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Introduction: The Intermedia Restoration

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This special issue approaches English Restoration texts and art forms from the standpoint of their media—that is, the technological processes and communication conventions at stake in their circulation and production. In so doing, it aims to extend the interdisciplinary conversation in media studies back in time. Scholarship on “mass media” or “the media” is typically dated to the advent of newspaper, radio, and television distribution at scale. “New media” studies, meanwhile, tends to designate the narrower purview of late twentieth and early twenty-first-century digital technologies.¹ As scholars including Lisa Gitelman have argued, however, media are not exclusively modern and contemporary phenomena but “structures of communication” that are “socially realized” at any given historical moment.² In their edited collection *New Media, 1740–1915*, Gitelman and Geoffrey B. Pingree “challeng[e] the notion that to study ‘new media’ is to study *today’s* new media,” given that “[a]ll media were once ‘new media.’”³ Fourteen years after this volume was published, during the rapid expansion of media studies across the humanities and beyond, 1740 remains something of an early limit. Media studies continues to slant toward the present, notwithstanding the obligatory glance to the early age of print that we find (to take one of any number of examples) in Asa Briggs and Peter Burke’s *A Social History of the Media: From Gutenberg to the Internet*.⁴

The Restoration—a period of media novelty upon media novelty, from periodicals and novels to genre painting, opera, and a newly cosmopolitan stage featuring female actors—warrants a fuller role in this conversation. We are familiar with the Restoration’s paradigm shifts in visual, acoustic, and linguistic representation, including new stage machinery and design. It has hardly been lost on us that the period of the rise of the newspaper and the founding of the Ashmolean Museum requires close attention to

“hypermediacy,” Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin’s term for communication steeped in media multiplicity and heterogeneity.⁵ Bolter and Grusin themselves cite the “hypermediacy of the baroque” as a precedent to the proliferation of media in postmodern culture.⁶ Yet we tend not to conceive of Restoration news, painting, music, theater, and other structures of communication as “media.” If that term is applied to pre-nineteenth-century communication at all, it is generally to written texts and above all to printed codices.

Indeed, we might say that media studies before the nineteenth century has been flattened into the history of the book. Book history has much in common with media studies: both have roots in textual studies and bibliography, both have grown and thrived along with the rise of the new materialism, and both focus rigorous attention upon material evidence. Like media studies, book history has proven compelling not least because its scope is defined by structures of communication themselves, as opposed to received disciplinary or generic boundaries. Book historians have expanded their purview well beyond the codex as such, to include every type of writing surface from manuscript epistle to printed broadsheet. Yet the close focus on archival sources that undergirds book history has remained strictly trained upon writing, to the exclusion of overlapping or closely related structures of communication.

As a result, we have been too quick to assume that written—and especially printed—media were more enduring, authoritative, or ascendant than theater, music, visual art, and other media. Take Clifford Siskin and William Warner’s edited collection *This Is Enlightenment*, for instance, which is framed around the idea that “Enlightenment is an event in the history of mediation” and is thus an important step toward a fuller history of pre-nineteenth-century media.⁷ Siskin and Warner’s volume does not advance a reductive use of “media”; on the contrary, it pursues a fuller and more careful historicization of the term.⁸ An essay by Michael Warner works to “move beyond the seductive but false clarity of ‘orality’ and ‘print culture,’” and an essay by Paula McDowell argues that, in the mid-to late eighteenth century, “literate groups’ ideas about oral forms and practices developed in an especially close dialectical relationship with ideas about *print* (especially print commerce).”⁹ Yet Siskin and Warner view the rise of newspapers and periodicals (along with the coffeehouses and other public spaces in which they were commonly read) as the “cardinal mediations” of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe—that is, the “new, or newly important” changes in the media that “establish[ed] the conditions for the possibility of the Enlightenment.”¹⁰ Siskin and Warner claim that asserting the prominence of print does not “downplay other forms of mediation, such as the visual,” but it is not enough to will the problem away.¹¹ None of volume’s twenty essays devote sustained attention to theater, music, or visual art, so that pre-nineteenth-century “media” are tacitly consigned to writing and (occasionally) speech.¹² When Ann Blair and Peter Stallybrass’s contribution sets out to examine growing obsessions with “information management in the varied media of the early modern period,” for example, what they mean by “varied media” turns out to be limited to written structures of communication.¹³

Expanding our scope beyond writing, toward a history of all media involved in the production and circulation of meaning, offers a way forward.¹⁴ Book historians have argued persuasively against essentializing “print culture” or assuming that print was

necessarily conceived to be more permanent than manuscript.¹⁵ Media studies helps us go further—avoiding the assumption that writing was invariably understood to be more indelible, or more material, than media including oil paintings, musical scores, or even actors' bodies. The Restoration saw a host of changes and novelties in written structures of communication, including postal services and periodicals. At the same time, it was a period of vogue for mixed and amalgamated media, whether in spectacular combination onstage or in careful arrangement and order as represented in Edward Collier's letter racks.¹⁶ Just as it will not do to reduce this period's systems of written transmission to print, a full account of Restoration media history cannot be reduced to writing.

The essays that follow therefore turn to "intermediation"—that is, interplay and overlap across media—as a keyword for the transmission and communication of Restoration texts and art forms. As Daniel Fischlin puts it, "[t]he word intermedia . . . addresses co-productive forms of representation that are what they are as a result of the simultaneous commingling of discursive and technical fields that arise in given historical circumstances."¹⁷ Unlike "multimedia," the term avoids implying that individual media are divisible into discrete categories, pointing instead toward the combination or integration of any number of media.¹⁸ Intermediation will not be a helpful term for describing all Restoration texts; we might say that novels commonly invite an immersive experience of the medium of print, for example, even when they remediate epistolary correspondence. Other terms from media studies might also be applied to earlier periods, including "multimedia" juxtapositions and correlations, or even "transmedia" characters, fictional worlds, or commodities that extend beyond a given media platform (e.g. comic book action figures drawn from graphic novels or films).¹⁹ As this special issue demonstrates, however, the term intermedia is especially apt for describing the extensive collaboration and competition among media that we see in dramattick opera, sung and recited neoclassical verse, engraved playing cards, and other Restoration media novelties.

In the opening essay, "The Intermedial Dramaturgy of Dramattick Opera: Understanding Genre through Performance," Amanda Eubanks Winkler shows how slippage between speech, music, and masque-like spectacle was not (as is commonly thought) a defect rendering dramattick opera incoherent. Instead, as we learn from the vantage point of modern theatrical production, the intermedial tendencies of dramattick opera are at the core of its baroque aesthetic appeal.

In "Abraham Cowley's Odes 'rightly repeated,'" Thomas Ward reveals how early printed editions of Cowley's metrically irregular *Pindarique Odes* are not, as we might assume, impositions of the regularity of print upon the vagaries of oral pronunciation. Instead, oral and musical performances of Cowley's lines shape the ways in which his *Odes* were conceived and displayed in print.

Sharon J. Harris's essay "Music, Text, Stuttering: An Intermedial Approach to Dramattick Opera in *The Fairy Queen*" shows how dynamic interactions among poets, composers, and performers were what made dramattick opera come alive. In *The Fairy Queen*, Purcell's music playfully mocks the limitations of poetry, the libretto develops a web of intertextual intrigue, and a stuttering, singing "Drunken Poet" exceeds the limitations of his script.

Stephanie Koscak's essay "Gaming Restoration Politics: Playing Cards, the Penny Post, and Conspiratorial Thinking" shows how the overlapping visual and textual designs of topical, engraved playing cards revealed and responded to contemporary anxieties about conspiracy—inviting players to imagine themselves within sensational narratives of plot discovery.

These essays began as papers for "The Intermedia Restoration" conference at the University of Maryland, College Park, in February 2018, which I organized together with Laura J. Rosenthal. Readers will notice shared lines of thought and common themes; to take one example, Eubanks Winkler, Harris, and Ward all touch on works by Henry Purcell (*King Arthur*, *The Fairy Queen*, and a setting of Cowley's "The Resurrection"), showing us different sides of Purcell's ability to remediate, lampoon, and discipline the rhythms of poetic meter. The essays are also strongly informed by other conference contributors, namely Franklin J. Hildy, William Germano, Erin Keating, Eric Nils Lindquist, Elizabeth Massey, Stuart Sherman, Nicholas Smolenski, and Rajani Sudan. All contributors gave illuminating papers and partook in a day-long discussion that set the agenda for this special issue.

Scholarship on intermedia history invites intermedia methodologies. We have aimed to bring together scholars from different disciplinary backgrounds: Eubanks Winkler is a musicologist, Koscak is an historian, and Ward and Harris are literary scholars. We are influenced by previous approaches to mixed genres and art forms, including the 2010 special issue of *Restoration* on Dryden and Purcell's dramattick opera *King Arthur*, which was accompanied by a CD of audio illustrations. And the essays are notable for incorporating examples across media. Eubanks Winkler shows how insights derived from contemporary theater production enable us to historicize Restoration drama texts in fuller and more imaginative ways. Harris combines literary interpretation with detailed analysis of musical notation, as does Ward, who also models an approach to intermedia history that is closely integrated with book history, including a new edition of the Cowlean ode "Come *Poetry*, and with thee bring along." Koscak's essay incorporates six illustrations—packs of printed playing cards, a political polemic, a broadside ballad, an engraved panel depicting a murder, and a broadside arrangement of playing cards in a narrative sequence—all of which remediate the embodied experience of game play as a mode of conspiratorial thinking. The essays collected here thus encourage movement across media in scholarly practice. They remind us that our own work takes shape between print, digital publication, and other modes of scholarly communication, including person-to-person conference gatherings.



Notes

¹ For instance, see Lev Manovich, “New Media from Borges to HTML,” in *The New Media Reader*, ed. Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Nick Montfort (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), esp. 19. In this introductory essay, only one of eight propositions for defining new media bears on media history, namely “New Media as the Aesthetics that Accompanies the Early Stage of Every New Modern Media and Communication Technology,” and even here there is an awkward and repetitive insistence upon the “New Modern.”

² See Lisa Gitelman, *Always Already New: Media, History, and the Data of Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), esp. 7: “I define media as socially realized structures of communication, where structures include both technological forms and their associated protocols, and where communication is a cultural practice, a ritualized collocation of different people on the same mental map, sharing or engaged with popular ontologies of representation.”

³ *New Media, 1740–1915*, ed. Lisa Gitelman and Geoffrey B. Pingree (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), xi.

⁴ Asa Briggs and Peter Burke, *A Social History of the Media: From Gutenberg to the Internet*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Polity, 2009).

⁵ Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), esp. 31–44.

⁶ *Ibid.*, esp. 36.

⁷ *This Is Enlightenment*, ed. Clifford Siskin and William Warner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 1.

⁸ See especially John Guillory’s essay showing that the media concept was slow to be elaborated in its recognizably modern sense, “Enlightening Mediation,” in *This Is Enlightenment*, ed. Siskin and Warner, 37–63; and see the longer version of Guillory’s essay, “The Genesis of the Media Concept,” *Critical Inquiry* 36, no. 2 (Winter 2010): 321–62. See also Knut Ove Eliassen and Yngve Jacobsen, “Where Were the Media Before the Media? Mediating the World at the Time of Condillac and Linnaeus,” which suggests that “media’ might arguably be an anachronism with respect to the study of early centuries,” in *This Is Enlightenment*, ed. Siskin and Warner, 64–86, esp. 65.

⁹ Michael Warner, “The Preacher’s Footing,” in *This Is Enlightenment*, ed. Siskin and Warner, 368–83, esp. 369; Paula McDowell, “Mediating Media Past and Present: Toward a Genealogy of ‘Print Culture’ and ‘Oral Tradition,’” in *This Is Enlightenment*, ed. Siskin and Warner, 229–46, esp. 246. See also McDowell’s since-published book, *The Invention*

of the Oral: Print Commerce and Fugitive Voices in Eighteenth-Century Britain (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017).

¹⁰ *This Is Enlightenment*, ed. Siskin and William Warner, 12.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹² In addition to the essays by Michael Warner and Paula McDowell discussing orality, cited above, exceptions include Anne Fastrup's discussion of Diderot's art criticism, where paintings accrue "aesthetic autonomy," in "Mediating *le philosophe*: Diderot's Strategic Self-Representations," in *This Is Enlightenment*, ed. Siskin and Warner, 265–83, esp. 277.

¹³ Ann Blair and Peter Stallybrass, "Mediating Information, 1450–1800," in *This Is Enlightenment*, ed. Siskin and Warner, 139–63, esp. 140. In fairness, note that Blair and Stallybrass are working to broaden the scope of media under consideration beyond books, to include "the great bulk of printed matter such as blank forms, bills of lading, printed slips, commonplace books, accounts, and paper money" (140). See also Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).

¹⁴ I make this case at greater length in the introduction to Scott A. Trudell, *Unwritten Poetry: Song, Media, and Performance in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

¹⁵ See (for instance) Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); and *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies after Elizabeth L. Eisenstein*, ed. Sabrina Alcorn Baron, Eric N. Lindquist, and Eleanor F. Shevlin (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007).

¹⁶ On the "new media regime" subtending Collier's letter racks, see Dror Wahrman, *Mr. Collier's Letter Racks: A Tale of Art and Illusion at the Threshold of the Modern Information Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), esp. 8.

¹⁷ *OuterSpeares: Shakespeare, Intermedia, and the Limits of Adaptation*, ed. Daniel Fischlin (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 3–4. On the term "intermedia," see also N. Katherine Hayles, *My Mother Was a Computer: Digital Subjects and Literary Texts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), esp. 15–38; and *Handbook of Intermediality: Literature – Image – Sound – Music*, ed. Gabriele Rippl (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2015). I came to the term at the suggestion of Gary Tomlinson, who offered it as an alternative keyword at "Performing the Book: Multi-Media Histories of Early Modern Britain," a conference I organized at Rutgers University, New Brunswick in 2011.

¹⁸ See Jens Schröter, “Four Models of Intermediality,” in *Travels in Intermedia[lity]: ReBlurring the Boundaries*, ed. Bernd Herzogenrath (Hanover: Dartmouth College Press, 2012), 15–36, esp. 15: “the term ‘intermediality’ . . . attempts to take into account the more and more apparent fact that media do not exist disconnected from one another; rather, they have existed forever in complex media configurations and have therefore always been based on other media.”

¹⁹ See *The Routledge Companion to Transmedia Studies*, ed. Matthew Freeman and Renira Rampazzo Gambarato (New York: Routledge, 2018), especially the forward by Henry Jenkins, xxvi–xxx.



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