The Recusant Print Network Project

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Research Questions + Thesis

Goals:
-To find new questions, trends, and supporting data by collating, analyzing, and graphically displaying like information —in this case Recusant literature— that is distinct from traditional forms of scholarship
-To use this data and scholarship to work within and potentially expand the extant historiography of recusancy and lend evidence to a particular avenue of various scholarly debate (ex. the Haigh/Bossy debate)

Research Questions:
-Will network data analysis tools allow a new level of immediacy with the vast body of Recusant literature?
-What can we learn about Early Modern Catholic printing missions by visualizing the hubs of recusant literature?
-What future work can be made possible with a visual and workable database such as this?

Thesis:
By removing the obstacle 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 known trends and potentially opening

Explanatory Information:
This project seeks 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, analyzing, and graphically displaying like information —in this case Recusant literature— that is distinct from traditional forms of scholarship. 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.

Additionally, the aim is to combine methodological approaches of traditional book history — in this case merging bibliographic studies with quantitative history— and also utilizing new 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 such as the lingering tails of the John Bossy and Christopher Haigh debate that still consumes much of the scholarship on recusancy.

Key Terms

-***Recusant***: From the Latin, *recusare*. Following the Tudor-led English Reformation, a recusant was an illegal Catholic and abstainer from the Protestant church. This legal status hardened under Queen Elizabeth I following Catholic-led uprisings in the North of England and rumor or plots against the crown. This led Elizabeth to establish the Recusancy Acts in the late 16th century and to their continuance into the Stuart monarchy. Fear of plots and radical ultramontanism largely led to the severity of the punishments for recusants which could include a combination of financial penalty, torture, or death.
-***Recusant Literature:*** Catholic devotional and instructional literature printed with the express purpose of maintaining the faith in England during the years of high-recusancy by giving lay-Catholics the materials for private devotion and hidden priests the materials for illicit sermon. Additionally, this literature worked towards stoking the animosity against the protestant powers by striking against their legitimacy and by defining a martyrology and mythography of oppression.
-***Network Analysis:*** A graphical representation of the connections between data points or nodes. The nodes in this project are known works of recusant literature, known and unknown recusant printers, and printing locations as defined by either the title-page imprint information or the ESTC scholarship and the defined notion of false imprint data.
-***Remediation & Immediacy***: In this project I am using the definitions for remediation and immediacy set out by Bolter and Grusin who argue that the manifestation of a particular work indicates how that work will be used and the ease or difficulty in that use. For this project, remediation refers to digitization and the ability to group, view, and organize works in new ways to see connections that are otherwise opaque. These new and interesting ways work towards the object's immediacy in that by removing the traditional impediments, the work is more immediately usable for the purposes described.

Data Sources

Stage 1, Phase 1

Data Source	Format	Method	Benefit	Access
English Recusant Literature, D.M. Rogers (ed.)	~40 Vol. set of facsimile text reproduced in org. size	Physical copying and data entry	Defining 'recusant' literature in a useful way by setting parameters	-Print (UMD holds about 15 discontinuous Vols. -Hathi Trust full text (UMD Libraries)
A Catalogue of Catholic Books in English Printed Abroad or Secretly in England, A.F. Allison and D.M. Rogers	Catalogue representing known (as of ~1956) recusant literature	Reference	Defining scope and terminology	Print
Eng.-Short Tile Catalogue ESTC	Database with linked EEBO full text	Cross-reference and use of STC/ESTC scholarship	Usable and scrapable metadata Authoritative scholarship (mostly)	UMD Libraries

Stage 2, Phase 1

Data Source	Format	Method	Benefit	Access
EEBO-TCP	Scraped metadata from EEBO-TCP	Cleaning and editing data to work with project goals More quantitative analysis than previous work	~1000 records to work with that changed the shape of the project and preliminary conclusions	ESTC numbers and linked EEBO Full Text
Stage 1 Data		Rectifying datasets with each other and normalizing fields where possible/known Ex.W. Carter ➔William Carter, etc.	The EEBO-TCP data includes very-specific records from phase 1 & 2 of that project, so having additional data helps the validity. Much more work to be done.	

-D.M. Rogers, English Recusant Literature 1558-1640. Facsimile series available via Hathi Trust to member libraries, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/010174592.
-EEBO-TCP metadata records culled from the ESTC.
A tremendous debt of graditude is owed to Anupam Basu for help with this data. Please see his valuable project here: "Early Print."

Visualization software:
-Gelphi, https://gephi.org/
-Tableau Public, https://public.tableau.com/s/

Visualizations

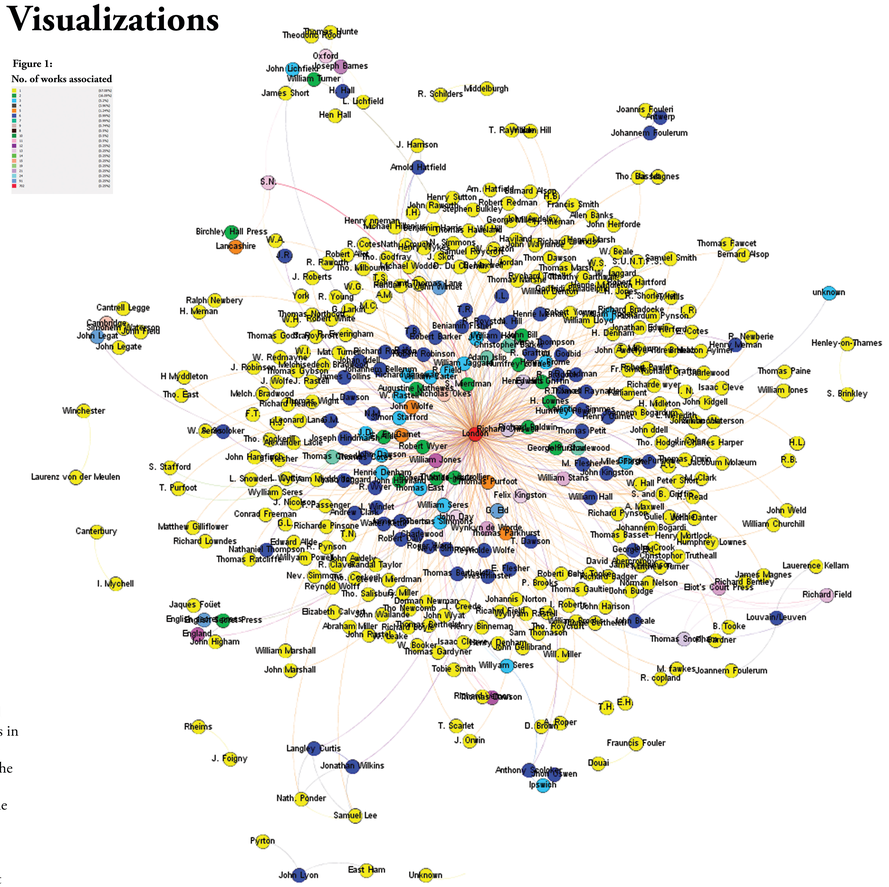




Figure 2:

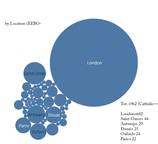
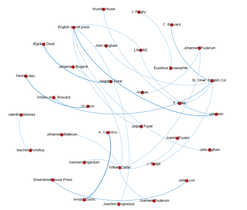
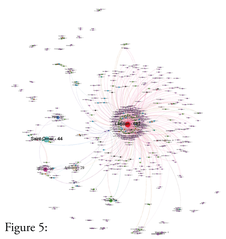
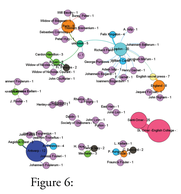
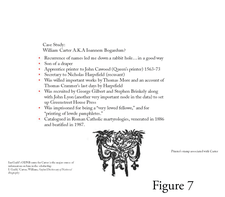


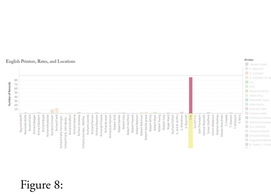
Figure 3:


Figure 4:


Figure 5:


Figure 6:


Figure 7


Figure 8:

Problems:
Stage 1:The Rogers series consists of 394 volumes with each volume containing approximately 1-4 texts. Despite the digital availability through the Hathi Trust, there was not a convenient or usable way to scrape the metadata from this series as the simple OCR of the contents was inaccurate and proved difficult to standardize without considerable effort. As such a demonstration dataset was manually collected by transferring information from the title page facsimiles and into a spreadsheet in order to illustrate the potential of the project and the effectiveness of the visualization tools.
Stage 2: EEBO-TCP Data is limited and doesn't include many of the ERL texts
-Limited to defining the fields as "Catholic Literature," and "Controversial Literature" which makes the data less accurate overall
-Usable and manageable for this project
(48, 000 in Basu's spreadsheet, edited to about 1,000 through the controlled vocabulary filtering
-High-rate of *sine nomine* records (**Figure 8**)

Data Discussion

Figure 1: -This visualization is perhaps the most representative of the true English recusant print network. This graph is the combined records from the demonstration data and the EEBO-TCP data which indicate an English printing location. This visualization illustrates two main components of importance:
1) The inner, multi-colored ring represents printers of multiple works where blue indicates printers of two works and accounts for 16% of the total merged data. There is a sharp drop-off of printers who produced three (light blue, 5.2%) and four works (green, 4%). With each drop in the number of printers represented, however, the more interesting the nodes become. The printers in the pink hues represent those with a printing rate between nine and twenty-one. These individual printers represent only a small percentage of the network, but whose output far exceeds many other printers. These names include people such as John Day (nineteen associated works), William Jones, and Felix Kingston. Additionally, this visualization, while cluttered demonstrates some of the connections between these printers as partners such as the aforementioned John Day is connected to his colleague William Seres.
2) This graph illustrates the largest of the data in yellow. These nodes equate to printers with only one associated record. These one-offs account for 67% of the data and while not immediately interesting may indicate an area of further study. Particular names that fall into this category are some of the names associated with William Carter. Thinking about the preponderance of false imprints throughout the data, the number of single occurrence works makes sense due to the potential for false names and locations in order to disguise a more well-known or legitimate printer within the stationer's record. Looking at a small network for four printers associated, according to the ESTC with London, may indicate the partial future for this project. While the majority of the single occurrence nodes are not directly, at this time, connected with other nodes other than location, it is interesting the connection demonstrated in the cluster containing Langley Curtis, Jonathan Wilkins, Nath. Ponder, and Samuel Lee. Curtis and Wilkins are each indicated as being the printer of two works, and Ponder and Lee one work each. In looking back through the data, these printers are associated as co-creators on a particular work and associated separately otherwise. Demonstrating these connections and illustrating how individual printer nodes are related to one another is the eventual goal of this project. The visualizations created for this early stage in the project serve largely as a proof-of-concept and do not fully represent the possibilities for future analysis.
Figure 2: This early graph (using the demo dataset) illustrates the standard idea that the majority of the recusant literature was produced outside of England at printing centers such as Saint-Omer (northern France), Douai, Antwerp, and Paris . In fact, Saint-Omer, first site of the English College established by William Allen, alone accounts for nearly 24% of the 105 records used in this set In fact, the European centers account for a dramatic 66% while London accounts for merely 19% alone or, slightly more interestingly 28% of the imprints when combined with the entries Henley-on-Thames, East Ham, and the very generic England (generally associated with the equally vague "English Secret Press" note from the ESTC). Because of the complicated history with the settlement in Dublin, I have chosen to neither count this entry as Europe (unrestricted Catholic printing) or England despite the Anglican establishment there. The data used for this visualization is derived solely from the item imprint information and does not account for the "false imprint" information as will be expanded on below. Taking these items at face value, then, gives us a visualized graph of the traditional makeup of recusant printing. Because this was a small sample, however, it was intriguing to see that 28% of the records noted an English printing location; more than would be assumed, perhaps, through a reading of the secondary literature.
Figure 3: As this simple bubble graph illustrates, the EEBO-TCP data provides a more expansive look at the location occurrence rates suggested by the demonstration dataset. In this graph, however, the trend illustrated previously of more English printing occurrence than originally assumed is dramatically expanded. Using the EEBO-TCP data which pulls from the ESTC MARC metadata, we find that 682 of the 962 "Catholic Church — Controversial literature — Early works to 1800" records pulled from the larger dataset indicate London as the place of printing and thus accounting for about 71% of this set. When compared to the network analysis in figure 5, we can see that the majority of these 682 records associated with London are single instance records (indicated in purple) and account for 68.31% of this data. Additionally, the EEBO-TCP data is representative of the bias towards ascribing a large majority of the imprints as false. If this scholarship is correct, this would be a definite shift in the understanding of recusant literature. This would indicate that the instances of literature being created in Europe would be lower than those printed on clandestine presses in England. I approach this conclusion with a great deal of skepticism despite my general fondness for notion, after Bossy, that the English Catholic community was not a passive population, but the numbers may indicate a printing community and printing rate that, because of the secrecy needed, would be potentially difficult to maintain. There are, perhaps, other explanations including piracy or at least larger scale unlicensed printing of recusant texts but with without ideology. More likely, however, could be that a visualization of STC/ESTC speculative scholarship may highlight a level of caviler assignation of a theory that when displayed in graphical and condensed form betrays some of the faults not seen when spread throughout the database.
Figure 4: This visualization utilizes the demonstration dataset and is an attempt rectify data from the "false imprint" information and the ESTC scholarship connections between pseudonyms and a printer's supposed real name. As illustrated in the case study of William Carter (**Figures 6 & 7**), the multiple-name reoccurrence of both his name in the visualizations and through the ESTC records indicating the names "Johannem Bogardi," "Ioannem Bogardum," and "Iohannem Bellerum" are all to be associated with William Carter and that the imprint location, typically Douai, is false. All of these names associated with recusant literature and found within both the demonstration dataset and the EEBO-TCP data and, interestingly, may add to the number of works Carter is said to be responsible for. With this information, the English recusant print network began to take shape. This graph, while incomplete, represents some of the shape that future efforts may take with this project.

Conclusion + Next Steps

Figure 5: Ultimately the question posed research questions section remains to be answered. Does this study positively contribute to the historiography of recusancy? While the data is incomplete I think there is a conclusion to be drawn. When viewing the vastness of the printing network both in visualizations illustrating the global network and what the ESTC notes as the English network, we see a vast scope of actors working either within the Jesuit printing mission or as a part of the English Catholic community. In particular we see a band of as of now unaffiliated nodes which represent, potentially, a larger scale of recusant printing by lesser or unknown printers, or we see the evidence of a larger scope of aliases and clandestine practices throughout the country. Taken as such, this evidence may work to lend modern credibility to John Bossy's thesis of a reborn and robust Catholic community that may have emerged as a factor of the post-Tridentine Church.

Key Findings & Importance to the Field:
-Higher than expected rate of "false imprints"
-Data-driven evidence towards traditional debates
-Potential shift in geographical locus of printing (according to false imprinnts)
-Suggested higher rate of English Clandestine printing
-High rate of S.N. or *sine nomine* records
-The ability to highlight particular printers and their associations (ex. William Carter) with the potential for the discovery of new printers or secert associations

Next Steps:
-Illustrating the printing location (Greenstreet House) and the selling location ("under the syne of Blacke Beare Pauls Church-yard")
-Matching the false imprint information with the ESTC scholarship-derived location
-Database to more accurately and thoroughly capture location and biography information
-Interactive Data visualizations (more like Six Degrees of Francis Bacon)
-Continue to build the social network through traditional scholarship but informed by the data collection and display