

Renaissance and Reformation
Renaissance et Réforme



Trapnel, Anna. Anna Trapnel's Report and Plea; or, A Narrative of Her Journey from London into Cornwall. Ed. Hilary Hinds

Mary Morse

Volume 40, numéro 3, été 2017

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1086166ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v40i3.28770>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (imprimé)

2293-7374 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

Morse, M. (2017). Compte rendu de [Trapnel, Anna. Anna Trapnel's Report and Plea; or, A Narrative of Her Journey from London into Cornwall. Ed. Hilary Hinds]. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 40(3), 345–347. <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v40i3.28770>

© Canadian Society for Renaissance Studies / Société canadienne d'études de la Renaissance; Pacific Northwest Renaissance Society; Toronto Renaissance and Reformation Colloquium; Victoria University Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies, 2017

Ce document est protégé par la loi sur le droit d'auteur. L'utilisation des services d'Érudit (y compris la reproduction) est assujettie à sa politique d'utilisation que vous pouvez consulter en ligne.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/fr/usagers/politique-dutilisation/>

érudit

Cet article est diffusé et préservé par Érudit.

Érudit est un consortium interuniversitaire sans but lucratif composé de l'Université de Montréal, l'Université Laval et l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Il a pour mission la promotion et la valorisation de la recherche.

<https://www.erudit.org/fr/>

Caravaggio is often celebrated for his use of realism and tenebrism. However, this book has effectively demonstrated that one must look beyond heightened naturalism and pronounced chiaroscuro to fully appreciate the ground-breaking work that Caravaggio produced during his short and turbulent career. Highlighting compositional opposition and ambiguity in Caravaggio's work has allowed Thomas to shed light on the artist's ingenuity and sustained influence. This book is both well written and well documented, and is an excellent read for those looking to broaden their understanding of Michelangelo Merisi as a man, a master painter, and a revolutionary whose personal manner of making intellectually and sensually engaging art helped lay the foundation for painting in the modern age.

JENNIFER STRTAK

Yale University

Trapnel, Anna.

***Anna Trapnel's Report and Plea; or, A Narrative of Her Journey from London into Cornwall.* Ed. Hilary Hinds.**

The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe: The Toronto Series 48 / Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 503. Toronto: Iter Press / Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2016. Pp xv, 155. ISBN 978-0-86698-558-1 (paperback) US\$34.95.

Anna Trapnel's Report and Plea; or, A Narrative of Her Journey from London into Cornwall, published as a volume in the well-received Toronto series *The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe*, definitely positions Trapnel as a significant "other voice." Editor Hilary Hinds, professor of English at Lancaster University (UK), has published widely on seventeenth-century radical religious women writers, including an edition of Trapnel's *The Cry of a Stone*, which relates her prophecies predicting Oliver Cromwell's downfall and the restoration of the English monarchy. The most famous of these prophecies, spoken during her eleven-day trance in a public eating house in the London district of Whitehall in January 1654, imprints Cromwell's face upon the leader of a herd of cattle charging Trapnel to place "his horn to my breast."

Her prophecies soon attracted attention among government officials and congregations sympathetic to Fifth Monarchist views. *The Cry of a Stone* was published in February; in March, Trapnel visited Cornwall at the request of Captain Francis Langdon, a Cornish representative to the Barbone's Parliament. Trapnel's narrative meticulously dates her activities during her journey to Cornwall and colourfully describes her surroundings and the people she encounters during this journey. *Report and Plea* thus emerges as a text that confirms historical events and people noted in other texts produced during Cromwell's rule as Lord Protector of England. Trapnel's writings appeared only during a six-year period ending in 1659, but subsequent writers recalled her prophecies to fit particular political or religious agendas up until the French Revolution. The entire *Report and Plea* has not been republished since its first and only appearance as a pamphlet in 1654, although excerpts have appeared in several anthologies since the 1980s, with the feminist reclamation of works by early modern women writers. This modernized and extensively footnoted edition of Trapnel's *Report and Plea* will introduce students to a woman writer who not only chronicles the aftermath of England's Civil War but, like many female mystics and seers before her, also defies societal gender roles and confronts accusations of witchcraft.

Hinds refers to specific points Trapnel makes in *Report and Plea*—for instance, when discussing Trapnel's ability to construct her own narrative through judicious attention to the difference between what she says and what she might want to say but refrains from saying. According to Hinds, Trapnel's clever manipulation marks her as a writer who is uniquely aware of how distinguishing between thought and speech in her text will define people's reactions to her right to prophesy. When she appears before the justices at Truro, for example, and they all join in the questioning, she first considers answering them within a stereotypical depiction of women as those who speak but do not listen; instead, she answers them by asking why they are all involved in the questioning: "What do you speak all at a time? I cannot answer all, when speaking at once" (88–89).

Trapnel's reliance upon paraphrases and quotations of biblical passages reflects the Puritan culture in which she was raised as a shipbuilder's daughter. But this practice also links her to the American captivity narrative of Mary Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, which was first published in America in 1682. Both women cite passages, particularly those from the Psalms,

that relate to their ordeals during their respective captivities, Rowlandson among the Narragasset Indians of Massachusetts and Trapnel during her imprisonment at Bridewell after her journey to Cornwall. Additionally, the renewed interest in witchcraft trials in early modern Europe and in the women who tended to be the targets of witchcraft accusations also suggests that Trapnel's *Report and Plea* could offer primary documentation of the way that the trial judges heard and interpreted women's testimonies.

Noting that Trapnel remains little-known beyond scholarly circles, Hinds hopes her edition will demonstrate that "the words and actions of a seventeenth-century prophet from Poplar in east London can continue to enthuse contemporary audiences seeking historical precedents for popular activism and creative ways of speaking truth to power" (36). One cannot help but wonder, then, why Hinds does not attempt to situate Trapnel's narrative as a useful parallel to American women writers such as Mary Rowlandson and Anne Bradstreet, or to women's testimonies in the witchcraft trials. Neither does Hinds consider Trapnel within the larger mystical tradition that led to popular seventeenth-century acceptance of Trapnel's prophecies. In many ways, Trapnel can be viewed as a successor to Margery Kempe, another self-proclaimed travelling mystic who is arguably the most widely studied medieval English woman writer. Both were middle-class laywomen who had to convince others that God indeed spoke to them through vision and prophecy, both were accused of witchcraft, both described the conditions of daily living in their respective autobiographical accounts of their conversion and journeys, and both eloquently employed trials as scenes that reinforce their privileged connection with God and encourage others to convert. Placing Anna Trapnel alongside the experiences of better-known women writers could broaden her appeal while simultaneously showing how religion continued to offer a space for women writers in societies that often silenced them.

MARY MORSE

Rider University