Western discourse has traced its own trajectory through its historical construct in *biblia*, chasing its shadow by the corporeal sundial that has as its turning point the next millennium. This is due to the construction of an apocalyptic expectation that lurks beneath the unconscious collective Christian imagination, the intense allegorical literary imagery/imagining system encoded by an enculturation in Biblical discourse. This system creates a Christian culture map that promotes Christian iconography as a mode and medium of information transmission.

Christian dogma expects the Apocalypse as a fulfilment of centuries of suffering, a time when the Second Coming of Christ will subvert the oppression in the world,

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1 This paper was initially presented as “A Tabloid Study of Reaganomics and the Profits of Corporate Christianity or, Whose Apocalypse, When?” at the Centre For Millennial Studies, Boston University, during “The Apocalyptic Other” conference, November 2-4, 1997.

handing the reins of power to the meek, who shall inherit the earth, and be indulged with a millennium of rule over their oppressors before the world is remade, or paradise fulfilled. Tabloid publications the Sun and Weekly World News both cater to and promote this apocalyptic angst in North America, using the mnemonic associations of print media to corroborate their own authority. These publications form part of a Christian subconscious in America, an apocalyptic belief that saves those who are ‘othered’ by the

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dominant capitalist project, at the same time as it ‘others’ any and all who do not espouse
capitalism enacted under a Christian aegis. There is also a subtle power play enacted in a
search for phallogocentric primacy: which particular religious group will have the power
to usher in the New Era after the Apocalypse, perhaps an inevitable effluent left in the
wake of what remains of Reaganomics and the Religious Right in the corporate space of
contemporary American culture.

Apocalyptic rhetoric in-forms the Christian
culture which views the turn of the millennium with trepidation. As Marshall McLuhan
says in Understanding Media, “the medium is the message,” meaning that it is the very
medium of transmission that effects the message being transmitted. In Christian culture,
the written word has authority; consequently, written artifacts have the denotation of
authority because of biblical antecedents: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word
was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). The Word is equated with the Divine,

as words in print become both the axis and the access of ideology: the knowledge of power is the power of knowledge. As McLuhan says:

Words are a kind of information retrieval that can range over the total environment and experience at high speed. Words are complex systems of metaphors and symbols that translate experience into our uttered or outered senses. They are a technology of explicitness. By means of translation of immediate sense experience into vocal symbols the entire world can be evoked and retrieved at any instant.

The locus of power for this retrieval lies within print media, as represented here with the appeal to a secret code in the bible. The representation of hidden codes and apocryphal texts—a common theme in both these tabloids—reaffirms the primacy of print authority and the power of retrieval of hidden information that will effect the present. The search for lost origins of textual authority seeks to corroborate itself in a discourse ouroboros that begins where it ends, in the primacy of the text itself that refers to itself, in itself, creating a mise en abime of originary yearning that articulates a literary genealogy back to ancient prophets and divine inspiration. The literary artefact thus reifies its own

6 “It is written” is a symbol of authority in Christian culture, appearing 75 times in the King James version of the Bible in conjunction with divine jurisprudence. There are numerous similar connections with “writing,” “to write,” etc. that also underscore the divine association with writing. For more information, see note 9 below.


8 I base my study of these tabloids on those published between August 1996 and the present. The study is ongoing.

9 A literary genealogy that participates within a search for textual origins and authority is analogous to what Jacques Derrida calls the “ethic of nostalgia for origins” (“Structure Sign and Play” 93) that punctuates Christian culture. The tabloid reporting of lost biblical texts participates within a nostalgia for lost origins that will confer authority to the words as re-presented within the sacred space of writing. As Walter Benjamin says in “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” Illuminations. (New York: Schoekern Books, 1969), p. 221, “The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced”; historical antecedents confer authority within mass media culture. In Dissemination, (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1981), p. 93, Derrida recounts the origins of Thoth and writing, saying “This god of calculation, arithmetic, and rational science also presides over the occult sciences, astrology and alchemy. He is the god of magic formulas that calm the sea, of secret account, of hidden texts: an archetype of
position and status as a location of sanctioned cultural reproduction. This is the incorporation of the Word, or Religion, INK.

Incorporate literally means to embody, to “form into one body or whole,” and the literary re-presentation of the apocalyptic other embodies the rhetoric of redemption Nietzsche calls *ressentiment*. In *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche defines *ressentiment* as the rhetoric behind a “slave revolt” (22) wherein the “powerless, the oppressed” (23) seek a moral highground from which to escape their oppression: “If, out of the vindictive cunning of impotence, the oppressed, downtrodden, and violated . . . [leave] revenge to God, . . . the patient, the humble, the just” will be rewarded, via divine intervention (30). This is the rhetoric of revenge, of redemption, and is an apt description of biblical notions of redemption via the sufferings of the martyr, Jesus. The oppressed conceive of themselves as those who will take the place of the oppressor, and thereby become the oppressor. The tabloid re-presentation of the authority invested in print media and a binary definition of existence creates a crucifiction: a narrative space that hopes to (re)animate the imaginative reconstruction of Christian apocalyptic expectation with the use of Biblical tropes or *topos* in order to effect this animation outside of the literary text, in the cultural narrative—the world outside the literary fictional text. It is a Genealogy because the crucifiction of the Bible narrative *articulates*

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a linear stream of mythic consciousness from the beginning to the end of human existence on earth, a patrilineal narrative created *in biblia*—what lies “in books.” This phallogocentrism necessarily creates a binary cosmology: there is “one true God,” or there is not.

The Book of Genesis provides an example of “additive oral style” through its use of polysyndeton, a technique that articulates the linguistic lineage of the objects of creation back to a single source, Jehovah, and places man at “the culmination of the divine activity.” This further rationalizes the hegemonic primacy of power of the Christian God. Gone are the multiple deities that animated previous religions. In their place is a monotheistic, omnipotent and omniscient creator solely responsible for the creation of all. To emphasize this deity one-up-manship, the story does not begin *in medias res*, but rather begins with nothing and creates a linear stream of mythic consciousness that was wholly in keeping with a desire to undermine and usurp the authority of previously pantheistic religions. This rhetorical manipulation adds authority to the word of Jehovah; he alone is the primogenitor of all life. Thus, the Bible manifests a totalizing ideology that negates the legitimization of any other within the rhetoric of its epitomized archetypes. The Bible paints a picture of the beginning of time, Genesis, and the end of time, the Apocalypse, situating the perpetual present somewhere *in medias res*.

Consequently, and also because of the influence of Greece on Western philosophy,

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“Thought had to have a beginning, middle, and an end.”¹⁴ Western discourse, especially literary discourse, has been bound to this sense of linearity, finding corroboration in Aristotle’s dramatic theory as applied to poetics. But it is the End that becomes significant in Christian culture, because this is the only event depicted within the text that has not yet come to pass. The End offers ultimate redemption, making sense of the suffering endured by Christians: the end justifies the means.

Christians find both unconscious and conscious corroboration of apocalyptic fear and desire in Biblical discourse,¹⁵ as well as in the

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‘prophecies’ of prophets like Nostradamus.

The belief in apocalypticism is not so far fetched. As Chomsky says, “Three quarters of the American population believe in miracles. The numbers who believe in the devil, in resurrection, in God doing this and that — it’s


astonishing.”18 A recent Globe and Mail article entitled “God is Still Not Dead” reports that 95 per cent of Americans “profess belief in God or some other universal spirit,” while “76 per cent imagine God as a heavenly father who pays attention to their prayers.”19 Of course, the world did not end “Next Week,” but readers were exhorted to pray in unison to avert this potentiality. The next week’s issue told of the success of this extra-textual communication, thereby giving each reader a sense of participation in the world presented in the text, as well as in the world outside of the text in the larger community of the global village. Apocalyptic belief here becomes a “cite” of authority: each reader participates in writing the social text of/with redemptive salvation. Belief in apocalypticism belies an attempt to absolve ourselves of responsibility, to wash our hands of the suffering in the world, to prove to our own logic that God is at work in the world, reaffirming a sense of purpose in


20 Sun, October 8, 1996.
populating the world with Christianity. Chomsky further says that a recent study on evolution showed that “About 40% [of the population of America] thought the world was created a few thousand years ago,” illustrating the role Biblical discourse has had in shaping the collective consciousness of America. These believers—whether conscious

22 Barsamian, p. 79.
23 Sun, March 10, 1998.
or not—invest meaning and weight into apocalyptic currency within popular culture and politics, automatically relegating all others to the sidelines of their history.

In the theatre of the Cold War, former US president and ex-Hollywood actor Ronald Reagan sought to act out his Christian desire to stage the last act in the grand drama of Christianity: the Apocalypse. Reagan used apocalyptic rhetoric to represent what he perceived as the evil spectre of communism that was haunting the world, appealing to the imagination of the American populace that has been encoded with a sense of superiority: the Christian elect. The politics and policies of Reagan exemplified the apocalyptic theme; “On the right, politicians and preachers invoked the spectre of a world Communist dictatorship that would threaten America with either enslavement or apocalyptic destruction if we did not invest in new weapons systems.”


ability to purchase arms in order to dominate the world in a battle to create and control a single economic system.

Reagan and the religious right constructed a Corporate Christianity.

This was firmly rooted in a capitalist economic system based on exploitation, a system where the religious rhetoric of “let us pray” turns into “let us prey.” This exploitation was justified by the Religious Right’s belief in their own legitimacy, an attitude that fostered a sense of cultural megalomania that was wholly in keeping with the Christian belief in religious exclusivity—that their God was the one, true God. Corporate Christian mentality posits that striving for prosperity is the way to serve the Christian God. Not to prosper in a Corporate Christian world is to fail to serve God. Capitalism is thus equated with Christianity. Those who do not espouse capitalism, or those who do not prosper within it,

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26 This is a postcard bought from a merchant in downtown Kingston, Ontario, Canada. Copyright The American Postcard Co., INC., NYC / Get Bent Graphics NYC.

27 The metonymic shift from “let us pray” to “let us prey” can be further refined to “let U.S. prey,” reflecting the Corporate Christian cultural megalomania inherent in Reagan and the Religious Right’s belief in their own superiority.
are therefore demonized, as were the Soviets by Reagan’s dogma, and as are China, Iraq, Iran, Cuba, North Korea—all ‘others’ in today’s tabloids.

Reagan’s use of apocalyptic rhetoric to situate the communist other as the Antichrist was an easy task because “Biblical apocalyptic resorts to similes, negatives, parodies and analogies in its attempt to describe the indescribable, . . . preferring to leave the text as a juxtaposition of images profoundly enigmatic.” Thus, Reagan was easily able to impose his own meaning onto this template. O’Leary gives a sample of Reagan’s infamous “Evil Empire” address, in which Reagan uses “Biblical imagery to demonize the Soviets”:

“There is sin and evil in the world, and we’re enjoined by Scripture and the Lord Jesus to oppose it with all our might. . . . [L]et us pray for the salvation of all those who live in . . . totalitarian darkness—pray they will discover the joy of knowing God. But until they do, let us be aware that while they preach the supremacy of the state, declare its omnipotence over individual man, and predict its eventual domination of all the peoples on the Earth, they are the focus of evil in the modern world.”

Reagan’s success shows that “a vast portion of the American audience seems willing to engage in (or at least tolerate) apocalyptic speculations on the eschatological significance of contemporary history.” This is because apocalyptic discourse is part of the Christian culture map, and because it allows people to consider themselves among the chosen ‘few’ of the world; this kind of rhetoric appeals to the ego.

It is the cult of the ego—the individual ‘I’—that provides the impetus for Corporate Christianity under the capitalist aegis. Like communism, Christianity calls for

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29 O’Leary, p. 181.
30 O’Leary, p. 183.
an eventual domination of all the peoples of the world, by the select after Armageddon, and the totalizing ideology of a capitalist world order espouses the same goal under the guise of individualism. By calling for a New World Order of American rule (what would later become George Bush’s rallying call in the Gulf War), Reagan was able to justify the economic and political subjugation of the ‘others’ of the world. The apocalyptic rhetoric was used because it offered a convenient excuse for this subjugation. As Chomsky says, “A standard technique of belief formation goes along with oppression . . . The standard reaction is to say: ‘It’s their depravity. That’s why I’m doing it. Maybe I’m even doing them good.’” The others of the world deserve their oppression because they are not the elect, they are not Christians. Only the elect of Christianity would be allowed prosperity in the order of geopolieconomics, an Order that is both an edict and a system for creating an ultimate unified capitalist market, with the United States situated as supreme. ‘Theirs was the impetus of a God-ordained mission to prosper, to engender the world with the capitalist Word, the New World order: the American I-deal—you follow.

Reagan and the Religious Right’s cultural megalomania created an economy wherein “the money of destruction . . . that circulates in nuclear orbit suffices to control all the violence and potential conflicts around the world.” The attempt to define the world in this way, to be the guarantor of a credit economy fuelled by violence

31 Barsamian, p. 65.
32 The notion of the Christian elect and the democratic process of election has perhaps more than just a metonymic connection here. It is reasonable to see that Reagan and the Religious Right interpreted this mnemonic association as further evidence of the divinely ordained impetus behind capitalism as interpreted by the United States, thereby corroborating Corporate Christian cultural megalomania.
(MAD—Mutually Assured Destruction), is the transumption of history, as Reagan anticipates the Apocalypse as the next thrust of God’s divine right to engender the new world with Corporate Christianity—the chosen ones of Christian husbandry. The tabloids studied here support this premise, promising salvation and redemption for all who believe in the Corporate Christian ideology.

America is seen as a Biblical referent, usurping

34 Sun, May 13, 1997. It should be noted that the woman pictured on this cover is Hilary Clinton.

historical and geographical data in an effort to construct a genealogy that corroborates an American primacy enacted within Corporate Christianity. Please note that the Garden of Eden is located just outside Denver, Colorado. Revelations of new data from previously unknown holy texts reveal close ties

between the American President and Jesus, as America becomes the seat of power in an apocalyptic world.

The *Sun* 23 September 1997 reports on “End of the World Secrets from the Messiah Tomb,” a “World Exclusive” of “Christ’s Deathbed Writings” that enables readers to “Discover truth of what happens after you

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37 *Sun*, September 17, 1996.
“die,” bear witness to “Miracles that will change your life forever,” and learn that the “White House seeks summit with Vatican and Bible scholars.” The articulation here—the joining of political and religious authority within the discourse—is a common theme in both the Sun and the Weekly World News, and is an important feature of the construction of a Corporate Christian mentality. While there is no mention in the article of just what bed on which Christ wrote his “Deathbed Writings,” “The six tablets, which have been verified as authentic by a team of Israeli scientists, contain prophecies which are ‘100 per cent accurate’ of past events” [italics mine].  

The article reports “experts” as saying that 1997 is the beginning of the End:  

By the year 2000, death and sickness will be things of the past. No one will age. The stones tell us we’ll all be given beautiful, healthy young bodies ‘without stain and without blemish.’ Mankind will live for all eternity, under the care of a good and benign God. Glory be. Such wondrous miracles are in store for us all!  

Bodies are accentuated here, as readers who in some way deviate from a beauty mythos are told that the time will come when they too can be “in fashion.” But until that time, no one need bother to care for their present body: a new one will be issued in the year 2000.  

This expiry date mentality fuels the ongoing and increasing consumption of

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38 Sun 23 September 1997, p. 20.


40 Beauty mythos body ideals are also re-presented in the Weekly World News, which runs a “Page 5 Girl” regular feature of a bikini-clad woman that perpetuates the model-conscious culture of consumerism.

41 Members of the Heaven’s Gate sect believed that they were to get new bodies from their celestial counterparts, reflecting a corporeal concern as tied to apocalyptic expectation.

42 The idea of an expiry date mentality is the fear or belief—or both—that there is a definite beginning, middle and end to life. But the problem is that the expiry date of infinity is fast approaching: “September 9th 1999 will also be a day that lives in infamy, thanks to the programming convention that uses ‘9/9/99’ as the code for ‘forever’—that is, for products that have no expiry date” (“The Millennium Bug.” The Economist, October 4, 1997. 25-29.) The fact that this seemingly unattainable date is due indicates in part a historical inability to conceive of life without an apocalyptic paradigm, further underscoring a sense of a
commodities that is the capitalist paternoster of progress: to consume is to serve God in a Corporate Christian state.

The “Mankind” that “will live for all eternity” seems to speak loudest to the white couple depicted in the lower left corner of the page. Their semiotic position of primacy over the world conforms to the sense of the elect nation who will preside over the millennium of rule, where “Christ will reign in glory for 1000 years from his fabulous palace in Jerusalem." Corporate Christian control is assumed over the Middle East, a sentiment further corroborated in the next week’s issue.

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Christian cultural megalomania inherent within Corporate Christianity, as the “designers” of the system of selling by bar code did not foresee a time past September 9th, 1999.


44 Sun, September 23, 1997, p. 20.
that details “Incredible forecasts that will affect every one of us.” The interpreter of new Nostradamus apocrypha claims that one notable prophecy “means that Satan will be destroyed in the Middle East” and that Christmas 1997 will be a time of a great sign: “something wonderful will appear in the sky this Christmas Eve, perhaps The Saviour himself.”

All others in the Middle East will be annihilated by nuclear holocaust: the sight of World War III as seen through tabloid lens.

46 Sun 30 September 1997, p. 21
47 Sun 30 September 1997, pp. 20-21 Please note Saddam Hussein and Kim Jong Il, described as “‘Iron Men’ dictators” who “will do a sudden about-face.”
The danger of Satanists also harks back to the previous issue and an article about “Doomsday Cult Suicide Watch” that casts aspersion on false prophets “The House of Yahweh.” These other apocalypticists are othered in turn by the more mainstream eschatological brand name of Corporate Christianity in a shuffle for a phallogocentric primacy. All of these new-found holy apocrypha are corroborated by newfound prophecies of Nostradamus. One report from the Sun 19 August 1997, p. 21, reports that Christ will return to earth and establish “his worldwide headquarters in Jackson County, Missouri.” The “expert” says that “We’ve reached this conclusion based on Nostradamus writings, which coincide with the Book of Mormon.” Corporate Christianity takes on a further refinement, as Mormons are suddenly singled out as being the apocalyptic elect.

48 Sun, September 23, 1997, p.27.

49 Sun, August 19, 1997, p. 21.
Both the Sun and Weekly World News share a fixation with the revelations of “lost books” of the Bible, as well as with apocryphal prophecies from Nostradamus and others. These prophets are commodified within the tabloids, and their writings participate within the literary genealogy and the crucifixion of the larger cultural narrative. The currency of prophecy and the continual construction of the cultural crucifixion creates a prophet margin within the profits of Corporate Christianity that corroborates the Book of Mormon’s suspicious origins: it too was an apocryphal book. “New Found” texts lend credibility to a genealogy of found texts, in which the Book of Mormon participates. Aspects of Mormon narrative appear

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50 Sun, October 15, 1996.

51 Stephen O’Leary raised the issue of the status of the prophets within tabloid media during the question period that followed the initial presentation of this paper. During the conversation that ensued then and later, we discussed the implications of the institutionalization of contemporary prophets as representing the maintenance of a prophetic order for current consumption. This canonization illustrates the currency prophecy has within contemporary religious culture, as well as the desire to invest the present with the past (new prophets articulating an ancient type of divinity) and the past with the present (new prophets corroborate the statements of old prophets). This last point also demonstrates Enlightenment ideals of progress pressed (literally and literarily) into the present as pre-sent forms of authority. Thus the present reaffirms the past even while the past reifies the present.
also in the Weekly World News. The 20 May 1997 cover story of “Chilling Prophecies

Found in 1847 Time Capsule” reports on the wagon train that coincides with the Mormon trek to Zion in that same year. The expert in charge of revealing these prophecies is from Salt Lake City, headquarters of Mormon operations. The recent Weekly World News four part series on “The Millennium Papers” presents texts published by an “elite” group known as “the Nostradamus 10,” which distributes an eponymously titled publication “by mailing it to individuals, companies and politicians.” 52 This could be any pamphlet from any

number of religious groups that see failure in the stock market and the general breakdown of social safety nets as apocalyptic portents heralding the End of the world. Part II of the four part series focuses on the impending dangers of “Foreign and domestic terrorism,” “Muslim fundamentalism,” and an “Asian Aids threat.” Part III focuses on such internal American strife as “Violent Crime,” “Multiculturalism,” “Employment” and the imminent “School systems crash.” Part IV attempts to “lay out some of the exciting good news Americans have to look forward to

53 This flyer was delivered to my home. It advertises Seventh-day Adventist seminars spanning three nights that will teach how “You Can Thrive in Life’s Toughest times,” “Countdown to Eternity,” and “A World in Turmoil: What Next?”—all aimed at providing adherents with the belief that they will prosper in the apocalyptic times that punctuate contemporary life. Note that the main sponsor is “It Is Written Television,” providing the authority of print within TV media. Other sponsors include “Breath of Life TV Program,” “Lifestyle Magazine TV Program,” “Voice of Prophecy Radio Program,” and “Signs of the Times Magazine Journal,” as well as “hundreds of local Christian organizations across the continent,” a veritable panoply of media that have language in some form as their axis of mediation. During the last three years I have had four such flyers delivered to my home at different cities across Canada, all sponsored by a Seventh-day Adventist group. I have also been visited by both Jehovah Witnesses and Mormon proselytizers many times, reflecting common concerns over apocalyptic expectation and the notion of the Christian elect.


in 1997 and 1998.”\textsuperscript{56} These include the end of corporate downsizing and employment and prosperity for all, but most importantly, and noted prominently, a “Rocky Mountain Prosperity.”\textsuperscript{57} “The Future Looks Bright” heralds the byline, especially for those in “Utah” in “the state’s ‘knowledge’ industry.”\textsuperscript{58} Salt Lake City is singled out as an area of dominance in this aspect of technology, as control over knowledge is an important theme in Christian apocalyptic.

That corporate control of the world conforms to the Mormon project is suggested in a recent \textit{Time} article on the Mormons by David Van Biema, 4 August 1997.


\textsuperscript{57} \textit{Weekly World News}, September 9, 1997, p. 25.

\textsuperscript{58} \textit{Weekly World News}, September 9, 1997, p. 25.
smacks of Mormon doctrine. The connection makes more sense when consideration is 
given to whom or what is the Apocalyptic Other with/in tabloid discourse.

There are two distinct “others” effected by the Sun and Weekly World News. 
The first and foremost is that person who does not buy any brand of Christianity. This 
person is automatically excluded from the elect because of faith, or rather the lack of it.

But within Christian culture are sects 
such as the Mormons who have long sought legitimacy in mainstream Christianity. Van 
Biema reports in his Time article that Mormon membership has expanded rapidly in the 
last 46 years and the Mormon church now boasts a $5.9 billion annual income and $30 
billion in assets worldwide, a phenomenon he links to the success of “corporate 
Mormonism” and its appeal to others who witness Mormon prosperity. It is impossible 
to know who exactly reads these magazines, and I do not wish to conjecture as to the 
makeup of their readership. What I do will suggest is that the discourse of Corporate

59 Weekly World News, September 23, 1997, 46. Interpretation is foregrounded here, as Dr. Ernest 
Caramen proclaims, “It’s heartbreaking but true—huge numbers of people who think of themselves as 
Mormons will wake up after the Apocalypse and find themselves in Hell.” Caramen, “the 
author of a forthcoming book called To Save your Soul!” propounds his version of author-ity over the 
Bible.

Christianity, which now may also be linked to the Mormon project, offers the socio-economically underprivileged a psychological avenue of escape from the oppression of being poor. People are encouraged to remain poor, as this becomes the precondition necessary for the reversal of fortune foretold in the Revelation. Thus, those that are othered by the capitalist system in general are given an avenue of redemption via tabloid apocalyptic with stories that proclaim ways to get out of debt, win the lotteries, or use psychic powers to get rich. In this way, these tabloids cater to the Other, as it is this Other that will inherit the earth at the Second Coming. These Others, further othered by “mainstream” society with the appeal to apocalyptic extremes, are entrenched in their position by the morality of suffering as necessary precondition to the rhetoric of redemption. And if the locus of authority is an American version of Christianity—Mormonism—then the belief in the legitimacy of apocalypticism married to an American cultural megalomania operating within this expectation reaffirms the Corporate Christian mission of creating the world in its own image, the image of America—the brand name of a Christian capitalism.

The buying public consumes the body of supposed biblical apocryphal text represented in tabloid crucifixion, thereby purchasing apocalyptic ideology. But these tabloids could also be carnivalesque, and thereby help to divest apocalyptic expectation

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61 The number of stories that deal with getting rich and/or making money are many, further reflecting tabloids as a locus for “secret” information that will provide an avenue of escape from being poor. This tradition of “how-to” books has a long literary history with antecedents in Renaissance England, when the relatively new printing press made it possible for the cheap production of printed materials.

62 The narcissistic impulse of Christian creation is reflected in the creation of “man”: “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness . . . So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them” (Genesis 2:26-7). The Corporate Christian desire to do the same reflects a desire to play God within the earthly realm of economics and the Corporate Christian mission.
prevailed in contemporary culture. The politics of consumption are too extensive to
detail here, but the issue of whether the buying public that ascribes to this “purchasing
ideology” are either believers or non-believers in the mythology that underwrites these
texts is perhaps moot.  

Believers may invest currency
into apocalyptic expectation while non-believers may scoff, but both still help to maintain
the cultural capital and power of print media, a medium that carries its own religious
message which ultimately influences its own reception in a self-referential circle,
perpetuating itself, with/in itself and in the larger cultural milieu in which the text is read.

All of the tabloid rhetoric appeals to those who are devout in a wicked world.
Thus, all others of the world are excluded, as these tabloids both reflect and shape
apocalyptic angst in contemporary America. Mormonism perhaps provides an avenue of
a divinely ordained prosperity to accrue to individuals. I do not know the extent, if any,

63 During the question period, Chris Smith raised the possibility of these tabloids being read as a site of
carnival. Lee Quimby also queried later the extent to which buyers of these publications actually believe in
the apocalyptic rhetoric espoused within the text. The effect of carnival is that it offers a space for
subversion and parodying of institutionalized societal norms, something these tabloids cater to. Certain
persistent questions make it difficult to conjecture on the make-up of tabloid readership, i.e. the trinity of
race|class|gender that defines socio-cultural distinction. But, the tabloids presented here do make fun of the
culture that has produced them, which further problematizes their active role in the construction of belief
and a “purchasing ideology” that sells belief in the legitimacy of print authority via this authority itself.

64 Weekly World News, December 17, 1996.
of collusion between Mormons and the editorial boards of these publications.

A good conspiracy theory would be this covert manipulation of supposed secular media such as the Sun and the Weekly World News.

But it could be just as well be that publications are

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65 Weekly World News, September 10, 1996. The cover and story of this issue are re-presented identically on and in the June 24, 1997 issue, reflecting the wholesale recycling inherent to both tabloids studied here. The fact that this issue is replicated exactly also illustrates that throw-away temporality of these artifacts, and indicating that perhaps they are not meant to be kept at all. The recycling of stories, pictures, and motifs could then function as mnemonic devices that corroborate themselves within the minds of the readers, evoking a sense of familiarity that lets the reader interpolate her or his own “knowledge” of apocrypha as affirming that which is reported. It should also be noted that the Government conspiracy is a common theme in both of these tabloids, reflecting on one level perhaps distrust in governmental authority, and on another a divine authority that transcends human authority. Or, the writers of these stories could be simply capitalizing on the currency of conspiracy theories so prevalent in contemporary culture.

fixating on millennium fever, using the dogma of print culture to capitalise on present
congerents around the year 2000.

We are all familiar with tabloids, whether we admit to reading them or not. We
all shuffle past them in the supermarket checkout line and cast a quick glance—and why
wouldn’t we? Perhaps we even have a chuckle at the blaring headlines of these cultural
comic books. What is significant about them is that they reflect contemporary concerns
about millennial angst. Frequent integers of aliens, immortality, computer conspiracies,
and the significance of contemporary events all seek to corroborate a megalomaniacal
belief that the End is near. Tabloids try to appeal to their public by giving localized


examples of how

coming apocalypse. Apocryphal texts are constantly being “discovered,” presenting new
revelations that reveal their readers will be saved, exemplifying America as Promised
Land. But we would be naive to think that these seemingly innocuous tabloids—this
pulp fiction—are isolated in their apocalyptic rhetoric.

Life and Time magazines, as well as

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Hollywood movies from "12 Monkeys" to "Armageddon" and TV shows like the "X-Files,

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70 *Time*, (April 8, 1996); Spilt-image--illustration for *Time* by Anita Kunz; photograph for *Time* by Gregory Heisler.

71 *Time*, December 16, 1996. Digital Photomontage by Kinuko y. Craft. Interestingly, the back cover of this issue features a Microsoft advertisement. If, as the article posits, the Internet is transforming the way in which faith and religion are being negotiated, then the “timeliness” of
“Millennium,” and “Touched by an Angel” are also complicit in promoting and catering to this advertisement points to a Corporate Christian backdrop in Microsoft itself, or another computer conspiracy theory.  

millennial anxiety about some semblance of apocalyptic destruction and divine intervention into worldly affairs. Believers and unbelievers alike are forced to negotiate the Christian millennium, proving that our supposedly secular, post-religious world still

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74 *Time*, (October 6, 1997). Gordon M. Grant--IPOL, Inc.
seeks corroboration from the Transcendental Signifier of the Western metaphysic. Is God dead? Or has he risen again? With the Western, Christianized historicism actualizing the extent of its predicted historical epoch, we have the chance to see in full light the ‘end’ result of our past: the present preoccupation with religious, Christian apocalyptic in America relegates all Others to the margins of culture.

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Bibliography


