented and acted against the harmless lambs, with the cruel proceedings of the dragon and his wicked council, viz. General Ram, Col. Bear, Col. Asse, Col. Wolf, Col. Fox, Col. Buck, Col. Bore, Col. Cock, Col. Goat, and Col. Catt secr. against their lawful Sovereign King Leonis. Also the manner how they drew in all other beasts of prey to the destruction of many thousands of the poor Lambkins; and afterwards how these rebels were subdued by the young Lyon, and the lambs restored to their ancient liberties, &c.* London: s.n., 1660. Reproduction of the original in the British Library. http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&res_dat=xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99869613
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Anon. *The Mens answer to the womens petition against coffee vindicating their own performances and the virtues of that liquor from the undeserved aspersions lately cast upon them by their scandalous pamphlet.* London : [s.n.], 1674.

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