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## The Specter of Heresy and Blasphemy in the English Revolution

David Loewenstein

in *Treacherous Faith: The Specter of Heresy in Early Modern English Literature and Culture*

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Item type: chapter

This chapter examines the flourishing of anti-heretical writings, including the heresiography, a new kind of book that emerged during the 1640s and 1650s as orthodox godly authorities voiced their nightmarish fantasies about heretics and generated a new period of religious fear. Orthodox godly writers, including Thomas Edwards and Ephraim Pagitt, desperately tried to control the scourge of heresy and toleration, and this chapter explores the tension between the urge to eradicate the lethal contagion of heresy and the recognition that it might be uncontrollable. This chapter discusses the outburst of anti-heretical discourses during the English Revolution, the vivid language they employed, the sensationalist stories they related, and the specter of monstrous heresy they constructed. The notorious case of the blasphemous Quaker James Nayler in 1656 reveals how fears of infectious heresy and blasphemy reach a climax during the Interregnum, highlighting acute anxieties in English Protestant culture over religious symbolism in relation to the extreme and theatrical behavior of heretics.

## Bleached Faith

Steven Goldberg

Published in print: 2008 Published Online: June 2013  
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Item type: book

Public recognition of religion has been a part of American political life from the country's beginning, and that is not going to change. But in recent years, the effort by some to challenge the long held separation of church and state by imposing religion in the public sphere has

caused more harm than good. Along the lines of other incredulous “neo-Enlightenment” books, this book makes a case that the gravest threat to real faith comes from those who would water down religion in order to win the dubious honor of forcing it into public buildings and classrooms. The freedom of religion enjoyed in the United States, both as a matter of law and practice, is extraordinary by any measure. However, when American courts allow the government to insert religious symbolism in public spaces, real religion is the loser. The author argues that people on both sides of this debate should resist this corruption of religion. The book provides a survey of the legal and political environment in which battles over the public display of the Ten Commandments, the teaching of intelligent design in our schools, and the celebration of religious holidays take place. The author firmly maintains that, “if American religion becomes a watered-down broth that is indistinguishable from consumerism and science, we will have no one to blame but ourselves”.

## “Bolivarian” Anti-Semitism

Claudio Lomnitz and Rafael Sánchez

in Powers: Religion as a Social and Spiritual Force

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Item type: chapter

This chapter discusses the use of religious symbolism to disempower others. It surveys recent cases of anti-Semitism in Venezuela that are directly related to Hugo Chávez's attempts to stabilize his position as the nation's leader. It argues that the attack on the Tiferet Israel Synagogue in Caracas on January 30, 2009, is part of a continuous stream of anti-Semitic statements and acts in Venezuela, which associate the Jews with Adolf Hitler and the devil through the symbolism of swastikas and the number 666, the Mark of the Beast in Revelation 13:18. Such anti-Semitism, combined with populism, military uniforms, and homophobia, helps to construct the regime's opponents as enemies of the state by associating them with Zionist imperialism and the Jews. It thus legitimates either expelling these outsiders from the body of the nation or subjecting them to the will of the people. This ideology has a firm basis in the work of the Argentine Holocaust denier Norberto Ceresole, who acted as Chávez's adviser, rather than in the writings of the great liberator Simón Bolívar.