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**Slide 1**--Before I begin, I'd like to first thank the organizers of this wonderful conference, Sabrina, Andria, Stefano, and Justine, as well as all the others associated with this program. I'd also like to preface my paper somewhat with some couching information from the start. This project doesn't solve anything or claim to upend traditional methods or studies, I am simply seeking if not new questions, new ways to formulate questions and to learn if new methods can be used to enhance scholarship, not uproot it. So, with that...

**Slide 2**-- In this project I am seeking to understand how the use of data-driven visualizations of sixteenth and seventeenth-century title page imprint information can illuminate aspects of the recusant printer network in the era of high-recusancy (c.1558-1640). This is largely a project of **remediation** with the goal of investigating whether new insight into an established field can be gained by collating, analysing, and graphically displaying like information—in this case Recusant literature—that may be distinct from traditional forms of scholarship. **Slide 3**-- I argue that by removing the impediments of shelf-bound and geographically separated volumes and by quantifying elements of their creation, the network and nature of recusant literature is made more **immediate** by illustrating trends and anomalies at the same level of access and visibility and thereby potentially opening new avenues of research.

**Slide 4**-- Additionally, the aim is to combine methodological approaches of traditional book history—in this case merging bibliographic studies with quantitative history—and also utilizing methods of corpus mining and data visualization to help make the obscure known. While much has been written about recusancy, there are still new stories to be told by

investigating new forms of evidence made available through newer methods of humanities scholarship. New methods can potentially lead to new evidence to help settle old historiographical debates.

**Slide 5**-- It is important to also address what this project is not, at least at this stage. This project deals with a very particular set of title page imprint data and seeks not rhetorical analysis, but network and geographical analysis—to learn, in other words who constituted the recusant print network, and from where were they printing. It is also important to stake out a note of definition in the use of the term “recusant literature.” **Slide 6**-- I am relying on the scholarship of A.F. Allison and D.M. Rogers in the construction of the term as they used it in their 1956 study *A Catalogue of Catholic Books in English Printed Abroad or Secretly in England 1558-1640* and in the subsequent 1970 collection of facsimile texts by Rogers *English Recusant Literature 1558-1640*, which consists of Catholic literature such as Edmund Campion’s *Rationes Decem* which serve as instructive literature for the self-education or **self-catechism** (using Eamon Duffy’s phrase) and maintenance of the faith for the illicit practice of Catholicism for those either refusing prayer-book services or attending these services while harbouring secret Catholic confessional allegiances. **Slide 7**-- Often this literature is translated from Spanish, Italian, French, Latin, and others. This is, therefore, primarily European literature and represents, to me, a form of Early Modern English Catholic samizdat. As John Roberts notes in his important critical introduction to his anthology of English recusant devotional literature, “the Recusants were primarily men of action” who did not, as Roberts continues, have the “time nor the leisure needed for composing books of devotion.”<sup>1</sup> Roberts adds that there was not an urgent need for

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<sup>1</sup> John Roberts, Introduction to *A Critical Anthology of English Recusant Devotional Prose, 1558-1603*, by John Roberts (Pittsburg: Duquesne University Press, 1966), 45.

English-origin material because there was such a glut of continental material available. The question remains, however, in understanding how and where this material was printed and if there existed a more robust printing network than has been previously analysed.

This project assumes a program of counting, of making connections and drawing conclusions based on numbers, rates, and trends in order to find new stories and to indicate through occurrence rates and network connection who the members of the recusant print network were, where they were located, and how much they printed. Importantly, at this stage the connective tissue between the elements is illustrative and summative, but not predictive. The reason behind this is simple: I'm not great a maths.

In Franco Moretti's essay "Network Theory, Plot Analysis," Moretti describes many of the features and methods that this projects works with and some of the justifications for using this form of analysis in a humanities project. While Moretti used Network Theory to analyse plot and character connection and this project seeks to connect real-world historical actors, both projects seek to find the clusters and connective edges that illustrate the, in Moretti's words, "uncanny rapidity with which one can reach any vertex in the network from any other vertex."<sup>2</sup> Importantly, these connections are referred to as the "six degrees of separation," a term cleverly utilized by the "Six Degrees of Francis Bacon" team. The Six Degrees project is very important in the development of the recusant network project in that both projects aim to pull out from obscurity the **contemporaneously known connections** —that is, the social network of writers and patrons in the Six Degrees project or recusant printers in this project— but of which the

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<sup>2</sup> Franco Moretti, "Network Theory, Plot Analysis," in *Distant Reading* by Franco Moretti (London: Verso, 2013), 212.

evidence is obscured by the inaccessibility of vast and dense archival material.<sup>3</sup> Creating a tool to better see not only the large important connections but also to see the general “gloop” that, as Jonathan Hope and Michael Witmore discuss in the context of identifying trends in the rhetorical language of Shakespeare, hold the network together.<sup>4</sup> This is important because as we will see, there are stand out characters in the history of recusant printing, but as this project demonstrates, there is a much higher rate of unknown and unaccounted for printers. These unknown printers constitute this project’s “gloop;” the binding agent that provides the shape of the recusant printing network.

As the Six Degrees project illustrates and as van de Camp and van den Bosch discuss, making meaningful connections between historical actors outside of direct kinship networks is incredibly complex. Relational data from a social network extraction model can be used to determine related entities and sentiment analysis can be used to model the nature of that relationship. These methods are more typically used in data sciences and in the development of social media algorithmic predictions. In their ground breaking work with Marian letter networks, however, Ruth and Sebastian Ahnert develop an important “betweenness” model that functions more robustly as a predictive system for historic network analysis.<sup>5</sup> In their work they are able to determine not only connections but also originator or hub-influencer relational data by measuring the distance between nodes and their weighted importance to the network using algorithmic scoring tools. This work has been very important in the field of humanities-centric network analysis and a similar focus on statistical predictive modelling is being used by the Six Degrees

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<sup>3</sup> Christopher N. Warren, Daniel Shore, Jessica Otis, et. al. “Six Degrees of Francis Bacon: A Statistical Method for Reconstructing Large Historical Social Networks,” *Digital Humanities Quarterly* 10 no. 3 (2016)

<sup>4</sup> Jonathan Hope and Michael Witmore, “The Hundredth Psalm to the Tune of “Green Sleeves”: Digital Approaches to Shakespeare’s Language of Genre,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 61 no.3 (2010) : 361.

<sup>5</sup> Ruth Ahnert and Sebastian Ahnert, “Protestant Letter Networks in the Reign of Mary I: A Quantitative Approach,” *ELH* 82 no. 1 (2015) : 14-17.

project. As briefly mentioned above, the recusancy print network functions as an illustrative model to demonstrate the known connections, that is the association of title page information with the specified places and people contained. As the project develops and becomes more sophisticated, however, there will be further need for predictive modelling and analysis to map speculative and derived alias data with the potentially false imprint information (a trend I will address in the next section).

As I mentioned, I am using these tools in hopes of finding new questions within the deep and vast extant historiography of English Catholicism and recusancy. In particular, by focusing on the print network indicated by the title page imprint information, what can be added to the known information about the trade and production of singularly recusant literature? To explore the networks of recusant literature communities is to enter, as Nancy Brown wrote, “uncharted territory.”<sup>6</sup> Brown’s study of the manuscript networks of the recusant community is very important for understanding both recusancy in general and for understanding the place of literature within this community. As both she and Alexandra Walsham have discussed, for the lay-Catholic community authoritative and instructive works were of critical importance as they were, as Brown writes, “the means of spiritual sustenance when no priest was available and no mass heard.”<sup>7</sup> This made England something of a special case in the post-Tridentine Catholic world. While manorial resident priests were an option for some, without an alternative for most Catholics the silent preacher of the text was of the utmost importance. Walsham highlights this in a number of studies looking at the impact of the recusant literature on lay-Catholics and the potential for danger not only in the radicalization of a beleaguered population, but also of the

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<sup>6</sup> Nancy Brown, “Paperchace: The Dissemination of Catholic Texts in Elizabethan England,” in *English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700 vol. 1*, ed. Peter Beal and Jeremy Griffiths, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 120.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 120.

misinterpretation of texts and the possibility, to echo the sentiment of the period, of the “silent heretic.”<sup>8</sup> Walsham additionally notes that the instantiation of print had a great effect in creating what she credits Brian Stock as terming a “textual community.” Not only did print provide a fairly uniform edition of a text, it was generally, and this is one of the points of debate that this project addresses, printed by an authoritative source such as the English College at Saint-Omer and others.<sup>9</sup> Alternatively, there is a very interesting history in the creation and dissemination of manuscript copies of this material, often by women —many of whom became martyrs— under the spiritual direction of manorial priests described as (Ellen Macek) “Ghostly Fathers.” While there isn’t time to delve into this area, it is important to see the need for the material before we look at the modes of supplying it. As it happens, one of the priests associated with spiritual direction, John Mush, appears in the data as the author of one of the recusant works associated with a clandestine press in London and the printer Jacobum Molaeum.

As will be illustrated in the discussion, this project highlights centres of printing as well as illuminating printers themselves. One such printer that rises through the vast corpora of data is William Carter. Carter is a romantic and typifying character of the high-recusancy period in that his story is one of both centrality and of martyrdom. According to Ian Gadd, Carter was the son of a draper and an apprentice printer under the tutelage of John Cawood. Cawood was the printer to Queen Mary and whose own mentor (Grafton, printer under Edward VI) was executed as a traitor for his support of Jane Grey.<sup>10</sup> In the apprentice-printer network surrounding Carter, therefore, we see in miniscule the turbulence of the period in sharp detail. Carter was recruited

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<sup>8</sup> Alexandra Walsham, “‘Domme Preachers’? Post-Reformation English Catholicism and the Culture of Print,” *Past and Present* 168 no.1 (2000) : 74.

<sup>9</sup> Alexandra Walsham, “Preaching Without Speaking: Script, Print and Religious Dissent,” in *The Uses of Script and Print, 1300-1700*, ed. Julia Crick and Alexandra Walsham, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 212.

<sup>10</sup> Alec Ryrie, “Cawood, John (1513/14–1572),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. David Cannadine, (Oxford: OUP, 2004) : online ed.

into the recusant cause and was a figure of some importance printing at least fourteen books.<sup>11</sup> As a result, he was imprisoned, tortured, and eventually hanged, drawn, and quartered thus becoming a recusant martyr<sup>12</sup>. Carter is of particular importance to this project because of his associations (possibly) with multiple pseudonyms as well as the clandestine Greenstreet House press which he operated with the similarly important John Lyon. These figures are representative of the aims of the project in that they constitute key players in the recusant print network. In Thomas McGoog's recent work, he expands on Gadd's original scholarship on Carter and places him within the clandestine print era that predates the Jesuit print mission of c.1580. McGoog importantly discusses the nature of this mission and the Pope's removal of the requirement for all literature to be published with full imprint information.<sup>13</sup> **Slide 8**-- This is important because as we will see, this (along with the nature of Early Modern printing in general and the required secrecy of the presses) allows for the volume of what the *English Short Title Catalogue* describes as "false imprint" information and the high number of records catalogued as "S.N." or *sine nomine* (without a name). Interestingly, Walsham provides evidence of this form of clandestine practice, but from the perspective of persecuted Protestants and other nonconforming sects under the Marian monarchy. Walsham gives the example of John Day who, in an effort to mislead the ever encroaching authorities, creates works under the pseudonyms Nicholas Dorcaser and Michael Wood both, importantly falsely recorded as printed in Rouen.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, to support the *ESTC* thesis of a large-scale (as will be clarified in the data) English clandestine operation, Ceri Sullivan, in analysing the arguments of F.S. Siebert and W.W. Greg, finds that despite the high

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<sup>11</sup> Thomas McCoog, "'Guiding Souls to Goodness and Devotion': Clandestine Publications and the English Jesuit Mission" in *Publishing Subversive Texts in Elizabethan England and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth*, ed. Teresa Bela, Clarinda Calma, Jolanta Rzegocka, (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 97.

<sup>12</sup> Ian Gadd, "Carter, William (b. in or before 1549, d. 1584)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. David Cannadine, H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004) : online ed.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas McCoog, "Clandestine Publications and the English Jesuit Mission," 101.

<sup>14</sup> Alexandra Walsham, "Preaching Without Speaking: Script, Print and Religious Dissent," 214.

cost of printing and the scarcity of material, other, non-ideological printers may have printed recusant material as a supplemental income away from the eyes of the Stationer, thus, potentially accounting for a large portion of the false imprint information. While they may have felt inclined to print the material, it is highly doubtful they would want to associate themselves with these prints.<sup>15</sup> Recusant printers would, however, move from a clandestine press in England to free presses in Europe if the authorities suspected their shop or location of housing illegal material or an illegal press. One example that McGoog gives is Stephen Brinkley, another high occurrence name within the dataset, who after being imprisoned in England for printing illegal material fled to Rouen and continued his work with the mission. This larger print mission has been described by Stefania Tutino as the “Empire of Souls” and it is in this work that Tutino—in a discussion of Cardinal Bellarmine— writes about the de-centralization and the complexities of Early Modern Catholicism at large.<sup>16</sup> This resonates with the recusant print network as discussed in Macek that concessions needed to be made to account for the localized need with the English mission, (i.e. the flexibility and the preaching through the print that was necessary despite the refocus on pastoral Catholicism after the Council of Trent).

While the high-profile recusants such as those involved in the multiple conspiracies against Elizabeth I, the Gunpowder Plotters, the musician William Byrd, or the families of the recalcitrant gentry who remain proud of this history even today, there remains a history to be told about the unknown, or at least less well known recusants who constituted the vast network of literature during the era of high-recusancy. Again, this project is illustrative and not predictive

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<sup>15</sup> Ceri Sullivan, *Dismembered Rhetoric: English Recusant Writing, 1580 to 1603*, (Madison: Associated University Presses, 1995), 38.

<sup>16</sup> Stefania Tutino, *Empire of Souls: Robert Bellarmine and the Christian Commonwealth*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 6-8. This also echoes John O’Malley, *Trent and All That: Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).



and so the data derived from the imprint information gives us a quantitative account of a history that is well accounted for in qualitative historical works. Despite some humanists' fears that this form of history obscures historical actors, the use of visualization brings from obscurity names and connections that may have otherwise been lost.

### **Transition to showing the actual project**

**Slide 9**-- Early on in the project I began by simply doing a tedious and time consuming data-entry project transcribing the imprint information into a spreadsheet. **Slide 10**-- Based on our library's holdings of about 13 volumes of the Rogers *Recusant Literature* collection, I thought this would be a manageable project, but I was quickly disabused of this idea when I learned that this collection has something on the order of 400 volumes. **Slide 11**-- I had hoped that because this collection is available through the Hathi Trust, I could use their OCR'd text to help this process along, but as you can see, their OCR leaves a lot to be desired. **Slide 12**-- Thankfully, though the help of my wonderful professor Kellie Robertson, I was put in touch with a prominent DH scholar who gifted me a large set of scraped data from the Early English Books Online-TCP project which uses English Short Title metadata at its core. From the initial data I was playing around with, I had started to see some interesting trends that prompted some of the initial research questions I mentioned before. **Slide 13**-- For example, even within the small dataset, the percentage of works with an English imprint were higher than I would have expected despite the majority still being associated with Jesuit and other printing centres in Europe. **Slide 14**-- Taking that idea and extrapolating using the much larger dataset, we actually see the trend continue with a high proportion of the imprint data located as "London" and associated English locations. There is a reason to pause over this data however. Within the ESTC, the cataloguing standards do not have a subject heading for "Recusant Literature," or anything close to a

categorically useful term for this context. The closest term is “Catholic Literature—Controversial”, which, is obviously problematic because this doesn’t specify a particular ideological construction, and therefore not specifically “Recusant” in nature. That said, there are connections to be drawn at least at a cursory level that may indicate new avenues for more expansive research. Meaning, if there is a Catholic work with an imprint denoting London, and specifically “under the sign of the Dolphin,” etc. and within the era of high recusancy, this is something to take a look at.

**Slide 15**-- To begin with, then, going back to the first “accurate, but small” grouping, we can start to look at the associated printers for these individual instances and some interesting trends and anomalies start to stick through the set. By using a basic frequency analysis linking the rates of each instance with the creation data (place, person, date), we start to see some interesting trends come through the noise a bit. **Slide 16**-- If we look at geographic centres represented, we see some names, perhaps in slightly different forms (but noticeably similar) occur. **Slide 17**-- Looking first at London, for example, William Carter appears as a higher frequency printer, and importantly is linked, though *ESTC* scholarship, to the name “Ioannem Bogardum.” **Slide 18**-- Note the similarities of some of the additional names associated with London. **Slide 19**-- Now Antwerp. **Slide 20**-- Now Louvain. There are some declension issues, but there is a similarity —not proof mind, but a similarity worth further study.

**Slide 21**—Moving back to the larger dataset, we can see some additional interesting points. With this larger graph, we are looking at an approximation of the printing environment for this literature. Importantly, in the centre we have the London associated text with the inner ring of nodes representing the higher frequency printing rates. As mentioned, S.N. or Sine Nomine records constitute a large portion of this graph, as do the more well known printers. As I

also mentioned before, the more interesting part of the project may be this light yellow ring, these are the one-offs, the orphans in this set with only one title associated to a name. There are multiple reasons this could be so, all of which are interesting in their own right. **Slide 22**-- If I move forward with the project further, I would like to build the connective elements that constitute the social or perhaps individual network of the printing apparatus. As seen with the Carter example, this requires both traditional scholarship for the difficult work of placing the pieces together, and, I argue, this form of scattering and visual display to begin to see the curiosities and connections in a different way. **Slide 23**

-Thank You-

Earlier this month in the Chronicle of Higher Education, three articles ran debating the relevance of the digital humanities. The first of these articles, “The Digital-Humanities Bust,” by Timothy Brennan challenges the very notion of the digital humanities as a valid or necessary form of scholarship. While controversial to those of us interested in this format, his essay brings up some valid points which I think should be defended (and I hope to do so) in any DH venture. Brennan essentially asks us “so what?” what can we better understand about Melville—in his example—knowing the total number of instances of the word “whale” in *Moby Dick*? A provocative question, but also one which, in Bond, Long, and Underwood’s rebuttal, misses the point. As with this project, the purpose is not simply to know a set of numbers, but to find new questions which may help in traditional debates. I myself am not fully convinced by DH as a whole, it should be said, but like with new critical modes at any point in the study of theory and methods, there is worth in understanding. DH may become a school or a method, and as such I hope as we continue to explore its uses, we view it in the same light. I hope the term Digital Humanities or Digital History becomes obsolete (*after* I obtain tenure, of course) and the valuable methods become a normalized part of the humanist’s tool kit.