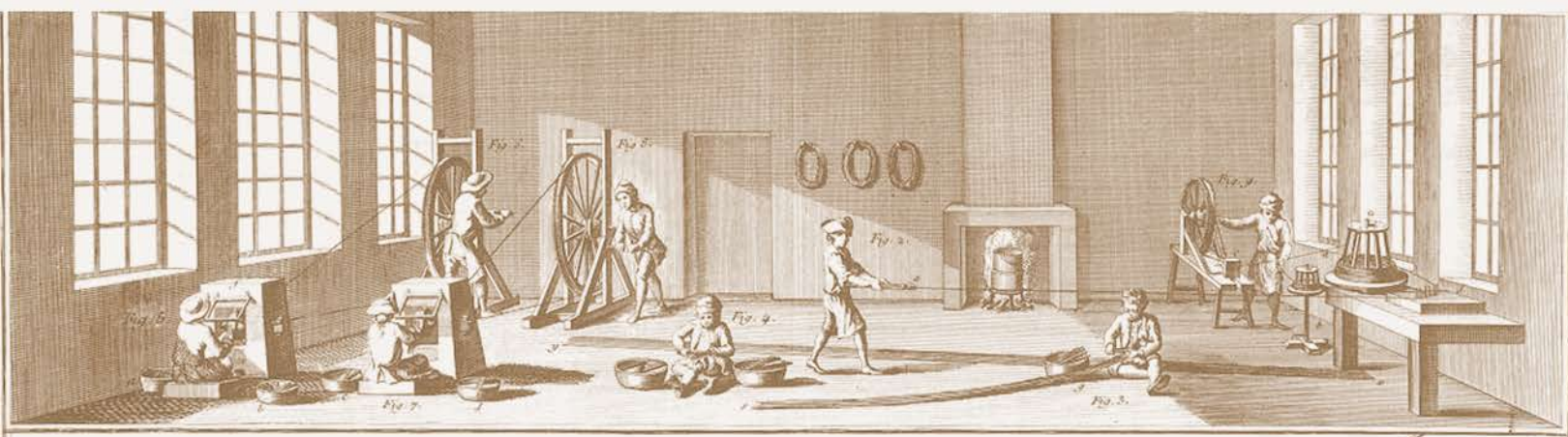


# The WORKSHOP

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The WORKSHOP  
Number Five

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## From the Editor

REBECCA L. SPANG

It proves oddly appropriate and even instructive that this particular issue has been a bit delayed in publication. At the “Eighteenth-Century Futures” workshop (May 2016), many of our conversations turned on whether the future was (and/or was understood to be) “open” or “closed.” In other words, was the future something both unknown and unknowable (because it had yet to happen, and experience provides us with the only evidence we have) or was it unknown yet nonetheless already largely set? Depending on context, the future might be envisioned as a political ambition or speculated on in probabilistic terms; it could be wished for or dreaded; it might be planned by men [*sic*] or promised by God. If many in the eighteenth century conceived of the future as “out of their hands” or divinely ordained (as do many today), others derived hope from the thought that the future might be theirs to make.

Publication closes one future for authors and their characters, even as it opens other possible futures to readers, reviewers, and writers of fanfiction alike. Since its founding nearly twenty years ago, the Center for Eighteenth-Century Studies at Indiana University has built its major, annual workshop around the discussion of pre-circulated, unpublished texts—texts, we might say, with a future. Part of the pleasure of looking back at the workshop in retrospect is to see colleagues’ ideas, arguments, and analysis develop through interaction with each other (such that a text’s possible futures at the start of the workshop and those it has at the end may not always coincide). When we met in May 2016, for instance, David Alff’s *The Wreckage of Intentions: Projects in British Culture, 1660-1730* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017) and Christina Lupton’s *Reading and the Making of Time in the Eighteenth Century* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018) were still works in progress—the transcribed discussions published here show us these authors (and many others) still in the process of honing their arguments, crafting their prose.

The conceptual entanglements and meta-media contortions of a volume that records past conversations about the future as if they were happening in an eternal present are easily seen here: in any of the transcriptions, for instance, there comes a point at which the session chair lists the commentators and questioners who are still yet to come (most of whose eventual words then do appear several pages later). But with two years’ hindsight, it is the political thread running through these discussions that stands out most sharply. At the very beginning of the workshop, for instance, a graduate student was reminded (following Center norms) that her status allowed her to jump the queue and “trump” faculty members wanting to speak; she chuckled and replied, “I feel so powerful being trump.” In the context of late spring 2016, when Donald Trump had just, somewhat improbably (and thanks in no small part to the recent Indiana primary results), emerged as the almost certain Republican Party candidate for president, his name could still be used to ever-so-slightly-nervous comic effect. Later in the workshop, intervening to suggest that the primary purpose of counterfactual writing is to produce something “interesting,” something that results in “affects of attentiveness and excitement,” a colleague said, “You could come up with a lot of different [counterfactual] scenarios [that are] boring, and so we would not even think about them. ... I mean Hitler has to win the damn war or

something.” The counterfactual, he proposed, “makes the past interesting again” and potentially has the same effect on the future as well. He continued, “There’s something happening that’s exciting: maybe Trump gets elected, something crazy will happen”—an astute insight into the thrill of the counterfactual and a statement met with general laughter. Nobody in the room really expected anything *that* exciting to happen.

But now “something crazy” has been happening for more than eighteen months. Long since anything to laugh about (except in the bleakest of ways), events of the past two years cast claims and conversations from the workshop in a new light. One paper, for instance, called our attention to Coleridge distinguishing the Roman Empire from Napoleon’s by means of the latter’s “rapidity... The reigns of the first three Caesars have been crowded into the three first years of the reign of Bonaparte.” Read today, those lines call to mind the many recent editorials, articles, and books in which authors assert or question the appropriateness of the 1930s as comparator for our present political moment. Hartmut Rosa’s argument—that political change once happened at a speed that corresponded to human lives but late financial capitalism has sped change up so much that politics [as we have known it for the past two centuries] is left behind—also rings more eerily true in summer 2018 than it did in May 2016. In retrospect, perhaps most eerie of all is the description by one participant of a certain strain in Marxist historiography—with its emphasis on the agency of ordinary working people and optimism about the possibility of meaningful revolution—as “an appealing counterfactual, counter-narrative” but not anything “we” might ever accept as true.

In the current moment, we take our future hopes where we can find them. I derive some small joy from the thought of readers around the world accessing these conversations and building their own futures from them. (It has been suggested that the transcripts may some day be acted out by participants’ children, friends, or colleagues.) Joy comes, too, from thinking of the Center’s past achievements and on-going work. As always, it is a pleasure to thank individuals and institutions, including: Executive Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Indiana University-Bloomington, Larry Singell; the Center’s first two Directors, Professors Dror Wahrman and Mary Favret; the Center’s Administrator and Financial Officer, Dr. Barbara Truesdell and Melinda Bristow-Meadows; and above all, our talented and dedicated transcribers, Tracey Hutchings-Goetz, H. Grace Schmitt, and Robert Wells.

## Smuggling, Police, and Empire: Michael Kwass's *Contraband* and the History of Consumption

REBECCA L. SPANG

Hello! As I think you all know, I am Rebecca Spang, Director of the Center for Eighteenth-Century Studies at Indiana University, and it's a very great pleasure for me to welcome you to this discussion and celebration of Michael Kwass's *Contraband* which has been awarded this year's Kenshur Prize for the best book in our field. The Center has been awarding a book prize since 2008 and this event has really become one of the highlights of our year. What I want to do now is to make a few introductory comments about our speakers and then a few slightly longer comments about the book. Then—lest I forget—we will have the formal giving of the prize, followed by more comments and discussion.

Let me first introduce my fellow commentators and thank them for serving on the Kenshur Prize Committee with me this year. Helen F. Thompson is Associate Professor of English and Director of Graduate Studies at Northwestern University, where she is also affiliated with the Gender and Sexuality Studies Program. She has a B.A. from Amherst College in English **and** Chemistry; a masters from Johns Hopkins; and her PhD from the English Department at Duke University. Her first book, *Ingenuous Subjection: Compliance and Power in the 18<sup>th</sup>-cy Domestic Novel* read social contract theory alongside novels of domesticity to trace the political, philosophical, and generic significance of feminine compliance. Praised by Cora Kaplan as “brilliant and persuasive,” the book was also called “significant and much-needed” by Deidre Lynch and has whet everyone's appetite for Helen's next book, *Fictional Matter: Empricism, Corpuscles, and the Novel* to be published next year by Penn.

Fritz Breithaupt, known to most of you, is Professor of Germanic Studies here at Indiana University, where he is also affiliated with the Comparative Literature Department and the Cognitive Science program. He has published on an extraordinary range of topics, from empathy and Goethe's politics of perception, to money and the most recent book (at least, I think this is the most recent one!) on the “culture of the excuse” which came out a a few years ago with Suhrkamp. At the same time, Fritz is an exemplary citizen of this campus, having served in the past as Acting Director of this Center, Interim Dean of the Honors College, Director of West European Studies, and—now—as Chair of his Department.

The winner of the Kenshur Prize for books published in 2014 is Michael Kwass, Professor of History at Johns Hopkins University. A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, Michael did his PhD at the University of Michigan with David Bien, and taught at Yale and the University of Georgia before moving to Hopkins in 2011. Michael writes major, field-changing works. His first book, *Privilege and the Politics of Taxation in Eighteenth-Century France* (published by Cambridge) drew attention to the role of elite opposition to tax reform in radicalizing French society and was awarded the Society for French Historical Studies' Pinkney Prize for the best book in French history. His article, “Consumption and the World of Ideas: Consumer Revolution and the Moral Economy of the Marquis de Mirabeau” published in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, won an Honorable Mention for the Clifford Prize—that's the ASECS Prize for best article—in

2004 and I also want to make sure you are aware of the article he published in the *American Historical Review* in 2006: entitled “Big Hair: A Wig History of Consumption in Eighteenth-Century France” it manages to be simultaneously deeply researched, witty, and historiographically significant.

We are here today, however, to talk about *Contraband: Louis Mandrin and the Making of a Global Underground* (Harvard University Press, 2014). This is a remarkable book (as two other prize committees have also already concluded). In it, Michael moves from sites where the eighteenth century’s new consumer goods were produced (tobacco and sugar in the American colonies; calico in India) to where they were consumed (cities, towns, villages, and hamlets all over Europe) to craft a book that makes major contributions to scholarship on criminal justice, the Old Regime French state, and the history of consumption. He does this by focusing on the heretofore largely ignored question of *distribution* and by insisting (rightly) that “the globalization of Western European consumption from 1650 to 1800 did not take place in a political vacuum.” How could it, when the French state in this period declared a royal monopoly on the import and sale of tobacco and (for a time) strictly prohibited the import of printed cotton cloth from India? This attempt at creating a new source of royal income (and protecting French textile producers) was partly successful: at the end of the Old Regime, for instance, the tobacco monopoly yielded over seven percent of French state revenues. Yet these same measures had the unintentional effect of creating an enormous “shadow economy” in smuggled goods. Michael estimates that it employed over a million men, women, and children—something like 5% of the French population. We know about the the trade in “underground” and “forbidden” books from Robert Darnton and his students, but contraband salt, calico, and tobacco were actually much more common. It is with this last—and especially with the manhunt launched against one famous smuggling gang in French Savoy (the “Wild East”)—that *Contraband* is especially concerned.

Why does this story matter? In the interest of time, I will suggest just four answers to this question.

1. Because we now finally have a history of consumption and of the intersection of eighteenth-century political and economic life that is about ordinary people. These have been lively fields for the past two decades, but they have been dominated by studies of exceptional individuals (be it Elizabeth Shackleton’s careful parceling out of her hand-me-downs or the “thought” of Adam Smith, Condorcet, et. al.).

2. Because the French Farmers-General—the tax farmers charged with running the royal tobacco monopoly and collecting taxes from it—looked none-too-kindly on the infringement of its privileges and decrease in its income caused by smuggling. Of the Farm’s nearly 30,000 employees, two-thirds of them were armed guards—a paramilitary force that eventually stopped at nothing to capture the most notorious smuggler of all, Louis Mandrin.

3. Because as the scale of production, consumption, and illicit distribution grew, so too did that of enforcement. In the middle decades of the eighteenth century, special courts judged roughly 500 cases of supposed smuggling every year (more than one a day). Of those, something like 20% ended in death sentences. In other words, over a 60 year period, 6000 people were executed for smuggling. If these numbers are small beside those for the U.S. “war on drugs”—currently, something over a million arrests every year—they nonetheless arise from a similar logic.

4. Because when philosophes criticized the Old Regime, they all—even “moderates” like Montesquieu—singled out the institution of the Farmers-General and the punishing of smugglers with death as barbarous elements. Popular revolt combined with these demands for reform and had the effect of fully politicizing the shadow economy. I could go on. But I won’t. And I could ask questions. But I will save those for later. For now, I simply want to ask all of you to join me in congratulating Michael Kwass on writing another superb book.



## Vivid History: Kwass's *Contraband* and the Good/Bad Eighteenth Century

HELEN THOMPSON

Recommending Michael Kwass's *Contraband* to a friend, I realized that his history could be praised in terms taken from David Hume. In *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Hume offers an appraisal of the mental state of "belief" that pivots on why we credit history (though not present to witness it). Hume suggests: "Belief is somewhat more than a simple idea. 'Tis a particular manner of forming an idea: And as the same idea can only be vary'd by a variation of its degrees of force and vivacity; it follows . . . that belief is a *lively idea*" (*Treatise*, 97, emphasis added). In countless profound and surprising ways, Kwass's book meets the Humean criterion of "vivacity" as the condition for ideas that stimulate belief in history. Bracketing for a moment the high stakes of the revision to which belief in Kwass's history leads, I want to affirm the vividness with which he brings to life not only the exploits of the smuggler Louis Mandrin but also the regional, national, and global contexts in which Mandrin's acts assumed meaning. To cite one very concrete example, Kwass transforms how we see the map of eighteenth-century France and its neighbor Savoy: these are not statically delineated territories but zones subject to fiscal regulation whose manifest arbitrariness enhances how vividly we appreciate their perviousness to contraband. Expanding outward to a globalizing market at the same time that it turns inward to motivate the intensive—or, from the vantage of a scholar of Britain, crazy—fiscal discipline exacted by late ancien régime France, Kwass's book likewise vivifies the map of the eighteenth-century world.

To try to gloss the broad stakes of Kwass's study is to risk stilling the liveliness of not only its description but also its argument. Nevertheless, I can begin by saying that the stakes are high, not only for the French Revolution and its political antecedents but for a host of concomitant historical developments, cultural institutions, and historiographical ways of thinking. Most notable among these is the consumer revolution, which Kwass promises both to globalize and to extirpate from Whiggish narratives of polite commercial progress. Even the arguably most idealized byproduct of the rise of consumer society—the emergence of a so-called bourgeois public sphere of rational debate—is refracted across Kwass's account of the "parallel illicit economy" that exists as the very product of an "emergent global" market (42). Criminal contraband and its attendant violence—and, in Mandrin's case, also its attendant close simulacrum of licit exertions of fiscal power—is not, Kwass shows us, the stark antagonist but rather the flip side of a rising Enlightenment fueled by global commerce. As one major historiographical refinement driven by Kwass's vivification of omnipresent smuggling, we discover that the genealogy of carceral discipline written by Michel Foucault may be a bit too bloodless. Aimed, literally, at crushing smugglers who violated the General Farmers' prerogative, the eighteenth-century convergence of French absolutism's military and fiscal authority anticipates "the modern French prison system" but remained unacknowledged by Foucault (234). In Kwass's account, the origins of modern discipline reach back to Chesapeake Bay tobacco production, are sustained in France as enforcement of the state monopoly on the leaf and—in a decisively anti-Whiggish turn—wind up enslaving consumers of slave labor by sending convicted traffickers to toil in galleys and penal camps.

Turning to Kwass's most topical intervention, we encounter a French Revolution whose motivation has been re-centered: still a reaction against arbitrary power, to be sure, but

launched on July 12 by the destruction of new, contraband-busting walls around the city of Paris rather than by the storming of the Bastille two days later. The former heralds the National Assembly's more ambivalent embrace of populist calls for an end to indirect taxation of consumer goods and the accompanying repressive apparatus, an ambivalence that would be proved by the early nineteenth-century restitution of the hugely lucrative tobacco monopoly. What is most persuasive about this revised vantage on revolution is the force with which Kwass defends the political significance of Mandrin's short-lived but astonishing career. While Mandrin's highly performative flouting of fiscal law did not in any strict sense catalyze revolution, Kwass shows that the smuggler's incursion into the state-controlled tobacco and calico market was political to its core. By imposing contraband on state distribution outlets—infusing trafficked goods into the licit market by forcing low-level agents to buy them at gun- or sword-point—Mandrin challenged indirect taxation all the way up to the king. (Indeed, as Kwass reminds us, Mandrin left receipts that stuck the Farm with the bill.) Through Mandrin's life and his multi-media afterlives, and through the pre-revolutionary discourses of political economy and penal reform, Kwass shows how thoroughly Mandrin politicized the underground market. Perhaps more than anything, Kwass vivifies the moral logic of Mandrin's acts—which included selective excarceration of prisoners convicted of dealing in contraband—to stress the persistent failure of economic transgression, in minds both high and low, to register as crime.

The dubious criminality of traffic in contraband contributed to Mandrin's near mythic status during his lifetime and continues through the present day. To begin to formulate a question that is more meta-historical than properly historical, I return to a gloss of the micro-historian Giovanni Levi offered by Kwass to qualify the agency of everyday people: they occupy an “oxymoronic realm of heavily constrained freedom, where the mental faculties of the individual confront mighty but not quite omnipotent social structures and norms” (13). The genuine thrill of Mandrin's exploits, which resonate with today's theoretically informed approximations of “heavy constrained freedom” at the same time that they invite us to imagine what their eighteenth-century reception by an overtaxed people might have been, lead me to ask how or in what register this story first spoke to you [Kwass], the author? Not to bifurcate the micro- and macro-histories so cogently interwoven by the book, but I am curious to hear the history of your history. In other words: what brought you to this project initially, the “small” story of Mandrin's biography or the “big” story of taxation and smuggling? Can you speak to how access at either of these points led you to articulate the stakes of the project at its opposing scale?

This question speaks, I hope, to the relation between what you designate “[t]he happy eighteenth century” and “the sad eighteenth century”: the former “optimistic, filled with light and progress,” the latter “pessimistic, haunted by darkness and misery” or, even, driven by intensifying expropriation of the poor and escalating Atlantic slavery (359). During my own formation in eighteenth-century British literature (driven in the 1990s by the embrace of Foucault and mixed reception of Jürgen Habermas on the bourgeois public sphere), the sad eighteenth century served all too often as either redundant or countervailing evidence still eccentric to the proof it served: vis-à-vis Foucault, that imperceptible disciplinary power does finally recur to really terrible ends, or vis-à-vis Habermas, that the abstract sphere of public opinion upholds a normatively disembodied ideal at the cost of other, embodied and excluded persons. I do not mean to minimize these debates, but they engage the “good” eighteenth century as a still coherent abstraction punctured by the discrete bogeyman (or bogeywoman)

of the “bad” eighteenth century. Your treatment of contraband seems more finely to fuse, or confuse, good and bad sides, literally to populate the century with actors who move in-between: “Those excluded from the fruits of the century’s economic growth proved to be essential links in the commodity chains that buttressed consumption during the Enlightenment” (359). Along with chains and links, there is no more apt figure than smuggling itself to evoke the confusion of good and bad sustained by your book. With the question of how micro led you to macro or vice-versa, can you also speak to how you would articulate the nature of the connection between “good” and “bad”, whether it solicits a word like “dialectical” or something quite other, and how you feel such an articulation might most powerfully inflect historical methods for study of this period?

Finally, I cannot resist a question that I suspect has been asked before. At key points you invoke the American war on drugs as testimony not to Foucaultian discipline but to contemporary class- and race-based “discrimination”: the drug war’s repressive, arbitrary, and morally ambivalent anti-trafficking laws reflect “an invention of the modern state that in many ways is still with us” (249). To be brief, I would like to know: what specifically would you say your book helps us see about the war on drugs? In the eighteenth century context, you show the deep inter-reliance of licit and illicit economies, the role of repression in the emergence of state power, and the domestic repercussions of global commodity flows. What specific aspects of America’s prosecution of the drug war does Mandrin bring into most urgent critical focus?

As somebody finishing a book on corpuscular chemistry and the novel, I nominate as my favorite Farmer (if we can admit such a category!), the so-called father of modern chemistry: Antoine-Laurent Lavoisier. He appears by name twice in Kwass’s history, to denounce retailers who adulterate Farm tobacco with various additives and, more damningly, to promote the “new outer wall” around Paris that became the locus of revolutionary rage (327). But in fact Lavoisier surfaces three times: he stood fourth in line among the nineteen Farmers guillotined for conspiracy against the French people in May 1794 (Poirier, *Lavoisier*, 379). With this dénouement, good and bad sides of Enlightenment converge inexorably once more. It is testimony to the Humean force of Kwass’s book that contraband transmutes good and bad into one indelible history.

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## Reflections on *Contraband*: What a Smuggler Can Teach Us about Writing Eighteenth-Century Global History

MICHAEL KWASS

I am thrilled and deeply honored to receive this year's Kenshur prize, and would like to thank Rebecca Spang and the other members of the prize committee (Fritz Breithaupt and Helen Thompson, for all the time and effort they put into the selection process). I currently serve on a prize committee for the American Historical Association and am keenly aware of the enormous amount of work that such service requires. Thank you all for your tireless efforts, and thanks to everyone else for coming out at 4:00 on a Friday afternoon to talk about the eighteenth century.

As is customary, I'll begin by reading page ninety-nine of my book:

The exact relationship between nobles and their trafficking underlings was not always clear. Did nobles simply look the other way or were they actively involved in the illicit commerce? A case from Normandy suggests that some gentlemen were actually running the show from behind the scenes. In the town of St. Lo, a nobleman named Adigard imported fraudulent tobacco from the Channel Islands of Jersey and Guernsey, milled it in his manor house, and had his valet and a local dressmaker fill thousands of paper packets with snuff, which were then delivered under the cover of night to a corrupt local tobacco receiver with whom he split the profits. The receiver frequently dined at the nobleman's manor, making deals in "hushed tones" so the domestics did not hear.

This passage comes from Chapter Four, which sketches the underground economy in eighteenth-century France. As you can see, this was a robust illicit economy that drew men and women from across the social spectrum, including the nobility. Peasants did most of the heavy lifting—and ran the most risk of getting caught—but nobles, clerics, and merchants also wheeled and dealt behind the scenes.

Before I go on to describe the illicit economy, I would like to discuss the principal methodological and historiographical interventions my book seeks to make. What follows, therefore, is a sort of meta-analysis of *Contraband*.

Methodologically, the book aims to do two things. First, it seeks to play with scale, both geographical and temporal. Geographically, it embeds a microhistory of a famous eighteenth-century smuggler named Louis Mandrin in a broader history of globalization. In so doing, it suggests a connections among the rise of world trade, the political development of France, and the life of Mandrin. Moving between scales made writing the book a real challenge. When do I zoom in to tell Mandrin's personal story (his childhood, his descent into crime, his career as a smuggler, his execution, and his afterlife as a legendary folk hero)? When do I zoom out and provide national, regional, and global context (such as the rivalry among European states; European expansion into Asia, Africa, and the Americas; and the growth of world trade)? How do I draw connections between these different levels of scale? These were explicit questions I asked myself. The temporal scale I play with is mostly implicit. The parallels between eighteenth-century underground trade and today's "war on drugs" are striking: this is what drew me into the project in the first place. I did not want to force the comparison, but I do think it is important to maintain a dialogue between past and present, between the eighteenth century where I work and the twenty-first century where I live.

Perhaps we can talk about this in the discussion, but I believe this kind of communication between past and present is crucial for the health of eighteenth-century studies as a field.

The second methodological goal was to cut across the disciplines of history, economics, and literature. I wanted to tell a story about eighteenth-century political economy, the lives of ordinary smugglers, and the criminal justice system, but I also wanted to bring out the cultural and intellectual dimensions of the problem of smuggling. By cultural and intellectual dimensions, I mean everything that relates to the making of meaning and the world of ideas. So, I asked: What did global commodities mean to the men and women who consumed them? How did smugglers perceive their trade? How did readers appropriate meaning from the explosion of popular literature on smuggling (a question which raises the tricky problem of reader response)? And how did Enlightenment thinkers such as economists and legal reformers represent smuggling and the crackdown on contraband by the criminal justice system?

When I first started doing research for this book I noticed that the walls between disciplines were formidable (I'm sure Rebecca noticed the same thing when she began her research on money in the French Revolution). Social and economic historians worked on the mechanics of smuggling. Literary scholars worked on representations of criminality. Intellectual historians and philosophers worked on political and economic thought. But none of these people were talking to one another, and because they were not in dialogue they missed the larger eighteenth-century story. By combining these various approaches, I thought we could learn something new about the history of the period. This is what makes the field of eighteenth-century studies so valuable: it encourages scholars to play with different methodologies and cut across fields to provide new perspectives on the period.

So much for methodology. What about historiography? The book's historiographical intervention is relatively simple. It seeks to complicate our understanding of the so-called "consumer revolution" of the eighteenth century. Since the 1980s, historians have discovered that between 1650 and 1800 Europeans were consuming more and more stuff, including clothing, household furnishings, and colonial goods such as sugar, tobacco, tea, coffee, and chocolate. The historians of the consumer revolution made a fascinating discovery: Europe was filling up with goods long before the Industrial Revolution. Before the spread of factory production, the material world of Europe was rapidly expanding.

The literature on the consumer revolution is rich and complex, but I found it frustrating in one respect. It is profoundly apolitical. It depicts a rosy eighteenth century with households cheerfully accumulating more and more goods. My book complicates this picture in two ways. First, it calls attention to the fact that the consumer revolution did not unfold in a liberal free-trade environment. This was not a century of peaceable accumulation. Rather, it emerged in a war-torn age of fiscalism, when rival states sought to fiscalize the consumption and trade of global commodities in an effort to bolster their military power, and mercantilism, when rival states sought to control the flow of colonial goods around the world to the benefit of national economies. In the French case, the royal tobacco monopoly is an excellent example of fiscalism. Louis XIV established a monopoly on the production and trade of tobacco from the Americas as part of a larger effort to strengthen royal finances. Mercantilism, on the other hand, is well illustrated by the calico prohibition, a ban on the production and sale of cotton cloth from India. Here the king wished to protect domestic textile producers from the influx of coveted cloth from Asia.

These fiscal and mercantilist interventions in world trade had the unintended effect of globalizing the underground economy. In France, tobacco and calico flooded the black market, joining older European products like salt. This expansion of underground commerce suggests that there was a dark side to global trade and the consumer revolution it sustained. The second way I complicate overly optimistic depictions of the consumer revolution is to

suggest that the illicit economy had profound political implications. One political implication was rebellion, as the moral disjuncture between royal law and popular culture gave rise to violent cycles of rebellion from below. Mandrin's career illustrates this beautifully. He led a gang of over a hundred armed men (a small private army) and dramatized his attacks on the General Farm (the private company that oversaw the tobacco monopoly and calico ban). Not only did he occupy towns militarily to create open public markets in contraband goods, but he forced agents of the royal tobacco monopoly to purchase his contraband leaf. The publicity or political theater through which Mandrin staged his rebellions suggest he had a relatively sophisticated political consciousness.

The other political consequence of the illicit trade was repression. Faced with a globalizing underground economy, the monarchy massively expanded the criminal justice system. The police force belonging to the General Farm became the largest paramilitary force in Europe. The penal code was hardened as penalties against trafficking were tightened. And new extraordinary courts were created to impose tough new sentences on smugglers. One of these courts, the notorious commission of Valence, would sentence Mandrin to death in 1755.

This vicious cycle of rebellion and repression was further politicized by cultural producers. The violence over smuggling was heavily mediated, and processes of mediation only further politicized the problem. In the realm of popular culture, biographers, songsters, and engravers celebrated Mandrin's triumphs over the Farm. Readers could vicariously experience the violent thrill of trafficking and rebellion, much like viewers today experience the thrill of crime by watching TV shows like "The Wire". The proliferation of such crime literature turned Mandrin into a folk hero—a sort of Gallic Robin Hood—as it both reflected and fueled popular resentment of the Farm.

At a higher socio-cultural level, the issue of smuggling was mediated by the new "science" of Enlightenment political economy. Economists in the intellectual circle of Vincent de Gournay placed the problem of smuggling in a new theoretical context by inventing the concept of consumer sovereignty, which held that the state had no right to interfere with private consumption. It was pure folly to erect barriers between consumers and the goods they desired, for such barriers would only result in useless and inhumane border violence. Alternatively, another group of economists called physiocrats argued that all state interventions in the market violated the natural economic order. Smugglers had a "natural right" to buy and sell goods that had mistakenly been classified as "illegal" by the state. The physiocrats claimed that to regulate or tax such trade was to violate nature itself. Finally, legal reformers like Cesare Beccaria demanded an overhaul of the criminal justice system in order to establish a reasonable proportionality between crime and punishment. It was inhumane and ineffective, he protested, to prosecute smugglers as if they were guilty of morally atrocious crimes.

The mediation of the cycle of violence by popular and Enlightenment writers put tremendous pressure on the French royal state to reform itself. Smuggling was one of a host of public issues that led a crisis of authority in the late eighteenth century and ultimately helped bring about the French Revolution. Smuggling did not cause the French Revolution of course, but it did feed into the course of revolutionary events in interesting ways. For example, the first major collective action of the Revolution was not the storming of the Bastille, as is commonly thought, but the burning of the customs gates on July 12, two days before the Bastille. Smugglers and consumers interested in tax-free goods joined forces to raze the new customs wall that surrounded the capital. Such collective action posed a problem for the National Assembly, which faced fierce attacks on the Farm in Paris and the provinces. Confronted with popular unrest and partially persuaded by the new liberal economics of the Enlightenment, deputies in the Assembly tore down the fiscal and mercantilist institutions that had for decades stimulated the growth of the underground

economy. Absolving the men and women who had attacked the customs gates, the Assembly all but abolished the fiscal-mercantilist regime that had created the “war” between smugglers and the state. In its place, they established a new liberal political order, which would generate its own share of problems as the Revolution proceeded.

If, in the end, my book is the study of a single eighteenth-century life, it is also a history of the larger economic, cultural, and political forces at work in Europe and the wider world that shaped that life. My experiment with what has recently been called “global microhistory” allowed me to use the legendary figure of Mandrin to write a history about large-scale historical problems such as globalization, the rise of European consumption, and the origins and course of the French Revolution. Global microhistory is a wonderfully fruitful way to connect the lived experiences of particular individuals to the dynamic transformations of the eighteenth century.

# *Eighteenth-Century Futures*

The Indiana Center for Eighteenth-Century Studies announces its fifteenth annual  
Bloomington Workshop (May 11-13, 2016).

Eighteenth-century Studies is doubly entangled with time. Explicitly chronological in identity, it has also long been based on the notion that time somehow changed in the period c.1700-1800. The arrow of progress replaced the cycles of nature; prognostic techniques superseded eschatology; new forms of suspense and seriality emerged. With the rise of commercial society and of experimentation with calendar reform, came a newly regimented and linear sense of time. History, as academic discipline and attitude to the world, became manifest.

So, at least, it has often been said. For our fifteenth annual workshop, we propose to interrogate these commonplaces by focusing on the future. What did the future look like in the eighteenth century? What role have eighteenth-century texts, images, individuals, and histories played in later imaginings of the future? And what future do we anticipate for eighteenth-century studies today?

Proposed contributions may include working papers (draft articles or chapters), primary-source selections (text or image) paired with commentary, and other formats (technological or otherwise) yet to be imagined. Topics and themes to be addressed might include:

Immortality: fame, reputation, posterity

Narrative: plots, closure, sequels, sequences

Anticipation: probability, insurance, speculation, prognosis

Religion: providence, apocalypse, millenarianism, eschatology

Magic and the occult: fortune tellers, oracles, prophecies, predictions

Biopolitics: vitality, regeneration, reproduction, sustainability

Revolution: rotation, rupture, renovation, return

Limits: thresholds, borders, departures, arrivals

History: progress, regress, decline, ruins



During the Workshop, we will discuss 4-6 pre-circulated papers each day and have an occasional lecture. Expanded abstracts and/or entire papers will be published in the Center's *The Workshop*, along with discussion transcripts.

The application deadline is January 15, 2016. Please send a paper proposal (1-2 pages) and current brief CV (3 pages, max) to Dr. Barbara Truesdell, Weatherly Hall North, room 122, Bloomington, IN 47405; 812-855-2856, [voltaire@indiana.edu](mailto:voltaire@indiana.edu). We will acknowledge all submissions within a fortnight: if you do not receive an acknowledgment by Jan. 29, 2016, please contact Barbara Truesdell or the Center's Director, Professor Rebecca L. Spang ([rlspang@indiana.edu](mailto:rlspang@indiana.edu)).

Papers will be selected by an interdisciplinary committee. We cover most expenses for visiting scholars chosen to present their work: accommodations, travel (up to a certain limit), and most meals. For further information please see [www.indiana.edu/~voltaire](http://www.indiana.edu/~voltaire)

**EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY  
FUTURES**

Indiana Center for Eighteenth-Century  
Studies Annual Workshop  
May 11-13, 2016

What did the future look like in the 18th Cy?

What role have eighteenth-century texts,  
images, individuals, and histories played in  
later imaginings of the future?

What future do we imagine for Eighteenth-  
Century Studies today? We invite:

working papers (chapter/article drafts)  
primary sources paired with comment  
work in other formats yet to be imagined

for the full cfp, see:  
[www.indiana.edu/~voltaire/workshop](http://www.indiana.edu/~voltaire/workshop)  
proposals deadline: Jan. 15, 2016  
Indiana University, Bloomington

The Indiana Center for Eighteenth-Century Studies  
proudly announces our fifteenth Annual Workshop

***Eighteenth-Century Futures***  
May 11-13, 2016

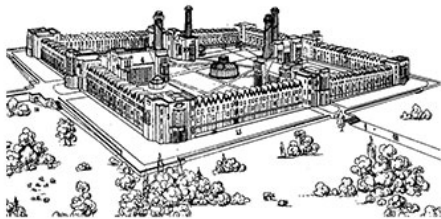
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*Eighteenth-Century Futures*  
Indiana Center for Eighteenth-Century Studies  
fifteenth annual workshop  
May 11-13, 2016

What did the future look like in the eighteenth century?  
How has the eighteenth century contributed to later futures?  
What future do we see for eighteenth-century studies?

[www.indiana.edu/~voltaire/workshop](http://www.indiana.edu/~voltaire/workshop)  
Proposal deadline: Jan. 15, 2016  
Indiana University, Bloomington

## Indiana Memorial Union (IMU)

### *Maple Room (IMU)*

#### Wednesday May 11

##### **2:00 Welcome and Introductions**

**Rebecca Spang (Director, Center for Eighteenth-Century Studies)**

##### **2:30-4:00 pm**

**Daniel Fulda (Center for Enlightenment Studies, University of Halle)**

The 'open future': Product or Precondition of Enlightenment?

**Jonathan Sachs (English, Concordia University)**

Slow Time and Eighteenth-Century Futures

**Comment: Fritz Breithaupt (Germanic, Studies, Indiana University)**

##### **4:30-6:00 pm**

**Michael Cooperson (Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, UCLA)**

Mercier's Carriages: Time Travel's Primal Scene Replayed in English, Arabic, Spanish, Persian, and Turkish

**Louis Sébastien Mercier (Grub Street, Paris)**

The Year 2440 (selections)

**Comment: Joanna Stalnaker (French, Columbia University)**

**Chair: Alex Tipei (History, Indiana University)**

##### **7:30 pm**

*Festive Dinner at the home of Oz Kenshur and Margot Grey (3807 Rachel's Glen Road, 812-339-9560)*

## *Distinguished Alumni Room (IMU)*

#### Thursday May 14

##### **9:15-10:45 am**

**Reinhart Koselleck**

*Futures Past* (Preface and Chapter One)

"Revolution and the Crisis of Temporality"

(Yves Mitton and Myriam Revault, interviewed for Booksandideas by Guillaume Mazeau and Jeanne Moisand)

**Comment: Rebecca Spang (History, Indiana University)**

##### **11:00-12:30 pm**

**Samuel Baker (English, University of Texas)**

Enlightenment, Romanticism, Georgic, Gothic: Remembering the Eighteenth-Century Futures of Robert Burns and William Wordsworth

**John Han (English, Indiana University)**

Resisting the Garden State: Uprooting the Legacy of the Past in Pope's *Windsor Forest* and Looking Towards the Future in Barbauld's *England in 1811*

**Comment: Nick Williams (English, Indiana University)**

##### **12:30-2:00 pm Lunch break (where you will)**

#### *Lilly Library*

##### **2:15-3:45 pm**

Note: We will have 18<sup>th</sup>-century atlases and other relevant materials available for participants to handle in one of the Library reading rooms from 1:30. If you finish lunch early, please do consult the works before the lecture.

**Helge Jordheim (Cultural History, University of Oslo and English, New York University)**

The Spatial Structure of Time in the Eighteenth Century (lecture)

**Chair: Hall Bjornstad (French and Italian, Indiana University)**

## *Distinguished Alumni Room (IMU)*

##### **4:00 -5:30 pm**

**Manushag Powell (English, Purdue University)**

The Piratical Counterfactual: From Mission to Melodrama

**David Alff (English, SUNY-Buffalo)**

The Idea of Projects in Eighteenth-Century Britain

**Comment: Rachel Seiler-Smith (English, Indiana University)**

##### **7:00 pm arrival for 7:30 pm**

*Banquet at Le Petit Café (308 W. Sixth Street)*

## *Distinguished Alumni Room (IMU)*

#### Friday May 15

##### **9:15-10:45 am**

**Jesse Molesworth (English, Indiana University)**

Time's Arrow: The Theory of the Earth in Eighteenth-Century Britain

**Christine Zabel (Center for European Studies, Harvard University)**

Present Future and Future Presents: The Science of Speculating Contingencies

**Comment: Sarah Knott (History, Indiana University)**

##### **11:00 -12:30 pm**

**Richard Nash (English, Indiana University)**

Anthropocene, not Anthropocentric: Towards an Ecological Re-reading of 18th-Century Poetry

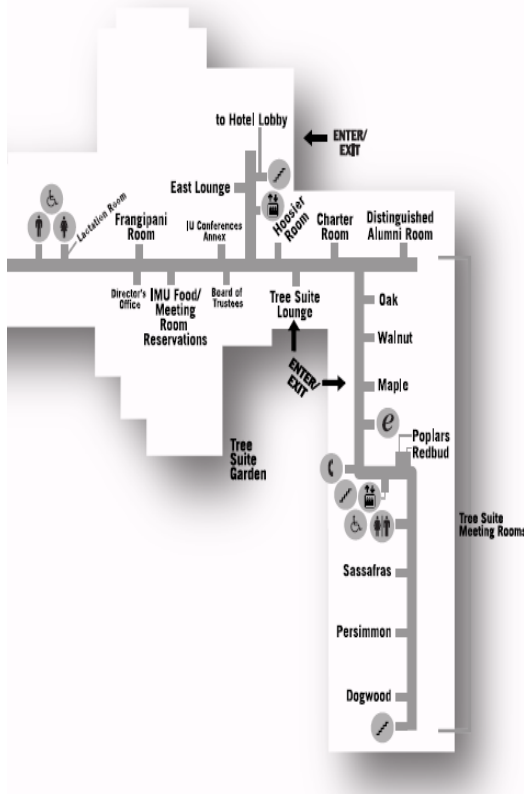
**Christina Lupton (English, University of Warwick)**

Reading and the Materiality of the Future

**Comment: Johannes Türk (Germanic Studies, Indiana University)**

## Map of the Indiana Memorial Union

### Mezzanine



*Sessions take place in the Maple  
Room, Distinguished Alumni Room,  
and the Lilly Library, IMU*

The Annual Bloomington Eighteenth-Century Studies Workshop is organized by the Center for Eighteenth-Century Studies at Indiana University (Rebecca Spang, Director).

The workshop is made possible thanks to the generous support of the IU College of Arts and Sciences. We thank all our workshop presenters and registrants for their enthusiastic participation and support. We would like to extend special thanks to Barbara Truesdell for her invaluable help in organizing the workshop.

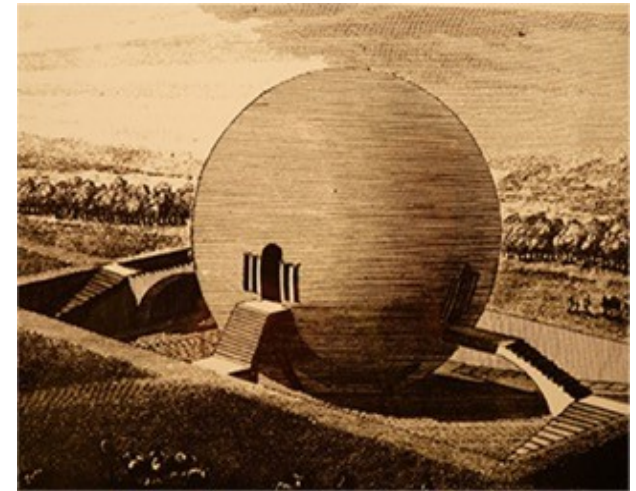
Since the Workshop relies on pre-circulated papers, it is for registered participants only. To register and receive the papers, or for other inquiries, please contact:

Dr. Barbara Truesdell  
Center for Eighteenth-Century Studies  
Weatherly Hall North, Room 122  
400 North Sunrise Drive  
Indiana University  
Bloomington, IN 47405  
Off: 812-855-2856  
Fax: 812-855-0002  
voltaire@indiana.edu  
<http://www.indiana.edu/~voltaire>

Cover image: Claude Nicolas Ledoux, from "maison des gardes agricoles" (plan) at Mauperthuis (1760s), published in Ledoux, *L'Architecture considérée sous le rapport de l'art, des mœurs, et de la législation* (1804)

## 18<sup>th</sup> Century

### Eighteenth Century Futures



The Annual Bloomington  
Eighteenth-Century Studies  
Workshop  
Indiana University  
May 11-13, 2016

## Workshop

## About the Participants (May 2016)

David Alff is an Assistant Professor of English at SUNY-Buffalo. He is completing a book manuscript entitled, “The Wreckage of Intentions: Projects in British Culture 1660-1730” to be published by the University of Pennsylvania Press.

Samuel Baker teaches literature at the University of Texas, Austin. He is the author of many essays and of the book *Written on the Water: British Romanticism and the Maritime Empire of Culture* (2010).

Hall Bjørnstad is Associate Professor of French and Director of the IU Renaissance Studies Program at Indiana University. He is a scholar of early modern French literature and culture.

Fritz Breithaupt, Professor of Germanic Studies at Indiana University, currently works on the disappearance of the “inner voice” during the long eighteenth century.

Christopher Chiasson is a doctoral student in Germanic Studies at Indiana University.

Michael Cooperson is Professor of Arabic at UCLA. His interests include: cultural history of the early Abbasid period; literary translation; time travel; Maltese.

Christie Debelius studies British Romantic literature. She is a second-year PhD student at Indiana University.

Daniel Fulda is Professor of German Literature at the University of Halle-Wittenberg where he directs the Interdisciplinary Centre for European Enlightenment Studies.

John Han received his PhD in English literature from Indiana University (2015), where he was a recipient of the Center for Eighteenth-Century Studies’ dissertation fellowship. He has been published in *Style* and is currently working on a book manuscript entitled “Fugitive Spaces in Eighteenth-Century Fiction.”

Noam Hoffer is a graduate student in Philosophy at Indiana University.

Tracey Hutchings-Goetz is a PhD candidate in English at Indiana University. A past recipient of the Center for Eighteenth-Century Studies’ fellowship for first-year students, she this year held a dissertation-year fellowship from the Center as well. Her dissertation, “Touchy Subjects,” offers a corporeally structured reconsideration of the status of touch in eighteenth-century British culture and literature.

Roman Ivanovitch is Associate Professor of Music Theory in the Jacobs School of Music, Indiana University. His work centers on issues of music analysis and aesthetics, in particular the relationship between technique, craft, and beauty in the music of Mozart.



Helge Jordheim is a Professor of Cultural History at the University of Oslo and a Visiting Professor in the Department of English at NYU.

Oscar Kenshur is Emeritus Professor of Comparative Literature at Indiana University and was one of the founding members of this Center.

Sarah Knott is a historian of the Age of Revolutions and Associate Professor of History, Indiana University.

Lara Kriegel is Associate Professor of History and of English at Indiana University.

Anita Lukic is a doctoral student in Germanic Studies at Indiana University.

Christina Lupton teaches at the University of Warwick. She works on media history and theories of time. Her new book is “Reading Codex and the Making of Time” to be published by Johns Hopkins University Press.

Trevor McMichael is a PhD student in the English Department at Indiana University, where he specializes in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British literature.

Chelsey Moler is a MA/PhD student in the English Department at Indiana University. She studies sex and sexuality, narrative theory, and women’s literature of the long eighteenth century.

Jesse Molesworth is Associate Professor of English at Indiana University and the author of *Chance and the Eighteenth-Century Novel: Realism, Probability, Magic* (Cambridge, 2010). His “Gothic Time, Sacred Time” appeared in the March 2014 issue of *Modern Language Quarterly*.

Monique Morgan is Associate Professor of English at Indiana University, where she teaches nineteenth-century British literature. She is the author of *Narrative Means, Lyric Ends: Temporality in the Nineteenth-Century Long Poem* (Ohio State, 2009) and is currently interested in narrative and epistemology in nineteenth-century science fiction.

Richard Nash is Professor of English at Indiana University where he is currently at work on a book about re-reading eighteenth-century poetry in an age of New Materialist Philosophy, with special attention to ecology rather than anthropocentrism.

Devon Nelson is a PhD candidate in musicology at Indiana University and is writing a dissertation about musical antiquarianism in eighteenth-century Britain.

Daniel O’Keefe is a graduate student in the English Department at Indiana University.

Manushag A. Powell is Associate Professor of English at Purdue University. She is the author of *Performing Authority in Eighteenth-Century English Periodicals* and of many articles.

Jonathan Sachs is Associate Professor of English Literature at Concordia University in Montreal and author of *Romantic Antiquity: Rome in the British Imagination, 1789-1832*. He was a 2014-2015 Fellow at the National Humanities Center and is the Principal Director of the Montreal-based research group “Interacting with Print: Cultural Practices of Intermediality, 1700-1800.”

Abby Sayers is a graduate student in History at Indiana University.

Grace Schmitt is a graduate student studying eighteenth-century British literature at Indiana University. She specializes in gender, sex, and sexual “deviance.”

Rachel Seiler-Smith is a PhD candidate in English at Indiana University and a former holder of a Center for Eighteenth-Century Studies’ fellowship. Her dissertation “Un/Accountable Enlightenment” theorizes the literary form of the “account” and its relationship to the cultivation of life and violence.

Rebecca Spang is Director of the Center for Eighteenth-Century Studies and Professor of History at Indiana University. Her *Stuff and Money in the Time of the French Revolution* (Harvard University Press, 2015) was awarded the Gottschalk Prize for best book at this year’s American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies meeting in Pittsburgh.

Joanna Stalnaker teaches in the Department of French at Columbia University. She is the author of *The Unfinished Enlightenment: Description in the Age of the Encyclopedia* (Cornell University Press, 2010) and is currently writing a book about the last works of the French *philosophes* and the end of the Enlightenment.

Jordan Taylor is a graduate student in History at Indiana University.

Alex Tipei is a transnational historian of Modern Europe. She completed her PhD in the History Department at Indiana University and currently teaches both in the Department of Slavic and East European Languages and Cultures and in the M.A. program at the Indiana Women’s Prison.

Johannes Türk is Associate Professor of Germanic Studies at Indiana University.

Robert (Bobby) Wells is a graduate student in History at Indiana University.

Arne Willée is a doctoral student in Germanic Studies at Indiana University.

Nicholas M. Williams is Associate Professor of English and Director of the Individualized Major Program at Indiana University. He is the author of *Ideology and Utopia in the Poetry of William Blake* (1998).

Christine Zabel is an early modern intellectual historian trained at the EHESS-Paris and University of Heidelberg, Germany.

## Futures Present

REBECCA L. SPANG

I am Rebecca Spang, Director of the Center for Eighteenth-Century Studies at Indiana University, and it is my very great pleasure to welcome you today to the Center's fifteenth annual workshop. The occasion could not be more auspicious. Long heralded and announced by wondrous portents (including tweets, status updates, and postcards in many designs), this is surely an event to be welcomed joyously but perhaps also one that will awaken darker sentiments because the future—well, the eighteenth-century's future—has arrived! Or perhaps I should say: the eighteenth-century futures *have* arrived.

In September (that is, in the past), we chose the title and rubric for this year's Workshop with the hope that "Eighteenth-Century Futures" would allow us to bridge two topics that interested members of our Center. The first was the historico-critical question of futurity and temporal logics in eighteenth-century texts, authors, and societies. How did individuals, groups and institutions in the past conceive, understand, construct, and—perhaps, even—limit the time ahead of them? The second was to ask what futures we could imagine, envision, plan, project, desire, or reject for the field of Eighteenth-Century Studies today. By combining these questions into a single call for papers, we refused two possible futures and set ourselves on the way to some third. Then, in early February, the Center's aptly named Steering Committee selected some proposals and solicited others, all with an eye to crafting an engaging and worthwhile future event. But as we all know (even if mice do not), plans often go astray. My own co-authored contribution has had to be postponed to some future workshop (but not the workshop on futures) because my collaborator—a scientist who was enthusiastically anticipating being here today—had already committed himself to being in Copenhagen on this very date. Our twenty-first-century future may be "open"—our time may be, in the phrase that Benedict Anderson borrowed from Walter Benjamin "empty and homogeneous"—but it nonetheless occurs in space and is therefore finite and singular. [If we ask "Where in the world is Simon DeDeo?" there can at any given point in time be only one answer to that question. But if we ask "When in the world is Simon DeDeo?" the answer becomes more complex.]

Looking back, I have some vague memories of how we thought—I thought—our conversations might go for the next two days. Having received and read the papers, I think I am now in a better position to anticipate the themes, issues, and concerns that may animate our discussions, but I certainly don't think I can *predict* them (nor would I want to wager money on any such speculations—though I would be willing to bet that Richard Nash would be happy to do so). Nonetheless, I will venture the following surmises (and only retrospect will tell if these are tangents, shaky limbs, or roads less traveled):

1. How genre-specific were (or are) eighteenth-century futures? Was the poetical future distinct from the geological or the novelistic? Think about the genres in which we conduct our own professional interactions. We might say one thing about the future of eighteenth-century studies as we talk among ourselves in this room, but write something quite different if we were introducing an anthology of recent articles or preparing a grant proposal.

2. The future hasn't happened, but several authors suggest that its conceptualization is crucial for how we periodize the past. Sam Baker asserts in his paper "memories are



about the future” and as evidence for this claim’s status as received wisdom, he cites an article in a periodical with the wonderful temporally-hybrid title *Dialogues in Clinical Neuroscience*: that first word could not be more eighteenth-century (it recalls Fontenelle’s *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes* among many other texts) but “clinical neuroscience” sounds to me futuristic—a futurism that is chronologically (but not affectively) close to that of George Jetson and his boy Elroy. What shall we make of this seemingly foundational interplay of past and future? Do the categories re-enforce and support each other, or do they dissolve *into* each other? Is time linear, cyclical, or knotted? How can we write about multiple temporalities in the linear materiality of the printed page? Is “meanwhile”—another term central to modern time as conceptualized by Anderson’s *Imagined Communities*—really the answer to that question? Does the logic of “meanwhile” have any meaning when thinking about future time?

3. While several papers attend to the poetics of futurity, others are equally concerned with politics. Our first author, Daniel Fulda, suggests that the “Open Future” was both constituted by, and crucial for the construction of, new sorts of politics. Michael Cooperson tells us that Louis Sébastien Mercier “accidentally” invented time travel in order to make a political (rather than a philosophical, moral, or theological) argument. And Richard Nash’s paper “embeds” eighteenth-century studies in a discussion of current politics. So we have poetics and we have politics—it is surely our task for the next two days to combine them into a vision (a plan? a project?) for the future.

Now, I need to take care of present business:

1. We are recording our conversations, many of which will be transcribed and published in our annual proceedings volume (of which three have appeared so far). We need your assent, so please complete release forms and return to me. We record and transcribe because we know we cannot predict how our discussions will go, but we also know that they are among the most cherished (and least well immortalized) of academic activities. To act, as Hannah Arendt writes in *The Human Condition*, “means to take an initiative, to begin... to set something into motion”—and each question posed, each comment offered, will be just such an initiative, the beginning of a new future for the conversation.

2. Each conversation has a chair (in most cases, not always, who also serves as commentator). It’s the chair’s task to keep our discussion convivial, shared, and more or less “on track.” Raise your hand if you have a question or comment; if you have a small intervention you want to make that follows directly on something that has just been said, make the “hook” sign and you will then be invited to speak immediately but please do make sure what you have to say does indeed follow directly and is concisely formulated. We also want to make sure that everyone—not just paper authors and commentators—feels welcome in the conversation, so to encourage student participation we continue with the house rule of allowing students to “jump the queue.”

3. And so as to facilitate those encounters, more introductions are in order now [all in the room then introduced themselves].

## Slow Time and Eighteenth-Century Futures

JONATHAN SACHS

How did those living in Britain during the later eighteenth century foresee the future? My current research thinks about futurity in connection with pace, and specifically about how anticipations of the future raise the question of *when*: what kind of time horizons are assumed when men and women in the eighteenth century anticipate future events and futurity more generally? How soon and how quickly do these projected futures seem to be arriving? Reinhart Koselleck has argued that for those living in the eighteenth century, two specific temporal determinants characterize the experience of transition from past to future: “the expected otherness of the future and, associated with it, the alteration in the rhythm of temporal experience: acceleration, by means of which one’s own time is distinguished from what went before.”<sup>1</sup> More recently, Hartmut Rosa has developed Koselleck’s emphasis on social acceleration into a new theory of modernity based on what he calls “the shrinking of the present,” an ever quickening rate at which the future seems to be approaching.<sup>2</sup>

In contrast to Koselleck, Rosa, and others, my work on eighteenth-century futures seeks to emphasize not just acceleration but also what I call slow time, and the renewed attention to processes that unfold so slowly as to be beyond observation. My pre-circulated paper, significantly edited in the version that follows here, opened with an account of Darwin’s journal of his *Beagle* voyage (1831-1836; publ. 1839, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1845) in which Darwin reflects on slow processes of change, invisible violence, extinction and decline, death and disappearance. What makes possible his protracted, slow understanding of time as something that is glacial and stony, characterized by rocks more than trees, grey rather than green, incomprehensibly prolonged and yet not infinite?<sup>3</sup>

The conditions of possibility for Darwin’s theory and its emphasis on slow time are of course over-determined. Darwin’s writings show a clear awareness of debates about timescale like those between Cuvier and Lamarck in the early nineteenth century, while Darwin himself explicitly acknowledges the influence of Malthus and Lyell, among others. Scholars have largely taken these sources at face value. My claim here, however, is that Darwin’s recognition of invisible violence, slow time, and the related mental wrangling with the unimaginably long periods of time that frustrate human comprehension (what we now call “deep time”) might also be understood as an outgrowth of changes in the understanding of time that developed in the later eighteenth century. To talk about virtually any aspect of Darwin’s theory requires an awareness of the plenitude of time and the consequent slowness of its movement, a fundamental reconfiguring of time that grows out of the increasingly large estimates for the age of the earth and its development from Buffon forwards. But such refiguring is also a representational and a formal problem: how can humans imagine and grasp the slowness of time and the presence of temporal processes that operate below the level of the visual? Poetry helps here because, in light

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<sup>1</sup> Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, translated by Keith Tribe (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 252.

<sup>2</sup> Hartmut Rosa, *Social Acceleration: A New Theory of Modernity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> See Paul Fry, *Wordsworth and the Poetry of What We Are* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 72.

of new ideas about time in the later eighteenth century, it serves as an important source for working out the imaginative and formal implications, the representational problems, produced by slow time. My claim here, in other words, is that Romantic poetry can also be understood as an unacknowledged but no less important source for Darwin's thinking and, further, that the temporal problems confronted by Darwin and his Romantic precursors have not disappeared but continue to shadow current thinking about slow time and invisible violence.

Slowness is not a quality that we traditionally associate with modernity, which is more generally characterized by a perceived acceleration or speeding up, one commonly instigated by advances in technologies of communication and mobility like print and the railway.<sup>4</sup> But feelings of acceleration associated with print circulation and a later eighteenth-century media shift also produced a new understanding of slowness, one eventually developed by Darwin and exemplified here by Wordsworth's poetry of unspectacular time (and in a substantially revised and expanded version of this essay, also by the "slow time" of Keats's Grecian urn, and by the fossils overturned in Charlotte Smith's "Beachy Head").

My suggestion is that one of the defining features of the later eighteenth century is a sense of discordant temporality that responds to innovations within the conception of time, and, more specifically, to a new sense of slowness perceived beneath the more commonly acknowledged sense of acceleration or speeding up of contemporary life. This new sense of time produces "disturbance or unease," and a "particular type of tension," related to what Raymond Williams calls a "structure of feeling,"<sup>5</sup> that can be grasped by looking at the formal and representational problems shared by later eighteenth-century and Romantic precursors to Darwin's writings. This structure of feeling persists and when I claim that Darwin's recognition of slowness is part of a structure of feeling that can be linked to the adjustment between entangled senses of acceleration and slowness that make their relation felt fully in the later eighteenth century, furthermore, I intend to suggest the later eighteenth-century qualities of other related and more recent attempts to rethink slowness and to grapple with our own current temporal confusions.

Ursula Heise, for example, has coined the term "chronoschisms" to characterize a "sense of time that in its discontinuity, its fragmentation into multiple temporal itineraries and its collisions of incommensurable time scales highlights and hyperbolizes certain characteristics of a culture of time," one that she locates as beginning in the 1960s.<sup>6</sup> My suggestion, however, is that this supposedly post-modern sense of time might more accurately be traced not to the 1960s but rather to the 1760s or thereabouts. More recently, in his manifesto on "slow violence," Rob Nixon has called for a project of redefining speed, a redefinition that recognizes the formal, representational challenges of showing effects delayed over long stretches of time and that emphasizes the particular difficulty of such formal problems in the context of turbo-capitalism

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<sup>4</sup> The point is widely repeated and acknowledged. I have in mind, among others, theorists of modernity including Reinhart Koselleck and Hartmut Rosa (already cited), but also Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987), Paul Virilio, *The Virilio Reader*, ed. James Der Derian (London: Wiley Blackwell, 1998) and Giovanni Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power, and the Origins of Our Time*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (London: Verso, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> "I have found that areas which I would call structures of feeling ... form as a certain kind of disturbance or unease, a particular type of tension, for which when you stand back or recall them you can sometimes find a referent." Raymond Williams, *Politics and Letters: Interviews with the New Left Review* (London: Verso, 1981), 167.

<sup>6</sup> Ursula Heise, *Chronoschisms: Time, Narrative, and Postmodernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 5-6.

and what Nixon calls “an era of enclaved time wherein for many speed has become a self-justifying, propulsive ethic that renders ‘uneventful’ violence...a weak claimant on our time.”<sup>7</sup> In response, Nixon proposes a recasting of the glacial as “a rousing, iconic image of unacceptably fast loss” (*Slow Violence*, 13). It’s an arresting image, and while I am sympathetic to both the urgency and the aims of Nixon’s intervention, it overlooks how an earlier eighteenth-century awareness of the increased speed and acceleration of contemporary life is already interpellated with the recognition of a concomitant slowness. Speed, slowness, and the collision of incommensurable time scales do create formal problems, as Heise and Nixon insist, but these formal problems are not new. They might better be understood as later eighteenth-century problems whose terms and contours, whose representational experiments we can recognize especially in what I will characterize below as a Romantic poetics of slowness.

### Acceleration and Slowness

The paper opens with a look at the “Preface” to the *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), in which Wordsworth laments a widespread “craving for extraordinary incident, which the rapid communication of intelligence hourly gratifies.”<sup>8</sup> In the more extended paper, this sense of speeding up is then developed with brief reference to contemporary theorists of acceleration and intensification like Koselleck, Rosa, and Paul Virilio, before the discussion focuses on a remarkable series of essays by Samuel Taylor Coleridge written for the *Morning Post* in 1802. Here, Coleridge compares the present state of France with that of Rome under the Caesars, and argues that France has been changed into an empire “by the same steps as the Roman Republic was, and under the same titles and phrases: only as before, differing in the degrees of rapidity with which the same processes have been accomplished. The reigns of the first three Caesars have been crowded into the three first years of the reign of Bonaparte.”<sup>9</sup> Coleridge and Wordsworth show that a sense of acceleration is not just something that has been recognized by contemporary theorists. Coleridge privileges Augustan slowness but his perceived speeding up of contemporary time offers consolation because it augurs a more rapid end to the French regime; for Wordsworth the outlook is more ambivalent and the increased speed of modernity serves only to gratify a craving for incident or event. For both, however, acceleration and slowness exist in a complicated interrelation in which the perception of speed enables the recognition of slowness and vice versa. Moreover, both associate acceleration with changes in communications technology, with what we would today describe as the saturation of print in the later eighteenth-century with the explosion of periodicals and related publications. Romantic readers, as we are now beginning to understand from excellent recent work grounded in the concepts and terms of contemporary media theory, very much understood themselves to be living through a media revolution as well as a political revolution.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 8.

<sup>8</sup> William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads*, eds. R.L. Brett and A. R. Jones, 2nd edition (London: Routledge, 1991), 239.

<sup>9</sup> Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Volume 3: Essays on His Times in The Morning Post and The Courier*, ed. David Erdman, 3 volumes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 3:316-17.

<sup>10</sup> I have in mind here Celeste Langan and Maureen McLane, Langan, “The medium of Romantic Poetry,” in *The Cambridge Companion to British Romantic Poetry*, ed. James Chandler and Maureen McLane (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Maureen McLane, *Balladeering, Minstrelsy, and the Making of British*

Wordsworth's understanding of acceleration and his association of the increasing speed of communications technologies with the diminished intellect of the audience for poetry circa 1800 has implications for how we read Wordsworth's poetry. If later eighteenth-century historical actors sensed the acceleration of time, and, if some, like Wordsworth, were alarmed by it, we can begin to interpret what I describe as a Romantic poetics of slowness as a carefully-thought response to this quickening, and therefore as a poetics that takes up Rob Nixon's clarification of the representational challenges inherent in making "slow violence visible" while also challenging "the privileging of the visible" (*Slow Violence*, 15). Nixon adds that "In a world permeated by insidious, yet unseen or imperceptible violence, imaginative writing can help make the unapparent appear, making it accessible and tangible by humanizing drawn-out threats inaccessible to the immediate senses. Writing can challenge perceptual habits that downplay the damage slow violence inflicts and bring into imaginative focus apprehensions that elude sensory corroboration. The narrative imaginings of writer-activists may thus offer us a different kind of witnessing: of sights unseen" (*Slow Violence*, 15). The terms are Nixon's, but this might easily be read as the program for Wordsworth's contribution to the *Lyrical Ballads* project as well as for works like "The Ruined Cottage" and for Wordsworth's poetry of the late 1790s more generally. Wordsworth's poetry responds to an excess of perceived speed by slowing things down. The poetry can therefore be understood as minimally stimulating specifically in order reciprocally to heighten responsiveness.

Read thus, Wordsworth's emphasis on the slow becomes a hortatory slowness, one that responds to a perceived quickening, to the fast becoming faster, with an aesthetic and moral appreciation of the slow. This kind of attitude, for example, marks the development of the *Lyrical Ballads* project. I'm thinking here about the speed and bustle of poems like "The Idiot Boy," whose effects are achieved not only through the description of speed but also through formal qualities like repetition and the use of galloping tetrameter, and "The Tables Turned," with its jarring and urgent opening appeal to haste aided and abetted by explanatory punctuation, "Up! Up!." Such moments contrast with the slowness and contemplation of "Tintern Abbey," the Lucy poems, and (later, in 1807) "The Leech Gatherer," but especially with "The Old Man Travelling" and "The Old Cumberland Beggar." After a close reading of these latter two poems that elicits the particular resonances of slow movement in each, the essay returns to a comparison of Wordsworth and Darwin.

### **Wordsworth, Darwin, and the slow**

Having shown the centrality of slowness in Wordsworth's early poetry (and in the paper's revised version, in the poetry of Keats and Charlotte Smith as well), the essay suggests that Darwin inherits formal and representational problems related to slowness from Romantic poetry. My argument thus expands the sources of Robert Richards's claims for the importance of aesthetic influences on Darwin from a German to an English context in a manner less insistent on direct influence, though we can see overlap between Darwin and his Romantic precursors,

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*Romantic Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), esp. pages 112-116; Andrew Piper, *Dreaming in Books: The Making of the Bibliographic Imagination in the Romantic Age* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009); and the work of the research group "Interacting with Print: Cultural Practices of Intermediality, 1700-1900": <http://interactingwithprint.org>.

especially Wordsworth.<sup>11</sup> After considering a series of verbal invocations of Wordsworth's poetry in Darwin's work, I suggest that while telling, such echoes are admittedly limited and an argument for the importance of Romantic poetics to Darwin's thought will require more than a series of verbal echoes.

Beyond the particular resonances of Wordsworthian language, Alan Bewell has taught us to recognize how Wordsworth's poetry models a fascination with the marginal, with the dispossessed, and with a series of social and racial types on the verge of extinction.<sup>12</sup> These marginal figures contribute to what I have been describing as a poetics of slowness, one marked not only by figures nearly extinct but also by rocks and stones and by the interaction and frequent figural transposition between the marginal and the rocks. Indeed, the prominence of rocks in Wordsworth's poetry has prompted Paul Fry to ask whether "the nature poetry of Wordsworth is green or gray" given that " 'rocks and stones' make up two thirds of the Wordsworthian cosmos" (*Wordsworth*, 72). Similarly, in her recent book on *Romantic Things*, Mary Jacobus devotes a chapter to rocks, which, she suggests, provide Wordsworth with a key for reading nature's silences. Jacobus's attention to the resonances between rocks and the nearly extinct is clear in her argument that the Leech Gatherer "records the infinite slowness of glacial time."<sup>13</sup> These recent emphases on Wordsworth's fascination with rocks should come as no surprise after Noah Heringman's convincing argument that "the literary culture producing this poetry was fundamentally shaped by many of the same cultural practices that formed geology as a science during the period 1770-1820."<sup>14</sup> Romantic poetry and the formation of geology might thus be understood as offering an archaeological framework for Darwin's appreciation of nature's slowness and the extinct former beings whose specimens Darwin collected on his voyage.

But if Darwin adapts a Romantic poetics of slowness, he abandons its frequent emphasis on benevolent interdependence in favor of a new model that sees such interdependence as part of a violent struggle for existence dissociated from moral values. Both, however, are part of what I have earlier described as a structure of feeling predicated on a particular type of tension between the seemingly accelerated, fast time of modernity and the slow time of evolutionary change. The fossils Darwin collected on the *Beagle* are literally indurate objects, bodies become rocks, that in their transformation tell us about duration, about time, and about the history of life on earth. If scholars like Heringman have placed their emphasis on induration, on the materiality of terrestrial history and geoformation in Romantic literature and science, my interest in the conjunction between Romantic poetry, Darwin, and geology is more about duration, about time. Darwin's thinking about fossils in his journal of the *Beagle* voyage and his reflections on time when he contemplates the sand along what is now the Uruguayan coastline echo historical disputes between the French naturalist Georges Cuvier and the botanist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck that hinge on how we understand the historical nature of life on earth, and the appropriate scale of time in which we imagine the earth's development.

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<sup>11</sup> Robert Richards, *The Romantic Conception of Life: Science and Philosophy in the Age of Goethe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

<sup>12</sup> Alan Bewell, *Wordsworth and the Enlightenment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

<sup>13</sup> Mary Jacobus, *Romantic Things: A Tree, A Rock, A Cloud* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012).

<sup>14</sup> Noah Heringman, *Romantic Rocks, Aesthetic Geology* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), xii.

It will come as no surprise that Darwin developed his theory in relation to important precursors like Cuvier and Lamarck. We can locate this push towards larger timescales not only in Lamarck and Cuvier, but also in their precursors Buffon, Saussure, de Luc, Hutton, Blumenbach, Demarest and other *savants* discussed by Martin Rudwick in his magisterial *Bursting the Limits of Time*. What this means is that the perceived acceleration of modernity, commonly dated to the later eighteenth century, can be understood to develop in relationship to the longer timescales of natural or geological history, what Keats called “slow time,” but which is at present more commonly called “deep time.”<sup>15</sup> For my purposes, however, the very changes that Rudwick describes in relation to the expansion of timescale by *savants* is part of a more widespread and less disciplinarily specific understanding of time that gains currency in the 1770s and develops through the Romantic period. The accelerated time of Wordsworth’s preface and the slow time of his poetry emerge together. How, then, does Darwin address the representational problems framed by the interpellation between these two competing—but also, as I have suggested, complementary—ideas of time?

In response to this question, the longer version of this paper looks at the frequency with which Darwin invokes slowness in the *Origin*—a concept he uses considerably more often than the struggle for survival for which he is better remembered. I then consider Darwin’s recognition of the timescale that it would take for evolutionary processes to unfold, “a lapse of time” by Darwin’s own admission, “so great as to be utterly inappreciable by the human intellect.”<sup>16</sup> This, of course, is the problem of slow time: that it eludes representation and often requires a temporal span so large as to be almost without meaning. How, after all, can we comprehend the significant difference between a ten million and a hundred million years, or, for that matter, even ten million and eleven million years? And yet this is also the representational problem that Darwin must confront if he wants to make the case for slow and gradual change within an almost incomprehensibly long time span that is nonetheless not infinite. Darwin understands the difference that deep time makes, and to render a vast timescale comprehensible he turns not to the poetic strategies of Wordsworth, but to a visual aid, a printed chart, the only illustration in Darwin’s *Origins*. What is interesting and innovative about Darwin’s chart, I suggest, is that it joins fast and slow into a variant of deep time that can now be made available to representation, one that offers the possibility of accounting for vast swathes of time in a single glance, in the same amount of time that one can account for shorter periods of time.

In calling attention to the multiple temporalities enabled by Darwin’s chart, I do not mean to suggest that Darwin has solved the representational problem of deep time; rather I want to underscore how Wordsworth and Darwin face related formal problems in their attempts to call attention to unspectacular but not insignificant events, events that are characterized by an intensity of slowness that commonly escapes representation but that must nonetheless be shown in relationship to time. Such formal and representational problems, moreover, do not disappear, and indeed, they continue into the present as attested by Nixon’s recent call for a redefinition of speed in relation to slow violence. The conditions for these ongoing problems, I have suggested,

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<sup>15</sup> Coinage of this term is often credited to John McPhee. The term, whose use has been widespread in geology, has recently become a contested topic in literary studies with the appearance of Wai-Chee Dimock, *Through Other Continents: American Literature Across Deep Time* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006) and Mark McGurl’s critique of Dimock, “The Posthuman Comedy,” *Critical Inquiry* 38 (2012): 533-553. Dimock uses “deep time” to mark a Braudelian long durée; my usage is closer to that of McGurl, though I am not convinced that either elicits fully the role of literary writing in developing the metaphorical force of the concept.

<sup>16</sup> Charles Darwin, *Evolutionary Writings*, ed. James A. Secord (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 192.

are set in the later eighteenth century when a sense of acceleration and eventfulness generated by print media and exacerbated by the monumental revolution in France develops in felt tension with new understandings of slowness and new awareness of the increasingly large estimates for the age of the Earth that we now associate with deep time.



## Discussion

**Fritz Breithaupt:** My task as commentator is easy. These papers are very clear and powerful, they are an excellent introduction for us. But I won't simply step away at this point, because we have our rituals. And rituals of course have the wonderful function of suppressing futures. Our Workshop has a lot of ritual... and I have to complain heavily that we are not in our normal room [Editor's Note: the Distinguished Alumni Room was not available, so the first two panels happened in the IMU Maple Room], so it feels that our rituals are out of place. But we will be there again... tomorrow? At some other time in the future, at least.

One of our rituals is that the speakers don't actually get to speak. Or, they get to speak, but only after a long comment. I will try not to make my own comment too long, I will just summarize, introduce the authors, and then try to push the two papers together by bringing out one conceptual pair that they don't really use but that could be interesting for us which is the relation between the individual and the collective. To introduce the authors, I could just say that Daniel Fulda is the European equivalent of Rebecca [Spang]: look at them [Laughter]....He has written two books and edited another ten or twelve on subjects from cannibalism to the objects of the eighteenth century. The paper that we have read by him makes a very bold claim. It takes apart something that I had always taken for granted, the claim by Reinhart Koselleck that the idea of an open future comes only from the late eighteenth century, from the "Saddle Time" of the 1760s and 1770s. Daniel Fulda says "no," if you look at the early eighteenth century, you see many authors already have this idea ... Rebecca just asked us to pay attention to "genre," and if you look at the texts on which Daniel Fulda draws they are not just one genre, they are many genres. But they are all planning documents—the future is something that has to be planned.... The question I have is about causality. If the open future is there already in 1700, then what does that mean for the Enlightenment? I have always thought that first you have the Enlightenment, then the future can be open. But maybe it's the other way: maybe it's when the future isn't known, that then you can open your eyes and then there is Enlightenment. Koselleck says two things happen in the late eighteenth century: the future becomes "open" (that is, unknown and malleable) and the thinking of history itself changes. Suddenly there is a new idea that can weave history together as a narrative—not with a *telos*—but with narrative as a way of holding things together. Daniel splits these two developments: he agrees that the last happens in the late eighteenth century but the first, almost a hundred years earlier.... My question for him: Could it be that this open future began around 1700 as a collective venture, and that then (around the 1770s) this collective open future got folded back into the individual? It therefore became much more manageable because it was individual—or it was totalistic, it involved all of us, but *as individuals*—and so it wasn't something that we had to plan collectively any more. So that's a big question, but I think it's one that could interest all of us. Another overall question might be about affect. Was the open future "dark"—that was Rebecca's immediate thought—or is it something else? Is it maybe sometimes dark and sometimes not? When was it dark and when was it inviting?

Now I come to the second paper. Jonathan Sachs comes to us from Canada, where he is Associate Professor of English at Concordia University. ...He has published widely on time [lists article titles and books, including "The Time of Decline."] Like Fulda's paper, his paper is very clear. I will focus on the second part: the main argument is that the acceleration that we usually

associate with the period around 1800 is connected with the discovery of a new phenomenon, “slowness.” That modernity is about speed, but it’s even more about a recalibration between speed and slowness. ... The interesting thing is that he discovers in speed, moments of slowness. There is too much going on, we can’t register all of it, and so we become slow, stupid. Then there is the slowness of evolutionary processes that span enormous time periods... Jonathan suggests that Darwin may have been inspired by Wordsworth. So here, in Jonathan’s paper, it is a jump from the individual to the collective level. When we talk about Wordsworth’s depiction of the beggar, it’s an individual who moves slowly. But when we get to Darwin, to evolution, there is no individual who is slow. Every animal and so on may be moving quite quickly, it’s only for the observer—the second-order observer who wants to see change—that evolution is slow. ... This slowness only appears if you skip from the individual to the collective. How did the line between individual and collective become so thin, that it was something you could skip around 1800? Is it about new media, or is speed itself a medium?

So we will give you a brief chance to reply, but only brief, and then I will manage the slow and fast conversation around the room.

**Daniel Fulda:** Yes. Thank you very much for your very exact condensation of my paper. I agree with this completely. But I am not sure if there is really a shift toward individual future in the 1770s. Yes. You are thinking about novels, perhaps? In the German literature, *Bildungsromane*. Normally these novels don’t try to explore the way of the central figure into a wider future. Its central figures are young people, and when they marry, the story is finished, yes? I don’t see this, this...

**Breithaupt:** I was thinking...

**Fulda:** ... this direction onto the future in novels of the end of the eighteenth century. And on the other side... I think Condorcet’s piece, *Histoire tableau historique... Comment s’appelle exactement...*yes, “d’un Tableau”.... It’s a *picture* of the development of society as a whole and not the development of individuals. Therefore, I don’t agree with this idea that in the end of the eighteenth century, the perspective skips from collective future again to individual futures.

**Breithaupt:** Mmhmm. Mmhmm. Okay. I mean that the collectives become treated as individual; like the nation state becomes a subject. But...

**Fulda:** The nation state is an individual among other states. But it is a collective enterprise related to individuals, like you and me.

**Breithaupt:** Mmmhmm. Mmmhmm. I’ll respond later to that... [laughter] I want to open the floor. But first: Jon.

**Jonathan Sachs:** I’m not sure how much I want to add to what you said already. I think it’s a terrific summary of the two papers and a really nice way of thinking about how they might go together. I would add briefly to your suggestion that with the later part of the eighteenth century comes this transition from the individual back to the collective. There’s one other aspect of

Wordsworth's writing that I think is important to know, or think, about and that is the way that for Wordsworth—and in relationship to this jargon—this isn't only about the shift from say an individual beggar to the collective idea of evolution and species change, but also the way that, for Wordsworth, he's using individual examples to model for us modes of attentiveness that are meant then to be collectivized, right? He's giving us a way of attending to writing in his poetry that he hopes will be taken up by the larger and wider reading public at this moment. That's one thing that I would suggest.

The second thing is: I think we're going to be talking a lot about the "open future" over the next two or three days, and I want to add a little bit to that. You mentioned this article on "the time of decline," and I just finished a book on decline. One of the fundamental premises of the book is about the relationship between decline and progress in the eighteenth century. One of the things I think is significant about "the time of decline" is that what it does is (in fact) it closes an open future, and I wanted us to think a little bit about that. And I want to make a connection about that to raise a question from Daniel's paper—for all of us, really—which is: "Is the future left or right?" [laughter] No, what I found very interesting about the frontispiece that you use in your paper [Editor's Note: from Friedrich Gladov, *Versuch einer vollständigen und accuraten Reichs-Historie*, 1717] is that the future appears on the left; we would never do that, I don't think. Never. I mean, we're completely accustomed to time series, line graphs, and individual images in which the future always moves to the right. So um, that's one thing, the second thing I wanted to say...

The third thing (and this will be the last thing, because you asked me to be brief) has to do with dating time and origins, right? I mean this idea that what do you do Koselleck's argument that these big significant changes happen in the early 1770s... Well, if you push them back to circa 1700, instead of circa 1800, then what do you get; right? And I think what you get is a long and sustained argument that we will probably be having over the next few days... And you [to Daniel Fulda] have a very clear sense of the payoff... But I want us to think very carefully as well about origin stories and about the relationship between what might actually be conceived of as an origin and what might actually feel like an origin, right? Because anytime you talk about origins in the streets, somebody like Tony Grafton steps up and gives you seventeen examples from Scholasticism about things that happened [laughter], you know, hundreds of years before what you're saying happened at the moment that you're saying that it happens. But the other thing about that is that oftentimes novelty is not necessarily about whether something is actually new, but whether it feels new to those who are experiencing something. And so that's something I want us to think about in connection with this.

And for my own work, the project I'm starting now is in fact a project on slow time; so this article fits the transition between the two. And what's important for me there is the relationship between Koselleck's theory of acceleration and the emergence and development of geology and increasing estimates of the age of the Earth (of the sort of thing that Jesse writes about in his paper). And what I'm interested in there is the convergence of these two things, right: these longer estimates for the age of the earth, which would suggest how slowly time is moving; and this sense of acceleration, which would suggest how fast it's moving. So when I was reading Daniel's paper, one of the things I kept thinking about was, "Okay, so if we push Koselleck back, what does that do for that convergence? Does that matter or not?" I don't know, I'll be

thinking about it a lot over the next few days and I'll be curious to hear what others say. I'll leave it there. Thank you.

**Breithaupt:** Excellent. Well, this is the moment that you all should raise your hands if you want to speak—Jesse was very quick here—but I will take names now quickly. So Jesse will go first, but who wants to be on the list?

**Rebecca Spang:** Um...*Rachel* will go first. [Editor's Note: Students jump the queue.]

**Breithaupt:** Ah, yes, it's true... Trumping over here... [laughter] So Rachel will trump Jesse... But who else wants to...? Okay, good. Rachel, you go first.

**Rachel Seiler-Smith:** I feel so powerful being trump. I just had a really quick question for Daniel, and forgive me for its particularity. But you were pressing against Fritz's argument by reading the novel and marriage as a foreclosure of futurity, whereas I always understood marriage to be a marker of futurity (or a promise of it) through reproduction. So I was just wondering: even if the novel closes, the idea is that a futurity lingers in union. I guess this is what I wanted to ask... about generationality in that sense, then.

**Fulda:** Yes. The novel which I had in mind is *Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre*; it's the most important novel in German literature, in perhaps of all literature. And the main figure comes to a marriage at the end of the novel, but he already has a son. And the new element in the marriage, becoming...—excuse me [inaudible in German]... “making children,” yes? [laughter] — will not happen in this completely new way in this novel because there is still the child of the main figure. But normally you are perfectly right. [laughter] And the young son is named “Felix”: from “into the future” or “for the future”...

**Breithaupt:** Jesse.

**Jesse Molesworth:** Jon, I'm actually going to lay down the gauntlet here...

**Sachs:** So early... [laughter]

**Molesworth:** You know, I love that you're going after Koselleck and Virilio and all these big people. From my perspective—working on the novel, I mean—this argument about slow time seems incredibly obvious. You know, I just hear Franco Moretti, you know, sort of lecturing, “The eighteenth century novel: incredibly fast paced; all hinge points, no filler. The nineteenth century novel: all filler, no hinge points. The novel slows down from the eighteenth century to the nineteenth century.” And for him, you know, it has nothing to do with the acceleration of print, media (you know, the way you're understanding this) ... For him, it's simply bourgeois experience: our lives move in a different sort of temporal rhythm; our lives are inoculated against catastrophe by things like insurance and modern medicine and so forth. You know, I just wonder how does Wordsworth comes to this privileged stature for you? I love what you do with the slowness of the beggar in some ways, but...

**Sachs:** Yeah...

**Molesworth:** Why can't we do that with, say, Lizzy Bennet, mulling over her thoughts in her boudoir; why can't we do that with Dorothea Brooke; why can't we do that with Emma Bovary? The novel slows down! I mean, it's incredibly obvious. [laughter]

**Sachs:** Or does it? I mean: *Clarissa*. Is *Clarissa*...? *Clarissa*'s pretty slow to me.

[extensive laughter, inaudible comments between Sachs and Molesworth]

**Sachs:** There's a larger point here too that gets into some of the work that Tina has been doing, and that has to do with the actual experience of reading: the fact that reading itself takes time, right? It's another element of this slowness.

**Molesworth:** Right, right...

**Sachs:** And so in part, it's difficult for me to speak to the promise of a future project that hasn't yet really developed its substance and its teeth yet. But in part, you know, one of the things I'm interested in is the relationship between this problem of speed and slowness in poetic form, and so in that sense it doesn't have to be something that is exclusive to the novel or exclusive to narrative. It just happens to be that the way my own thinking has developed, I've become less interested in narrative and fiction... in part because they just take too much damn time to read. [laughter] And in my eagerness to do readings and to develop ideas, I've found that it's easier for me and more interesting for me to work with poetry. I've got a lot shorter attention span as I get older...

That's a joking response to your question. But as a more serious response, right... I mean, the specific kind of slowness that I'm talking about here is the relationship between, in my case, poetry (we could say "this wider context of literature") and the development of geology and the new model for slowness that we're getting from geology and natural history. And I do think that that is what forces me to do this project as a late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century project. So in that sense, right, you could talk about the slowing down of the nineteenth-century novel, but part of what I would suggest is that the lexicon for thinking about that slowness is something that is mutually developing between different discourses and different kinds of knowledges. And we do have people who have done excellent work—some of them in this very room—on the relationship between narrative fiction and geology. And that's what I would want to insist on for that kind of time.

**Breithaupt:** Taking notes here on who's speaking... Yes, we actually have a couple of hooks now. So can you show that [hook gesture made with finger] again to model this for everyone? Look at Monique, what she did... She did a hook, and there's another one here. I'll hook you both back-to-back here... Maybe in that case because it's a hook, you three do back-to-back and then it goes back to Jonathan.

**Monique Morgan:** I also had a question about the sort of privileged place of Wordsworth in your piece, which was brilliant and I greatly appreciate it. But you do acknowledge that you take the term “slow time” from Keats, from “Ode on a Grecian Urn,” and you know Keats’ “Odes” are meditations on time in various forms. But I was thinking more of “Hyperion” and the Miltonic verse, and the description of—I believe, it’s Saturn—sitting there endlessly...

**Sachs:** Yes, and...

**Morgan:** So I guess my question is: how pervasive do you see this “slow time” among the Romantic poets? Or is Wordsworth really exemplifying it in a specific way that allows you to link into geology...?

**Sachs:** Ultimately this...

**Breithaupt:** Ah, ah...! [laughter] Tina is first... Short comments...

**Christina Lupton:** Okay, so I’m piggybacking on Jesse’s... I’m joining “Team Jesse.” Because I think that the performative element of the poem would, of course... One way of reading that through media history would be to suggest that poems participate in a quickening process by offering themselves up as formally limited experiences. As opposed to novels, which, if they are applying the brakes in some way, do that all the way down, at every level of their own structure, which would support Jesse’s argument. So I guess I’d like you to respond a bit more on that; you got off too easy. [laughter]

**Sachs:** Okay. I’ll go from Monique to Tina. In answer to your question about whether this is a Wordsworthian project: it most emphatically is not. And in fact one of the things I’m trying to do is to re-conceive Romanticism. I mean, I want to ask what happens when we think about Romanticism as a problem of pace, right? What happens when we rethink Romanticism not as a response to revolution, but as a response or aspect of evolution, right? That’s a slogan-y way of putting it. So it’s something I want to think about across the spectrum of Romantic poetry, and that I want to move backwards (as most of my work has been going back into the eighteenth century) to ask what in fact is different about the later part of the century. So that’s a short answer; I want to make sure we have time to talk about other things as well.

But in response to Tina’s question, and this idea of fiction... and poetry as being a short form, right... One of the things I think about in this context is someone like Vicesimus Knox: this late eighteenth century, you know... *Elegant Extracts*, right, where the idea, “I can save you time by taking all the good bits and putting them into one volume.” But the other generic implications of Knox’s argument is that he advocates for the essay, right; he argues explicitly and is in some ways writing against Newton. His basic point is: “Look, nobody has got time to read Newton. What we really need is this short, moral essay, that in the half-hour that commercial life allows you between your business and your children, you know... Take an essay, take half-an-hour to get something really moral out of it.” And the point here—your point—is that poetry fits into that, and I agree. But one of the things I think is also happening with poetry in the later part of the eighteenth century is that—because of the very problems of time that I’ve been writing about

and you've been writing about—one of the things that this issue of the press of time (in the sense of the haste of life) generates are questions and concerns about posterity and duration. And one of the ways for reading poetry that is being developed and formulated by Romantic writers is that, “Yeah, sure, you can read this in half-an-hour, when you aren't dealing with your kids and don't have any business to attend to. But what you really should do is quit your business, kick your kids out of the house, and spend the whole day reading this thing, because it has that much value.” So what I think is being modeled here and what is being suggested is an idea of certain kinds of writing—and with the fears of writing in Romanticism, this is largely poetry—as being that which endures; and which is worth your time if you don't have that much time; and that which you should attend to and read in a slower way. So I'll be interested to hear what people have to say about poetry and the novel in this context, but that's my initial gambit.

**Breithaupt:** Okay, so we have two more hooks, and we have a list of eight regular people. [laughter] So we'll do two hooks, and no one has really modeled a proper hook yet—we had the finger, but—a proper hook is like three sentences and then the person here in the front says, “Yes” or “No” [laughter]... or “I'll kick you later outside” or something like that. So we've yet to still practice that art. Max and Oz will do hooks right now, hopefully, and then we'll move down the list... Max.

**Max Nagano:** Yeah, so I'm kind of responding to Jesse's criticism of this project. I work a lot with geology, and my understanding of geology at this time is it allows people to gain understandings of basically nesting timescales; in the sense that you have geological time, you have timescales of populations, you have individuals, and then later we find out something like atomic isolations nested within individuals, or something like that... But the point is, you know... So I think it's a little different from the mere kind of experience of slow time, something more about... Particularly in the passage where you're talking about the beggar, where you see kind of different timescales (kind of). There's an interruption there between slower timescales and faster—an oscillation I guess... So I'm just wondering, and again this may kind of not be what you're talking about... When you're talking about this beggar, I think (you're on page 44 here)...I was kind of more interested in seeing if this is what you were talking about. Because you seem to be talking about a slow, labored reading of this passage, when to me this is really a kind of interruption of caesura—it's about different scales of time coming into conflict, and I wonder if you can speak at all to that?

**Sachs:** Is that the kind of question for a yes/no answer?

**Breithaupt:** [inaudible] We are slowing our roll, but we want real hooks that can be things that only make sense in that moment, so we'll still fiddle Oz into this idea...

**Oscar Kenshur:** That's right, but of course the moment was a couple of moments ago. [laughter] This is a quick comment that I would've expected Nick Williams to make with regard to the length of time (the duration of time) required by different genres. Think of Blake's *Milton*, or long Blake-ian poems that don't fit into that long/short paradigm.

**Sachs:** I'll try and integrate these both. Sorry, but when you say that Blake's poems don't seem to fit into the long/short paradigm, how do you mean that?

**Kenshur:** Well, we don't think of them as short, Romantic poems.

**Sachs:** No, but...

**Kenshur:** ... Or ones that you can squeeze into a half-hour.

**Sachs:** Sure, but nor for that matter would you make that argument for something like Wordsworth's "Prelude."

**Kenshur:** Right...

**Sachs:** And that's part of my point here. It's not that short poetry is fast poetry; this has very little, this has less to do with the number of lines on the page, right. It has more to do with the modes of attentiveness that are required to read them. And in that context, to read a short lyric like Shelley's "Montblanc" might take just as much time as it would take you to read a short novel like Goethe's *Werther*. (I am sure Germans would disagree.) [laughter] And I don't mean to make that an argument about the relative merits of those two works. But just that because of the kind of modes of attentiveness that poetry comes to see as required, it can take a very long time to read something very short. But, there was another... I'm sorry your name again was...?

**Nagano:** Max.

**Sachs:** Max. In response to Max's question about nested and layered timeframes: this is exactly what I'm pushing towards, right? And I hope that it is clear in the piece that that is what I'm after, right? That time is not experienced in a singular way as either slow or fast, but that what we're talking about here is a certain quality of heterochrony; but a heterochrony that is constituted through the experiences of multiple timeframes. And, in part, that those really long timeframes, and the idea that an event can play itself out beneath the level of observation, is something that I want to think about as potentially being new in the later part of the eighteenth century. Who knows, I may leave here in two days and say, "That was a terrible idea," and never write this book. [laughter] But I will push, and we'll see what people will say.

**Breithaupt:** Okay, I'll just read from the list who's on here, so if you're not on it but think you're on it, let me know. So I have as the next speaker, person on here is Helge; then I have Sarah; I have Joanna, then... Manushag?

**Manushag Powell:** Nush, yes.

**Breithaupt:** Nush. Okay, that's a little bit easier for me... David, John, and Richard. Did I miss someone? Okay. Helge...



**Helge Jordheim:** So I think we will spend a lot of time discussing “the open future,” so I thought I’ll just raise a question to that debate, I guess. Yeah. I think the way you put it at first, Fritz—moving from the collective to individual—that was exactly the opposite move that I thought you were going to do...but I think it’s right. I think actually that you move from this collective multiplicity of times and end up with Herder (for instance) doing the full genesis and the autogenesis and the [inaudible] *Zeit*, the “ages of man”—this is exactly what you’re getting to. And that fits so well with nationalist history writing and there’s something to be said for that. But that was not really my point.

My point was to say that the big question in many of these papers is: what’s the relationship between the idea of an open future and the idea of contingency? Start with contingency. So is that the same? If we... The way we can push the idea of the “open future” back is to say, “Well, it’s any unexpected thing, [that] is an indication of an open future.” So we can push it back to Machiavelli and the question of *fortuna* as open future, as you do with Castiglione; that’s when the strategical thinking of *The Courtier* is the open future. Going from Machiavelli, we would actually end up in Cicero in the end, with the Romans. [laughter] So I’m just wondering how far can we push this entanglement—this overlap—between contingency and open future? The thing that seems to... If we use Koselleck for this, we could say that, “Well, the thing that is not a part of contingency—a necessary part of the contingency argument—is the ‘new.’” I mean, Koselleck spends more time discussing the “new” than discussing “future,” in a certain sense. So the question is: Could it be that open future consists of two parts? One would be the part of contingency; the other would be the idea of the “new”, and related to the question of uncertainty and malleability. And that to think about the open future, at least in the Koselleckian sense, we need both? So we need the more radical idea of the “new” than what we find in Machiavelli and Castiglione and the advice literature. It’s contingency, yes; it’s *fortuna*, yes; but is it “new”? And how “new” must it be to be really, well, indicative of something “open”? I guess would be the question.

**Fulda:** The possibility of the “new” is strongly required for an open future; uncertainty is not enough. But I wrote in my paper (it was an important point) to distinguish between political foresight in Machiavelli and this *prudentia politica* for every man, which is not restricted to a small part of the society and, the second point, thinking of the possibility of the new. And I could add more evidence to this kind of historical moment (the early Enlightenment in these Protestant universities in Germany): the possibility of the “new” is emphasized—is emphasized. And on this point I agree with you.

I should answer your question about the two sides of the picture: the left side and the right side. I agree with you that normally for our modern consciousness, the left side is the older side, yeah? Every graphic of economic growth and so on in mathematics... But I don’t know any pictorial representation of history and of different time phases—time periods—where you can say: “There was the part of the past and there was the part of the future.” I only know one frontispiece before this frontispiece by Gladov where one can distinguish a past side and a future side, and there the future side is also on the left. There is a wagon, a [searches for word]...

**Breithaupt:** Carrier.

**Fulda:** ... Carrier with figures representing the four faculties of the university, philosophical faculty in the front—yeah?— the first one and they are driving ... there is an alternative: should they drive with *Esel* [donkey or ass]... What is *Esel* in English?

**Breithaupt:** Mule.

**Fulda:** Mule? Really? ... Should they drive with a mule to the right side into the past time of Scholasticism. Or should they move with the help of *historia* to the left side and the better future? The basic idea is similar to this frontispiece by Gladov—it is the same distinction between future and past, and right and left, like Gladov. But do you know any pictures with the other order of times? Yeah? You know one? [laughter]

**David Alff:** So my very short yes-or-no, hook question is... Just to say, I love what you did moving into seventeenth-century British discourse of political prognostication with Defoe... I wonder if you've looked at/thought about the literature on astrology and practical politics in seventeenth-century Britain? Because it seems to me the practice of astrology and the iconography of astrology might be very interesting in thinking about the open future, the closed future, and that third thing (which I think Jon actually might be talking about) the “mysterious future,” which a slow and interpretative attention might help one to appreciate, obey, enjoy.

**Fulda:** Do you think astrology is a good way of...

**Alff:** William Lilly is the major figure for this, any way.

**Fulda:** Mmhmm. I have been concerned a little bit with astrology in Germany, but I don't know if there is any important difference. But this astrology tries to read the stars, yes? But the premise—premise?—is that the future might be read by the stars because the future is *not* open; there is a providence.

**Alff:** There's the astrological discourse, and there is the counter-discourse: the anti-astrologers and a working through of that, right, in this period...

**Breithaupt:** Helge had a hook as well.

**Jordheim:** This hook is just an ad for my talk tomorrow, actually... I will show you pictures of things where future is not on the right side: it's down; it's in the lower part of the picture. So the whole argument of left-to-right is based on the timeline; if you don't have timelines, if you have other kinds of spatial representation of time, then the future will be in other places.

**Sachs:** That's my point, though, is that I want to think about...

**Jordheim:** Yeah, I know.

**Sachs:** ... at one point do we start to get that orientation? And what causes it?

**Fulda:** I could refer to another frontispiece: it is the frontispiece of the last volume of the *Theatrum Europaeum*, the most important historiography (historiographical?)... Series of history books from... beginning in the 1630s and the last volume is of 1732. And there is a god, Janus—Janus?...

**Spang:** Mm-hmm.

**Fulda:** Janus and he is looking to both sides, literally, and the sides have changed, yes? It's our modern idea of going into the future on the right side. Fifteen years later...

**Breithaupt:** It feels like fifteen years later... Sarah, your moment has come.

**Sarah Knott:** Well it does feel later, and I wonder if this is not the time for an exercise in proliferating our categories, but maybe that's the sort of exercise we need to do in an opening session and think of it in the guise of that. So I wanted to move the discussion away a little bit from genres and disciplines to other eighteenth-century categories of analysis. Because it seems as if thinking about slowness and acceleration might be interesting in relation to a series of activities like society and culture and economy and polity, right, all of which were spheres identified by our eighteenth century (not just by ourselves retrospectively). So it seems as if there are other ways of parsing this (aside from genre or discipline) that might be provocative.

And I'm just going to play the historian's card also and say that thus far we have mostly been talking about an elite conversation, say, right? And it's one that sounds as if it's located in the commercialization of society, transmissions in print culture, and revolution, right: so grand stories and we're all comfortable with that in the eighteenth century. So what I'd like to lay next to those are colonization, mobilization, dislocation: other kinds of historical phenomena that would surely impinge on the stories that we want to tell about the eighteenth century's own story about its experience of slowness, acceleration, past-present-future...things like that.

**Sachs:** Is there a question there?

**Knott:** Well, I mean, there's a question about what balls are we throwing into the air, right, in terms of the categories with which we think eighteenth-century figures are themselves thinking through questions of past and future or slowness and speed. And my proposition was that they were thinking in terms of politics, society, culture, and economy. And the other question was about how we think historical phenomena outside of the immediate purview of the thinkers we've discussed so far—like colonization, mobilization, dislocation, right: going beyond European metropolises and the discourses produced in them to a much more globalized eighteenth century that we also know a lot about... Is there a way to bring the conversation we've had so far into discussion with that, those historical realities?

**Sachs:** That's a great question, and what I particularly like about it is that it, of course, seeds potential future conversations that we can have over the course of the next couple days. But what I'll say in response to it is that part of what I'm wondering about in relationship between these

questions about speed and slowness as they come to connect to this idea of eighteenth-century futures is: how do you parse the relationship between futurity and pace, right? What does pace do for us as a category of analysis, right; and is that contiguous with the problem of futurity? And so, if what... In my own little project, right, what I'm trying to ask is: what happens if we think about Romanticism through the question or problem of pace, right? But there is a bigger question here, right, which is how do questions of pace and speed and acceleration and slowness relate to the problem of the future? Because one of the things that the future raises is this question of "when," right? And we get this repeatedly in contemporary discussions about climate change, right. Is it too late? Have we missed the moment? Or is it going to be too late if we don't do something now? Or is this really just a problem for 200 years from now? I suppose my way of answering your question is: I think questions of pace, speed, and slowness are fundamental to a discussion of futurity. But I also think, along with you, that we need not restrict this to questions of poetry or revolution at all.

In fact, the big payoff that I'm trying to get to in this next book is to pressure the question or problem of rupture, right. That one of the things you get when you introduce slowness into the question of acceleration is you trouble stories of rupture and catastrophe and break. And that's what I would argue is important. Because for the other categories of analysis that you are introducing, I would argue that those problems are ongoing; they are neither ruptured into nor behind us. Anyways... I'll stop there.

**Breithaupt:** Joanna.

**Joanna Stalnaker:** Ok, so I'm hoping that this is now a comment that has turned into a hook. [laughter] So I was really interested in what you had to say about the dating of deep time. And I wanted to ask you a question about the specificity of some of those numbers when attempting to date deep time (or look for an origin for the Earth) in relation to possible efforts to date extinction in the future in a similar, specific way. So I've been thinking about this with respect to Buffon's *History of the Earth* where, you know, we have this strange sort of specificity of numbers that he gives, 74,832 years, whereas at the same time—which is on the basis of [inaudible] experiments about the history of the Earth—whereas at the same time in his private manuscripts, he's thinking, "It could be three million, it could be ten million." So why do you need such an incredibly specific number, whereas at the same time, it could be so far from the numbers he's actually thinking about? He also predicts in the future extinction through the progressive cooling of the Earth, but from what I've seen, at least for him, he doesn't ever try to date that future with the same degree of empirical specificity. So I'm wondering if you've encountered other examples of attempts to sort of use that sort of empirical specificity with relation to the future or dating the future?

**Sachs:** Great question. And the Buffon question is an open question, right; you know how Rudwick answers it?

**Stalnaker:** Yes.

**Sachs:** Rudwick wants to say that he's making these speculations public because he thinks that 75,000 or so years is more tenable to people's ears, whereas 3 million will just be untenable. I don't know. I want to hear what other people want to say about that claim by Rudwick. He's somebody whose work I have almost a pathological respect for [laughter] and don't want to trouble, but I would be interested to hear...

With respect to the dating of the future: I'll give two examples, both of which are very different, but which I've written about together in a piece that's about to come out in *Poetics Today*. One is: I've seen a lot of people writing about Anna Barbauld and "Eighteen-Hundred and Eleven", right, but what's interesting about that poem for me—especially in respect to Mercier's *2440*—is the way that in Barbauld's poem, the present is dated and the future is not. So we have a very clear sense that, at some point in the future, London will be in ruins; but we have no sense as to *when* at all. There's another poem that hasn't been much discussed, by this guy called Thomas Littleton that comes out in, I think it's... It's published in the 1780s, but I can't remember the exact date of it. At any rate, the point is that he dates... His poem is also similar to Barbauld in the sense that it's set in an imagined future of ruin. But it's dated at the portico of Saint Paul's in 2199, and it's a letter from one friend to another from the imperial capitol of Boston. [laughter] And what's ironic about this is—if I remember it correctly, the publication date is 1782. So you look at it and think "Oh, great, you know, he's worried about the American War and he thinks that now that the colonies have been lost, it's over." But Littleton actually wrote the poem in 1770, so before this war even broke out. But that's one example of a kind of forwardly-bounded future that imagines when it's going to happen. Whereas with Barbauld the only date you get is the present date, 1811; with Littleton, the only date you get is the future date. And like I just said, right, that plays into what the poem will be reflecting on, based on its publication, history, and its composition...

**Breithaupt:** We still have a whole half-an-hour, so I will use this moment as a short breather for all. And I will just give you some kind of discussions—I will just throw them out as big bubbles of things we've talked about so far. But we still have a full list of questions here. And I will just name the topics here that I've seen have had a lot of traction. One of them was the question of genres, or as Sarah called them "spheres," other—astrology is one domain of reasoning where things happen. The question is: do some spheres or genres move fast or slower; do they have different future senses or not? That was one discussion we've already started here. I don't think it's a discussion—no one has mapped this clearly for us, but it's a discussion. The second discussion that is in the room is the question of slowing down. Fiction is one thing that becomes slower in the nineteenth century, and it can become a deliberate attempt to slow things down. Jonathan called it a kind of deliberate attempt to counter, move against acceleration, and that was a discussion we had here also in terms of the large-scale novel—Jesse started that. That's a second, larger discussion I've noted here so far. There I think we've made some progress—appear to be a little further in that one. And then we have this interesting, new discussion here of *when* does the future start: when is the moment that this happens; can one date it; is there something about it where exactly it happens. Jonathan has also spoken up here as well. Then we have a lot of kind of individual, little ideas that will probably be picked up: we have Rebecca's darkness of the future; we have questions of the radical new, obviously; and a lot of different

other things. So those are little kind of baits for you to kind of hook up with larger discussion to try to bring us forward here. But we have a list of speakers here. So: Nush...

**Powell:** Thank you. Okay, I have a very quick comment for Jonathan and then a question that maybe will speak to both papers. I'm always very anti-authoritarian when it comes to genres—Jesse and I have butted heads—I don't give a crap about "the novel." If we're doing Romantic time, right, the name that's popping up for me, of course, is de Quincey. You want to talk about slow time? well there are his opium trips where a thousand years pass. But on the other hand, the English mail coach (where the speed is absolutely horrifying to him) leads to an existential crisis. Right? I assumed you had thought about that.

**Sachs:** Yeah, you got it. I mean, this is the project, right?

**Powell:** Yeah, yeah. And it's so interesting. Because everybody knows those moments, but we don't talk about them...

**Sachs:** Yeah.

**Powell:** So my broader question was more about, since we're both kind of addressing the perception of time, right... I was surprised not to hear any discussion so far of technology. I mean, of course you have something like Stuart Sherman's *Telling Time*. Is time slowing down or speeding up because suddenly people can watch the minutes going by, which we never could before; that's one of the huge sea-changes in terms of eighteenth-century perceptions of reality. And it's elite, but it's not super elite; over the course of the century it becomes much more popularized. And of course in here with Sherman we have the diurnal writing: diary-keeping; newspapers; time is being segmented in a way that it hasn't before. And that certainly has got to have an effect on the way that time is talked about and measured going into futurity. So I would just like to hear some comments about that.

**Sachs:** I'll start very quickly. I mean, the one thing I would say in response to that is that Stuart's idea, right, is "diurnal form."

**Powell:** Right.

**Sachs:** And that's the issue, right?...

**Powell:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Sachs:** ... Is how do these new questions of time and temporality impact *form*, right? You can think about that. I don't want to gesticulate wildly and do a lot of that right now, because I think that's something that's more of interest to literary scholars. But that's also a question right there, right: to what extent are we really having interdisciplinary conversations? And to what extent do I really want to navel gaze on this question of form, or to what extent do I want to try to

broadcast form outwards, and try to make it relevant in other contexts and other ways? That's one thing I would ask about.

But in response to this question of watching time, right... The person that I've been writing a lot about is this guy William Playfair, who invented the time-series line graph; and that's about the visualization of time, of seeing time, right? So my response to that would be, you can see time in ways other than simply watching it tick off on a clock, right.

**Powell:** Sure.

**Sachs:** That when you start to invent new technologies for visualization, that's also one of the things that contributes to a sense of time speeding up. Because one of the effects of a time-series line graph is that time takes less time to see. And William Playfair, the guy who invents them, is very explicit about this, right? He's inventing this chart—this *form*—for men of business, whose time is pressed. He says, “They can do in five minutes what would take, you know, days if they had to do it with tables.” And here you have this really odd, interesting problem where, you know, he wants you to use the time-series line graph because it enables you to work with large amounts of data. But it also speeds up seeing and saves you time, but it also makes your time feel more pressed. Because there's yet one more thing you can do with your limited time, you know; it contributes to this problem of multi-tasking. And what else did I want to say about that? I think I'll leave it at that. Yeah.

**Fulda:** The authors to which I refer are academics at a university in a small, German town. But, perhaps you know, in Germany, universities are the centers of intellectual life. And this is the time when the first newspapers for academics... There is a rise... not exactly newspapers...magazines? *Zeitschrift*?...What is?... Yes, a journal. But these journals are numbered, a new number comes every week; this number has to be filled. They are producing news... It's also a product of new forms of publication. And in this field, authors strive to become famous. And especially this unknown—completely unknown—author, Gladov, to whom I refer, is such a young scholar who tries to establish himself as an academic intellectual. And I think this... competition?

**Breithaupt:** Competition.

**Fulda:** Yeah, this competition, which is theoretically conceived by the *prudentia politica*, takes place here in Halle and other university cities in Protestant Germany. This has a media side too.

**Breithaupt:** Media, yes... I'm sure we'll talk much more about that. Dave.

**Alff:** Daniel, so you talked about who possesses *prudentia politica*, who has the agency to undertake political projection. I'm curious about the fact that these political projections come to have their own histories. I wondered what happened at [inaudible] Grammar School: does it matter that Defoe was on the run from his creditors, was bankrupt when he writes *Essay Upon Projects*? And I'm wondering if the failure of political projection—political projection that can

be proven false or does not come to realize itself—can that call into question or jeopardize an open future in the eighteenth century?

**Fulda:** Jeopardize an open future? What does “jeopardize” *übersetzen*? Someone who does not succeed with his project, does he try to make a new project, or does he never try to make a new project? I think he tries to make a new project and in this sense, jeopardizing or not succeeding with your project is not a factor for foreclosing the future.

**Breithaupt:** It begs for the argument by Joseph Vogl, who says that in the eighteenth century, historical forces become so unmanageable, invisible, that you can’t manage them any longer; which means that no one can prove that you messed up because it could still have happened. There’s something to that.

**Alff:** There was a published project in the late seventeenth century to create an Office of Projectors to pay attention to and regulate all of these people who had become discreditable. [laughter]

**Breithaupt:** I actually didn’t know about that office, that’s great. I seriously do want to know about this. But John...

**John Han:** It seems like what we’re kind of talking about is the ability, or the difficulty, of articulating a future. And it seems like there’s... I’m talking about Michael’s paper—what was it? the legibility of history... And that struck me with Daniel’s paper: the containment of the uncertain, right. The fact that’s the precondition for an open future, if I’m understanding correctly. And Jonathan you’re talking about the sort of ruptures of time...

**Sachs:** I’m talking against the ruptures of time.

**Han:** Oh, you’re... Right, which actually makes it easier for me, because... Okay. It seems that poetry allows that containment of uncertainty, versus the novel, because you’re thinking about Frank Kermode’s notion of “tick-and-tock”: that there’s some sort of telos; some sense of an ending. You feel...that moment is felt time. Whereas poetry is centered outside of time: it doesn’t have that same sort of telos; that sort of, you know, the dates on *Pamela*, when she was at... And there’s something about the way that poetry encloses—not encloses, but contains... That certainly that allows it to get outside, you know, of a larger novel.

**Sachs:** Well, I mean, I’d want to ask about that.

**Han:** Okay.

**Sachs:** I’m amenable to that, but I also think that you could turn around and say, “Well, that’s a classic instance of the Romantic ideology.”

**Han:** Right.



**Sachs:** In the sense that Romantic poets want you to think that poetry is worth taking more time.

**Han:** Right.

**Sachs:** And that poetry requires modes of attentiveness...

**Han:** Right.

**Sachs:** ... That fiction doesn't. And part of what I'm trying to ask is... Part of what I'm trying to say is that all of these questions about the time of reading, the time for reading, the time that one should devote to reading, and whatnot... I don't have an answer for this. But if these are in fact more pressing questions in the later part of the eighteenth century, right, then these understandings of poetry in relationship to time (or novels in relationship to time) become later-eighteenth-century questions or later-eighteenth-century problems, and become related to these questions of futurity and the new kinds of attentiveness to time that speculation or anxiety about futurity generate.

**Han:** Right, and you know, in Jesse's paper, the idea of plot in some degree kind of delimits time, to a certain degree; it has to. Whereas poetry, I think... I don't know. Formally...

**Sachs:** Or are you talking about... But again, this is where we get into questions of genre. Because you could suggest that lyric poetry doesn't work like that.

**Han:** Yeah, yeah.

**Sachs:** But epic poetry might.

**Han:** Right, right.

**Sachs:** Or narrative poetry itself...

**Han:** Right, right.

**Fulda:** I only wanted to recall that there is a long tradition for reclaiming timelessness for poetry. As you all know the lines by Horatius, "*exegi monumentum aere perennius*." That is: "I have erected a monument longer lasting than..."

**unidentified female speaker:** Bronze. Bronze.

**Fulda:** Thank you: bronze. It's important for argumentation that you can show that the time becoming slower in your text is something different than this poetical tradition.

**Sachs:** That sounds about right, right? And this is of course a poetic tradition, and a long one, right: you can go even before Horace, you can go to Virgil; you can go to the *Aeneid*, right? The whole future projection that happens in the first book of the *Aeneid* and the way that the poem is meant to preserve that futurity. So the question becomes, “Okay, given this tradition of poetry as being something that is durable, or that endures through time, how do new temporal pressures that arise—and we’ll say just for the sake of it—in the course of the eighteenth century, come to bear on those kinds of arguments, right?” Are the kinds of arguments that Romantic writers like Wordsworth, Shelley, de Quincey, Barbauld... Are those kinds of arguments that are being made for the duration and timelessness or lasting quality of poetry—or of “Literature” with a capital “L”—are they different as a result of the temporal pressures that are coming through in the late eighteenth century? What I want to argue is that, in fact, they are. And they are because, when someone like Wordsworth says, “Look, there’s so much more stuff coming out. It gives this sense of eventfulness, it leads to a craving for eventfulness, which changes the kinds of things that people read. We need to make them read something different; we need to make them care about something different.” And he sees that as an ethical project and a political project.

**Fulda:** It’s a rejection of acceleration.

**Sachs:** Yeah. And so that’s what I would say. It’s not that... again, with this question about novelty or origin, right? This argument for the endurance of literature is not new or novel in the later part of the eighteenth century. But it’s charged with a language of temporality that is different. That’s what I would say.

**Breithaupt:** Richard.

**Richard Nash:** Oh, you got to me much quicker than I was expecting. [laughter] Jonathan, you mentioned at one point—after I had signaled that I was going to ask a question—you said, “What does pace do for us as a category of analysis?” and that immediately distracted me; handicappers for a long time have been debating precisely that issue. [laughter] And I was thinking of that not only glibly, but also seriously, because when handicappers consider the effect of pace, they’re thinking of the effect of pace on speed. And pace and speed are not the same thing, and yet we’re somehow using them interchangeably here. And so I’m thinking a little bit about this question of slow and fast, but trying to think of it in more nuanced ways rather than thinking of it as preferring one to the other—but about various, about what are the variables that affect that? And it seems to me that could extend well beyond genre (which we have been talking about). I’m struck by how these two papers speak to what I tend to think of as either ends of how we mark our period (defined as “the eighteenth century”) and, at the same time, doing so across disciplines. So that, on the one hand, there’s a nice bit in the first part of Daniel’s paper, where you might think of the “Quarrel of Ancients and Moderns” as setting something of a start point for an attitude towards futurity in relation to an attitude towards the past: somehow balanced or poised against each other. That when we get to your [Sachs’s] payoff, at what I think of as the end of the eighteenth century, there’s a very different sense of the importance of how you’re imagining time being conceived. There’s a changed sense of temporality. What I’m wondering about—trying to put these two together and get ready to think about all weekend long—is

whether our construction of this period *as a period* continues to make sense? It could be considered a very real... On the one hand, it would be easy to set these two as very different moments in time that *we're* claiming speak to one another, and yet that presumes a scale of reference in which this is a particularly meaningful, historical time period. And yet it seems to me that a lot of the questions that we're talking, when you were giving a glib answer early and then disavowing it about poetry, I was thinking, "Now you sound exactly like how my undergrads actually do talk about poetry: why does it take so long?" [laughter] But reading... We read differently at different times: we read slow, or we read fast, or we teach people how to read slow. And in a very real sense, you are reading quite differently if you're reading rock formation than if you're reading a poem, right? A lyric poem is a different text to read than a geological formation. At that level, I find myself wondering in this conversation as we're using categorical terms like "pace" or "speed," how much the change in reference is particularly one that we're just not... For me, I find it very hard to make a very coherent argument about futurity in "the eighteenth century" from this conversation alone. Now I know we've got many conversations ahead of us and it will all make sense to me at the end of the weekend... This was going to be a question if it hadn't come on me so fast, but I've gone on long enough... So there's a certain sense where I'm still trying to put these two papers together as something other than bookends that make me wonder: "Is there a thing between the bookends?"

**Sachs:** Well, if I may, I can riff with what you're pushing toward and try to think about it in terms of categories that might perhaps have more of a payoff... But I take the heart of your question to be this issue of "What is pace, really?" right? And part of what I'm trying to say, and... What is pace really? How does pace come to bear on our understanding of futurity? And to what extent is this an eighteenth-century problem? Does that seem like a fair trio of takeaway questions?

**Nash:** Yeah, can I add one more to that?

**Sachs:** Sure.

**Nash:** Because I'm wondering... There's something... I want to consider the possibility of fluctuation in pace, rather than particularly always trying to make it into a trend.

**Sachs:** Exactly. So part of what I'm trying to do, or think about, in this larger context is to suggest that if you want to think about futurity, that is inevitably a question of "when". "When" is also a question of "how soon"; or "how far"—"how near" or "how far"; "how sudden" or "how slowly." So to think about futurity is also to ask questions about pace. I think I have said that already... But pace in this sense is not simply about creating an opposition between fast and slow, but about recognizing qualities of speed which can be fast (or slow) as imbricated with each other, right. And one of the narratives that we like to tell ourselves about modernity is that this process of acceleration starts in the eighteenth century and, that from the eighteenth century forward, acceleration is what marks modernity. And part of what I'm trying to do is to say, "Well, that's pace. But pace is actually more complicated than just speed; it's about a mutual

imbrication of speed and slowness whose contours need to be developed.” So I can’t speak to exactly how that would be developed at this point; maybe someday I’ll finish this other book.

But the other question about that is that once you start to develop an idea of the future as a problem of pace, then you’re into—and this might play into some of the stuff that you’ve been writing about—you’re into a problem of relation. And I think, for me, this is what I want to bring to bear on this question of the eighteenth century. When you start to think about the problem of relation, you can start to play around with it and potentially develop new and interesting ways to periodize. And I think that one of the ways we tend to periodize is that we tend to periodize in very linear ways, and to say that we move from the Restoration to the eighteenth century to Romanticism in the context of English literary history. But what does that mean? And what happens when you start to play around with scale in that sense? What happens when you start to think about a Regency within Romanticism, or a Georgic period within the eighteenth century that has its variants One, Two, and Three? And so part of what I’m trying to do with this, and I’ve played around with this in other contexts—I did a MLA talk last year—is when you start to think about a periodization as relational, you can start to ask about what a year looks like in the context of the period. You can start to think about what happens when you toggle between a year and what we would typically consider to be a literary period, or a larger period. And this is a very vague way of putting it; I have to develop this. But I think it allows for a more dynamic model of periodization, one that can stretch across the rupture that we like to perceive between, say, eighteenth century, Romantic, and Victorian. But not in a way that says these periods don’t exist, these periods are unreal; but in a way that says these periods are more complicated than we’re assuming.

**Fulda:** This is another question to Jonathan...

**Breithaupt:** We... Okay, okay... We have three more speakers on our regular list; but now we have Tracey hooking, but it has to be brief.

**Tracey Hutchings-Goetz:** It’s really brief.

**Breithaupt:** Everything very brief now, we treasure our coffee breaks.

**Hutchings-Goetz:** So Richard’s comment helped me formulate a question, which is: when does slow time locate violence?

**Sachs:** Yeah, I mean, you can talk to someone like Rob Nixon, that’s going to be a postmodern problem: that’s going to be a problem that comes out in the later 1960s; that comes out in the relationship between the emergence of ecological writing. Part of what I’m trying to argue in the paper is that so many of these things that we consider to be postmodern are very much present in the period of the eighteenth century. With the takeaway from that for me is what we’re talking about here is modernity. Modernity is a vague, slippery, kind of shitty term, but let’s see what we can do with it. But the thrust of the argument is that postmodernity is crap, basically. [laughter]

**Spang:** It’s a meaningless term.

**Sachs:** Yeah, and that it's just ludicrous to talk about it; and that all of these problems that you want to locate as being postmodern can actually be found in much earlier instantiations. And somebody, I'm sure, could turn around to me and say, "Well this is all prior to the eighteenth century," and you know, there's our horse race of origins—pun, Richard.

**Nash:** Always appreciated. [laughter]

**Hutchings-Goetz:** Just to follow quickly... I sort of meant: in the kind of experience of slow time, is violence always in the future, or is it in a perpetual kind of presentness? So it was less the kind of theoretical question, and more... Yeah.

**Sachs:** Okay. Sure. Well in Wordsworth's case, it's in the past, right? The Cumberland beggar and the old man travelling have experienced violence on their bodies that caused them to walk this slowly. And that violence is unmarked and past.

**Breithaupt:** This dangling question—we will note that for later. The last three that will ask questions are: Johannes, Helge, and Christine.

**Johannes Türk:** Okay, so I will go back a little bit to what Helge said earlier, partly because I don't really understand what we're talking about; I think we are talking about very different things and I thought already the papers were almost too different to really talk about them. But I think I finally figured out a way to maybe think about them. And I'll just propose something and maybe you think it's completely meaningless or maybe it is... So it seems to me that any hypothesis like Koselleck's about an open future is really very naïve, in spite of all the distinction... in spite of the image of historiography, right. Because he thinks something happens in historiography: all of a sudden, history becomes open because historiographers think about it as an open process. And I think that assumes, in a way, a lot of... It covers over, in a way, distinctions that need to be made. And I think some of those... I mean: times are multiple. And I think that your, in a way, critique—or, let's say, amendment—to Koselleck makes us aware of that. You know, so there are institutional times; there are individual times; there are very different times that always exist. And the question is, "Are they more homogenous, are they less homogenous?"

And I think you touch a number of points. You touch the question of "How is a future open for these different agents?" For example, when you say that in the realm of sovereignty nothing new happens. So because sovereign agents have a certain art of conducting history, right, they prevent something new from happening. So that's why, I think... And then, you know, there are administrative sciences that integrate the Ciceronian and Stoic things like *prudentia* into a governmental science. They collect new data and then, all of a sudden, something new can happen. But it happens as an agent; so, in other words, just to think "open future" means "anything can happen" is not enough. We need to think, "Well, the future is actually doable." And there are different institutions that operate with different time scales. And part of this openness of the future is also, "I can do something later"; it's not just that the new will happen, right? So I think, on one level of course, it's necessary to say "deviation"—to distinguish

deviation from newness: we're capable of integrating newness; we're capable of having an open future. That's like the basic step. But then which types of knowledge are inhabited, you know, by this open future in what way: how do they imagine the future; how do they operate on it; what modes of deferral, of differentiation do they have; what data sets do they use in order to actually turn history into this thing in which new things can happen? So that presupposes at least two things. On the one hand, like a very open vision, you know: the future can be open; new things can happen. But also an idea about the doability: so something like a thick future that has to do with data; it has to do with projections; it has to do with modes of attributing agency.

And I think your paper, the second paper, in a way, touches a lot of these question, but I think less focused on the open future, but rather on the question of how do we represent time. And it's clear that in Darwin, you know, there's this whole... (And I forgot to mention, by the way, the knight, right? In this image of historiography; it's kind of totally absurd that the knight goes into the open future in the early eighteenth century? Right? [laughter] I mean, that's kind of... So that has to do with the agent...)

**Fulda:** Well, the knight is on the right side...

**Türk:** But in yours, it seems to me, what was really interesting about it... I mean, it's clear that Darwin grapples with this problem explicitly, right? Because he needs to draw on analogies such as breathing, such as, right?... That, in a way, humanize by turning it into the result of an activity that is well-known. And building a bridge to these timescales that are imperceptible, that we don't perceive. And so by integrating geological and biological time into the realm of the doable, right, I think he manages to open these dimensions of time. And so it seems to me that the representation of time, but also the question of "who" represents it on the basis of "what" knowledge and "how," you know, is really an interesting way of talking about it. Which means that you're probably talking about at least two things: about representing time and about time itself. So there's a doubling of it, in a way, and then I think you need agency. And I think those things together would create a slightly more complicated image, and would open (at the same time) venues for talking about both papers in a meaningful way. You know, where does acceleration come out of? How does it actually... From where does it reach us? How can it capture us? Who is doing it, right?

**Breithaupt:** Okay, I think we are now... It was a long comment. So...[laughter]

**Spang:** We don't—we have...

**Breithaupt:** We will not have answers; we allow the last two people to also makes comments now.

**Spang:** Right, but we also built in half-an-hour for a break, which is a long break, so that there can be a little bit of wiggle room.

**Breithaupt:** Yeah... I mean, the suggestion will not be forgotten that the doability or malleability as we encountered in, say, Daniel's paper is the key term he proposed as the

bridging term between the two papers. But I want to hear Helge and then Christine, and then we will have the speakers for a final... And you may make comments at this point too; it doesn't have to be anything but a question. So Helge, whatever you want to say.

**Jordheim:** Thank you. Okay, this was sort of perfect way to sort of bridge into my question. Because I'll try to link sort of what you said about institutional time—administrative time—knowledge and agency. And my question to you would be sort of about the politics of slowness—slowing things down—because it's politically opportunistic to slow things down. Because as long as, I mean... The dream of utopia is to stop time, right, because if you stop time, nothing can bad can happen: there can be no revolutions, no changes, this wonderful society would just exist. But stopping time is a hard thing. The fantastic example of this is Holberg, the Danish author, who has written about his journey to the center of the Earth, where he comes to this utopian society and it's utopian because things are incredibly slow. [Editor's Note: *Nicolai Klimii iter subterraneum*, 1741] So the rulers are stalling reception, so they need plenty of time before they get it, and then they have to consider the options for three weeks before they can make a decision. ...The important thing is that you put in place an administrative time that slows everything down. I mean, it comes into your question of revolution and time that you're addressing, Jonathan, and goes into the question of the *prudentia* also... I mean, it seems like good politics, if you want to keep stable political structures, to slow things down.

**Sachs:** A quick response that's not even a response: Hartmut Rosa, right? That's the terms that's gotta be put on the table. That Hartmut Rosa's modification of Koselleck's argument by acceleration. That's what you're talking about right there.

**Jordheim:** Yeah.

**Sachs:** And then the second thing would be slow food, right: these contemporary movements that see themselves as highly political because they want to slow things down. Part of what I want to do by complicating the slow-fast is to say "slow is not the answer." That's all I'm saying.

**Spang:** You're not going to feed 7 billion people with slow food. [laughter]

**Breithaupt:** Christine now.

**Christine Zabel:** Yeah, it's just a quick comment about the... I think in Koselleck, the notion of the future is—although his whole theory is about the future—the future itself is very understudied and undertheorized. And disciples like Lucian Hölscher in Germany right now think much more about the depth of the future. And I think that is what I think both papers kind of allow you to think about much more. When narrative and the open future don't emerge at the same time and when we rethink about the recalibration of slowness and acceleration: I was wondering if you could think about the recalibration of slowness and acceleration as a kind of trying to hold on a little longer to the past—to bring it into the future—but it still accepts that the future is new. But we need a time of transition. And that plays into (kind of) when does the future start. And one can accept that the future will be new, but maybe people at the end of the

eighteenth century tried to kind of delay that point of departure and have a transitional phase? And so, I mean, in nineteenth-century literature, as far as I know, there is this whole move to travel literature, that when people walk through—like [inaudible]—they walk through Germany by themselves. And observation is now much more... And that plays into my own project on speculation: that there is an acceptance of an open future, but we still need observation—but it is [no longer] observation of experience, but observation of ever-changing constellations. And in order to react to these ever-changing constellations, we need to close the observer to what's happening. So we need this slowness in order to address the open future and maybe have this kind of transition or delay when a rupture can emerge.

**Sachs:** Just very, very quickly... Yes! That's why I want to ask, right: why is it that, in so much of Wordsworth's poetry, we are talking about old men walking slowly through a landscape? [laughter]

**Zabel:** Yes, and it seems the walking is exactly...

**Sachs:** Yes, the walking is key. But again, to push on this postmodern/modern thing, right? When you think about this genre that you think of as so postmodern: psychogeography. Psychogeography—Iain Sinclair, right?—is about walking slowly. [laughter] It's not new!

**Zabel:** Yeah.

**Sachs:** Anyways...

**Breithaupt:** Daniel, you have the final word.

**Fulda:** Yeah, I would like to ask you—and all—if there is a necessary relation between acceleration and an open future? Is it a requirement for acceleration that the future is open, or is it possible to think acceleration in a closed horizon of futures? And I think one of the... Today's critique against acceleration is: society does not think in an open way—doesn't conceive of the future as open, but as something determined by economic and political constraints, yeah?

**Breithaupt:** Or time constraints. [laughter] Let's thank the speakers. [applause]



## Cooperson's Paper, Mercier's Numbers

JOANNA STALNAKER

This session will have a somewhat unusual format, as I will be responding both to a live author, Michael Cooperson, and to a dead author, Louis Sébastien Mercier. In a certain sense, this is perfectly appropriate: we need only to imagine that Mercier, author of the futuristic narrative *L'an deux mille quatre cent quarante: Rêve s'il en fut jamais* [The Year Two Thousand Four Hundred and Forty: Dream If There Ever Was One], woke up not in the future of 2440, as he claims in his narrative, but some four hundred years earlier, in 2016, to discuss his take on the eighteenth-century future with us.

Mercier borrows his epigraph from Leibniz: “Le Temps présent est gros de l'avenir...” [The present time is fat (or pregnant) with the future.] This epigraph reflects what Michael Cooperson takes to be Mercier's political project in the novel: “2440 makes the case that utopia is *not* a dream or fantasy: it is, or could be, the natural consequence of making certain choices *now*” (9). But in responding to Cooperson's paper, I will question the extent to which 2440—which was published in 1771 a little under two decades before the French Revolution—is a politically engaged text. Instead, I will suggest that Mercier found his future as a politically engaged writer in the interstices of 2440, when he went on to publish his twin descriptions of Paris: the *Tableau de Paris* in twelve volumes, published between 1781 and 1788, and the *Nouveau Paris* in six volumes, published in 1799.

Mercier first raises the issue of how difficult it is to imagine a politically transformed future in his dedicatory epistle to the year 2440. Addressing the year directly, he writes: “Mais, Auguste & Respectable Année, j'ai eu beau, en te contemplant, élever, enflammer mes idées, elles ne seront peut-être à tes yeux que des idées de servitude. Pardonne! le génie de mon Siècle me presse & m'environne : la stupeur regne : le calme de ma Patrie ressemble à celui des Tombeaux” (3) [But, alas! August and Venerable Year, perhaps to little purpose, when contemplating thee, have I animated, exalted my ideas; they may appear in thy eyes the mere conceptions of servitude. Forgive me; the genius of my age surrounds and oppresses me. Stupidity now reigns; the tranquility of my country resembles that of the grave (v)].<sup>1</sup> How is it possible, or is it even possible, Mercier asks, to imagine political freedom from a position of political servitude?

Mercier might seem politically audacious for asking that question. But to my mind, when compared to his subsequent descriptions of Paris, 2440 appears politically disengaged. The Englishman who criticizes the stark inequalities reigning in Paris at the beginning of the work opts to leave Paris until “tous ces projets auront été mis à exécution” (11-12) [all those projects are accomplished] (13). As Cooperson notes, Mercier himself leaves the interval between 1768, when his work was written, and the year 2440 largely untouched, as if he had little interest in how to get from point A to point B. At the same time, we can begin to see Mercier's future as a politically engaged writer emerge in the interstices of 2440, especially in the footnotes: the textual present of 2440 is pregnant with the future of the *Tableau de Paris* and the *Nouveau Paris*. In such footnotes—like the one about the lack of seats in the pit of the French theater—Mercier describes the social inequities of current Parisian customs and institutions in a way that calls for their reform. This is precisely the technique he would go on to perfect in the *Tableau de Paris*: in this latter text, change in the future starts with concrete, politically engaged descriptions of the present.

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<sup>1</sup> References to the French text will be to the original edition, Louis Sébastien Mercier, *L'an deux mille quatre cent quarante: Rêve s'il en fut jamais* (Londres, 1771). References to the English translation will be to *Memoirs of the Year Two Thousand Five Hundred*, translated by W. Hooper (London, 1772).

My next point relates to the questions of empiricism and the imagination and specifically concerns dating. In his paper, Cooperson documents the persistent motif of time-travelers observing sign-posting of the future dates to which they have traveled, whether it be Paris in 2440 or Istanbul in 2008. He observes that on the one hand, Mercier's date of 2440 may have been chosen precisely because it was arbitrary, but on the other hand, its numerical specificity is important because it "places [the year] in a definite and determinant relationship with Mercier's own present of 1768" (9). I agree with this point and would further call attention to the 1772 English translation's reconfiguration of Mercier's dating. Oddly, the title of the work has been changed to *Memoirs of the Year Two Thousand Five Hundred*. The translator claims in his "Advertisement" that this was the only modification made to the text. But in reality, the initial change in the title creates a domino effect as other numbers relating to time and dating have to be changed as well: the chapter "J'ai sept cents ans" [I am seven hundred years old] becomes "I am 760 years old," and the narrator's exclamation that he has slept 672 years must be changed to 732 years. All of these changes call attention to the potential significance of dating and numbering in Mercier's work, and in any work about the future: why did Mercier give such a specific number to the year of his imagined future (2440), but a nice round number for the age of his narrator (700)? Why did the translator invert that relationship, such that the year of the imagined future is more of a round number (2500) while the age of the narrator (760) is less so?

These questions are significant because they play into the broader eighteenth-century tendency to use incredibly precise numbers to imagine not just the distant future but also the deep past. As Jesse Molesworth notes in his paper on eighteenth-century theories and histories of the earth, the French naturalist Buffon speculated in his *Histoire naturelle* that the earth was 74,832 years old, on the basis of empirical experiments measuring the cooling rates of heated metal balls. The precision of this number is all the more striking when one considers that Buffon speculated in his unpublished manuscripts that the earth might actually be anywhere from three million to ten million years old. Why would one go to such lengths to offer a precise number, down to the ones' place, when one is also speculating that the actual number might be off by several million or more? It seems likely that Buffon used such great numerical precision to signal the empirical basis of his calculations for his readers. In that case, one might ask what the implications of the Buffon example would be for the numerical specificity of Mercier's imagined future. Is it possible to research the future in an empirical way and, if so, what would that mean?

My next point bears on the passage of time and Mercier's sense of historicity. In comparison to the *Tableau de Paris* and the *Nouveau Paris*, we don't get much of a sense in Mercier's futuristic utopia of what is *lost* with the passage of time. There is one striking reference to the lost cries of Paris, but it is again, significantly, relegated to a footnote: "Les cris de Paris forment un langage particulier dont il faut avoir la grammaire" (15) [The cries of Paris form a particular language of which one must have the grammar].<sup>2</sup> In other words, the future of 2440 is one in which the particular language of the *cris de Paris*, and its grammar, have been lost, but the narrator doesn't linger on such losses (and the 1772 English translation further downplays the loss by suppressing the footnote in question). Again, the historical interval between 1768 and 2440 has been erased, and a lot has been erased along with it. In the *Tableau de Paris* and especially in the *Nouveau Paris*, in contrast, there is a much greater sense of the passage of time and of what is lost—languages, customs, cuts of dress—with its passage. This is not to say that these works are nostalgic; on the contrary, they continually press for change with utmost urgency. But part of the beauty of these works lies in their complex sense of historicity, the way that Mercier presses for change while also attending to the inevitable loss of the past.

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<sup>2</sup> My translation. This footnote is suppressed in the 1772 English translation.

Finally, I would like to raise the issue of the juxtaposition of travel through space and time-travel in Mercier's works. Cooperson's paper allows us to imagine Mercier's post-chaise in the guise of Doc Brown's modified DeLorean in *Back to the Future* or the Jetsons' futuristic flying cars. He also observes a close link between carriages and social inequality in Mercier's works. The legs of the walking describer—whether in the *Tableau de Paris* or *2440*—are more egalitarian than the post-chaise, and so as Cooperson astutely remarks, we know we're not in a utopia if there are vehicles there. But this claim is complicated by Mercier's appreciation for the special vantage point afforded by the post-chaise for describing the world and thus for effecting change. In the chapter "Chaise de poste" in the *Tableau de Paris*, he writes: "Voyons le monde, s'il est possible, avant d'en sortir; la plus heureuse des inventions est la chaise de poste. Je n'ai jamais pu envier aux riches que ce seul avantage" [Let us see the world, if it is possible, before leaving it; the happiest of inventions is the post-chaise. I could never envy anything of the rich but this sole advantage.]<sup>3</sup>

Mercier's predilection for the post-chaise is also apparent in the unpublished and possibly unfinished essay "Visite" that Cooperson found in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal. In this text, Mercier receives a letter—by post-chaise—from the year 2440. Cooperson interprets the text as an early example of the kind of time travel that would have such a rich literary future. After acknowledging that it remains unclear whether this post-chaise constitutes "the first time machine ever," Cooperson concludes: "What is clear is that Mercier didn't—and arguably couldn't—understand what he'd done in this scene: late eighteenth century France wasn't ready for that yet" (22). Without discounting Cooperson's intriguing suggestion that Mercier may have invented the time machine, I would observe that his teleological frame for interpreting this text—in terms of the many time machines that would follow it—leads him to overlook several of the more curious things Mercier does in the text. In particular, he seems to be figuring time travel as receiving a letter not from the *people* of the future, but from the year itself. In the same way, he opens *2440* with a dedicatory epistle, not to the people of 2440, but to that "August and Venerable Year." In other words, it is the year itself that is called upon to judge Mercier's ability to imagine what political freedom might look like in the future.

As we have seen, Mercier raises for his readers the question of how difficult it might be to imagine political freedom in the future from a position of political servitude. But for us today, in reading his works, there is also the difficulty of imagining the past, not the deep past of the earth that Buffon imagined, but the past of languages, customs, and cuts of dressed erased in the interval between 1768 and 2016. So I would conclude by asking Cooperson (and Mercier if he could wake up in our present) what it might have meant for Mercier to write to a year and not to a person. What did it mean for him to choose a not-so-round number for the year of his imagined future, while choosing a nice round 700 years for the age of the time-traveler? These are some of the stranger features of Mercier's imagined future, and they are ones that can be too easily overlooked because they belong more to an unfamiliar past than to the rich future of literary time travel.

<sup>3</sup> Louis Sébastien Mercier, *Tableau de Paris*, 2 vols., ed. Jean-Claude Bonnet (Paris: Mercure de France, 1994) 2:1451. My translation.

# What Happened to Revolutions? Koselleck's "Saddle Time" and the Breaking of Modernity

REBECCA L. SPANG

Good morning. After yesterday's two stimulating sessions and the equally vibrant conversation at dinner, it is a pleasure to welcome you all to the Workshop's "traditional" meeting space [Distinguished Alumni Room, Indiana Memorial Union] which is (as Fritz Breithaupt noted yesterday) particularly conducive to conversations. When we were reviewing submitted abstracts, the Steering Committee noted only two repeated points of reference among the proposals we received: Louis Sébastien Mercier's *The Year 2440* and Reinhart Koselleck's *Futures Past*. It hence seemed useful to spend some time in conversations prompted by each of these texts (even in the absence of their authors). Even more than Joanna Stalnaker or Alex Tipei in their comments yesterday on Mercier, I am in no position to speak *for* the author whose work I am introducing—it is clear that many of you are more intimately familiar with Koselleck's oeuvre (and how it continues to be built upon, especially in the German-speaking world) than am I. So my role today is not as an "expert," but instead it is to position this work in the context of the broader field of Eighteenth-Century Studies (especially as that field is constituted in the United State), to throw out a few observations by way of provocations, and then to moderate the conversation that emerges among all of you.

For those of you with an interest in biographical criticism: Reinhart Koselleck was born in 1926 and as a young man (a very young man) served in the Wehrmacht and spent more than a year in a POW camp in Kazakhstan. Trained as a political philosopher and intellectual historian (he had a particularly close relationship with Karl Schmitt—Schmitt was no longer teaching in the German university system because of his connection to the Nazis, but Koselleck met him socially—and he read Heidegger in Gadamer's seminar at Heidelberg), Koselleck was appointed in 1974 as professor of history at the University of Bielefeld (almost certainly the most significant center for social, cultural, historical research in the West Germany of the 1970s-1980s). The text we have today was first published in German in 1979—a year after Said's *Orientalism*, two years after the English translation of Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, and both seventeen years after the initial publication of Habermas's *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* and a decade before that work's publication in English. (*Futures Past* first appeared in English in 1985.) Like the three other texts I've just mentioned [all of which were absolutely crucial for the late 1980s-1990s version of *historicist* eighteenth-century studies, in which our own Center is rooted], *Futures Past* (and Koselleck's work more generally) assigns special significance to the period 1750-1850—i.e., to that part of the "eighteenth century" that falls after the research specialization of Dave Alff and Richard Nash. In other contexts, this era has been called the Age of democratic, cultural, or Atlantic revolutions, but in Koselleckian terms, it is the *Sattelzeit*—a "saddle time" of transition between pre-modern and modern regimes of historicity. (Daniel Fulda's paper offers a crucial challenge to this chronology, one that—as Fritz mentioned briefly yesterday—implicitly calls for re-thinking the causal relation posited between ideas, politics, and practices.) It seems to me that Koselleck's key claim—that there was a point in the past when thinking about the past changed—differs from the arguments of the other works I just mentioned in very

significant ways, but it nonetheless shares with them the idea that “once upon a time, the world was one way... and then it was another.” The real issue, of course, is how that change was effected.

This brings me to my first provocation: I would like us to think about what’s at stake in the move from an Age of Revolutions—which, for all that it may be an “age” nonetheless posits radical breaks and definite ruptures (in intention if not realization)—to that of a century-long, transitional “saddle.” Some fast searching on JSTOR suggests that *Futures Past* (and Koselleck’s work more generally) is still in its citation ascendancy (roughly three times more citations in the most recent decade than in the previous one and *that* one saw two times the citations of the decade before it). I see this as part of a trend among Europeanists more generally—but not among scholars of the Atlantic World (who it should be noted, barely responded at all to our call for papers [and our local Atlanticists were in attendance yesterday, but are not here this morning!])—away from “revolution” as subject of study. In my own area of geographic specialization (France), there has certainly been a tendency for the bright young things to move away from the shocks and mess of the 1790s, and instead to see in various developments over the course of the eighteenth century “the origins of the French Revolution.” Michael Kwass’s two excellent books both do this, as does Paul Cheney’s *Revolutionary Commerce*—as if accounting for “origins” or “novelty” is all that needs to happen to explain a revolution (the energy goes into identifying specific instances of the former, rather than understanding the processes of the latter). How is it that we can have a Workshop on Eighteenth-Century Futures in which “evolution” not “revolution” is a central concept and in which Romantic poets get more airtime than do Robespierre, Brissot, or the French, Republican calendar? What does our apparently collective move away from “revolution”—and again here, I want to bracket Dave Alff and Richard Nash, because they have a *Glorious Revolution* and are happy to talk about it—suggest about the future of our field? How can we bring interest in changing regimes of historicity and transformed temporal perceptions into conversation with work on the Atlantic slave trade and the place of commerce and violence more generally in the transnational movement of people and goods—or do we want to? Has the apparent eclipse of “the transition to capitalism” as a category of analysis resulted in a bifurcated future for Eighteenth-Century Studies? (With Continental Europeanists on one side; littoral Europeanists and Americanists, Atlanticists on the other. But, really, I think it may be a trifurcated future, because the Dryden-Defoe-Swift-Pope folks are rarely part of either of these conversations.)

Closely related is my concern with—and general distaste for—the concept of “modernity” (this isn’t anything “new” for me). Writing of the painting commissioned in 1528 by Duke William IV of Bavaria, Koselleck writes: “From their feet to their turbans, most of the Persians resemble the Turks who in the same year the picture was painted, unsuccessfully laid siege to Vienna. In other words, the event that Altdorfer captured was for him at once historical and contemporary” (p.10). We should acknowledge that Altdorfer was hence producing what Michael Cooperson learnedly and conclusively refers to as “Orientalist claptrap” (no difference between Persians and Turks) but what I want to linger on here is the notion of representing the past as both “historical and contemporary.” This, I think, is the work done by the concept “modernity”: it allows scholars to say “I have found some key facet of our contemporary world—anything from novel reading and the perception of time to global capital flows and notions of selfhood—in the past and

hence this explains how we got to be in the world we inhabit today.” As Helge Jordheim noted several times yesterday already, this move on the part of dix-huitièmistes leapfrogs over the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: apparently, nothing happened then. And when that move is made, as it sometimes is, by colleagues working on the seventeenth, sixteenth, or fifteenth centuries, the jump is all the more dramatic. Time collapses when it’s implied that having found one aspect of our present configuration all the others come along with it. We see this move so often, I think, because it is perceived to be central—I don’t think it has to be—to claiming a future *for* Eighteenth-Century Studies. If “our” world today (whosoever’s world that might be—and I am pretty sure it isn’t everybody’s) came into existence at that moment in the 1700s when readers started to sympathize with characters in novels, or when individuals started to think of themselves as “selves,” or when whatever key “modern” thing first happened, then Eighteenth-Century Studies gets to be as “relevant” for twenty-first-century curricula (because it’s the same thing) as are “clinical neuroscience” and “sustainability studies” or any of the other things that contemporary universities think they need.

As presented in the chapter of *Futures Past* we have to discuss (much as in Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities*), “modernity” results from and requires the eclipse of religious world views. (It’s striking in this context that our Workshop cfp did not elicit any papers about the afterlife.) The “early modern political consciousness of time,” Koselleck claimed was not so different from Christian eschatology because there were so few real political actors. The future might not be prophesied, but it could be predicted (this is what Daniel Fulda’s paper yesterday challenged, by saying that already in 1700 there were more political actors than anyone could have counted). Only a philosophy of “historical process”—and it seems here that *process* and progress are being used interchangeably (this may be an effect of the translation?)—first detached early modernity from its past and with a new future, inaugurated our modernity. I think it’s worth asking how widespread this new philosophy was: I am thinking here of Marx and Engels saying at the beginning of *The German Ideology*, “and all of these changes have happened in the realm of pure thought.” Given that most people don’t in fact read historiography, how can it be that a change in historiography transforms how people experience history?

This philosophy of “historical process” on Koselleck’s telling was “transnatural” (and I don’t think he means that as a compliment) while the “self-accelerating tempo robs the present of the possibility of being experienced as present” (hence the vogue for “mindfulness”). Maybe it’s because I just finished teaching a course on past and future in nineteenth-century Europe, but I can’t help but hear some echoes of Carlyle’s “mechanistic age” in Koselleck’s account of modernity.

The second short piece we had, the interview with Yves Citton and Myriam Revaut D’Allonnes is striking, I think, for the way that its conceptual concerns echo Koselleck’s even as its politics very clearly do not. It may help us to think about how our very contemporary concern with “neoliberalism” and “late consumer capitalism” transposes the basic concept of “modernity” (shifts it almost musically)—from the brightness of the Jetsons and Star Trek to a decidedly darker, more minor key—but leaves many of the initial assumptions and tropes in place. Eighteenth-Century Studies, I think, tends to do this as well: leaves the basic structuring ideas of modernity and “the modern” in place, even as it moves from (say) seeing the Enlightenment as a “recovery of nerve” (Peter Gay’s formulation) to treating it as a precursor of totalitarianism. Can we instead consider the

possibility of multiple registers of time, competing temporalities? With different senses of time, wouldn't there also be different futures—not just a single eighteenth-century future, but many of them? (this begins to sound almost Braudelian, with time moving at different rates) For myself, I'd like to see an Eighteenth-Century Studies that was more attentive to social difference and concerned with articulating the relation (if only one of distance and non-recognition) between the temporal concerns of high culture and the lives of ordinary people. Theater and performance studies do seem one particularly fruitful way of doing this (insofar as theater really is a mass medium in the century), but this was another sub-field that did not respond to our call for papers.

In conclusion, I will note that Revault d'Allonnes and Cittot suggest that effective political action depends on the strategic "synchronization" of these different temporalities, an argument that for me recalls William Sewell's analysis of the storming of the Bastille. Synchronization, in that case, happened *after* the fact: what had been on the day perceived as a crisis came within a week or so to be the people "reclaiming their liberty"—an act coordinated with the political demands being made by the deputies in Versailles. Does political change therefore require different agents literally acting "at the same time," or is it a matter of how their acts are remembered, how effectively they can be brought into a single, narrative temporality?

## Discussion

**Rebecca Spang:** The floor is open.

**Jonathan Sachs:** Can I just quickly take some of the bait you've thrown out—

**Spang:** Yes!

**Sachs:** —and I want to make some qualifications. In a sense, to think about the figures that you mentioned (like Habermas, Said, Foucault, and Koselleck) alongside each other seems to me completely fair, but one of the things that I think is missing from that is—and it plays into your other comments—is this idea of the relationship between process and rupture, right? You quite rightly emphasize that Koselleck is about process, and the “Which one of these is not like the other?” is Foucault, right? It's Foucault's account that has—that's completely grounded in this idea of rupture and break, and you get that echo in the interview with him (with Citton and Revault d'Allonnes) and I think that's one of the things we want to think about. To shift emphasis away from the French Revolution as a rupture or break is not necessarily to de-emphasize or dismiss the French Revolution as unimportant. Not at all. Rather, it's to ask about: “Can there be a relationship between revolution and process, or does revolution always have to be a rupture?” That's the first thing that I think we may well want to talk about, but the second one has to do with this idea of leapfrogging and the idea that if we can locate something that is contemporary in the eighteenth century, then, you know, “There you go. Great.” I guess when I do that I—and I think a lot of us do it, right?—my instinct—my implication is not “therefore the nineteenth century is irrelevant”; it's that there's a story to be told here, and it's a story that goes back... and if somebody else wants to write a different version of that story that goes back further, that's okay. If somebody else wants to write a different version of that story that doesn't start so early, that's okay too—but there are ways to connect up these accounts, especially if you want to make an argument for process. If you want to make an argument for rupture, they're fundamentally contradictory: they can't align, right? The break has to come somewhere and you have to locate it in time. But if you want to make an argument for process, you can connect up these [multiple] stories in a very particular way. And then the third thing I'll say—and this is also something that comes up in the interview with Citton and Revault—is about this idea of layered temporality. I mean, and that is essentially—and this, I think, came up yesterday—I think we really need to have it on the table today, and that's Harmut Rosa. And he—what he does is he takes Koselleck's argument about acceleration, and he talks precisely about that—about rates of change happening at different paces and different speeds of activity. And the whole argument that Rosa is making is that the problem with contemporary life is that there once was a point where we felt that the speed with which we could make political changes could match the speed at which we could live them, right? Or could even be ahead of them, right? The whole idea of the French Revolution is to accelerate political change. His—Rosa's—argument is that by now other processes of quick decision-making have outstripped the political process and other spheres, like the sphere of economics and especially the sphere of transnational business, can make decisions and take action so much more quickly than any political process, and that the imbalance in speed between those two processes—not to mention the process that they relate—gives the advantage to neo-liberal, accelerated business cycles (if you want to call it that). So all those things I think are in your comments, and I just want to kind of emphasize them as talking points.



**Spang:** Helge?

**Helge Jordheim:** It goes to—or continues—what Jonathan was saying, in a sense. I think there are two Kosellecks: there's one that's all about rupture and modernity, and then there's another one who's about multiple times. That...the argument that he's making several times in several articles that we can't do without the theory of multiple times. We have to think about history in terms of multiple times. And he ends up, in this latter work, talking about layers. I'm not as happy as Jonathan with the idea of layers; I think it does something to how we think about multiplicity (this is where I have problems): the slow at the bottom and the quick at the top. I don't believe in that. We can discuss that. But I think it's just important to see that yes, there is this theory in Koselleck about the *Sattelzeit* but to me that's just a small part of a bigger theory about multiplicity of times that I think is much more important, much more useful to us. I totally agree with Jonathan there in that, I mean, to get stuck in a sort of rupture-continuity debate—it's sort of, I don't know how far we can get in that (in sort of just doing that) if we don't add the idea that... Well, that there are multiple times going on at the same time, and there are what I like to call processes of synchronization. And that's interesting to think about the crisis interview, that they talk about this. So we have this multiplicity of time, but for political change to happen we need to synchronize them. How do we do that? And that—what they call *soulèvement*—is what you need to synchronize—you have to do something to synchronize—the masses to act coherently (and at the same time in this chaos of multiple times) as a political move... and that is a really interesting way to put it, I think, and make it relevant for political life today.

**Spang:** Daniel.

**Daniel Fulda:** One could add to this point that Koselleck emphasizes the specialty of “several times” in his Foreword. There was this quotation by Herder: “In reality, every mutable thing has within itself the measure of its time.” A second point: the article which we read was his inaugural lecture in Heidelberg in the mid-1960s. It's contemporary with Habermas and with Foucault. And we should not forget that Koselleck's theory of history is born out of a political critique against the Enlightenment. He came from Carl Schmitt, and he makes the objection against *les philosophes* that they conceived social and political activity as a moral trial against people (against the reigning people). And this... for Koselleck, this is an attempt to get power *for* the intellectuals themselves and to delegitimize political action [as a] trial [in the] moral sense perhaps. And it's not easy to... I think, we—I guess *you*—did not want to adopt this attitude for Eighteenth-Century Studies.

**Spang:** It would be a very curious attitude to adopt for Eighteenth-Century Studies given that Eighteenth-Century Studies in this country and Britain is often so closely tied to “studies in Voltaire and the eighteenth century.” *Les philosophes* are quite central to at least a traditional—a tradition—of eighteenth-century studies. Oz?

**Oscar Kenshur:** I just want to make a small—this is a small meta-observation, actually—at a different plane. When you talk about when certain German works of theory or scholarship are published in German but then when they were translated, and the same thing is true—you know, this is very conspicuous in the case of Habermas, and then when we talk about the citations—the

rise of citations—it's also very conspicuous in the philosophy of science; Popper—there was a twenty-five-year gap between the German publication of *Logik der Forschung* and its English translation and if you looked up the citations, you know, the difference would be...What is interesting is that almost the same issues arise with what we're talking about with regard to process (about, you know, "when did something happens")... It's almost the same with scholarship in this regard.

**Spang:** Right, right: So a very interesting and important question here as part of sort of reception history but also the transnational movements of concepts, ideas, vocabularies and what it means to move them and how they change in different contexts. Helge?

**Jordheim:** Just a point on translation: that if you look at the title of this piece, it's completely impossible to recognize for someone that's read it in German. So the German title is *Futures Past in Early Modernity* (more or less). So the "planes of historicity" that are introduced here I have no idea where it comes from, and it goes to the fact that theorizing multiple times is a hard thing. So "planes" is here introduced (from somewhere) as a way in the English language to theorize something that is under-theorized in Koselleck's piece—in this specific piece—but obviously the translator wanted to think about it in terms of time.

I'll just give you one more example because it's quite interesting. There's a place where Koselleck says, "Historical studies needs a theory of multiple times" and in the English translation—not in this book, but in another book that came out five years ago or something—it says, "Historical studies needs a theory of periodization." So "a theory of multiple times" becomes "a theory of periodization." So it just goes to the question that theorizing (thinking about) multiple times as planes, as layers, as regimes, or as periodization is hard. It's just a hard...you can see it in the translation, that you're struggling to find the words to help you think about this.

**Sachs:** Was it...Oz used the metaphor of "planes and layers" to introduce your point.

**Spang:** Did he?

**Sachs:** Yeah.

**Jordheim:** He used "planes," yeah.

**Kenshur:** Oh, in terms of our—the discourse and the meta-discourse, yeah, exactly.

**Spang:** Yes, yes, that's right. Johannes?

**Johannes Türk:** I think where it comes from is there's a second volume of essays by Koselleck under the title *Zeitschichten*—so "time layers."

**Jordheim:** Yeah, but that didn't exist at the point when this was translated.

**Türk:** Really?

**Jordheim:** Nope.

**Türk:** I don't know; I—

**Jordheim:** It was translated in '95 and *Zeitschichten* came out in 2000.

**Spang:** Ah, but this is a revised translation...

**Jordheim:** Ah, it might...that would be interesting, if it's been revised. I don't think so. I think this is the original—

**Spang:** Ah. It's in the original too?

**Sachs:** No, this is the original; I can look up differences if you want.

**Spang:** So it is "Planes of Historicity"? That is the title?

**Sachs:** Yeah, it's "Modernity and the Planes of Historicity."

**Spang:** Okay. Point taken.

**Türk:** Okay. But you know, the conversation that you (Rebecca) reconstructed, you know, by saying Said is published a year before—that really assumes that there is some kind of transparency, both interdisciplinary transparency or that, you know, processes and stuff is transparent between disciplines as well as between national traditions. And especially in relation to the French, but also to the American, I think German academia was for a long time very resistant, right? So for example, translating *Les Mythologies* [Roland Barthes, 1957] only in the 1980s, right? Derrida, right? At the same time there were all these discussions between [Hans-Georg] Gadamer and the French deconstructive school where they just upset each other, didn't want to understand each other, you know... So there's a whole history to this that is to our eyes almost ridiculous. At the same time, you know, deconstruction and Deleuze and so on, they really only begun to be *read* in the mid-80s in Germany. Said is really only read in the late '80s, actually, you know, that it becomes a commonplace reference.

It also goes the other way, however, right? I mean, in the U.S. there are a couple people like Derrida or Foucault that are—who become—very important, completely overshadowing a lot of other things that happen in Europe such as Blumenbach or Koselleck and the German tradition. So there's a certain way in which there's an—these different temporalities of discourse actually lead to (are almost conditioning) a certain way of thinking and conceiving of problems, and then it requires a lot of work to bring them together because they're really heterogeneous; they don't inhabit the same space of thinking. And I think... That bring me back to (I think) what Helge said, because it teaches something about the way we formulate the problem, right? Because synchronization is one thing, right, but I think even the entities to synchronize are not—they're not constant. In other words, it's not that we have politics, the social, individuals, and so on: that these are entities and then they are more or less synchronized. It's rather that what entities exist—how intensely they participate or offer themselves or demand synchronization—is different, right? So you can say, "In the nineteenth-century through general schooling

requirements certain academic visions of history really permeate a large portion of the population. If you have a conscript army (which is for the first time the case under Napoleon), you have a different relationship to the nation because everyone—or every family—is implied somehow in the process, whereas before that...you know, it's maybe not relevant to many people that a war is happening unless they starve, there's a famine, or they are mercenaries in an army, right? So in other words... You know, the constellations and the players and the pressures and the agents are different at every point, and that makes it interesting. So maybe at some times... you know, there are times where it doesn't matter that the large part of the population is not implied, right? So there is nothing to synchronize, right, because it doesn't matter. And so then maybe, you know, the sovereign and his historian that teaches him are really the center of at least certain global decision-making, right? And then you can describe the rest in a way as detached or as a loose assemblage, right, where actually not all assembled elements exert any pressure to be included in the synchronization, right? So there's a loose coupling. But at other times it becomes a problem if even one element is not synchronized, right, and so therefore the binding force of certain historic entities is really not the same at each time, right? So it's actually a huge problem, but I'm not sure if you can deal with it without somehow relating it to agency or something like that, right? Even if—if not in the traditional sense...

**Spang:** I see this risks turning into a simple three-person discussion, so I'm going to use chair's prerogative to briefly say that I'm very appreciative of Johannes's pointing out that I had assumed the Archimedian vantage point of the American academic, saying, "This is when these things became available to *me*." I had a graduate student who once wrote a paper called "Has Anybody Heard of Michel Foucault?" [laughter] that was about the repeated discovery in the 1970s among Anglophone academics of, "Oh! There's this guy, Michel Foucault! He's doing very interesting work" and that each sort of article about this was like, "Nobody else has noticed this"...it was a pretty great graduate student paper. So thank you, Johannes, for that.

Johannes's comments also make me think there's another name that ought to be on the table here for thinking about modernity and different ways of conceptualizing time and agency, but I don't know if he's been translated into German: Bruno Latour. Right? Because both the argument that "we have never been modern" (but what is important is that there was a point at which we started saying we were modern) and also the argument in the Pasteur book that there are more of us than we thought, that history—changes in history are about the identification of different agents. So Daniel had a point, and Helge, but are there other—yes, Christina?

**Christina Lupton:** Do I get to—

**Spang:** Yeah.

**Lupton:** —I get to jump?

**Spang:** You do, because we haven't heard from you yet.

**Lupton:** Because I'm a woman, or—? [Laughter]

**Spang:** Because we haven't heard from you yet. I am going on Roberts' Rules...

**Lupton:** All right. I'm going to jump in on the Latour thing because I had a question that goes back to Jonathan's invocation of multiple times. So I guess that we're interested in what it would mean to think multiple times, but if that's going to be a thing that we're interested in, there's a few things I want to get clear about what this means. Because what I understood by your paper, Jonathan, yesterday, was that that had to do sort of with multiple speeds, not with multiple times *per se*. What I understand from Koselleck is something different that has to do with different sort of layers of historical development, not so much with multiple speeds. And if we're going to try and work this out I was thinking also of Latour, but also to some extent of Luhmann, I guess. Because I'm thinking here that these other models which introduce differentiation—so I'm thinking of Latour's modes of existence, which in some sense *is* a response to a longer sort of history about how to introduce time into his model, right? So he's responding to a long history of conversations with [Michel] Serres and thinking about Luhmann, how do we make these temporally responsive sort of models of physical interaction? So for him "modes" is the answer to that: We live in terms of different modes; modes are to some extent about negotiation of continuity through time (without that ever becoming totalizing), so if we're in one mode of academic discourse we're operating in a way that we'll pick up again in the morning, but we drop in the evening and which, you know, has a different time—a different speed, if you like, it goes to the speed thing...As does of course Luhmann's systems, which are also about speed in some way. You know, the art system is about a certain kind of slowing down of attention; the love system about a certain kind of timing that we give in a certain sort of focus. So systems also exist as differently calibrated forms of speed. So I would say "systems" and "modes" and maybe "spheres" too, if you want? I mean, there are a lot of people who've worked on ways to explain modernity as a story of differentiation (I would say here), but I'm not sure that they're all the same as thinking about different historical times, which is I think where Koselleck maybe has a specificity here. So I'm just hoping for some help in sorting this out. If we really want a big intellectual map for thinking about this, it seems to me that we have a lot of people who can help with the sort of differentiation discussion—but maybe not all in the same way and maybe not all with the same kind of eye to the question of history.

**Spang:** So I have Daniel and Helge; is there anybody who hasn't spoken yet who wants to come in at this point? [Pause] Daniel?

**Fulda:** I wanted to come back to Johannes's point, [which] I think I can link with your intervention. What you and what we try to identify: a tendency between the eighteenth and the nineteenth century concerning the multitude of historical times. Is there an amount—increase, yeah—is there [an] increase of multiplicity that did take place? A synchronization of more, different historical times, and I would guess that early modern times are less synchronized in their different social spheres or...for example, the sphere of the politicians and the sphere of the Church and the sphere of academics: they seem to me less synchronized than historical consciousness and visions of the future in the nineteenth century. Koselleck says something about (a little bit about) this and he tends not to emphasize the multiplicity of historical consciousness in early modern times. He argues in his first chapter that there is no important difference between the view of the politicians and sacred history. I'm not sure if this is correct. Do we have an idea if there is an increase or not?

**Spang:** Okay. So: Sam and Nush.

**Samuel Baker:** I just—I have a genuine question for this discussion, which is the idea of a name—oh, yeah, another name on the table, but I’m curious about how [Friedrich] Kittler in particular figures into the evolution of—development of—models for thinking about this historiographical (this historical and historiographical problematic) because I know he’s important for the reception of poststructuralism in Germany but also because it seems to me that the move that I associate with Kittler—to relocate the problem on the level of not just systems but also the level of like material media practices—potentially opens up the possibility for the sort of globalization of a history or the process of modernity that we see being followed up on in a totally different sphere recently by like Christopher Bayly, right, for example, like in his—and other people trying to do global histories of modernity, which, yeah, have been very interesting for these problems. So that’s just—just curious in this conversation we can figure out.

**Spang:** I want—again, abusing chair’s prerogative—I find the move from Kittler to Chris Bayly shocking, but I’m wondering if something like Kittler to Joe Roach...

**Baker:** Why do you find it shocking?

**Spang:** Because Bayly it seems to me is doing something more sort of synthetic and Hobsbawmian. I mean, yes he’s saying different things are going on in different places, but it is really a very totalizing—

**Baker:** He’s really not reading Kittler.

**Spang:** Right.

**Baker:** Right, it’s not at all...I’m not at all sketching a history of influence, right? I’m not saying like, “Bayly, having read Kittler”...Just that it seems to me Bayly is a historian who is interested in an exemplary way in working—or maybe more often failing—information systems and how they’ve added to global history.

**Sachs:** Is this C. A. Bayly, the guy who just died...

**Spang:** Yes. Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Nush?

**Manushag Powell:** I hope this isn’t off-topic, since I sort of had this thought four people ago, but to go back to the question about synchronicity and/or versus multiple times, I—there’s a concrete example that I—my brain keeps drifting back to and I wonder that it hasn’t come up... I wonder if it’s a reflection of how many kind of later versus early eighteenth-century people are in the room, but the British (or English) calendar shift in 1753 seems to like...should we not be talking about that? I mostly work kind of pre-1760 and just trying to explain to my grad students May Day dating and they’re like, “Why?”—I mean, just a rejection of that idea that they’re basically using our calendar but new year’s at a different time, but then they decided to fix it but... I mean, there’s a great deal of, you know, popular wrestling at that moment about what that means, and—but—very like basic stuff: you know, I’m renting my house and I pay my landlord, and suddenly three days are gone. Do I get a rebate for those? Or, like, I mean, do I

have to pay for days that didn't exist but, you know, according to the landlord's calendar they... So like, it's this moment of very widespread, popular, concrete debate over the difference between, you know, sort of theoretical or marked time versus actual lived time. And I've been working on this for years because unfortunately in my first book I had a bunch of (kind of) examples that I needed to use that all happened right when this was going on and so just trying to figure out who was actually responding to whom because you couldn't go by the publication date was such a pain in the butt! And so, like, I've never really come to grips exactly with how to think or talk about that calendar shift, but it does seem to me that it's a more kind of eighteenth-century-grounded version of what we're talking about and might be worth coming forward with.

**Spang:** John?

**John Han:** I was kind of interested—curious about—what everyone thought about warfare and how that changes... how that created different modes of time. Because one way warfare is—can be viewed affectively as lost time, right? It's gen—people die, there's [*sic*] generations lost, and the way that warfare then becomes reclaimed as contested time that leads to progress. So there's this kind of like dialectic between loss, regression, and progression (and revolution in some sense). I'm just wondering how warfare compresses, slows down, or creates different modes of temporality. Especially with, you know, the way we, you know, date epochs, right? That's predicated on warfare—so that's, right?

**Spang:** And I'm pretty sure they didn't call it the Seven Years War when it was going on. [Laughter]

**Han:** Yeah.

**Powell:** And in America they never do. [Laughter]

**Jordheim:** Do I get?...

**Spang:** Yeah.

**Jordheim:** Yeah? This, maybe this goes back—I don't know. It goes to what you were saying (I think) and to what Johannes was saying, and I think my argument would be that there are turtles all the way down: there's synchronization all the way down. So, I mean, political agents—social agents—they don't exist. They come into being. They make themselves by practicing synchronization. I mean: you can't do anything as a political agent, as more than one people, if you don't synchronize your moves, your interventions, right? There's a wonderful book by Bill Warner on the American Revolution that does this. It tells, "How could this rattle-taggle hunters [*sic*] synchronize themselves into becoming the political agent that takes on the British empire?" That's a process of synchronization. You use newspapers and letters, and you synchronize your... what you do. So I mean there's—I agree with you that those actors are not there, but they're products of synchronizing processes also (would be my argument). So going back to what you were saying, so the layer model in Koselleck would be, "Okay, when you use a concept—revolution—you invoke a bottom layer that goes back to Aristotle. That's really stable, hasn't changed much, it's still there, has to do with things that come back. And then you evoke

another layer that might go back to the French Revolution that is about rupture, and then you work [in] a third layer that's about your own political conflicts, maybe. So if using [a] concept would be evoking different temporal layers. I mean, the problem with that is thinking that there's—that this is both about space (about *pace*, sorry) and about duration. So these layers: the bottom layers are long and they're slow, right? The top layers are short and they're fast. That would be sort of... the kind of easy, trivial way of putting it in a certain sense.

**Powell:** So it's rabbits at the top and turtles at the bottom?

**Jordheim:** Yeah, more or less; good point. Long turtles at the bottom, short rabbits at the top.

**Lupton:** I'm already lost in terms of... I mean, the way you described it suggests that there's a "you" in there, that. ...I mean—that you as an actor or an organization have access to these different temporal layers, which would be a very different description of differentiation from one that ascribed our differences to the fact that... I mean, there's different ways of doing this, right? But one...I mean, I think Jonathan was suggesting one in which, you know, we have access to different kinds of speeds that maybe we occupy in different parts of our day but never at the same time. Or the other one that would be, "Well, people are just kind of encapsulated in these different speeds"—this would be like Bloch or Raymond Williams or whatever, right, where you have different descriptions of different class experiences based on different locations within sort of the historical pockets of experience, and so what you've just described suggests that there's some kind of version of political action where I deploy—

**Jordheim:** Not really. That was not—just...

**Lupton:** Yeah, I know, so can you say it again in ways that—

**Jordheim:** That's why—I mean, it's easy to theorize this in conceptual-history terms because the argument would be that you use a concept, that concept has aggregated meaning in it that you don't control, so when it is used and heard and the way it affects other people has to do with these temporal layers, that you're not deploying or using that just—

**Lupton:** You're just kind of triggering what exists.

**Jordheim:** It's a surface of meaning in the recurring sense.

**Lupton:** Yes. Yes, okay.

**Jordheim:** The surface of meaning is the surface of time in that sort of would-be cause—I mean, I'm not saying this is what—something I would necessarily agree with. That's sort of the Koselleckian version—short version—of—

**Sachs:** Can I just dive in here?

**Spang:** Jonathan.



**Sachs:** I think that the confusion that we're having—the confusion that's going on right now in our conversation—is reflective and illustrative of one of the potential biggest problems in Koselleck's work, and I want to think about that briefly. And this is the idea that his work is very deceptive in the sense that it is rooted in a kind of historical sociology that invokes historical particulars, but not through archival sources, right? And so it's not as if it's devoid of examples, yet it's working on a very high plane of abstraction. So there's a constant toggling between the particular example[s] which are gleaned from secondary historical sources and the kinds of arguments and concepts that Koselleck wants to put into play. That's one of the problems. The second problem though is that if you want to think about—you know, again—the examples you've invoked (Habermas, Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, Said's *Orientalism*)—these are books. Koselleck does not write books; these are articles that are collected, and if you read across them—if you read across *Futures Past*; if you read across the other, the second translation, which is *On The Practice of Conceptual Histories, Spacing...*—I can't remember the full title—those are also essays. And one of the things that happens is that he's continuously repeating himself, and repeating himself with change. And it's very hard, I think, to pin it down and get a sense of what the full inflection and the full implications of his argument are. And I've tried to do this, and it's hard. But one of the things that—I think Helge might want to jump in on this—but one of the issues here is that Koselleck is not saying that any of these processes that we're talking about is necessarily new in the eighteenth century. What he's saying is that there are a whole series of processes that characterize modernity that are coordinated in themselves for the first time in the eighteenth century. I could read you the quote that—in which he identifies those processes, and I think that would make my point because it doesn't clarify...

**Spang:** I'm not quite sure, Jonathan, to be honest, why you think we have a confusion right now. I think we have a conversation, but I'm not sure I think it's a confusion.

**Sachs:** I say it's a confusion not because we're confused, but because there seems to be a difficulty in identifying precisely what it is that Koselleck is arguing and the point that he's making, right? And because that is in play, right, then you can't—we can't position him in relationship to a series of other thinkers and try to clarify how it is that we're reading the problem of the future in the eighteenth century.

**Michael Cooperson:** Can I call for the quote?

**Sachs:** Yeah, sure. So here it. This is from *Conceptual History*, and the suggestion is that there's a whole series of related processes that Koselleck argues are coordinating with themselves for the first time in the eighteenth century, and here it is: "The dynamitization and temporalization of the experiential world"—this is translation—"the task of... to plan for the open future without being able to foresee the paths of history; the simultaneity of the nonsimultaneous, which pluralistically differentiates events in our world; arising out of it, the perspectival diversity within which historical knowledge must be gained and evaluated; furthermore, the knowledge that one is living in a period of transition in which it becomes harder and harder to reconcile established traditions with necessary innovations; and, finally, the feeling of acceleration by which processes of economic or political change appear to be taking place."

**Powell:** Could you read that again? I missed— [Laughter]

**Sachs:** Happily! Yeah.

**[Murmurs]**

**Türk:** Did it really say what is unclear?

**Sachs:** It's not that it's unclear; it's that it's so heavily abstracted—

**Spang:** Right. It's so abstracted.

**Sachs:** —that when you try to parse the abstractions it's very difficult to do.

**Jordheim:** And it becomes even more abstract in English.

**Sachs:** Yeah.

**Jordheim:** I mean, in German “synchronicity” is “gleichzeitigkeit”—“the same time”—whereas [with] “synchronicity” you have to go back to Latin and think about “syn-” and “chronos” and simultaneous. So there's something about the vocabulary of time in German that seems to be better to deal with than what you end up with really [in English]. I mean...

**Kenshur:** It's a better vocabulary for everything because you see the elements much more readily.

**Jordheim:** Yeah. Yeah, exactly. That might be. [Laughter]

**Powell:** That's the solution.

**Jordheim:** Can we change language?

**Spang:** Christine, did you want to say something?

**Christine Zabel:** Yeah, just a little hook. I think he's more clear in his introduction to the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* where he explains the four processes that happen in the saddle time. “Saddle time” is not even his wording; he always talked about “Schwellenzeit.”

**Fulda:** No, no: he began with saddle time.

**Zabel:** The original was “schwellenzeit”; saddle time did only emerge in the discussion with Koselleck, and he first said “threshold time” for the “saddle time.” That [saddle time] only emerged in discussions with him when he talked about acceleration.

**Fulda:** No.

**Zabel:** And I wanted to add one thing: I think what Jonathan just called the “confusion” is that the abstraction of Koselleck is that he only studies verbalized or expressed visions of the future that we can study in a concept or in words or in notions or in... But what is right now happening in Germany, for example, is—when people engage with Koselleck—is that they want to try to bring Koselleck together with a kind of praxeology. So that is not only the study of practices, but of a set of practices that get inhabited and embodied: institutionalized practices where people don’t express at all time issues and that, I think, might be helpful in order to really study the extent of synchronizations, the extent of the multiplicity of time layers in different fields of society—where time is not expressed at all. It’s just, when there are practices, for example, of foresight, of life annuities or of life insurance—that is, practices towards the future and that inhabit a kind of concept of time. And I think that is a very fruitful approach in order to extend a conceptual history into—or to bring it together with... Yeah, a more practical approach to study different layers.

**Spang:** I have Sam.

**Baker:** I just wanted to ask to hear a bit more about that; that’s very interesting.

**Zabel:** Praxeology?

**Baker:** Yeah, praxeology. Is it—is the methodology then that’s being fused or layered or put into relation to Koselleck’s project—is it anthropologically derived, and who are the practitioners of this and so forth?

**Zabel:** I mean, theoretically it is based upon...It goes back to [Pierre] Bourdieu, I would say—

**Baker:** Yeah, that’s what I was imagining.

**Zabel:** —also to... There are a couple of...German sociology has really picked up on that right now and has come up with not only the *habitus* concept of Bourdieu, but more a sort of praxeology that is about inhabited practices or incorporated practices—but that is more than *habitus*. And Egon Flaig would be a name, or [unintelligible]—and they don’t necessarily engage with Koselleck. They just come up with a sociology of practices, and historians are now trying to bring these two fields together and say: “We want to study practices of engagement with the time and the future.”

**Spang:** So. I see two things that are happening in the conversation... One is that some people in this room (maybe all people?)... but some *verbal* people in this room are invested in the question of what to do with Koselleck and where to put his writing and thought in relation to that of other writers and thinkers. And other people, I think, are more interested in taking a sentence or two and thinking, “Oh! Well, but how does this relate to things I’m interested in right now?” So one is about sort of historicizing—positioning—Koselleck and one is about thinking about the future of eighteenth-century studies and our own work, and those don’t necessarily—those two conversations don’t necessarily go...—they don’t synchronize. So I have Richard and Joanna next.

**Richard Nash:** Okay, I'm going to be asking the people who are not confused by Koselleck to help me think about the future of eighteenth-century studies. So I'm thinking of two passages in particular (I will be an exemplary model of what Rebecca was just describing). At the bottom of his page twenty-two, he quotes Lessing as a representative figure of a form of desire, that "The bearer of the modern philosophy of historical process was the citizen emancipated from absolutist subjection" and then goes on to quote [Gotthold Ephraim] Lessing: "Lessing has described this type for us: he often 'takes well-judged prospects of the future,' but he nonetheless resembles the visionary, 'for he cannot wait for the future. He wants this future to come more quickly, and he himself wants to accelerate it . . . for what has he to gain if that which he recognizes as the better is actually not to be realized as the better within his lifetime?'" So that's: I think that's an expression of desire for the future, one that is it seems to me particularly secularized here, as rather . . . as substituting for what was a Christian futurity where one also desires a future, but a future where you would be happy after your misery was ended. Thinking of that, I want to go back to the end of the first section of his paper. . . . The paragraph at the bottom of seventeen: "Here we touch on a fifth point. It was now possible to look back on the past as 'medieval' . . . . The triad of Antiquity, Middle Ages, and Modernity had been available since the advent of Humanism. But these concepts became established for the entirety of historical time in a gradual manner from the second half of the seventeenth century. . . ."—more or less that disruptive change that bubbles up at this moment in doing intellectual history—"Since then, one has lived in Modernity and been conscious of so doing." The question that I'm thinking about as I read Koselleck and think about this is, "Is that a statement about periodization that was true for this man who is no longer present because he's dead?" and that the "Modernity" that he's describing as beginning in the late seventeenth century is now ended and we're sitting here deliberating what comes next and, "What will be the future after modernity?" I'm still. . . . Because confusion for me is much more real than it is for Jonathan, and I'm struggling with this. Any help would be appreciated.

**Spang:** Helge?

**Jordheim:** Yeah, I'd just point to a couple of books that François Hartog, the French philosopher who's written very explicitly continuing Koselleck's work, has made this argument that yes, we've exited the modern regime of temporality and have entered something else that he calls "presentism" and for him, it is an incredibly dystopian situation where we're unable to relate our own pasts and futures.

**Nash:** So it—just to follow up on it—that takes me back to: so is he saying the period we are now entering is one in which we don't have this desire for the future?

**Jordheim:** Exactly. Exactly. Exactly. We not only don't have the desire; we're unable to think about the future in terms of planning, prognosis, progress, and we're really also unable to think about the past except in terms of memories—fragmented memories. That would be. . . and he's explicitly doing this in reference to Koselleck's theories. That would be one example of someone thinking along those lines.

**Sachs:** And that comes out very explicitly also in the interview that we read.

**Jordheim, Spang, etc.:** Yeah, yeah.

**Sachs:** He's got the same idea. And I'm very sensitive about speaking with—in front of Helge, but—

**Jordheim:** What?

**Sachs:** —just to follow up on that; you can qualify this if you want. I mean, my sense in Koselleck's work is that there are actually two senses of acceleration that are recurrent, and that one has to do with a kind of phenomenological sense of acceleration where individual historical actors (men and women living through the eighteenth century) feel things—feel change—happening more quickly. But then there's also—and that's closely related to the problem of periodization—and part of what Koselleck is arguing is that the identification of certain historical moments as “periods” comes into more widespread practice during the eighteenth century. It doesn't start in the eighteenth century—it's important to make that quite clear—but it comes into more widespread practice, and what also happens as it comes into more widespread practice is the term that we associate with each period becomes ever and ever briefer. So you move from “Antiquity” to “Middle Ages” to “Reformation,” then into kind of this modernity concept, but there are also then further subtemporal categories that [we] can identify within that. Each one becomes shorter and shorter is his point: and that itself is an illustration of a kind of historical acceleration.

**Spang:** Tracey and then Joanna.

**Tracey Hutchings-Goetz:** I just wanted to add, so then the kind of final version of that acceleration would be the crisis, right? The idea of the per...—like, the crisis as the period that is the shortest possible period. That kind of like what we've accelerated into is just crisis after crisis, right? (Just to connect it up to the interview.)

**Spang:** Joanna?

**Joanna Stalnaker:** Okay, I'm not sure how relevant this is at this point, but I just wanted to come back to the question of these metaphors of layers and planes. So, granted, you know, the problems of translation with the title, but the term “planes” is used also a lot in the chapter itself, so I'd be interested to know what that term is in the original? But it seems to me that the way that we've been talking about these ideas of layers, bottom and top, and planes—all of those metaphors don't really allow one to talk about conflict between different temporalities and sort of how they come into...So the geometrical metaphor is—I don't think planes sort of disturb each other as they come into contact—and layers certainly implies that they are co-existing peacefully in a certain sense.

The second thing I wanted to say is somewhat more specific—which is just a more specific example—getting back to the question of continuity and rupture. For me, you know, I'm interested in certain works of the late eighteenth century—I am thinking of the *Encyclopédie* but also of Mercier's descriptive works—that (as I was saying a little bit yesterday) sort of seek to contribute to change and (possibly even) rupture and bring about certain ruptures even as they're trying to sort of preserve and bridge the gaps. So we have something like the encyclopedic

project of Diderot and d'Alembert, which is sort of engaging in a fantasy of the destruction of all books and replacement of all books with a single book and at the same time is—it has a sense of itself as a project, as sort of bridging a revolutionary gap. If there was going to be a complete destruction of knowledge, it would be the bulwark that would allow us to sort of bridge that gap. So I think that with reference to examples like that, we don't want to think about continuity and rupture necessarily in opposition to each other.

**Spang:** So picking up on what you just said about layers: I'm very sorry Jesse [Molesworth] isn't here, because I think what's interesting about the study of geological time is it's not just one layer calmly on another but the places where you can see that layers have gotten turned up on their edges, all right? And that's how you would end up with older time on top of newer time, so to think about what those sorts of processes are like. But I very much would like to echo Joanna's appeal for us to think about conflicts between regimes of time, regimes of futurity because I think that's very real. You have a different idea about what the future is going to be: you're not going to sit peacefully with somebody whose time horizon is quite different. This... one final point and then I'll get to Tina and back to Helge. Helge talked about how political actors have to synchronize, but I wonder if our current presentist—dystopian presentist mode (and this would go to Richard)—isn't perhaps because we're so aware of actors who aren't political. Right? We don't think of the forces that are at work in the Anthropocene as a political problem; it's an environmental problem. And if you think about some of the new actors that Latour talks about in the Pasteur book, it's not as if the viruses ever get together and synchronize behaviors, right? They just get recognized, and their being recognized may synchronize them, but do you think the viruses get together and...

**Türk:** coordinate.

**Spang:** Coordinate?

**Jordheim:** We need to keep that open, I think at this point.

**Spang:** Okay. All right, let us think about that. All right, so who did I have? I have Tina—oh, but no, Dave you're next.

**David Alff:** I just want to go to Joanna's point—this is on page seventeen—"The course of the seventeenth century is characterized by the destruction of interpretations of the future, however motivated." So there is an interest in shutting down certain forms of futurism, but—to echo the earlier conversation about confusion—I'm not sure how much I take this as an historical claim versus a postulate? To be able to make a model of metaphors out of historical material because he cites three examples and I don't ever know what to do with statements that begin, like, "In the seventeenth century this happened." So... but it does seem there's some recognition of conflict between, you know, contending futurities he's trying to get in.

**Spang:** Tina?

**Lupton:** Well I'm happy to think about conflict, but again I just would appeal to sort of everybody for some clarification because in order to think about conflict between different kinds

of temporality we have to, I think, decide who the actors are. So—I mean, again, I would just—I mean, what I’m getting from this is that we’re as a group willing to think about there being sort of perspectival diversity in Koselleck’s terms that would mean (for our purposes) that we had the future as a form of temporal thinking that wasn’t uniform but was accessed differently for different people in different ways in any given period of the eighteenth century... So that we’re going to try and sort of tease that out from other ways of thinking about the past or from not thinking about the future or from being in the present. But then the question is, “So, you know, does this mean—when we talk about conflict, does this mean that I’m in conflict because at some points of my day I’m thinking about the future and in other modes of my day I’m completely embedded in something more presentist or am working in older modes that are traditional and therefore not...?” That would be one version of this, right? That the conflict is simply mediated by my own daily practice as a modern being who is called upon to occupy these different spheres or planes or modes or whatever—we’re-calling-them in any given day of my existence, so that the conflict is then in the sort of fact that my life doesn’t add up, you know, that the future cannot—I can’t just be future-looking because I’m also asked to be sort of retrograde at other moments in my existence. Then the other one would be that, you know, different people: So there are people who are thinking futuristically, but there are other groups of people who have no access to the future because they’re totally locked into the present or the past. That would be... and then the conflict would be more like class conflict or more like consciousness conflict between different groups of people who can’t speak to each other because they have these different temporal existences. Or, to go to the “trigger” thing, we could say, “Well, they’re all there all the time. The future is always accessible as something that we trigger in some version of our discourse or our practice, but our doing so might bring us into conflict with some of the other versions of things that we’re also triggering.” That would be the sort of the trigger version where...which I think you were trying to move towards. But I really do think they’re different, and I think they have different... They account for the very particular and relative presence of future-oriented thinking in ways that would imply it’s conflictual status very differently.

**Spang:** Helge again.

**Jordheim:** Just—I’m not going to monopolize this...yeah.

**Spang:** Oh, okay. Tracey, go.

**Hutchings-Goetz:** I just had a really little hook that I think is illustrative here: which is that if you look at our current political moment in the U.S., the Bernie Sanders slogan is “A Future We Can Believe in” and Donald Trump is “Make America Great Again,” right? Which—so those are two very different temporalities.

**Jordheim:** And Hillary’s got the arrow of time, right?

**Hutchings-Goetz:** And Hillary has an arrow of time to the...right? Yeah, it’s to the right. And it’s—isn’t it “Hillary Progress” or something? I can’t remember what hers is; it’s obviously not as catchy, right? But those two temporalities are very—even though they’re both future-looking, right, they’re also very, very different, right? And one is, you know, Trump’s is even cyclical,

right? Not only in its evocation of Reagan's, you know, slogan, right, it's repetition of that, but also in the idea of kind of recovering or repetition of a past greatness, right?

**Lupton:** Yeah. But then Latour, for instance, would relativize that further by saying that (you know) to the extent that you're conforming to any one of those visions of the future you're only doing so for a couple of hours of your week, and the rest of the time you're engaged in a totally different kind of temporal orientation where it doesn't matter actually whether you're voting for.... you know, any three of those people, you know. It—so—

**Spang:** Right. If the question is buying groceries for dinner on Friday: that's future-oriented but in a very, very different way. [Laughter] Sam, you had a little point.

**Baker:** Yeah, I just wanted to add to Tracey's list the old Bill Clinton slogan that drove me nuts in 1996, which was... He kept on saying, "We're going to build a bridge to the twenty-first century." And I hated this slogan because I thought it was this egregious mixed metaphor, right, of—

**Alff:** Bridge over what? [Laughter]

**Baker:** Bridge over what; how do you have a bridge in abstract, you know, empty, homogenous space/time, right? Then I realized, I learned to love Big Brother, and I realized that no, it's a great slogan because it was about this idea that a concrete social practice of infrastructure investment, right, was actually the way that we would get to a twenty-first century that we wanted. And that's putting—obviously putting—a positive spin on it, in order to think of it as effective rhetoric, and I do think that the... What's fascinating about politics is the relationship between the lived practices of everyday life and ideas/hopes/fantasies/affective cathections on dreams of the future, right? And those dreams of the future will often be recognizable in, you know, at least moments of people's lives, right? You know, the moments where they try to connect with that possible future ...be it by how they buy groceries or what they pray for.

**Spang:** But I'm now thinking that perhaps there are historical eras in which the political as the domain in which you think about the future is more or less important. ... So if the domain in which you think about the future is, "What am I going to wear next Wednesday?" that isn't necessarily a political question, though it is a question that could keep you very busy until Wednesday. Fritz?

**Fritz Breithaupt:** I want to add on Tina's comment here about the different kinds of conflict. Now I don't think conflict is necessarily the key term for Koselleck (even though it comes up a lot). But I think there's a third possibility here and I'll try to be very brief here. I mean, I see basic[ally] Koselleck's point as saying that in the modern age there is a prognosis bias—same thing, just in different words—and what you said now: you distinguished several layers of possible conflict here. It could be for an actor, "Do I do x or z?" or something like that. I mean, "Do I think about my present, or do I do the laundry list?" Now of course unless this is the first auto-observer—you mentioned Luhmann—then there can of course be a conflict for second auto-observers to your different versions of the trigger model. You have different models of futures that could come about from different standpoints. But I think that the real conflict—or at



least another one that I think he really does stress here—in a way those two proposed are still somewhat pragmatic—but there’s also a structural conflict, and that is a structural conflict that is a presence that is stopping the future to come. So this prognosis bias (this futurity that he sees emerging in the late eighteenth century, and before of course) is exactly that the present itself is a conflict; that is actually what you want to get rid of. This is the quote that Oz, that Richard recalled for us here with this visionary [who] wants to come to the future faster. So in that sense I think conflict is not so much between different versions, but the conflict is that the future—no, that the *present*—is the problem. You can have: you want to have it as a crisis in order to get rid of it. So that’s what...how to kind of sum it up here? is this bias that he proposes. And of course there’s also this negativity that Rebecca’s pointed to that doesn’t like this presentist that’s what he is getting at.

**Spang:** Christine.

**Zabel:** I do think too what Koselleck doesn’t offer is the kind of individualistic view on the multiplicity of times within one actor. And again, that would be what praxeology could do, because actors can be actors in different settings and act with artifacts of practices, but...And I’m thinking of Koselleck’s article in response to Cambridge school intellectual history. Although there was not a lot of interaction between the two traditions, he has this article of social history and conceptual history and for him conceptual history *was* social history. So what he’s thinking of...He is citing Herder here, but he doesn’t take him seriously because what Herder says here is that “every mutable thing has within itself the measure of its time,” and that could be very individualistic (there could be very different layers), but Koselleck actually doesn’t engage with this kind of futurity or temporality. It is the temporality of social classes that he can—or that he wants—to show and that is what he does. In his introduction he says the main thing that is happening in the saddle time is the democratization, the pluralization, the politicization, and synchronization [of the future]. And so it is not the study of multilayered, individualistic views or engagements with the future. It is also striking how he treats the *philosophes* as just the class of the *philosophes* or the group of the *philosophes*. So he’s studying the multiplicity of times, only of groups, and I think that is what Koselleck offers, but it’s also his limits of his concept.

**Spang:** Strangely enough we are now out of time for this discussion, which seems very odd to me. I almost didn’t feel time passing.

## Future's Prospects: Appropriating the Past in Pope's *Windsor-Forest* and Looking Towards the Future in Barbauld's *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven*

JOHN HAN

This essay examines the prospect poem and argues that its complicated form results from the way it inherently grapples with historicity, temporality, and nationalism in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Emerging from a seventeenth-century Royalist poetic tradition, the prospect poem celebrated the restoration of the Monarchy with versified images of a secure and stable British future. In the hands of eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century British poets, this genre demonstrated its formal flexibility in accommodating both patriotic and apocalyptic visions. I examine two landmark works, Alexander Pope's *Windsor Forest* (1763) and Anna Laetitia Barbauld's *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven* (1812), and suggest that they represent two opposite poles of the prospect poem's vision of the future.

For Pope, the genre imagines an optimistic prophecy of Britain's early eighteenth-century imperial ascendancy, fresh off the 1713 signing of the Treaty of Utrecht (which ended the Spanish War of Succession). *Windsor-Forest* represents Britain as a new Arcadia, but one grounded in the nationalist soil of Windsor. Barbauld, however, turns the prospect grim and imagines an Empire languishing in financial woes and mired in the French War. *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven* moves the prospect *from* England *to* America, thereby inverting Pope's—and his fellow neo-Augustans'—views of Britain's magnetic power. Barbauld upturns the genre's nationalist agenda by uprooting what I have termed the *garden state*: the physical manifestation of the prospect poem in cultivated and enclosed eighteenth-century British gardens. My paper uses these seemingly polar opposite versions of the prospect poem in order to reveal the genre's discrete formal and ideological pliability that accommodates both visions of a hopeful and a disastrous future. Upon further inspection, the same formal elements that go into shaping the genre's optimistic prospective dream simultaneously allow for a portentous nightmare. In the pages to come, I will begin with a literary history of the prospect poem, then move to a discussion of how technological advancements in surveying and telling time affected the poem, before grounding these discussions in the English garden and concluding with how these issues inform the verses of both works.

The prospect poem owes much to the century's poetic and technical innovations of vision and chronometry. Though the poem includes a litany of formal devices—an all-seeing Muse, a hilltop view, a panegyric, a representation of rural sports, views of historical sites—the prospect poem is a mixed form that borrows from the pastoral and georgic. Scholars believe that the prospect poem originated in the seventeenth century as poets, like John Denham and Edmund Waller, began crafting the genre's political and nationalistic contours. Their poems *Cooper's Hill* (1642) and *St. James Park* (1661) respectively focused the poetic eye on British landmarks such as St. Paul's Cathedral, St. James Park, Thames River, and the Royal Forest of Windsor.<sup>2</sup> Setting

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<sup>1</sup> The lion's share of the "complication" stems from scholars' difficulty in naming the prospect poem. It eludes classification: called by turns a loco-descriptive, topographical, or progress poem. My investments here lie less in the nomenclature of this genre and more in the formal elements that make the prospect poem what it is.

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that among John Denham's many occupations, surveying was one of them. He was appointed *Surveyor of Works* after Inigo Jones.

the scene for Alexander Pope, Denham and Cooper's poetic vistas anticipated the eighteenth-century's development of the topographical survey, a scientific and methodical ordering and mapping of properties, estates, and even nations. This advancement, I argue, allowed surveyors and poets alike to define and demarcate boundaries. Eighteenth-century surveying relied on using fixed hillside sites, or surveying stations, to take various sightings and triangulating distances to replicate accurate readings for maps. For Pope, the prospect poem's hilltop view continues the genre's lineage but also emphasizes the view's fixed, stable, and objective aspect. This view allows prospect poets to demarcate and triangulate the historical sites of England in order to mark the Empire as the central power in the world. Moreover, the eighteenth century's advancement of chronometry and theories of time also contribute to the prospect poem. The poem's projection into the future relies on a similarly rooted and linearly temporal perspective. Like the surveying stations, the present situates a (temporal) reference point in order to coordinate what comes before and after. In theoretical terms, this is a version of Walter Benjamin's notion of an "instantaneous present" which is that static and fixed moment. Benjamin notes that the eighteenth century helped usher in the notion of an "empty homogenous time" that represented a fluid time, governed not by cycles but by neutral movements of a clock's hands.<sup>3</sup> But as chronometry advanced and more and more Britons increasingly relied on mechanical timepieces to measure precisely time's passage, eighteenth-century poets resisted this advancement and clung to the older notion of Messianic Time, which foretells and forecloses time from Genesis to the Apocalypse and reveals time as the continual return of cycles. Despite the early rippling of time's fluidity, Pope's *Windsor-Forest* fixes on a cyclical view of time and history where Golden Age, not hours and seconds, augurs the return of a future Great Britain.

The eighteenth-century English garden was grounded in issues of surveying (to order and organize the display of cultivated nature) and timing (to plan for the blossoming of specific flowers.) As Maynard Mack has extensively demonstrated, Pope's fascination with gardening was rooted in his fascination with controlling nature with art and containing profound thoughts with measured heroic couplets. Beginning with his early exposure to these horticultural activities in Binfield, a stone's throw from Windsor Forest, Pope perfected his garden state in his grotto in Twickenham. But the garden resonated with all poets; it recalls, after all, humankind's first garden in Eden. When eighteenth-century poets put their ink-stained hands on the Edenic trope, they quickly connected God's garden in Eden to England's garden in Windsor Forest. That is, they imported Eden's perennial promise of Adam and Eve's eternal bliss to Britain's new Golden Age. Because the Royal Forest of Windsor resembles less an actual natural and organic forest and looks to be more a glorified garden sanctioned by the Empire, Pope's use of it in his poem encloses time and space on nationalistic soil.

My reading of *Windsor-Forest* examines the ways in which Pope fixes his poetic and historical survey. Throughout the poem, Pope strategically places adverbs ("here" and "there") into his verses to temporally and visually delimit his prospect in England. When he opens *Windsor-Forest* to a prospect of the eponymous "garden," the poetic vista appears like the static views from a surveying station. The "here" refers both to the location of England and to the present moment of the Empire; the "there," in contrast, casts the vision to both the edges of the geographic boundary (the "there" where England ends) and the "there" of a future Golden Age. The spatial and historical boundaries created by that duality work to represent Britain as a bounded and glorified garden at the center of the world. Thus, he includes in the poem a scene where Na-

<sup>3</sup> Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1969) 262.

tive Americans are magnetically drawn to Queen Anne's court.<sup>4</sup> By invoking the way England can attract even uncouth Western "savages" from the supposed "New World" back to the "Old," Pope suggests that the Empire occupies a stable, cultivating, and powerful centrality. Moreover, this event will recur in the future. The poetic present in *Windsor-Forest* creates a platform to witness and celebrate Britain's cycle of glory.

Barbauld, on the other hand, unmoors Pope's *garden state* by offering an apocalyptic vision of Britain's future. That she published *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven* in 1812 demonstrates that she already rejects time's cyclicity and embraces its chaotic fluidity. Time, evacuated of Messianic markers, opens up epochs and disrupts the telos of history's supposed cycles. Unlike Pope who begins with visual prospects ("here" and "there"), Barbauld invokes aural aspects and focuses not on peace, but war. The threat of Napoleonic Wars actually reaching England's shores breaks the garden's enclosed safety. She rejects the analogy of a British Eden by prophesizing England in ruins: flowers decaying and castles crumbling. There is no "second Golden Age" for England. In stark contrast to Pope's view of Britain's magnetism, Barbauld inverts the image of the New World "savage," marveling at England's power with a view of an American tourist walking over the graves of famous English figures (such as Shakespeare, Locke, and Baillie) and the debris of Britain's once powerful culture. In the end, Barbauld proposes a fluid and ethereal view of the Spirit of Progress that escapes Britain and lands in America. This airy Spirit speaks to Barbauld's view of "empty homogenous time" and of the failures of natural boundaries. Barbauld collapses the distinction found in Pope between worlds "Old" and "New"—one that valorized the "Old" as a locus for cyclical renewal—and endorses the notion popularized in the Romantic period of *translation studii*: the movement of progress westward.

Barbauld undermines Pope's *garden state* using devices inherent to the prospect poem. After all, all prospects (ocular or literary) can be obscured, can be blinkered, and can fail. Barbauld carefully mimics the prospect poem's form with excruciating detail, including the Muses' eye, the invocation, the heroic couplets, and the historic sites. But these similarities only highlight the different ends to which a poet can use these formal elements. In other words, despite the conventions buttressing the prospect poem, the ideas that undergird it can form a rhizomatic underpresence that can be used for different ends. Barbauld's more Romantic view of the prospect poem works precisely because of the recognition that the prospect casts both images and shadows. Clearly, Pope's training as a Neo-Augustan poet and Barbauld's development as a Romantic poetess also play a crucial formal role. One particular Romantic motif almost goes undetected in *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven*: the role of walking. Pope does not walk in *Windsor-Forest*, neither in poetic structure nor in figuration. Rather, as mentioned earlier, he stands still. While standing still seems limited, the Neo-Augustans viewed standing as objective, public, and commanding. The standing-from-a-hill trope invokes stature and power—a monarch elevated on a Hill and directing the commerce and traffic of the world—while the itinerant view invokes rambling, errancy, and waywardness. Though Barbauld's poetic eye also seems relatively static, her willingness to provide multiple views (one in England, the other in American) simulates the power of motion. Walking for William Wordsworth and Samuel Coleridge seemed to represent a contemplative and deeply personal mode that had to do less with statuesque prospects than with human interaction and local circuits. When Barbauld's tourist walks on the gravestones of Pope's canonical figures, he makes pedestrian not only the spirits of an age, but also the very epoch they

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<sup>4</sup> Pope draws here on the historical moment when Iroquois Indian chiefs visited England in 1710.

inhabit. In providing a more chaotic and fluid temporality Barbauld's *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven* also creates a moving "Spirit of progress" that moves with time rather than against it.

## Poetic Genres of Futurity: A Response to Baker and Han

NICHOLAS M. WILLIAMS

By way of opening the floor to discussion, I'll take my primary duty as reminding us of what we've read, but will also suggest possible connections between the two essays and raise a few broad questions. In a late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century moment, and particularly in terms of the phenomenally popular Robert Burns and William Wordsworth's response to him, Samuel Baker describes two discontinuous modes of remembering the past as a way of staging the future—the georgic and the gothic—themselves at play in a moment where Enlightenment and emergent Romanticism contend. The nationally focused, improving, and culturing georgic, with its dominant temporality of cyclic productivity, stands in tension with the gothic's focus on the spectral, nature's resistance to improvement, and a revolutionary temporality of "sudden intensities and slow ruination." Samuel approaches both these modes as practices and theories of mediation and remediation; responsive, as they are, to landscape (georgic) and architecture (gothic). In the case of Burns's own poetry, these media platforms position him alternatively (and simultaneously) as democratic national bard or fatalistic singer of the dead driven under the georgic plough. For Wordsworth's stages of response to Burns—during his tour of Scotland in 1803, in poems drawing on that trip published in 1807, in the 1816 *Letter to a Friend of Robert Burns*, and then in a series of Burns-themed verses of 1842—Burns variously plays the role of cautionary example in a tale of moral improvement, object of a love which asks no reasons and resists the call of reason, and entombed bard who posthumously haunts the everyday doings of national life. As such, the Burns-Wordsworth relation suggests an ongoing entanglement of the discontinuous mediations of georgic and gothic in our own projections of a future.

John Han considers two contrasting instances of the same genre—the prospect poem—in Alexander Pope's *Windsor Forest* and Anna Barbauld's *Eighteen-Hundred and Eleven*. John sketches the parameters of the prospect poem in terms of what he calls "the garden state," a nationalistic, imperialist imagining of a coherent triumphalist history, insuring a future by connecting it to a stable present and a mythic past. The prospect lays the foundation for this coherent narrative by writing into existence a punctuated present moment, spatially stable in its positing of a fixed position from which to view a fixed and particularized landscape and temporally stable in its notion of itself as instantaneous, unhaunted by past and future and therefore able to thematize them with confidence. Within the canonical prospect poem—and Pope's poem plays this canonical role—this instantaneous moment allows the commanding viewer to posit a mythic history of recurrence and the return of a Golden Age, a temporality materialized in the practice of the eighteenth-century garden and its chronotope of meditative reflection and improvement. For John, Barbauld's *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven* occupies the prospect poem in order to subvert it, substituting a global perspective for local particularity, a moment of transnational simultaneity for the instantaneous fixed present, empty homogenous time and an open future for the guarantees of cyclic recurrence, and multiple viewers for the stilled stable viewer of *Windsor Forest* (not to mention substituting a turbulent weather for the predictability of the seasons, and an ungrounded mobile Spirit for the grounded material observer). Barbauld thus, in John's view, un-writes the prospect poem as a way of undermining Britain's colonial prerogative.

Connections between these papers are many, and I hope I'm not led just by the contrastive structure of each to wonder if Barbauld's focus on the future ruins of London and "the fairest flowers expand[ing] but to decay" is an instance of Samuel's gothic mode. By proposing an or-

ganic setting for ruination, those decaying flowers might suggest that a historical triumphalist is simply someone who never visits greenery after mid-October or, alternatively, that a Gothicism is someone unwilling or unable to believe in perennials against the evidence of his own sight. Given John's focus on the instantaneous present of the prospect poem, I'm also intrigued by the particular organic present tense of these lines: "But fairest flowers expand but to decay: / The worm is in thy core, thy glories pass away" (313-4). What the prospect poem seems unable to imagine in John's view is *duration*, preferring instead a punctuated present from which to view its stable past and golden future. Duration, in Bergson's landmark formulation, is "the continuous progress of the past which gnaws into the future and which swells as it advances," and given Samuel's description of gothic temporality as one of "slow ruination," I begin to wonder if what matters in gothic time is not whether it involves expansion or decay, but that its present is one of unfolding duration rather than of a picturable snapshot of time, a participle time of expanding, decaying, gnawing and swelling (and connections to Jonathan's notion of an emergent slowness in the period also cry out to be made). Since John connects Barbauld's corrective of Pope to empty homogenous time, and to the abandoning of sequence, I think there's matter for discussion as to whether her alternative to garden time is gothic, homogenous, or something else—or is it where all these temporalities intersect?

I'd also like to invite Samuel to think aloud about the other aspect of gothic temporality he identifies: sudden intensities. Here, I am also thinking of the role that intensity plays in Jonathan Sachs's paper, where intensification can characterize acceleration but also slowness. My question is still fairly vague, but since intensity plays such a large role in the gothic and since the question of temporality's relation to affect was broached yesterday, I would welcome a chance for the group to think about the temporality of intensity. And since John's "stilled observer" of the prospect poem represents the physical disposition of a temporal belief in coherent, triumphalist history, I am curious to re-raise the matter of walking (which came up briefly yesterday) to ask how that physical disposition—as reflected in a differently inflected type of loco-descriptive poetry—might invoke different temporalities. The Pope-Barbauld contrast structures an opposition between the grounded but motionless in Pope and the ungrounded but mobile in Barbauld—which makes me want to revive the excluded term of the grounded and mobile, as it is found in the representation of walking. I'll do my best to guide the itinerary of comments now, but also to give our authors the chance to respond if they wish.

## Discussion

**Samuel Baker** [to John Han]: Did you have anything spring to mind?

**John Han**: No. [Laughter] I need to walk around in my head a little bit.

**Baker**: Well, I felt like there's a few things I'd like to try to clarify or reiterate from my paper, and I appreciate the invitation to revisit the "mixture": the idea that there is a mixture of sudden intensity and slow ruination in the gothic. I think actually though the notion of such a mixture is so consonant with the discussion so far that I might leave that provocation to resonate with the assembled. What I want to...what I mainly want to put on the table is the question of the relationship between the experience of the eighteenth century at the beginning of the nineteenth century (which my paper concerns) and the experience of the eighteenth century here in the twenty-first century that we're all enacting. At the beginning of my really (I think) somewhat gnomic last paragraph I have the sentence: "The Wordsworth Circle writers, in responding to the Enlightenment, stage a drama of what we might call the emergence of the residual, when they strive to reimagine Enlightenment as unfolding on the platform of gothic and georgic cosmologies." I think when I wrote that "The Wordsworth Circle writers . . . stage a drama," I was writing metaphorically, but I think I might want to think about that figure... about the non-metaphorical possibility of its capturing a performance—a studied performance—of themselves *as authors* that these writers are conducting and also a "presentation of self in everyday life" (to use Erving Goffman's title phrase) that has an importance for how we think about the possibilities for eighteenth-century futures. Because I think that for these writers the idea of the self as enlightened, right, is very important, and it's something that needs to be continually (even ritualistically) reenacted. At the same time, the notion of—I'm glad you picked up on this—the notion of a contra-Enlightenment, a post-Enlightenment self is also just as important for them... and for them in interesting ways even more modern. And that notion of a performance that can inter-articulate different affects that are representative of different moments of feeling, I think, is what I was trying to show as a possibility in history.

So how is this a possibility now for us? I ought to just say that more and more I'm thinking that it's really crucial for academics who care about the repertoire (the historical repertoire) of different periods, styles, and different archives of works and authors to create a popular front, right, with actual working artists and people generally beyond academia who care about this sort of thing too because it's a basic thing that artists do, right?—to revivify, ritualistically bring us again through a place that's passed. Classical music is nothing odd at all, right, while playing an eighteenth-century work. And when an eighteenth-century work is playing, well, you know, in some very literal way, right, one is experiencing a kind of historical continuity with...—you know, not to be totally unsophisticated, and with all of the mediations that we know exist. There is something to that. I feel like too often academic status gets used as a standpoint for differentiation and a hyper-mediated relationship to the object, when in fact there's also an immediate relationship that can be captured. And so yeah, this remark at the end of the paper about being out of pocket for being present to say these remarks, because the last third of this paper was originally a conference paper at a conference where there was a lot of affect around the sense that this particular academic public was underfunded and unable to do what it was doing—or not being institutionally enabled to do what it was doing—and I wanted to express a kind of solidarity with that.



And I think it's fantastic that this kind of public is funded [here in Bloomington] to be assembled. I also think it's really good to think about the resonance of the academic work we can do here in this kind of research environment with artistic projects being undertaken in all different kinds of institutional and non-institutional formats that are also, you know, making a past period present and possible for other futures.

**Han:** So thanks, Nick, for that great introduction, and I'm glad that Sam went first because it gave me some [time to] kind of like collect my thoughts and flip through the pages because I think there were some really good connections there. When it comes to—when you're talking about walking—the first thing that kind of popped into my mind was the issue of pace, and another issue that we didn't really talk about was directionality, and I think it was Koselleck who was the...—yeah. And so, you know, [Barbauld] published in 1812 and she's essentially walking backwards, right? And so I think pace here, and also just the notion that the tour—you know kind of deriving from Sam's paper—was considered an enlightened project. I think the way Barbauld figures walking and touring is in the gothic mode, right? And it's precisely the, maybe the gothic view of history, and moreover just the fact that... you know, pace, I think in Barbauld it occurs a lot slower. A lot of the papers you discussed so far have—like Michael's paper—like 1787-2440 has a rather long duration, so there's kind of a lot of filling in to be done there, whereas Barbauld it's—there's no future date. There's only one date in the title, so there's less of duration. So I feel like what ends up becoming more... instead of acceleration there's more of [a] compression of time. So the notion that decay doesn't accelerate but the outside forces of history kind of... You see more, I think, when you're walking. The world becomes a much smaller place, so you just happen to see a little more immediate problems, financial, of the empire.

**Nick Williams:** Can you remind me of your name? Sorry.

**David Alff:** Dave.

**Williams:** Dave.

**Alff:** So the thing about georgic is it's never the thing that I remembered it to be, and I might take the time to actually read one in its completion. And I'm wondering, Samuel, the extent to which you—your process for distinguishing the sudden intensities owing to a gothic intrusion on georgic versus the depictions of ruin, famine, disease, death, displacement that have always been part of georgic, that were part of Virgil's georgic—to what extent has georgic always carried a gothic strain that's maybe latent and is then activated in Burns or, you know, becomes conspicuously visible there?

**Baker:** Yeah, I—a book I need to read is the book by—Tina, help me out? David ...—the book on genre and mixed genre by the fellow who's at Aberdeen—remember this book, David...?

**Alff:** Duff.

**Baker:** Duff, yeah. David Duff, thank you. David Duff's book on generic mixture [and] so forth (which I've looked up, but I haven't properly processed) is a place for thinking—I think of it as a resource for helping me think through the problem of how to present generic mixture that... I did

not want to suggest that it's only through the interjection of gothic that georgic can have a sudden intensity. I think that it's perfectly... I think it's *necessary* to understand that range of temporal effects to be intrinsic to gothic (to georgic) on its own terms. That said, I did feel that the recourse to a double-generic lens, right, might help to clarify some of these workings.

**Williams:** Tracey?

**Tracey Hutchings-Goetz:** So my question is for Samuel but also for John, and it concerns the (kind of) embodied experience of temporality. So it certainly intersects with the issue of walking, but one of the thoughts that I had was that you associate the gothic with the spectral, but there isn't really a comparable term for the georgic [in your paper]? And for me that [term] would be "the tactile" because the georgic is defined by this hands-on experience, right? And that is also associated with life, right: because it's gardening, it's pruning, it's braiding together apple trees, right? And so I was wondering if you could speak about that a little bit or if you'd thought about those as kind of balanced terms? And then for John, you know, I'd love to hear you just speak a little bit more about walking: because there is this weird way in which both, you know, both Barbauld and Pope are—they're visual, right? It's about perspective. But then to throw walking in there kind of complicates it, right, through this phenomenological experience and how that's connected to the understanding of time or temporality.

**Baker:** Well I can be quick: I hadn't thought of that; I'm taking note of it. That's a fantastic—

**Hutchings-Goetz:** Thank you. [Laughter]

**Baker:** I think it's better than you realize for this reason: The tactile actually is intrinsic, right, to many period understandings of the visual, right, so—

**Hutchings-Goetz:** Yeah, my dissertation is on touch, so—

**Baker:** Excellent. Excellent.

**Hutchings-Goetz:** So I have thought about it a lot.

**Baker:** So you're the touch person? [Laughter]

**Hutchings-Goetz:** Yeah, I'm the touch person.

**Baker:** And then the ... Moreover, you talk about the spectral, right, in your dissertation?

**Hutchings-Goetz:** Yeah, there's going to be a chapter on the gothic and the invisible hand.

**Baker:** So do you think of the spectral then as representing like a...a broadening out from just certain kinds of supernatural phenomenon [*sic*] to representing non-tactile, visual phenomena?

**Hutchings-Goetz:** Yeah, so it's not fully worked out. But for me the spectral is kind of the fantasy that you can have touching without bodies, which is kind of, like, purely metaphorical in

some ways, right? But it's, "How can you..."—for me the spectral is a lot about kind of trying to think through, "How can you have kinds of effects or agency but without bodies?" So it's kind of systems thinking in some ways, but—

**Baker:** Well so then the spectral *is* tactile?

**Hutchings-Goetz:** Well...It's not... I've not totally worked it out, but can you expand on that? How would it be tactile then if it's—because it's...It might be felt or experienced, so you think that you're felt by a hand, right, you think that someone reaches out and touches you, but you're not...

**Baker:** "Touched by an angel"?

**Hutchings-Goetz:** Yeah. So you're touched, right, but you're not touching, and so there's no reciprocity there because the ghost or the spectral hand does not in itself feel you, right?

**Han:** You'd have to trip over a tombstone. That could... [Laughter]

**Baker:** All I can say is that I am going to appropriate "tactile" to go into my account, my whirl of possible oppositions, and we'll work all this out.

**Hutchings-Goetz:** Yeah, we'll talk more about...

**Baker:** That's good.

**Williams:** Let's go to Nush—she has a hook quickly.

**Manushag Powell:** Sorry, yeah, because I—this is kind of—but the thing is ghosts in the eighteenth century are material, right? You know, the Canterbury ghost: Mrs. Veal slaps her leg and you hear a sound. She doesn't eat, and she doesn't quite kiss hello, but there is a body there.

**Jesse Molesworth:** The Cock Lane ghost...

**Hutchings-Goetz:** Yeah.

**Powell:** Exactly, right? So it may not be, like, haptic in the standard sense, but it is absolutely haptic in some kind of conceivable sense, and that's one of the things that's sort of special about the Enlightenment spectral experience. The other place that I would always go with this is "Blah blah blah, Mr. Spectator," who is all about the sensate body without the body being directly sensible to his readers. It's just everywhere.

**Hutchings-Goetz:** Yeah. So I guess my question would be, "Does that change, right, by the Romantic period or by the texts that we're looking at here?" And so that's the thing I'm trying to work out in the chapter that's not written, so...

**Powell:** It may, but I think the heritage is always—like, I think there's a strong awareness of it.

**Hutchings-Goetz:** Yeah.

**Williams:** I don't know if you want to read this as walking, John.

**Han:** Well I think...I mean, for the most part I think both Pope and Barbauld are very—well, Barbauld is a lot more ethereal, right? It's about—and even in Pope—it's visual or it's aural, so it's always at a distance. I don't think there's really... Even with the tour scene, they're visiting—he (the American tourist) is visiting—the graves but, you know, Johnson's not really buried there. There's no sense of—it's just a memory that might be connected to standing on a monument. I'm not sure if that's necessarily embodiment as such?

**Jonathan Sachs:** But don't forget that the whole poem is framed—at least from the middle point onwards—by a specter that's walking.

**Han:** Right, but that spirit is—and it has chains that it breaks free of, but I tend to read that as, you know, the muse, that guy. And it's very, you know, it's—I don't see this spirit being particularly embodied. Perhaps “buff” because he breaks the chains?

**Williams:** Jesse?

**Molesworth:** John, I'm wondering if—I mean, I want to think about this transformation between Pope and Barbauld maybe in the context of, you know, the discussion we just had on Koselleck. I mean, is *that* the difference between Pope and Barbauld? the sort of emergence of this notion of an open future?

**Han:** Right.

**Molesworth:** I mean, it seems, you know, this is precisely the, you know, when you're discussing the turbulence of the weather and so forth...

**Han:** Right.

**Molesworth:** But this seems to be something that Barbauld recognizes in “Eighteen Eleven” [*sic*] that potentially Wordsworth doesn't recognize in “Tintern Abbey” or that, you know, Charlotte Smith doesn't in “Beachy Head.” You know, just the impossibility, you know, of this project of the prospect poem, the envisioning of the future...I mean, that's the kind of ambitious territory that I'm hoping you can push this argument into.

**Han:** Yeah. I mean, I think that the prospect poem is—it's just a weird genre. I mean, it's—I'm not sure how many of you know what the prospect poem... I certainly don't know. I've tried to kind of cobble together a history of it, but it's progress, it's topographical over descriptive, and it borrows from georgic, and what I want to say is I think Barbauld's use of such a grounded genre in nationalistic soil; I mean, you're standing literally on a hill overlooking St. James Cathedral [*sic*]. She uses that intentionally to contrast sharply her view of a history that is precisely un-

grounded, and I would even go as far as to say it's not tenable, it's sort of—it's not circular, it's not—it's just it's kind of diachronic. It goes both ways, I think...

**Molesworth:** But is it Koselleck, you know? This is the question.

**Han:** Yeah, I don't know. I think so, in the sense that there's no... maybe not in the sense that the instantaneous present links to a future. I think her future: once you get there, the present gets erased. All right? So that's where—and that's why I tried to bring in some of the ocean metaphors because the way the ocean works is just completely chaotic, and I think that's what Barbauld is trying to advocate for.

**Williams:** Jon?

**Sachs:** Very quick, one way to open this up along those lines is to introduce into the comparison between Pope and Barbauld: Volney.

**Han:** Volney, yeah.

**Williams:** I didn't know if you had a bigger point that you were in line for, or a series of hooks, Jonathan?

**Sachs:** I'm just happy to let... I have no more after that.

**Williams:** Okay. Let me go to Monique.

**Monique Morgan:** So thank you both for these great papers, and I was thinking about the binary that each of you has set up (which was very effective), but I guess I have a suggestion for each of you for a sort of intermediate term, and I'd be curious to hear your reactions on whether or not it makes sense or is useful. So, Sam: I was thinking that between the georgic and gothic we might place the elegiac? Because it's about death but it also requires some kind of recuperation-consolation-moving forward. You know, Wordsworth poems are in a sense elegies for Burns.

**Baker:** Right.

**Morgan:** Right? And John: between *Windsor Forest* and *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven*, I'm wondering if we should place Coleridge's "Fears in Solitude"? Because he starts off in this silent dell, you know, this little valley where he can't see anything. He's thinking about his fears of a French invasion and giving his critique of (you know) domestic policy and imperial policy. And then it's like the limited landscape of England...

**Han:** Right.

**Morgan:** ...that consoles him. And then he's able to walk out of the dell and onto a prospect, onto a hill, and, you know, have this consoling vision, right?

**Han:** Right. Yeah, that's right. Thank you.

**Williams:** Daniel?

**Daniel Fulda:** Yes, my question is to John's paper, to an aspect which was not discussed yet. You characterize the concept of history in Pope's poetry and Pope's poem with Walter Benjamin's notion of a Messianic Time, and I wanted to ask firstly, generally, "What does it say about our assumptions about the change between the eighteenth and the twentieth century when Walter Benjamin's notion was coined, mid-twentieth century?" Is it possible to work emphatically...No, to work with a concept of Messianic Time, which shall be a fundamental critique of modern time regime[s] and Messianic Time says for Benjamin that the continuum of time should be brought to an explosion, yes? It's a revolutionary term in religious language. That's my second point. My first point [is] a general question to the anachronistic use of this notion by Benjamin? And second, is it plausible to use a concept which combines political critique from a Marxist standpoint and which is emphasized by religious speech [and apply it] to Pope?

**Han:** Yeah, I think so. I mean, I see your point that it's rather anachronistic, but I think that the basic principle behind Messianic Time does—aspects of it—perhaps I maybe should have framed it better, but I do think that in the late seventeenth/early eighteenth century there was that function, that explosion. Dryden's "Annus Mirabilis" was a poem, was an epic poem that had a very beginning and a strong sense of end, right? And Pope oversaw, you know, the fall of, you know, he was very...he was a Catholic in a time when it was Protestant and there was, you know. So the sense that there was an end, that there was a Messianic end—maybe not "Messianic," but there was some sort of apocalyptic end—was already prefigured by Dryden in the late seventeenth century. And I think Pope carries...because then the neo-Augustan also.

**Fulda:** The messiah is a redeemer which *shall* come, which...—*who* has not come, who did not come yet.

**Han:** Right.

**Fulda:** And who shall be this redeemer in the view of Pope?

**Han:** Anne. Queen Anne.

**Fulda:** But she came?

**Han:** Right. [Laughter] But his poetic imagination... because he was pretty political. He was at that point lobbying for getting another Tory, so it was—

**Baker:** Or getting another Stuart.

**Han:** Mhm.

**Fulda:** But there's a complete change: expecting a messiah or speaking about somebody who is identified as the messiah. There is no desire for a *coming* messiah in Pope.

**Han:** I think there is. See, I think—

**Richard Nash:** Can I turn my question into a hook?

**Williams:** Yes. [Laughter]

**Nash:** Because there is a certain sense in which I wanted to offer what I think is a different reading of *Windsor*. I think you and I disagree about *Windsor Forest*, and so I want to offer a comment here, but in some ways I want to hook it now to a possible intervention. If you think of *Windsor Forest* as written in two parts (1704 and then the later 1714)—I think I read that divided structure differently than you do. But in that early 1704 version, where he's imagining Windsor Forest, he publishes it in connection with—or he imagines it in connection with—the pastorals, and when he publishes the pastorals they are deliberately written cyclically in cyclic time that then leads to—and the heading in the first version carries over—to “Messiah,” so that his four pastorals culminate not in winter but in his—what do we call it?—adaptation of the *Polio*, Virgil's *Polio*. It's creating a certain Messianic cycle: I do think there's an argument you might make that at least [when] conceiving of *Windsor Forest* in 1704, Pope may have been imagining the project that way.

**Baker:** In the tradition of Virgil being read as a Messianic text or as...

**Nash:** ...as the fulfillment, right. But the poem then doesn't appear until he comes back to write in 1714, and that's where the politics of this strike me as really quite interesting in that there's a sort of a cautionary component here. In 1704, William has just died in Windsor Forest, and things are good: Protestant succession (we have that negotiated promise) and we have the Stuarts, who are still in place, but by 1714 it's pretty clear we're moving the other way... And if there's any elegiac component to *Windsor Forest* it may be a cautionary tale that: “You want prosperity to...—we're about to lose the prosperity of the Stuarts unless the Jacobites—” So there's this sort of ominous undercurrent it seems to me in the politics of reading this divide. On the one hand, the good news in 1704 is William's death, right, and Anna [*sic*] reigns. The bad news in 1714 is Anna [*sic*] reigns and she's going to be dead soon, what comes next? And that's where... Do you read *Windsor Forest* as triumphant, or is there somewhere—is there a latent Jacobite threat underneath the poem? And that's the politics that to me seem much more unstable than...

**Han:** Yeah, that's a really good comment. In an earlier version of this paper I tried to mix pastoral and georgic into this form, but the pastoral (the original form), it carries within it the threat of violence, the threat of eviction, right? So I think that's embedded in the notion of the prospect. So in *Windsor Forest*, sure, it's a happy garden. Everything looks great, but it's—there—like the hunting scene is, I find it's very, very dark, and I—but—that doesn't mean—just because this—and maybe these are the different temporalities—I think he sees the gothic ending, right, but that doesn't negate the possibility that in this form he still hopes for a pastoral conclusion.

**Nash:** I guess the way that I... and this is now the time for me to articulate the difference between the way I'm thinking about the poem and the way I *hear* you speaking about it. I'm less sure that I can identify a stable “Pope” behind what is called...

**Han:** Oh, yeah. Yeah, yeah.

**Nash:** And so *Windsor Forest* becomes interesting to me in terms of seeing it as written at two different phases and therefore two different voices, even though it's sort of sutured together. And I guess that's...

**Han:** But then you could also argue that what I talk about, that's why I talk about the garden. In the same way, the garden's changed, right? The Twickenham, it's an amalgam of different artifacts. He constantly renovates it. So I think the same way that gardens change, you know, because of bad climate... It's always... it requires a constant cultivation. So his notion of messiah is—to really reduce this into a horrible metaphor—is sort of like a perennial, right? He wants to do his best to kind of grow that messiah as a plant, as a fauna. I can't believe I said that. [Laughter] That's all I had to say.

**Williams:** A hook from Helge, and then I had a hook from Rebecca.

**Helge Jordheim:** It goes to those two questions from Daniel and Richard. I'm just wondering why you're so invested in the idea of a *stable* present? You write that it is necessary to conceive of this as a stable present, and then you use Benjamin and Auerbach to argue for a stable present—two theorists that don't have stable presents. They have presents that are incredibly dynamic and open, and they're Messianic in the sense that they're unstable. They point you somewhere, but they're not finished. They're not stable at all. They point to something else, they point to something happening, right? So it's just...and I'm wondering if that means that you're really interested in Benjamin and Auerbach in relation to Pope but not in the stable present? Or if you're really interested in the stable present but those are maybe the wrong people to theorize it with? I'm just...there's tension here that I'm just interested in, yeah.

**Han:** Well I—again, I think it's a really good point. For me, I... Benjamin: I see it's vertical, right? It's a very eschatological system and that for me is more stable than sort of the horizontal mode, the one that—if everything is kind of, you know—the rise of chronometry in the eighteenth century—then in comparison, the Messianic is a lot more stable. At least you have a direction. You can look up and say, “We don't know what's going to be up there. We don't know what the message is going to be, what the messiah is going—when he's going to come—but we anticipate that,” whereas the empty homogenous—there's no such expectation. I guess that's where I'm... Maybe “fixed” is a bit *too* strong, but I feel like there's a certain element of stability that the Messianic Time offers versus empty, homogenous time.

**Jordheim:** Yeah, yeah. Interesting.

**Baker:** So in a sense are you saying that if in *Windsor Forest* Pope presents a Benjaminian dialectical image, there's an emblematic—even if the, in its nature it's dialectical—there's a[n] instability in this picture of the era? There's still at least a notion of emblematic completeness, right, that feels like something one could affiliate with and makes the poem—gives the poem—force as an organizing work.



**Han:** Exactly.

**Williams:** Your hook, Rebecca?

**Rebecca Spang:** I just want to try to keep us vaguely “on topic” by glossing what Richard said: which is that the future looks very different to Pope in 1714 and 1704. And Pope in 1704 isn’t imagining “future Alexander” in 1714 looking ahead and not being able to see what happens next...

**Nick Williams:** Rachel?

**Rachel Seiler-Smith:** Oh, wow. Yeah, I had a question that sort of was born out of Jonathan’s reference to Volney... And you know, John, I think you do a really nice job of covering your base—albeit briefly—in saying that, you know, the things that you’re talking about are not particular to the prospect poem, but nonetheless you’re going to talk about the prospect poem. But at the same time, I think you’re also right to point out that prospect is (you know), it saturates so many genres, not to mention painting and, you know, the actual development of optics, but also prose. And so not only Volney, but I’m also thinking of Wollstonecraft very famously in her letters is sort of looking out to the ocean and imagining the future in her present. Volney is thinking about it as well. And even Austen: you know, when we think of Austen using the word “prospects” it’s always in relationship to “ladies with prospects,” and it’s a very dire future for these women. And at the same time what’s interesting is whereas Austen’s use of prospect in her novels ties into the form of the novel in the sort of quotidian “everyday,” you know, the idea is a precarious present so to speak—going back to Helge—a very precarious present for these women that points towards a lived everyday future that, you know, is economical and about sustenance and sustaining. In Wollstonecraft and Volney, it’s not nationalistic: it’s actually global the way that they’re thinking about it. They’re traveling across time and ruins but also looking towards a global future that’s at the level of species. So I wonder if looking at the prospect poem—and you’re interest in the sort of sheer formulaic-ness of the prospect poem—is what roots it to this idea of the stable present, but it’s obviously... it was never stable. The stability is in this fantasy of the *form* being stable, whereas in these prose works (you know), the sort of protean nature of the prose seems to unmoor them from these stabilities perhaps more obviously. So I’m wondering if your project is going to speak to prose as well as other forms?

**Han:** Yeah, I was actually going to talk about—because, I mean, my... One of my primary investments is the notion of, “Is there a poetics of time, and how does that differ from a prose of time?” And I was gonna add a section about *Jane Eyre* that, the famous line where she’s ... you know, “Where are my prospects?” Right? And so—and I think there’s—I guess I wanted to address the notion in this... I take all your points about this repeated instability of the present, and I want to suggest that it’s poetry that allows that illusion to work, right? The heroic couplet, you know, it’s a complicated, you know, form, but nonetheless it contains some sort of uncertainty that... to borrow some of your discussion of the open future. So I think the prospect poem is the—is a unique genre that allows someone to imagine a stable present and to imagine the illusion of a stable present, and this is precisely why Barbauld has so easily dismantled this notion of the stable present. Right, the prospect is all about, “You’re standing here,” right? You’re looking—for all intents and purposes—you’re looking at, you know, stationary at a distance. Now

that doesn't mean you can't look elsewhere, you can't fall over, but that's sort of what I'm... where I'm coming from.

**Williams:** Joanna?

**Joanna Stalnaker:** So I think I have two questions—one for each of you—that are related. The first one has to do with the question of literary genre/poetic genre and the idea of an open future. So what I know is the French context for this kind of poetry, and in a way some of the differences are interesting there. So this idea of—you've referred to the question of loco-descriptive, which presumably means there's a very specific place, right, that's delimited in a certain sense, and Barbauld is reconfiguring that in a certain way. In the French context, the reconfiguration of the georgic is going to be associated with the so-called descriptive genre that's considered to be a modern genre, and then there's going to be a tremendous backlash against that practice of descriptive poetry. And one of the problems with it is that it's not delimited in space and this relates to the question of walking. So the poet could just keep on walking and the poem would go on and on and there's no didactics to the structure, there's no narrative structure—and this is conceived to be a sort of a real problem in the critical reaction to the genre. So I'm wondering with respect to Barbauld in particular: I see this, you know, sort of idea of a reconfiguration of the prospect poem with the idea of the future—you know, this sort of paradoxical-looking future—as one way of being able to walk in some sort of unlimited way. So is this... is there a thinking in the English context about the idea of these as being modern genres? Or are—with an open future that really departs from the georgic, that departs from—or are they really conceived of as continuing in a tradition even as they're being reconfigured? And so I'll just say the second question first and then (before you respond) is the question of genre versus medium. So media—you seem to be very invested in the language of medium—the medium of literature, the new medium of georgic, I think you refer to... What are the—with respect to the question of temporality of genre and the temporality of media or medium—what are the stakes of that language for you? I thought they might be related, sorry.

**Han:** The prospect poem is I think squarely placed in the neo-Augustan tradition. When you get to the Romantic—you know, Wordsworth—and they're walking, that represents the sharp break.

**Stalnaker:** And is that conceived of as very different from Thomson's *The Seasons*? That's just—

**Han:** Yeah. Well Thomson's *Seasons* is a whole different genre. I can't—I don't even know what the hell that is. They're related but like, they're walking in, like, the Himalayas and it's, you know, so it's not as isolated, you know. Or Cowper's *The Task*, right? They have certain elements of pastoral/georgic, but it's harder to—to use a pedestrian term—to *track* where they're going because they're... Maybe in some ways Barbauld's reconfiguration of the prospect poem allows—opens up the possibility of moving around? Like, the way the spirit—I mean, I didn't really think about this, and I thank you for bringing it up—but the notion of, you know, the spirit: he walks, right? So it's—I guess correcting myself—so he is, you know, mobile. He is embodied, and I think that sets up nicely future iterations of traveling and looking at different locales in Romantic poetry.

**Stalnaker:** And walking into the future, no?

**Han:** Walking—it can, but even like in Cowper, like, they go to like Lapland, but they don’t actually really come back; it’s strange. They don’t. They’re all going outwards, right? You never get a sense of “They’re coming back” to some degree. In Cowper there are a few moments when... I think actually in *The Task*—I think... Doesn’t he, doesn’t Cowper have like a little cabin where he invites the ghost of Pope and... maybe I’m thinking of... maybe this was a dream of mine [laughter], but I, there are moments where Cowper—it’s kind of like with Coleridge’s “Frost at Midnight”: where they go out and the news is brought back in. So there’s that kind of dialectic, whereas a prophet is always kind of looking this way and not really asking for any sort of return. Except for Pope, I guess? but that’s more of an empirical empire.

**Baker:** I’m going to try to talk my way through the problem (the terminological problem) of “genre” and “media” by starting just with some thoughts on Monique’s suggestion about the elegy as being a genre that has an important—maybe even mediatory—relation to the georgic and the gothic (as I’m thinking about them): I think it’s a great suggestion. I think that elegy *might*—the thought of elegy—might suggest a role for pastoral here also, because there’s something about the... first of all, there’s a strong tradition—a strong connection between the pastoral tradition and the elegiac occasion, the elegiac moment in the history of poetry. There’s... The elegy is a—it’s an operative expression of what we call it in an ideological context “pastoral care,” right? And it’s about the—not the instantiation of a national or otherwise institutional project like the georgic is—but rather about the recognition and convocation of fellowship in the form of a flock or a church, right? So the elegiac seems to be—and then finally, there’s not work in elegy in the same way that there is in georgic, and yet there’s a ministration to what are often... you know, very gothic concerns with death, loss, and the...even just the unbearability of duration. So I like that.

Genre and media. So, the first place I want to... I like thinking with media because of the materiality of media as extensions of the senses and of consciousness, right? To me, genres are conventional practices within media but then they also cross media, particularly as we see the contents of media being other media... that remediation and intermediation of different works, right? So for instance when animated television starts, you know, to pick up on the history of cinema, right, which is, after all, originally a different medium, you’ll see a transformation of different generic staples of cinema like Western gangster movie, right, to, you know, other—first of all citations of that genre, but then even all kinds of subgenres in television. And so I think that for me, one interesting ongoing research question is the relationship of pastoral drama (and other kinds of dramatic performances) to this literature. And another major moment of remediation—intermediation—that I do discuss in the paper that bears on this is the relationship of the genre of the loco-descriptive poem to the medium of landscape, right? And there’s surely a medium there in the sense that like, you know, Windsor Forest is landscaped, right? That these poems are not just, you know, landscaped, but they’re taking—they’re literary explorations of spaces that have been shaped, right, already, that are in a different medium. And to me the graveyard scenes, right, churchyards, are another example of this, right? Like the disposition of monuments in a churchyard, right, is a...—I don’t know if you want to call it architecture or landscape architecture or what—but there’s already a work of mediation there that graveyard-school poetry is mediating.

**Williams:** Yes, Jonathan?

**Sachs:** I don't mean to be petty, but I'm not sure you've answered Joanna's question, either one of you. I want to push this a little further. I mean, in a sense... Right. There's this question about the relationship between genre, medium, and mode, and that's one thing I want to pick out—not just the distinction between genre and media or medium, but also between genre and mode. And so, John, in your paper there's a deep concern with genre, and what you're trying to do is to define very precisely what the genre of the prospect poem is as a genre and then to think about an example of the prospect poem and the way that problem might be thought to reverse the genre.

**Han:** Right, right.

**Sachs:** So then, Sam, in your paper you're pushing away from the category of genre because you want to bring your inquiry into this question of, this problem of media history. And so there's an issue of medium there, but there's also your preferred term, which is "mode." And so the question I have about this is: If genre's working very hard to build towards generic terms, it seems to me that by introducing mode you're trying to push away from generic terms, and that might have some problems of its own that I want us to think about before I get to my actual question [laughter], which is, "When you talk about a mode, right, when is a bone just a bone?"

**Baker:** When is a what...?

**Sachs:** When is a bone just a bone, or when is a plow just a plow, right? When you break genre down into mode, one of the things that it invites you to do is repeatedly to invoke "genre" at any moment that you see an aspect of genre, right? So if somebody has a plow in a poem, that's georgic [laughter]; if there's any element of threat or death in a poem, that's gothic, right? and to—I want to hear about that. My real question then is ultimately, "Okay, so whether we call it mode, medium, or genre, how do these categories—and this is where I think Joanna's question comes in; this is the part I think has not been answered—if we call it 'mode, medium, or genre,' how do these categories of inquiry allow us to think about time?" That's the part that I think is missing. It's there in the papers, but I want to hear it more clearly.

**Han:** I would say that... I mean, for me, I could... Maybe my rush to call it a "genre" was too quick...

**Sachs:** No! [Laughter]

**Han:** My—I mean, after writing this I quickly realized that my real investment was in the prospect poem and how that's a genre (a very temporal genre) that is playing with the notion of prospect in terms of futurity and in terms of the felt experience of seeing, hearing, anticipating across a channel, across, you know, across the transatlantic, you know; it's that notion. So I think for me prospect is a temporal—is a deeply temporal genre.

**Williams:** Lara has a hook.

**Lara Kriegel:** Yeah, I just wanted to say... I mean, as we answer this challenge, I just want to—I was very taken with Sam’s notion of the emergent residual, and I wonder if this might be an opportunity to put that in play as you answer.

**Williams:** It’s your hook now, Nush.

**Powell:** To offer yet another term—but it does get to the point of temporality... The most recent issue of *SECC—Studies in the Eighteenth Century...? Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture?* Yeah, okay, you know the one I mean!—has a panel on microgenres, which was a thing two ASECS ago that got a fair amount of attention. And, you know, microgenre is what it sounds like: a really specific genre. But there was an added element to the way they were trying to define it that I thought was interesting—and I haven’t made my mind up as to whether or not I’m buying it—but the idea was it’s not only a very specific genre, but it’s one that is locatable in a specific temporal moment. And some of the writers on it were in fact invested in charting a rise and a fall of that particular microgenre, and so that may be useful to the way that you’re trying to conceive of this.

**Han:** Yeah, yeah. Thank you.

**Williams:** Another hook?

**Christina Lupton:** Am I the next up?

**Williams:** Yes.

**Lupton:** Okay. So I want to just kind of get my bit in on the media side of things by asking... I think I’m going to—I mean, I want to respond to the media thing by modeling a *real* media question, like, which was what I was going to ask you in question form, but now it’s a hook, so... So here’s the real media question. So for me all of this is a bit sort of wishy-washy around the media stuff, so I’m going to give you a real media question. The media question is this: So—it’s for both of you—so these contrasts that you’re pointing out between (or relationships between) the gothic and the georgic or Burns and Pope are going to some extent be resolved in the future of these texts by the fact that readers are going to read them at the same time, all of them. And I’ve been working with a little library in Scotland where there’s a complete set of borrowers’ records, so we know that in 1820 someone’s going to go to this little library in Perthshire and they’re going to get some sermons, and a farming manual, and Pope, and Burns. And then they’re going to go home and, you know, in the course of a month they’re going to read those, and they’re going to read some aloud, and they’re going to read some intensely and superficially. Then they’re going to put them back in the library. And I wonder—I mean, if we throw that sort of ethnographic aspect of the future of books into this conversation, what I think we get is the fact that the real, material history of these texts is one of mixture and combination and perhaps—to go back to our temporality discussion—one of layered temporalities, in a very material way that I would describe really being about mediation. This is the future of material text, is to be layered temporally in very complicated ways by the way that they’re used.

Now, if we turn that back to the sort of questions that we’re having about the content of these texts: does it make any difference to think about the fact that these thoughts of the future are in

some sense at least potentially primed to see themselves participating in that mixture? If the future of your text is the future of a book which is not going to be read in order of influence or in order of its own sort of generic primacy—it's going to be read as part of that temporal and generic mix that is simply the fated future of books. What happens, then, to the arguments that we're making from the perspective of these works' creation?

**Baker:** So I'd like to try to immediately answer your "real media question," for which I think you.

**Lupton:** Excellent.

**Baker:** I think that everything you said strikes me as true and important. I think that for the... Where the particular set of texts and events that I'm concerned with, as far as they go... Yes, the reception history of these works in books, and yes, their history as participating in an afterlife of canonicity or noncanonicity matters. Hence the significance of the debate over Burns involving Wordsworth, Currie, and Jeffrey, right? I also think, however, that for the poets what—I think I'm using the word correctly—I think for the poets—the phrase correctly—I think "secondary orality" matters more. Because I think what matters even more for the poets is the afterlife of these works as verses, as lyric, right, as song, as thought, because I think the idea is that if these poets are really effective this fellow in 1820 may check out these books, right? You know, a woman in 1920 may check out these books. (I think often of Terry Castle's work on the reception of the eighteenth century in the 1920s, right?) But especially the poetry's going to matter to them as they memorize it and think of it. Which, coming back to Jon's question, right, about the relationship between media and mode, right? I think there is a hope for the future that these poets have (and I'm not saying they're right) but I think they have a hope for the future that their works may be encoding dispositions, right, that can emerge in some possible future, right, through the remediation of books and memorization and teaching institutions and the experience of art outside of institutions, right? All kinds of routes, but there's a way in which they'll re-emerge and matter for people not just as they are doing literature again, but as they are living. So: plowing It's, like, not the case—no, it's absolutely not the case—every time there is a plow there is the georgic, right but I do think that every time there is plowing, there is working. And every time the plow has rows you have verses, right, too, and therefore there's a potentiality of the transmission of disposition from mode to mode through genre. Happening, you know, across these works. But to grasp it you have to have a full sense of the movement from thought and disposition into material mediation, either, you know in a book—or just in the waves in the air—and then back, right, into somebody else's bodily expression.

**Han:** And I think that the notion of the microgenre was really helpful; thanks for that.

**Powell:** You're welcome.

**Han:** And I want to point out the fact that Barbauld's *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven* was bashed. The critical apparatus—when you look at any anthology, it's—the first few lines are: "This was a heavily planned project. She died; this is the last published piece she ever wrote," right? So the narrative behind that microgenre in some ways kind of marks the end of the prospect poem, so I am trying to in some anachronistic way show how Pope sort of is the starting point and this is

Barbauld's kind of last version of it... But it still goes on, and it's very much mixed with time. I mean, she was—Croker was a complete dick and he called her a “fatidical spinster,” right? There's a certain element of gendered temporality. So the notion that she can't give birth to, you know, in a biological sense or in a poetic sense to further texts, right, sort of, I think, is an important component of this genre. *Her* prospects are gone, but her work remains. And it allows—and to answer your question a little bit, sort of, about the larger implications—I think her move to have America brought back is kind of a cheeky way to talk about how Romanticism goes to America. So you have Whitman walking, and so I think there's a certain kind of fluidity that way.

**Baker:** So can I ask you a quick, naïve question about Barbauld? So I knew she was at Warrington Academy—what's her understood relation to Unitarianism later on? Do you know? Does anybody know? Because it just seems to me that for me and my guilty conscience around this—which is why I'm here at a workshop with this paper, right—I feel like... We can have our present-day “media” theory of what was happening, right, in eighteenth-century or late-eighteenth-century literature or history [but] it's also significant to recognize what their media history was—of course, not expressed in those terms, right? To me I think a lot of their media history really did have (really was articulated in terms of) theology. So I think that the question about Pope and how Pope was imagining futurity in *Windsor Forest* probably has a lot to do with, like, you know, crypto-Catholicism and ideas about the Stuart dynasty in relation to Catholic divine right.

**Han:** Right, right. Right, right.

**Baker:** And I feel like with books and with people and their dispositions and the notion of living on into a possible future I think that—I know that—there's a powerful intervening model of Unitarianism, you know, that happens between *Windsor Forest* and then, you know, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Burns, Barbauld in 1811, which gives a whole different model for the relationship of individual action and material mediation.

**Williams:** Hook from Jesse.

**Molesworth:** This actually may be lost, but I want to defend, you know, “mode” as a necessary literary concept. You know, Jon, I don't think there's anything, you know, wrong with what Sam is doing. Things can have both a genre and a mode, or, as I prefer, a form and a mode. You know, gothic novel: the form is the novel—fiction. The mode is simply a series of tropes; that's what a mode is. If you have enough of them that's... You know, pastoral elegy. The elegy is the form; the pastoral is the mode—the series of tropes, the shepherds. You know, there's nothing—

**Sachs:** Sure, but to be clear, what I'm asking is not—what I'm trying to do is not to disqualify the use of “mode,” but try to ask about the border between the genre and the mode, right? That you... At what point does—because my issue is that a lot of times you can play... When is something that involves death *not* gothic? Right?

**Molesworth:** That's not the only trope that has to do with the gothic.

**Sachs:** I'm not saying that it is! There are plenty of tropes that are part of the gothic; that's why we call it a genre.

**Molesworth:** Right, but just because something has death doesn't make it gothic. You need many more tropes, again.

**Sachs:** But that's my point. [Laughter] That's my point, right? That if I were to put pressure on these two papers respectively I would put the pressure in different directions, right? I think that when I push John about defining a genre he wanted to back away and say, "Well maybe I don't want to define this as genre." No, you absolutely do need to define it as genre and stick to your guns! But if I put pressure on the opposite direction on Sam...I mean, there are moments in that paper where I see what he's talking about very clearly as being gothic or as being georgic, right? There's a sustained set of reference and tropes—if you want to call it that—that read to me exactly as he wants to characterize them, as gothic and as georgic. But there are also moments where a certain—I don't want to rattle through examples now—where one term, one word does all the work: and that's what I'm pushing at. So we're on exactly the same page, and I'm not saying that we should never talk about mode [or] we should only talk about genre, but what I'm asking about are: you know, what does it take to build a case from a word?

**Molesworth:** Well do it. There's form and then there's mode. You know, they're different. There's content, you know; content versus form, you know.

**Williams:** Hook from Richard.

**Nash:** I think what I'm going to say will somehow suture the disagreeing agreement between these two gentlemen and a point raised by Lara earlier about emergent residual and Monique when she was suggesting elegy. Let's see if I can pull this all off. [Laughter] Sam, what I found interesting is that Lara was asking you to go back to—and I would like to echo that again—your final paragraph where you're speaking of gothic and georgic as jointly contributing to what you think of as the emergence of the residual. While the notion of elegy and pastoral came in, it seemed to be in some way supported. It seems to me that there is a distinction between notions of time and temporality invoked by—and particularly by the relation of the past to the future—that's invoked by georgic and gothic when you suture them together (and that's maybe a super-genre rather than a microgenre; I don't know). But whatever you get out of that conjunction that speaks to your notion of the emergence of the residual seems to me *not to be* the same thing that you get when you think about how elegy and pastoral configure temporality. So I—maybe I'm wrong about that?—but I'd like to hear you talk more about what you see as being the payoff of this "emergence of the residual," and is this something that you want to tie specifically to that georgic/gothic conjunction, or do you want to include the more expansive elegiac modes?

**Baker:** Right. That's great; that's really useful. Now I'm going to follow Jon's example from yesterday by robustly defending my paper. I was telling you [Sachs] yesterday, "Jon, well-defended." So when I start quoting from Wordsworth's elegies of a kind that Burns—although they're not titled elegies; they're titled "thoughts"—I agree with Burns. It's not an elegy for him in terms of its titling. It's in a different generic space of graveyard thoughts. I quote these lines about, you know, "Address to the Sons":



Ye now are panting up life's hill!  
'Tis twilight-time of good and ill

.....  
Ye Sons of Burns! for watchful care  
There will be need.

Right? But I say about these lines—I don't say these lines are georgic; I don't say they're gothic, right? I say, "Right, here we've got Wordsworth furthering, right, his general (you know) project, right, of recontextualizing his previous Enlightenment sympathies within a Burkian conception of traditional social order," right? It's this kind of counter-Enlightenment and (between the lines here) a very Anglican sort of tidying up of Burns, right, that I don't see as particularly georgic or gothic. It's elegiac in a certain "church-y" way, but that's it. But what interests me is that he then feels like he needs to have, right, you know, some more thoughts? And in his further thoughts he awakens all of these lingering anxieties, doubts, right, maybe inspirations? And then he's giving you, you know: "I shiver, Spirit fierce and bold, / At thought of what I now behold," right, when he's at the mold where Burns is laid. And then he says, "And have I then thy bones so near, / And thou forbidden to appear?" Right? But yeah, it's the word "bones"—but, like, yeah, I think this is a gothic scene. I think this is some body where there's bits of bones and, like, I imagine I'm by an uneasy grave, right, and it interests me that here, right, after verses that are very boringly in one traditional genre you get—not the genre of gothic re-appearing; it's certainly not a gothic poem, heaven forefend—but you have the mode, you have that *attitude* emerging in a striking way through something that is worth quoting twenty years later.

**Sachs:** I'm going to hook in there because this is not the case I'm thinking, about, right? Obviously, barnyard—

**Baker:** That's not bones.

**Sachs:** But then declaring that this is gothic, right? This is a poem that "remediates the gothic architecture of the cemetery, and finds in the graveyard a perverse georgic landscape." It's the "georgic landscape" that I find objectionable, right? So why is that georgic, right? Is it georgic because Burns was a ploughman? That seems to be the implication of what you're arguing. But if Burns was a ploughman, does that make everything written about Burns georgic? That's my issue.

**Baker:** Because sadness grows through the bones of the ploughman, right.

**Sachs:** Yeah, I see your point. [Laughter]

**Baker:** Burns's virtue, he declares, is that he "showed my youth / How Verse may build a princely throne / On humble truth," right? Having been able to visit with Burns, he writes, "What treasures would have then been placed / Within my reach; of knowledge graced / By fancy what a rich repast!" which makes me think—a text that was very much on everyone's mind in this moment was, you know, Malthus's "Feast of Nature," right? I mean, to me, those lines that aren't in the block quote but that continue on, you know, [they] very much start rewriting the scene into, you know, [one] of providence, right? You know, of agricultural gathering.

**Sachs:** Just to be very clear very quickly, very explicit: I *buy* your argument. I'm not pushing against the argument at all, and I think that it's a very convincing suggestion of the way in which the interplay of the georgic and the gothic creates this mode that we might call "Romantic." But what I'm questioning (and I'm glad we're getting it out here) is just that I also buy your use of "mode" as a way of getting away from the strict confines of genre, as a way of thinking about the georgic and gothic essentially as metaphors, right, or as signs and symbols of these larger sets of concerns that are also generic.

**Baker:** Well, and one of the things that I think is so helpful in this discussion—this discussion is helpful in so many ways—one way in which your particular intervention's helpful right here is making me think, you know, had I slowed down over this passage, right? And highlighted, you know, where the moment comes that Wordsworth's having trouble is premature Anglican closure ([which] with this gothic further thought resorts to georgic) might have made this stronger.

**Williams:** Is yours a hook, Rebecca?

**Spang:** It's a meta-hook. [Laughter] There's someone ahead of me.

**Williams:** Oh, yeah. Dave?

**Alff:** Yeah, I really like Nick's formulation of georgic as a mode that attempts to remember the past to stage the future, and I'm wondering, John, what happens when that past is really awful? Windsor Forest is...I mean, it's ground zero for the Norman yoke.

**Han:** Right.

**Alff:** It's this place that William the Conqueror supposedly depopulated in order to create a hunting preserve. And *Windsor Forest* also occasions this history of seventeenth-century England that's really strange because he talks about—Pope's speaker grieves over—the bones of Charles I (supposedly interred in the park) and then talks about the intestine wars (the Civil Wars) which raged quote until "Anne said 'Let discord cease!'," which leaps over the Commonwealth Protectorate, the reigns of Charles II, James II, William and Mary, William on his own. So my question is, "With respect to the histories that Windsor Forest conjures up, does Pope's future of blue water navy, *asiento*, imperial dominance over the Atlantic sphere depend upon misremembering or selectively remembering this past?"

**Han:** That's a great question. I tried to play it up in the paper, but I essentially said that he's using—this is a horrible metaphor—but it's almost like the past is like a check, right? So he's using—that underwrites, that funds this instantaneous present, right? The violence of the past makes the instantaneous present seem worthwhile—somehow in his mind the Norman Conquest, those were, at that time they were investing—rather violently, in blood—into a future that then Pope kind of, you know, re-creates and says, "Yeah, this is—we paid for it, and this is the fruit of our labor."

**Alff:** But it's also such—I mean, I think about, like, the reinvention of slave plantations as resorts. I mean, if you're Pope this is... I mean, you're looking back at the legacy that still seems so toxic and that he seems to be writing against at the same time the Stuarts vacation there.

**Han:** Right.

**Alff:** And that seems to me to be one of the hardest things about the literal state of Windsor Forest. It's not how it comes to be, [but] how it ceases to be a forest in the period of Interregnum in the middle of the seventeenth century ....

**Han:** And, you know, maybe, you know... It's been agreed that some of the plantations are just, you know, they're renovating them so it doesn't look so "slavey" and stuff, and I think that's where *Windsor Forest* sort of—that's why I bring in the gardens and stuff, because he's literally cultivating the past. He's saying, like, "Eh, it was a little bloody. It's fine. We'll just put up, you know, a statue there, a grotto. It's fine. You can't see the blood." So I think there's that element of selective remembrance and editing.

**Williams:** Okay. Rebecca?

**Spang:** This is probably an appropriate but provocative thing to say at the *end* of this session. So I'm sitting here trying to think what this very good discussion means for the future of eighteenth-century studies and the future of the workshop. It has sometimes been said about previous workshops that we have fascinating discussions, but we don't actually talk about the papers. This particular session all we've done is talk about the papers—which could be thought in terms of, "Well, yes; we've actually learned to concentrate and focus." It's also striking to me that the people who participated most vocally in this session are not the people who participated most vocally in the previous session and the discussion of Koselleck, so I have a little bit of an anxiety—and again, as is well known, I'm a historian who likes hanging around with literary people and likes going to papers on "literature," but I did repeatedly in this discussion think, "I don't see a hook for a historian." Is there a way to think about those questions of mode, media, genre as also being relevant for history *writing*? Would that be a way to do that hook? And I suppose that's kind of a Hayden White move. Would there be a way to historicize the gothic as sometimes a mode, sometimes a media [*sic*], sometimes a genre? Perhaps there are other ways of re-enabling a conversation between historians and literature scholars. And, thinking about Joanna's question about, "Well, this looks different in France": again wondering how we get this very "English literature" discussion into some kind of [broader] conversation—I mean, there are references in both papers to empire, but it's a gesture. It doesn't really go to the Atlantic World, and so again I'm wondering how those kinds of connections might be forged, or if we need to forge them, or if the future of the workshop and the future of eighteenth-century studies is saying: "We have these things side by side, right? And we can have a historical paper, we can have a very close reading of a couple of texts, we can have a historicist reading of a text, and we'll just do these things one after the other."

**Jordheim:** Can I just hook in with a small point? It's interesting; in Germany, the main Koselleck reception has been among literary people. So the real historians haven't really—you can chip in on this—but at least for a while it was something that literary people would read.

**Fulda:** It's easier to read in English than in German. [laughter]

**Nash:** Not for some of us.

**Williams:** Well perhaps we should make an effort to have literary people join historical people for lunch. [laughter]

## The Piratical Counterfactual from Misson to Melodrama (summary)

MANUSHAG N. POWELL

Pirate lore, particularly the melodramatic form that dominated in the nineteenth century and remains very much in circulation today, would simply not function without authors and audiences alike having inherited a tradition of counterfactual thinking. The aim of this essay is to suggest (using pirates both real and imagined as the case in point) that by the eighteenth century, counterfactual writing was already in place and ready to contribute to the romantic aesthetic.

Eighteenth-century pirate writing liked to speculate about pirate colonies and utopias, and while there is nothing especially romantic about utopian thinking in general, the specific case of a pirate paradise brings an air of counterculture freedom that resonates well with the yearnings for *liberté, égalité, fraternité* still to come. That pirates held appeal for nineteenth-century audiences is not very shocking, for they represented rebellion, class warfare, the troubles of empire, and the sort of magnetic, misanthropic antihero often termed “Byronic.” But eighteenth- and nineteenth-century pirates are linked generically as well as thematically.

It is not far wrong to consider nearly all latter-day literary pirates as what some literary scholars call “counterfictions,” deliberate revisions of established literary worlds to improve, correct, or wonder “what if?”—for example, something like Nahum Tate’s famous happy-ending version of *King Lear*, or J. M. Barrie’s Captain Hook, who served with Blackbeard (real) and frightened Captain Flint (fictional).<sup>1</sup> Before they could be fictionalized and counterfictionalized, real pirates were adapted, counterfactualized, and the blank spaces in their autobiographies filled (their dimmer character aspects made more brilliant). This chain of pirate intersections, of the real with the imagined, is the heart of how pirate narratives came to function in the nineteenth century: counterfactuals merging into counterfictions.

On 9 April 1798, the Royal Circus Theatre hosted the premiere of John Cartwright Cross’ *Blackbeard; or, The Captive Princess*, a spectacular pantomime opera that proved the most famous pirate melodrama of its time and through to the 1850s.<sup>2</sup> The play was centred on the capture of the Grand Mughal’s ship by Blackbeard and the travails of Princess Ismene, one of its fair passengers, when the lustful Blackbeard absconds with her back to his treasure-laden fortress in Madagascar. The plot is complex and includes some complicated racial politics, cross-dressing, wife murder, ghosts, and sword fights in plenty—but it eventually ends, as one might suppose, with fiery explosions and “*British Valour and Humanity conspicuously triumphant*,” all the true lovers reunited, and Blackbeard vanquished by the hero Lieutenant Maynard.<sup>3</sup>

“Blackbeard” (the nickname of Edward Thatch or Teach) was a real pirate and Maynard the name of his vanquisher, but the historical villain was a West Indian rover with no base in Madagascar, nor did he ever molest a Mughal princess; if he was haunted by a wife’s vengeful ghost,

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<sup>1</sup> On the term, see Richard Saint-Gelais, “How to Do Things with Worlds: From Counterfactuality to Counterfictionality,” in *Counterfactual Thinking—Counterfactual Writing*, ed. Dorothee Birke, Michael Butter, and Tilmann Köppe (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co., 2011), 251.

<sup>2</sup> Burwick and Powell, *British Pirates in Print and Performance*, 39. For a history of its staging, see 39–42.

<sup>3</sup> John Cartwright Cross and James Sanderson, *The Songs, Duets, Glees, Chorusses, &c. In the Popular Grand Spectacle of Music, Dance, and Action, called, Black Beard; or, The Captive Princess: As Performed Upwards of 100 Nights, at the Royal Circus, Last Season; and Revived with New Songs, Scenery, Dresses, &c. on Wednesday, May 15, 1799* (London: T. Burton, 1799), 6.

no documentary evidence of that survives. To spice up his show with the oriental exotic, Cross deviated from history and borrowed heavily from the plot of Charles Johnson's *The Successful Pyrate* (1712), a tragicomic account (whose amorality badly distressed critics such as John Dennis) of the exploits of Captain Avery, the most famous English pirate pre-Blackbeard. Cross's reframing of Teach in Avery's mould launched a vast tradition of the lustful stage pirate versus captive maiden. The twist is that, while Avery was both real and remarkable and his renowned assault on Aurengzeb's pilgrim fleet in 1696 was well-documented, his most legendary action – marrying the princess he found on board the *Ganj-i-sawai* and with her founding a dynasty in his piratical colony on Madagascar – never happened. Cross's play was the most important popular source for romantic pirates and romanticising the pirate until Sir Walter Scott's Captain Cleve-land (who was brought to life in three competing stage versions within less than a month of the publication of *The Pirate* in December 1821) and especially Byron's Conrad (the *Corsair* was staged in at least five different adaptations before mid-century) came along.<sup>4</sup> And Cross's play is not inventive, but highly speculative: asking not only *what if* Blackbeard had been more like Avery (who was, technically speaking, also not like the historical Avery at all), but also building upon previous widespread speculations that Avery planned a Roman-style future for himself complete with bride theft and a growing empire. Blackbeard, meanwhile, was popular in large part due to his sensational treatment as a theatrical, lascivious devil in *A General History of the Pyrates* (1724-1728).<sup>5</sup>

Not content with fictionalizing the lives of both Blackbeard and Avery, the *General History* also introduced a romance (in the generic sense) about a liberty-loving French pirate named Captain Misson. Misson's strange idealistic, bifurcated, and curtailed narrative feels markedly out of place in the largely law-and-order *General History*. Through Misson's narrative, the *General History* experiments with a number of modes—including history and romance and, through their combination, counterfactual writing. This is more than just an interesting quirk of composition. It is radical experimentation, an extremely early and atypical example of the counterfactual mode. Counterfactual writing is not a new genre, although its popularity within fiction is fairly modern. I am attempting to be somewhat provocative by using the term “counterfactual” here; for although the concept of counterfactual thinking and writing has lately generated excitement in nineteenth-century studies, its place, if any, in the eighteenth century remains mostly unexplored, and among the treatments of eighteenth-century counterfactual that do exist, none account for the kind of writing in the *General History*.

Further, there is a special connection between counterfactual writing and pirates in popular Anglophone culture. The *General History* shrewdly formalizes what has always been the heart of pirate legends: that their transgressions outside the bounds of law, culture, and nation court fiction into every pirate history. The tendency is towards what are called “upward” counterfactuals, retellings that make imagined piracy more positive than it was—more thoughtful, chivalric, ideologically pure; less violent, less implicated in sins like the slave trade, less greedy, less threatening. This is not an impulse limited to the literary realm, either; historians too often want piracy generally, and even Misson in particular, to be representative of an organised anti-capitalist counterculture that never really materialised in a consistent form.

<sup>4</sup> Burwick and Powell, *British Pirates in Print and Performance*, 73, 59-72.

<sup>5</sup> John Robert Moore attributed the *General History of the Pyrates* to Defoe in *Defoe in the Pillory and Other Studies* (1939); Furbank and Owens reject the attribution in *The Canonization of Daniel Defoe* (1988) and *Defoe De-Attributions* (1994). Arne Bialuschewski, in contrast, makes the case for Mist in “Daniel Defoe, Nathaniel Mist, and the *General History of the Pyrates*,” *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 98.1 (2004): 21-38.

The *General History* might be said to have three beginnings: the Preface and Introduction, the first chapter of Volume I, and (added in 1728) the first chapter of Volume II. Pointedly, each of these beginnings weighs the possibility of a pirate nation. The first comes from introducing Rome as a nation both of, and dogged by, pirates. The second appears in the *General History*'s odd choice for Chapter 1, a heavily revisionist representation of the life and fate of the legendary Captain Avery and his men. By and large (though with the notable exception of the British East India Company!) the English public was inclined to view Avery as a seafaring Robin Hood. Though the captain had not been sighted since 1696, Avery's band lived on in speculative fiction, and were depicted as "merry outlaw" imperialists in texts such as the 1709 *Life of Avery* by the pseudonymous Adrian van Broeck.<sup>6</sup> In the *General History*, however, Avery's pirates took slaves, set up plantations, and generally behaved wretchedly to the natives around them, "Tyrant like they lived, fearing and feared by all," (61) until Woodes Rogers comes upon them and finds the petty pirate princes rather tattered. Illiterate, bestial criminals of the lowest orders, they neither offer any real threat to a well-armed civilized Englishman, nor any deep appeal to the reader.

If the *General History* were to stop here, it would be fairly simple to read its version of the pirates on Madagascar as satirically dystopian. But, curiously, it does not. In Volume I it lowers the historical Avery, who was not a very nice man but did at least really lead a group of poor sailors in successful rebellion against what amounted to wage slavery, *down* into a craven opportunist with no principles and little intelligence. The opening chapter to Volume II replaces Avery with an equally aggrandised but obviously fictional figure who just like Avery begins with mutiny and ends with an attempt at Madagascar dynasty: Captain Misson, who bases his career on revolutionary principles of liberty that seem ripped backwards in time from 1789. When the *General History* revises the fictional source material of Misson's story and interpolates it into Tew's, it transforms the whole into a counterfactual narrative, one that pretends to contain the wild, romantic rebellion proposed by Misson, but is really just admitting the intractable role of the main themes of Avery's legend in received pirate history. This is what counterfactual writing does: it plays upon readers' willingness and even desire to invest in an alternative world in which we pretend a thing we know did not happen, did.

The *General History* is careful to temper the subversive power of Misson by intertwining his imaginary destiny with that of a historically real pirate, Thomas Tew, who sailed in Avery's fleet. Ultimately the *General History* kills off both men, the real and the invented, attempting to bury Avery's fame in their collectively failed potential. The strange staggering of Misson's story into Tew's has vexed readers of the *General History*, for its effect is profound: mixing Misson and Tew means this is not a mere interpolated fiction, but rather, crucially, it is carefully structured as a very early example of counterfactual writing. According to Catherine Gallagher, counterfactual writing did happen in the eighteenth century, but largely with respect to religious debates and "critical military histories," which were more common in the romantic period.<sup>7</sup> Most eighteenth-century counterfactuals revolved around divinely-rooted versions of the idea of many possible worlds. What happens in the *General History*, which is neither military nor overtly attributed to Providence, is atypical of its cultural moment, and might seem more at home a half century or so later.

Misson's strange story is redolent with almost-romantic discourse; and perhaps the counterfactual mode is especially prone to usher in a romantic discontent regardless of time and place.

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of the sources, see Burwick and Powell, *British Pirates in Print and Performance*, 28-30.

<sup>7</sup> Catherine Gallagher, "What Would Napoleon Do?: Historical, Fictional, and Counterfactual Characters," *New Literary History* 42.2 (2011): 323.

As Damian Walford Davies has remarked, “That aspect of the Romantic aesthetic that valorises the contingent and the possible over the rigidly determinist is always attuned to alternative histories and realities.”<sup>8</sup> The rebellious Captain Misson calls up his men and tells them he wants “a Life of Liberty,” and that if they choose, as they do, to obey him, he will use it only for their good (391). Eventually, Misson and his men end up near Madagascar, founding a colony on the northwest coast of the main island. He calls it Libertalia, “and gave the Name of *Liberi* to his People, desiring in that might be drown’d the distinguish’d Names of *French, English, Dutch, Africans, &c.*” (417). Here, with the birth of a new nationality, the story suddenly breaks off.

We do not hear of the end of that colony until we encounter Captain Thomas Tew, who, like Avery and unlike Misson, was real. As the author of the *General History* must have known, given the other details he includes about him, Tew met his fate in 1695. But the text is using Misson to present an alternative, or more precisely counterfactual, version of the fantasy version of Avery, one who is truly admirable, even improbably so. Tew decides to visit Captain Misson’s utopian colony, though this is a trip not only to no place, but to no time, for Misson’s story takes place at least a decade or two after the real Tew died. Tew befriends and admires Misson and joins his naval company, but their happiness is short-lived, for one night, “without the least Provocation given ... the Natives came down upon [the *Liberi*] in two great Bodies, and made a great Slaughter, without distinction of Age or Sex” (437). Misson’s radical experiment is, in short, wiped from the Earth as though it never existed; he makes no substantial alteration to the real timeline, and importantly his loss is coded as a personal tragedy rather than a large societal one.

Strikingly, then, both volumes of the pirate Ur-text *General History* open through allohistory, by describing the failure of different Madagascar-based piratopias that never were. The *General History* compulsively re-writes the demise of Avery perhaps as basic reaffirmation of the need for strong, reliable government particularly in the dawning age of empire. And yet, if that is its purpose, it fails. Libertalia has persisted as a rumoured utopia for centuries, engaging sober historians to take it rather more seriously as an example of pirate principles than they probably ought (even today its Wikipedia page admits only that it is “a possibly fictional anarchist colony”). It failed too, at least in part, to quash Avery, whose fabled exploits are now typically assigned to Blackbeard or other fictional pirates in fictions and films. The *General History* ultimately only guarantees that the myth of the pirate nation will be available to later writers and pirate lovers.

Reading Misson as a self-aware exercise in counterfactual thinking, then, moves us crucially closer to understanding the romanticisation that took place for pirates especially in the nineteenth century, which was the age not of Avery, but of Cleveland, Conrad, and Long John Silver. Stevenson’s Silver, who, like Hook, claimed to have known Blackbeard, hops about with a waggish, dynamic swagger more likely found on the stage than the quarterdeck. Scott’s Clement Cleveland was roughly based on the pirate John Gow, who had been written on by both Johnson and Defoe; Byron’s Conrad came from the complex problem of Greek pirates (who resisted Ottoman rule, but also tended to attack other ships). Under his white flag, Misson, a pirate who thought he was better than a pirate, appears in some core ways more akin to Byron’s idealistic and doomed Conrad than to the *General History*’s notoriously cruel Blackbeard or low cunning Avery. The shift from anarchic thief to ideologically motivated nineteenth-century swashbuckler was especially apparent in the populist incarnation of the stage pirate. The pirate authors who followed

<sup>8</sup> Damian Walford Davies, ‘Introduction: Reflections on Orthodoxy’, in *Romanticism, History, Historicism: Essays on Orthodoxy* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 10.



Cross's opera were wide awake to the dramatic implications of their vogue, and there is something performative and theatrical even about most prose pirates.

The history of Cross's smash hit *Blackbeard* and the what-if pirate thinking that paved its way—a series of tales in which pirates can be greedy and cruel as well as loving and idealistic, historically based but imagined as fantasy, in Madagascar and America at once—is a monument to the fruitful flexibility of counterfactualism. Pirate lore in the romantic period is strongly anchored by the golden age of piracy in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries (roughly 1650-1730) that was documented by the *General History* and yet, at the same time, as Misson shows, it stays adrift in atemporal seas. The voyages that Stevenson's Silver sailed with Blackbeard and Captain England—and Barrie's Hook with Silver and Captain Morgan—are not only anticipated but enshrined when the *General History* decides to have Captain Tew leave Avery (with whom he really did consort) for Captain Misson (with whom pirates could sail only in dreams). In Cross's *Blackbeard*, source material includes the legend built up around Captain Avery, whose fanciful Madagascar empire had been cried down in Volume I of the *General History*, and then revisited and purified via Captain Misson in Volume II.

The romance and arguably romantic land of Libertalia itself has certainly lived on in pirate lore. In, for example, the 1952 film *Against All Flags*, Libertalia is the name of the pirate community in Madagascar. In a literary example, William S. Burroughs concludes his Red Night Trilogy with *Cities of the Red Night* (1981), a nonlinear counterfiction that thinks itself counterfactual, in which Libertalia survived and men seek to live in the present day by the articles of Captain Misson. "Had Captain Mission [sic] lived long enough to set an example for others to follow, mankind might have stepped free," suggests Burroughs.<sup>9</sup> Pirate audiences are remarkably willing to balance fascination with the "real" history of piracy against a love for those fantasy versions of pirates who never sailed, but could have. The what-if? questions that seem radical and daring intellectual acts for modern critics were quite literally the core enabling aesthetic of such romantic tales.

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<sup>9</sup> William S. Burroughs, *Cities of the Red Night* (New York: Viking, 1981), xiv. Burroughs returned to his counterfactual Misson in *Ghost of Chance* (Whitney Museum of American Art, 1991).

## The Idea of Projects in Eighteenth-Century Britain

DAVID ALFF

What can we learn from futures that never happened? This question drives my research into projects—concrete yet incomplete efforts to advance British society in a period defined by revolutions of finance and agriculture, the rise of experimental science, and the establishment of constitutional monarchy. Then, as now, the word “project” meant a proposal for action and the possibility of action itself. By “proposal” I mean a document drafted to make things happen, while “action” signifies the happening of those things through events like the enclosure of land, the construction of hospitals, and the founding of colonies. The Long Eighteenth Century saw thousands of endeavors called “projects,” but relatively few materialized, leaving scores of defunct visions, from Daniel Defoe’s attempt to farm cats for perfume to Mary Astell’s proposal to charter a college for women. When a small number of ventures succeeded in fields like banking and postal delivery, their project status—their ability to come or not come into being—was typically forgotten, as uncertain endeavor hardened into the empirical fact of achievement. The project, I contend, remains an elusive concept today because it is always turning into something else or into nothing at all.

This essay, a précis of my book *The Wreckage of Intentions: Projects in British Culture, 1660-1730* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), argues that even un-enacted words mattered to the extent they both tested new ways of being a society and endowed their readers with the agency to make, and not just describe or react to, the here-to-come. A project could “benefit the world even by miscarriage,” according to Samuel Johnson, who praised authors for charting original courses in commerce and statecraft no matter how feasible.<sup>1</sup> For us belated readers of eighteenth-century culture, projection records a constructive thinking through of possibility, even when those possibilities ultimately remain shut. I argue that re-reading old proposals uncovers the strategies of rhetorical persuasion, publication, and embodied action that made projection a unique and controversial cultural practice during early modernity. Such interpretive analysis can tell us how writers sought to make speculative endeavor seem plausible in the context of the future, and how such argumentation was (and remains) vital to the functions of statecraft, commerce, science, religion, and literature.

By interpellating present-day readers as residents of eighteenth-century Britain, old proposals invite us to believe in a certain idea of the future that is by now historical (or, more likely, counterhistorical). The expired scheme asks us to not know what is to come or, as Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer put it, to “play the stranger” to a world of enterprise whose fate we today know.<sup>2</sup> In this attempt to shake off presentism and rekindle the eighteenth-century projector’s long-extinguished imaginary, my essay recalibrates some of the interpretive practices that we often bring to bear on this period. Since the archives of projection generated so much obvious failure, it would be no hard task to pick apart their contents, ridicule their assumptions, disprove their expectations, and unmask their

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<sup>1</sup> *The Adventurer*, October 16, 1753.

<sup>2</sup> *The Leviathan and the Air-pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life* (Princeton University Press, 2011), 6.

profit motives. In short, one could bring to bear the full forces of ideology critique to uncover projection's submerged commitments and presumptions of mastery. And when it is illuminating, scholars should indeed do this. However, I contend that we can do more than simply critique projects: we can also revive their former possibility by re-imagining what once was dreamt as a sign of that culture's understanding of itself and its capacity to change. Mine is a hermeneutics of salvage that gathers historical evidence in order to reanimate old enterprise. What this resuscitation contributes to eighteenth-century studies and culture studies more broadly is a demonstration of how to think with the past's inadvertent posterity in the moment it tried to build an unknowable here-to-come that we are used to viewing through hindsight.

The specific past futures that I study originated between 1660 and 1730, a period when "project" retained longstanding associations with Caroline monopolists and parliamentary state building while amassing new connotations derived from discourses of science, finance, exploration, and technology. I argue that projects became ubiquitous in these decades, assuming a foundational role in the making of Anglophone culture that they did not previously possess nor have since relinquished. It was after the Restoration that projection engendered an adequately broad and self-reflexive discourse for Defoe to declare it the spirit of his age.<sup>3</sup> By the 1720s, projects came to seem less like a notorious invention than an inevitable practice and unquestioned social fixture. While authors continued to debate the value of particular schemes, they were less prone to attacking the project itself as a vehicle for ambition.<sup>4</sup> Defoe's "Age of Projects" never really ended, though we have grown oblivious to its experience over the last three centuries. This book scrapes away the sediment of familiarity to remember the project as an eighteenth-century inheritance we use and inhabit daily.

In distilling my book manuscript's overarching claims, this essay attempts three things: first, it shows how project proposals present scholars with an opportunity to read the past through the futures its writers imagined. When read in light of their former potential, old plans, blueprints, and solicitations reveal a past in process. These writings can vitalize our conception of history by showing the impact of undertakings that were intended but unachieved. Even fantastical schemes for draining the Irish Channel and raising silk worms in Middlesex challenge what Michael Andrew Bernstein calls the "triumphalist, unidirectional view of history."<sup>5</sup> Such teleological perspectives underwrite not only much-questioned "Whig" narratives positing constitutional monarchy as the zenith of British civilization, but also the tendency of eighteenth-century scholars to find in their period the birth and rise of empire, capitalism, the novel, the self, the public sphere, the nation, and enlightenment. It is not my aim to contest these claims of origin and upsurge, but to suggest that their preponderance reveals our desire to make the past a history of modernity—to find prefigurations of ourselves in the 1600 and 1700s. This pursuit

<sup>3</sup> See *An Essay Upon Projects* (1697).

<sup>4</sup> One late eighteenth-century author still riled by the idea of projects was Adam Smith, who condemned projectors as fickle arbitrageurs, "a corn merchant this year, and a wine merchant the next, and a sugar, tobacco, or tea merchant the year after." *The Wealth of Nations*, ed. Edwin Cannan (New York: The Modern Library, 2000), 131. Smith's friend, Jeremy Bentham, would refute this characterization by praising projectors as "a most meritorious race of men, who are so unfortunate as to have fallen under the rod of your displeasure." *Defence of Usury* (London: T. Payne, and Son, 1787), 132.

<sup>5</sup> *Foregone Conclusions: Against Apocalyptic History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), 3.

founders upon projection, and the many thousands of schemes that failed to create recognizably modern institutions and practices. While the proposals I examine invariably aspire to progressive ideals (to rise, discover, enlighten), their history is riddled with commercial busts, epistemological cul-de-sacs, and abandoned infrastructure. Projects simultaneously harbored the possibility of improvement and debris. They manifested forward-looking intention but also anticipated a form of wreckage incongruous with the grand historical narratives we have constructed to explain this era.

The archives of early modern projects reveal a society simultaneously making and unmaking itself through the ongoing generation of chancy schemes. I suggest that this unmaking has a rhetorical form and material history. Failed enterprises encapsulate what Reinhart Koselleck calls “since-superseded future,” a never-experienced temporality that can ventilate a past thick with multiple possibilities, including un-enacted plans that undercut progressive accounts of human development.<sup>6</sup> Projects not only instance since-superseded futurity, but constitute one of this imaginary ontology’s most fundamental and observable units. Old projects reframe the past as an ongoing “present” brimming with former potential. Inhabiting this past is, according to Michael Bernstein, “not merely to reject historical inevitability as a theoretical mode . . . it means learning to value the contingencies and multiple paths leading from each concrete moment of lived experience, and recognizing the importance of those moments not for their place in an already determined larger pattern but as significant in their own right.”<sup>7</sup> Bernstein and Gary Saul Morson use the term sideshadowing to refer to interpretive modes that admit not just “actualities and impossibilities,” but also “a *middle realm* of real possibilities that could have happened even if they did not.”<sup>8</sup> In this spirit, my research surveys some of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Britain’s paths untaken or not fully taken. It traces what Herbert Butterfield, arch-censor of teleologies, calls the “crooked and perverse . . . ways of progress,” while rejecting the notion that progress need always be found.<sup>9</sup> In dwelling upon what Morson calls the “presentness of the past,” I propose the project’s evocation of past presentness as a means of unstreamlining the histories we inherit and make.<sup>10</sup>

Secondly, my essay argues that project writing spurred the innovation of eighteenth-century literary forms. Projectors’ conjuring of the future engrossed poets, playwrights, and novelists in the late 1600 and early 1700s, whose creations usually illuminated the fissures between the conception and realization of schemes. An itch for projects afflicted literary personas ranging from Milton’s Beelzebub, who upbraids the Congress of Pandemonium for “projecting Peace and Warr,” to Richardson’s Clarissa, who begs “that I may not be sacrificed to projects,” but succumbs to Lovelace, who exclaims “success in projects is every thing.” Literary authors made projection a salient theme at the same time they derived from proposals rhetorical strategies for depicting the future in its uncertain potential. I demonstrate how projects furnished writers ranging from topographical poets

<sup>6</sup> *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), xxiv.

<sup>7</sup> *Foregone*, 70.

<sup>8</sup> *Narrative and Freedom: The Shadows of Time* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 6.

<sup>9</sup> *The Whig Interpretation of History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1965), 23. Walter Benjamin offers a similarly useful metaphor when he rejects the singular thread of universal histories “bound up with the notion of progress,” in favor of a “frayed bundle unraveling into a thousand strands that hang down like unplaited hair,” until gathered up by the historian (“Paralipomena to ‘On the Concept of History,’” IV.403).

<sup>10</sup> *Narrative*, 6.

to prose satirists with generic models for advocating and repudiating new ways of being a society.

A number of literary authors conceived of their compositions *as* projects, acknowledging their participation in the speculative economies that resembled those they mocked. Jonson's *Devil is an Asse* (1616) appears to condemn project-crazed Jacobean court culture when it renders Meercraft a contemptible villain. But then, in the epilogue, Jonson refers to his play as "a Project of mine owne," framing his dramatic authorship as its own enterprise of public entertainment, social reform, and profit potential."<sup>11</sup> Of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Andrew Marvell reflected "I lik'd his Project, the success did fear."<sup>12</sup> Projects in the 1600 and 1700s were both a popular theme in writing and a metaphor for understanding authorship as its own enterprise for accruing fame and righting an imperfect society.

Finally, my essay models a practical approach to investigating projects, a concept so ubiquitous in western society that it resists historical particularization and cultural analysis. I demonstrate that the project is most readily grasped as a history-bearing idea when divided into four stages: the articulation, circulation, undertaking, and reception of ideas for new enterprise. Project authors composed persuasive arguments to render their schemes plausible and attractive. They worked alongside stationers to disseminate new proposals through print. They enacted written designs through performances known as undertakings. Finally, these attempts at reforming society stimulated public response. The eighteenth-century idea of projects encompassed acts of writing, print, performance, and literary invention. Therefore, my approach combines techniques of rhetorical analysis, book history, performance theory, and genre criticism to illuminate the multi-faceted phenomenon of eighteenth-century projection, from some of the era's most ephemeral schemes to a few of its most enduring.

Although I focus on eighteenth-century Britain, my research poses questions that also pertain to the present. My book manuscript pursues an idea of discrete design and futuristic forecast that is omnipresent today in the form of art projects, dissertation projects, housing projects, infrastructural super-projects, and countless projects in private self-fashioning. The term is undeniably vital to modern society but also often ungraspably abstract, proliferating within managerial modes of thought as well as philosophical discourses ranging from Heideggerian ontology to Freudian psychoanalysis. Projection's idiom has proven so resilient that it threatens to impede investigation by conflating the object of study with the instruments of its analysis.<sup>13</sup> In this vein, Georges Bataille grudgingly conceded that projection had become an insuperable employment of modern philosophers when he described his *Inner Experience* as a "projet contre projet," a manifesto for "existence without delay" that ironically (but inevitably) took form as a book project.<sup>14</sup> Given this problem of immersion, a theoretical goal of my research is to establish the project as an investigable form. In looking back to seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Britain, I seek to dislodge an aspect of present experience so given we hardly no-

<sup>11</sup> (London: 1641), 66.

<sup>12</sup> *The Complete Poems* (London: Penguin Books, 2005), 192.

<sup>13</sup> The word "system" poses similar challenges of ubiquity to Clifford Siskin, who claims that "we have forgotten that system, like the novel, *is* a genre and not just an idea - it's a form of writing that was crucially important to the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries." See "Novels and Systems." *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 34.2 (Spring 2001), 202.

<sup>14</sup> *Inner Experience*, trans. Leslie Ann Boldt (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988), xiii.

tice it. My goal is to show how “project” became the primary term for endeavor-in-progress during the 1700s, and an idea that continues to shape possibilities of thought and experience today.

## What's (Not) Happening?

RACHEL SEILER-SMITH

According to both of our authors, the eighteenth century possesses robust, varying forms for contending with the counterfactual: what Nush's paper succinctly defines as "pretending a thing we know did not happen, did," and that David's paper identifies with the acts of imagining things that could happen, but don't. Whereas the piratical imagination in the eighteenth century signals a readerly "willingness...to invest in an alternative world," the projecting imagination marks the development of a "speculative enterprise" that works to gain a "rhetorical hold on the future." David's work asks what happened to those ideas that history seems to have lost; Nush's paper contends more with the ideas that seem to have abandoned history (or rather, "historical accuracy"). What I found so intriguing about Nush's claims about counterfactualism was the notion that piracy is particularly poised to enter into fast-and-loose plays with boundaries and conventions, since pirates (by sheer virtue of being such) are transgressive, working "outside the bounds of law, culture, and nation." Pirates "court fiction," she writes. Though perhaps that's too aristocratic a rendering of piracy—a romanticization; the piratical imagination might well plunder and pillage history in its commandeering of fictional strategies. This brings me to my first question, which is, (I hope) a *deceptively* simple one that Nush's paper—and to an extent, David's—raised for me: that is, how much does our grasp on the counterfactual in the eighteenth century rely on a stable notion of the factual? If we abide by Mary Poovey's claims (and I'm not necessarily suggesting we do), the "fact" was a tenuous "epistemological unit" in the eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Are we assuming facticity is "a thing" in the eighteenth century when we use the term counterfactual? Or does counterfactualism—like piracy—allow us to scrutinize facticity in playfully serious ways? It seems like pirate narratives might call attention to the fragility of thinking history a fact of the past, just as the project calls into question whether futurity itself is a fact—not just if something *will happen*, but that *anything* will happen.

I suppose, then, that another way we might pose this question is by couching it more firmly in the notion of "happening": what does it mean that something "happens" or it doesn't? What is a "happening"? The *OED* defines it as an "event, action, etc: to take place, to come to pass, occur...to ensue as an effect or result"; but "happen," especially in the eighteenth century, also means "perhaps, maybe." Happening is *both* an occurrence and an uncertain potentiality. And I think one of the most insightful offerings these pieces provide, as papers authored by literary critics, is a tracking of how "shit happens" in a variety of forms: the pirate drama is a happening, an event, even if what it portrays takes piratical license with a past that has its own assumptions about what "happened"; projects, in imagining things that should happen and might happen, enact a rhetorical happening that is more ephemeral and difficult to trace, but nonetheless there. Such a question may be a symptom of my own disciplinary context—maybe even my cultural context: I can't help thinking of Harry Potter's final chat with Dumbledore at King's Cross Station (a chat, notably, about Harry's future)—in which the boy asks about the nature of

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<sup>1</sup> *A History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1998).

the conversation's "happening," of its facticity, its realness, to which the sage responds: "Of course it is happening inside your head, Harry, but why on earth should that mean that it is not real"? Now, that reference might date *me*, but what I wonder is whether or not our assumptions about facticity and our definitions of what it means to "happen" date *us*—and what we might make of dating such definitions within the eighteenth century.

This brings me to my last question, which is not unconnected to the penultimate one: David's paper argues that we wish to see ourselves in the past—in the novel, the self, the nation, the rise of capitalism etc; and he suggests that these claims "of origin and upsurge...implicat[e] our desire to make the past a history of modernity—to find prefigurations of ourselves in the 1600 and 1800s." But, as his work evinces, the "project" also implicates the desires of those in the past to prefigure themselves into the future—in a modernity that is only "postmodern" in the literal sense that it is a modernity that comes after their own, a period "postponed" and delayed but, for better or worse, inevitable (or is it?). David argues, provocatively I think, that plumbing the wreckages of projection reveals a form of the past "incongruous to the grand historical narratives we have constructed": an emphasis on the eighteenth-century project "unstreamlin[e]s the histories we inherit and make." Yet David also calls the project our "eighteenth-century inheritance" that we "use and inhabit daily" so much so that its distinctive formal and rhetorical strategies, if not its historical roots, have been largely invisible. This seems to me a claim of prefiguring ourselves in the eighteenth century, and of rooting our own sense of modernity in the narratives of the eighteenth century we already write. Admittedly, I take little issue with such prefigurations. I tend to describe similar moves as taking a sort of Brechtian approach to the past in which we in the twenty-first century perform a "stand-besideness" when reading the eighteenth century: respecting both the alterity of the character of the eighteenth century and working, at the same time, to understand that character in relation to ourselves. If I'm not mistaken, though, David's paper is attempting to straddle a critique (albeit a generous one) of this method at the same time that the form of the "project" suggests such a mode of thinking is inevitable. At the very least, the project reveals the difficulty of wresting ourselves away from that method despite *our* best intentions. I welcome David's clarification on this point, but I also invite Nush to comment. As her work demonstrates, the ennobling and amelioration of pirates might signal that eighteenth-century readers and writers too wanted to see more of themselves in the transgressive characters of the past so that their modern sensibilities could continue to enjoy pirates and piracy in the future. Are these maneuvers—not only of projecting ourselves into the future, but also projecting ourselves onto the past—an eighteenth-century inheritance? And, maybe more important: is such a move to be classified as "counterfactual"? Despite their employment of counterfactualism, these papers encourage us to think otherwise—and this is particularly relevant to historians, too, of course.



## Discussion

**Rachel Seiler-Smith:** I open the floor for discussion.

**David Alff:** Sure... Yeah, thank you. Those are really great, provocative questions, including the question of what it is I'm ultimately seeking to critique when I tell the story of projects. In thinking about facts and facticity, I think Mary Poovey lays out a really interesting dichotomy and a really helpful one in this case where the facts can be that which enables us to make enquiries or that which is the result of those enquiries. I think for projects and projectors, facticity is a destination: it's what they set out to become, and I think of that "happening" as taking place across different stages. For me there's a rhetorical component in which one proposes what should happen, that rhetoric circulates in the form—usually written form of pamphlets in the period—and then it's undertaken. Undertaking we might think of as something synonymous with projects today, but I think in the seventeenth and eighteenth century it was the *enactment* of projects. And it is ephemeral and it takes place outside of archives because it's the moment in which intentions leap off the page and become labor or speech or something that we can't find in a library: so that's where I've leaned on performance studies to try to think about how to work with this absence. So, that's what I think "happening" happens to be in this setting.

**Manushag Powell:** Alright, to go back to the question of the counterfactual: yes, that, that is a continued problem. So, well then, what is a "fact" if you are going counter the facts? And so the—I mean this in the most respectful way possible—the problem is that as I was working on this project (and, more specifically, on my book) what I thought was a fact and what historians working on piracy thought were facts often were not the same thing at all. I kind of just kept running into that as a, you know, frustrating problem. And so, that's the thing with counterfactual thinking: lit people are just now starting to steal it from historians who have been using it for, you know, since the eighties anyway or since the eighteenth century (depending on who you talk to) and it gets used in psychological circles; it gets used now, really by physicists doing a certain kind of work. But, I mean, lit people really aren't quite sure what to do with it, so you get the very kind of narrative counterfactual, like: What if Percy Shelley hadn't died? Like, how might that have changed Mary Shelley's career? And, that does ... it makes a certain kind of work possible. That's different from what I'm doing here which is (like): let's once again move back the origin of this thing that we think of as shiny and new because the predominant thinking now is that counterfactual writing, you know, became a thing in the nineteenth century, and of course, nothing actually ever became a thing in the nineteenth century, we know that it was always earlier. [laughter]

You know this is an interdisciplinary problem that we're wrestling... especially because as you read, you find that people are defining "counterfactual" in different ways. Some people use it as near synonymous to alternate history or al-historical, whereas some people make it very, very specific. And so even like "What does 'counterfactual' mean?" is not a matter of fact, but a matter of interpretation. And it is just, you know, counterfactuals all the way down. But that's how I... how I ended up kind of leaning into "counterfiction," which is the other term I'm using in the essay. I didn't initially set out to do that. What you have are stories that get told on top of stories on top of stories and they each resonate powerfully in different moments. And, and to me that ended up being a legerdemain that I had to use to make any kind of sense of what I was looking at.

To your second question, I guess this is a second answer to your first question. In, in trying to get at pirate facts... Like, even if we can all agree on (you know) *when* Blackbeard was in the Carolinas, right? That's a pretty factual fact, you know. We don't know if he really set his beard on fire, right, and if he really set his beard on fire, *what* psychological traumas made him do that. And so, like to kind of enter the narratives trying to fill that in. So the problem is like, even about someone like Blackbeard (whose history is fairly well documented), we always want to know more than the historical record is ever going to yield. And so these fictions kind of become necessary. And so, did readers want to see more of themselves in pirates? Like, yes, maybe that's where some of that narrative impulse is coming from: that we want to see something that's recognizable as a psychologized human (or a materialized human) in a pirate about whom we only know, like, these bits and pieces and fragments. So, yeah, there is kind of like a pirate "project" going on. We would like to have facts about them, but I don't think it's ever really going to happen to the extent that people would like them because the way we've been trained to read pirate narratives has given us an appetite that is not ultimately satisfiable. And yet because pirates really existed there is a yearning to have these stories somehow rooted in fact, and so it's very easy (I find) to trick people into thinking that anything you tell them about a pirate is true. [laughter]

**Joanna Stalnaker:** I don't know, were you planning to respond?

**Seiler-Smith:** I was not.

**Stalnaker:** Okay, okay, so I have two questions for David. The first one: I want to bring us back to Mercier just one more time [laughter] because they talk about projects. The Englishman—so this is on page twelve and thirteen in the Mercier (page 112 of the reader)—the Englishman complains and so the Frenchman says, you know, maybe you should come back. Well, I'll just read it: "if they shall accomplish, in their full extent, the different projects that have been proposed. So, maybe you should come back, you know, when we've finished our projects. 'Ah! he replied, there is the foible of your nation; projects forever!'" [laughter] So, I was, I would just be interested in you talking a little bit about the Englishness of projects versus, you know, here it seems to be something specifically associated with the French. Of course, we're in a much later period, so what is (sort of) the future of the idea of an English project versus this, you know, association with the French—a very negative association with the French as project makers but, perhaps, in a slightly different way than some of the negative associations that you look at in your paper.

And the second question has to do with the place of literature in your project as a whole. So you said you have a few things to say about that in what we've read here with respect to, you know, the question of these projects often appearing in works that "we would classify as literary with a big L" (you say at a certain point). But, I would be very interested to hear you talk a little bit about how your work on these sort of actual projects that you're looking at might lead us to think differently about literary projects that themselves sort of pose themselves as unrealizable projects or virtual projects (and that's part of their self-definition as a literary work). So, just to give an example which I know takes you completely far afield from the kind of thing that you're thinking about, but, for me, Rousseau's *Reveries of a Solitary Walker* is... you know, he puts out this project of describing this "self" and he also puts out a sort of virtual, descriptive project of describing all the plants on the island of Saint Pierre where he's walking around. But, the project is already sort of foreclosed by the time he even starts because he started it too late, and so the

entire work seems to exist in this state of projection... but it's already finished by the time it's started. So, you know, it seemed to me—I was real excited reading your piece here and thinking about your broader project, to think how would these much more concrete, actual (you know), pamphlet projects cause me to think differently about the literary project that sort of poses itself as such.

**Seiler-Smith:** Want to hook in before he responds?

**Rebecca Spang:** Hook really fast on that. The beginning of Rousseau's *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*: where he defines the state of nature as "does not now exist, will not exist, and may never have ever existed" and yet we need to know about it anyway. So, there's a way in which the counterfactual as a condition for knowledge is actually quite central to certain forms of eighteenth-century reasoning.

**Stalnaker:** And I would just add to that a condition not just for knowledge, but for *judging* the actual state of affairs.

**Spang:** Judging. That's the word, yes, yes.

**Alff:** In terms of Mercier, I was wondering to what extent, to what extent the satire or the joke was at the expense of the English speaker? I mean whose, you know, alleging or, you know, imagining the French as being obsessed with projects coming from England in the eighteenth century. I mean something that I see repeatedly in discourses of proposals are often times jealousies: jealousies regarding institutions like the French Academy for sponsoring improving endeavors, for standardizing improving endeavors, whereas things are very ragtag and ad hoc on the English side, you know. The history of projects in England is a really varied and weird EEBO search, you know, where one goes through and is drawing out all of these different documents. So, I can't speak a great deal to the factual history of projects on the French side. I know that the term itself is *projeter*—I mean it is one of the roots for the English term.

In terms of thinking about unfinishable or unfinished literary enterprise: I'm not sure that it's helpful. I'm trying to think of other examples, you know, from my period that I know a little better. It's just something that I'll kind of keep thinking about as we're talking...

**Christine Zabel:** Very small hook on the Englishness of projects. I told you yesterday about this book in French about projects or *projets* and I just know that in French a project or *projet* or *projecteur* is not exactly the same as in English. It's much more... For example, John Law, which is like the example for a projector, is not necessarily called (or, is *not* called) a projector. It's *Système Law*.

**Spang:** Yeah, *système*.

**Zabel:** It's a system. And even later, I mean, also the English word entrepreneur is a French word, and I think that is much more used in the French case, to be an *entrepreneur*. And so, I would say there is *projet et projeter*, but it is used slightly differently and not ubiquitous as in the English language.

**Alff:** Although Adam Smith called John Law a projector.

**Zabel:** Yeah, but—

**Spang:** Yeah.

**Alff:** So, when it comes to English he writes it into the vernacular, right.

**Seiler-Smith:** Jesse.

**Jesse Molesworth:** This may end up being more of a comment than a question; I hope that's okay. I love this pairing and I love it so much because I absolutely hate this claim, you know, made by Gallagher and others that there is no counterfactual before the eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup> I mean" there is. The counterfactualism that David's describing, the counterfactual that, you know, Nush has traced out, and I'll give you more. I mean you cannot convince me that Hogarth is not a counterfactual thinker: you know, that's what *Industry and Idleness* is—it's the imagination of industry taking *this* path but, you know, "what if industry had, you know, followed this other path of idleness and so forth?" you know, we wouldn't get to this position of Lord Mayor and so forth. *Tom Jones*, *Tom Jones* is, you know, utter, you know, counterfactualism. You know each version of the characters that he encounters is a version of himself, you know: Lieutenant Northerton, the Man of Mazard Hill, Nightingale—they are all versions of himself. And, therefore, he is the counterfactual (you know) sort of character that emerges precisely in this (what is described as a) history. You know, this is, you know, to me utter counterfactual thinking, and, you know, I am absolutely flummoxed and horrified by the claim that, you know, we don't have this in the eighteenth century. We do, you know, it just exists in different forms, and so: thank you.

**Powell:** You know it's actually been keeping me up at night that *Oroonoko* is a really good example, and like I feel like I somehow have to work this in and there's no way it will fit in, but it's just... Yes, exactly Jesse; we agree on novels! [laughter]

**Zabel:** Yeah, I have two questions for David as well, maybe for both of you. But, I'm interested in... I have mainly two questions: one is around the open future and the other around objectivity. I was... maybe first to the objectivity aspect. You mentioned the future realism and the disinterested testimony, and I was interested in when—in the history of business planning, for example, or political arithmetic there is this kind of showing numbers in order to make it less about the author and show the objectivity of numbers and of the analysis of the situation. And when, for example, in the course of the earlier eighteenth century it was much more invoked, like, the reputation of the author, and like, "I know these guys, so I know about the situation. And so, you can invest in my business because I have this kind of reputation. I have the back up of all these people." And then by the end of the eighteenth century, it was much more the kind of, "I analyze the situation, and I have numbers. And, I show you also all kind of possible scenarios and, like, try to show you numbers in it." And, so that would relate also to Martin's work on business planning, and there is also Will Deringer's work from MIT about objectivity of numbers and political

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<sup>1</sup> Editor's note: Catherine Gallagher, "What would Napoleon Do? Historical, Fictional, and Counterfactual Characters," *New Literary History* 42:2 (2011)

arithmetic in the 1710s and 20s.<sup>2</sup> And so, I was wondering how (or if) you would say that what you're calling "disinterested testimony" and "future realism" and the rhetorical strategies applying to that—if you would call that a try to objectify this fictional aspects of your...—what you call the projecting fiction or language? So, I would be interested in that.

And then, something that I am personally also interested in, or am struggling with, in my speculation project, but I think it's even... in the projects what is interesting is that there are possible future scenarios, but there is also a concrete plan in a given moment. And so, the future is—although there are certain, there are multiple possibilities?—the plan kind of makes a plan for *one* future, and so the future (the open future) is closed up in the plan. And, so, I'm interested in: if you could talk a little more about the aspect of projecting which kind of implicates an open future, but then it's not at all an open future and how you deal with this ambiguity?

**Alff:** Well, I mean, something I kept asking myself yesterday is: Does the project presume an open future, you know, to begin with? And then, in thinking about our discussions today, I would say: does the future need be open or closed? Can it be closed, but there's a "meantime" that can still be constructed usefully? So that even if time is going to end and it's not, you know, stretching on into open space, is there virtue to handling five years of that period differently than it might have gone otherwise if you had not established a plan for it?

So, yeah, I think that the project in some senses imagines a future as constructible, manipulable... to the extent that it can close it off. But then there's some schemes that are trying to anticipate contingency, that are trying to deal with the unknown (schemes of defense, protection against invasion, weather), so I don't think all projects kind of lead to one end. I think some are trying to deal with an array of possible futures.

**Zabel:** But the objective is still the same. I mean I know the business plans that go through the contingencies of the situation. If there is war? How does it change in the Du Pont powder industry if there is a war or peacetime? So, they go through these kind of these contingencies, but it is still the same objective: to show that this business plan would work out and is believable. And so, the contingency that is implied in the business (or in these plans) is actually not a *real* "open" contingency. It is a possibility that you have to think through, but it's still closed up in the same objective. Is that clear what I'm saying?

**Alff:** Well yeah, and I mean I think it's true if you look at one instantiation of a proposal, but many of these proposals if you look at their media history or their print history: there are multiple editions of certain proposals and they'll be sometimes anthologized, they'll be reworked, they'll be plagiarized. So, sometimes we can track plans that shift their sense of what the future will be through these successive iterations.

I just wanted to say one thing about the authorial objectivity, which is that oftentimes what a lot of these writers I'm studying did would be to try to completely obliterate their own identity, to say that I found this proposal or this is given to me by a trusted friend. So, oftentimes I think that the identity of the author could be a great liability because then that introduces the problem of self-interest.

<sup>2</sup> [Editor's Note] William Deringer, *Calculated Values: Finance, Politics, and the Quantitative Age* (forthcoming).

<sup>3</sup> Editor's Note: Marcus Rediker, *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age* (2004).

<sup>4</sup> Editor's Note: Peter Leeson, *The Invisible Hook: the Hidden Economics of Pirates* (2009); Peter Linebaugh and

**Zabel:** Exactly.

**Seiler-Smith:** Fritz.

**Fritz Breithaupt:** Oh, that was quick! Wonderful, thank you. My question is inspired by David's paper, but I'll address it to Nush. And the question is a question that applies to both, and the question is: Really what is the measure of success for either the project, the hypothetical, or the counterfactual? Now, David actually is clever enough he answers this he says, "there's a gain to be given." And, I still wonder about that in the case of Nush's paper, so we had the case (we just talked about it briefly) that there can be an intellectual gain out of the counterfactual. But I think the case here of the pirate stories, and I think actually in general the larger case is a different one. I want to make a proposal (but you can rebut it) and that is: actually, what you gain from it is the category of the interesting. The counterfactual story is only then successful or the counterfactual history is only successful if it's interesting. You could come up with a lot of different scenarios and they're boring, and so we would not even think about them. So, there's something about, at least...; I mean Hitler has to win the damn war or something. I mean it has to be really radical or interesting and some other thing. A simple kind of... that wouldn't work. And that's already true (I think of all the examples Jesse gave us, too) here in the eighteenth-century and even before. I mean I think I would even go to the sixteenth century.

But, now if it's "the interesting" we are dealing with we are dealing with an interesting affect, one of these affects of attentiveness, of excitement, and so on and so on. Which means that suddenly with the category of the counterfactual, the past becomes itself something like a spectacle; we are suddenly focused on the recipient who sees this, who's interested in and newly interested in it. And the flip side of this, and this is what I really want to get to, is then, of course, the future side. Once we focus on the recipient, the future also becomes a spectacle. It is something that is not just the dark future—we talked about the dark future mostly—but no, there's something that makes the view to the past, but potentially also to the future, interesting again. There's something happening that's exciting: maybe Trump gets elected, something crazy will happen. [laughter] So, it's interesting. So it's interesting, and that's important because that is different from the project. The project I still think is driven by nervousness. You're holding off the other uncontrollable future with your plan. The plan is still driven by dark future, open future is closed: I mean, that was the last discussion between Christine and David. The project, yes, you want to close the open future because you're afraid of it. But this potentially... I think this is what the counterfactual is... that's how I mean, what I'm inspired here, it's about the interesting. And pirates, what is more interesting than pirates?

**Powell:** Very little. No, I think that's...—that feels very right to me and thanks, that's good fun. And actually to bring the counterfactual and the project together once again: like, there were lots of projects to repatriate the pirates of Madagascar who... (like), there weren't that many pirates in Madagascar. [laughter] Like, there ... it was already always counterfactual, and Defoe wrote an important one, which if you don't have the reference and you may because you know how to research, but if you don't, I can send it to you. But, like, the premise of it was, like, "Okay, you've got all this money. You're a wanted man. You can't spend it. So, you're sitting in Madagascar on top a pile of gold wishing you could come home and spend all of the gold, so how about we offer you amnesty and we bring the gold and you inject it into the economy: win, win,

win, win.” The problem is (like) there weren’t that many pirates in Madagascar and they didn’t have that much gold. And so there are all these (like) schemes getting picked up to repatriate these people with their wealth and—you know, really they’d be happy to take the wealth and leave the people—but that wasn’t there, and yet it keeps coming up again. To, you know, take something that is, you know, kind of disappointing and an unknowable end to the pirate career and make it a hopeful future again, right?

But, yeah. Like you say: what’s more interesting than a pirate? Joe Roach’s book *It*, the last chapter is on pirates. *It* is the study of things that are—like, what’s the phrase he uses?—“abnormally interesting,” right. “Pirates steal dreams”: like there’s something about the pirate in and of itself, right, that is always going to be abnormally interesting. So, the question becomes: if the pirate himself is always interesting, why is that not enough? Why do we have to make the pirate *more* interesting? Because I think you’re right; I think that’s exactly what the counterfactual pirate thinking is doing, is adding this twist, making it, you know, new, and giving it that frisson again, but, like, why is that also necessary? And, you know... I guess my best answer goes back to Hillis Miller—we’re really going into old theory here, right, on narrative. Like, why do we need stories? Why do we need the same story over and over again? But, why is our need for stories never satisfied? And, you know, it’s the same question three times, but it’s also different questions. Like because it’s interesting we need to keep creating differences because those are kind of how we make sense of the complications of our own lives. So, basically: all of fiction can be explained by pirates. [laughter]

**Molesworth:** I disagree, Nush. [laughter]

**Powell:** Jesse!

**Seiler-Smith:** Helge.

**Helge Jordheim:** Yeah, sorry for being late. Two terrific papers, I loved reading them so much, and I have two things. One for David, which is about Holberg again. Ludvig Holberg [1684-1754]: his whole work is on project and projectors, and there’s this specific kind that you allude to when you quote John Brewer, saying that there are these people who make proposals for government reform. So, he has written like ten dramas that are all about these people making projects for government reform and how...—and he ridicules them every time, right?—and even at the level I referred to the other day, if you propose a project, and it doesn’t work out, you kill them. So, the idea that projects are (and projectors are) the most dangerous [people] for political stability is extremely strong in Holberg. And, he has this term “project makers” that pops up everywhere, and then they’re the worst. I mean you could be a tyrant, but if you’re a project maker, you’re just like [oof]; you don’t want that.

The other thing that goes to both of you is to bring in another term, which is conspiracy. Because, and I kept thinking about this because of Nush’s—you have this ... Johnson refers to (he has) secret informations about something that historians don’t have.

**Powell:** Right.

**Jordheim:** And it seems to be that counterfactuals are very often linked to different forms of conspiracy thinking, and the same goes for certain forms of eighteenth-century projects. The pro-

ject was something that you can't see, but people still did them. So, there's someone projecting behind your back. So, both these counterfactuals and projects may have this element of conspiracy that you find in the eighteenth century and that we still sort of have very present in today. So, I just wanted to hear your thoughts about that.

**Alff:** Well I think this goes back to Daniel's paper yesterday. I mean about who possesses *prudencia politica*; who is perceived to have the authority to try to prescribe what the future should be? And, I think that's often times recursively a reflection on what you've pitched in the past and whether it's worked. And, I think this also goes to the question of when is a project successful? When does it end? And, I think that those who would be the most successful at proposing things are those who put forward endeavor that creates a reality that we come to take for granted. The best projects aren't called projects; they're just reality, they become invisible. In fact, when we call something a project today we're gesturing toward its incompleteness. You know we call a "housing project" a "project" because it fails to live up to the social ideals behind it; otherwise it would just be a neighborhood or place.

**Zabel:** Or it might [still] come, rather than [be] failed; that would say that it's already passed.

**Alff:** Right, that it's passed its expiration date.

**Zabel:** But the project could also be something that can still be achieved, also nowadays.

**Alff:** Right.

**Seiler-Smith:** Sam.

**Samuel Baker:** Yeah, another word that might be useful is "experiment" because, right, there's a relationship between the rhetoric of projects and the rhetoric of experiment.

**Seiler-Smith:** I'm also going to hook and say I think "conspiracy" and I also think of "plot," which also has literary and landed terms: a plot of land that you build upon, a plot that you write about in literature, and the Popish plot, other plots, you know. Plots: some fail and some succeed and are conspiratorial, you know.

**Powell:** Yeah, to go back to the idea of conspiracy. This is one of the places where I find myself butting heads with historians, and I go against Rediker a little bit.<sup>3</sup> Sorry... Did you want to?

**Spang:** Nope.

**Seiler-Smith:** There are two hooks, but go ahead.

**Powell:** Should I just stop talking? [laughter] You know, Peter Leeson is another example, or Peter Linebaugh.<sup>4</sup> ... Like, there's a desire to see piratical thinking as more organized and cohe-

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<sup>3</sup> Editor's Note: Marcus Rediker, *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age* (2004).



sive than I think it was, to see them as anti-capitalist warriors and to be able to theorize them into hydrarchy. And, it's like...

**Jordheim:** Cuba, Cuba.

**Powell:** Nineteenth century, though. And, and, yes, absolutely, and that has directly to do with Napoleon. But, and in fact, nineteenth-century Cuban piracy is quite different to eighteenth-century Golden Age piracy—but (I mean) the problem is it inflects a lot of modern thinking because that's most Americans' (and I'm here as an American), that's most Americans' more immediate experience of piracy. So, that's why like Stevenson in *Treasure Island* he sets it in the eighteenth century, but his pirates are out of the nineteenth century (you know), because I mean that's what he grew up aware of, right? So... We're back into these weird slippages of time, like butting up against each other. But, so, yeah, piracy was (you know) it's a mode, it's something that you do. And then, to go back to our discussion this morning, thereby you're like kind of invoking this kind of anti-capitalist ethos, absolutely, but I think in only rare cases was it ever very deliberate or deliberative, you know. Mostly piracy is something that you fall into out of a sense of desperation: that it's the least bad of evils.

And, by the way, when I teach this to my undergrads I start with a clip from *The Princess Bride* where Westley is explaining about the Dread Pirate Roberts “and I am not the Dread Pirate Roberts” (like, that was four pirates ago) and he's living a like a king in Patagonia, that he has not been marauding for twenty-five years. Pirates did not maraud for twenty-five years (one to three years tops) and then you were dead or retired. Like prostitution, like you didn't do it that long because it was dangerous. And it was something you would kind of dip into because of a labor shortage, and then get back out of again. So, it's not, it's not this, you know, “way of life” that in different ways [unintelligible] try to make it. Or, I mean, it is a way of life, but a temporary, interstitial one for most cases. (Less interstitial if you end up hanged at the end of it.) But... Okay, I'm wandering afield now. My point is... so that's what interesting to me about Misson's narrative is that it's kind of the best example of this pirate conspiracy that becomes a really, like, kind of philosophically cohesive way of life and it's absolutely so clearly fictitious, and so many historians have hooked onto it as though it were real. I mean (like) look at the Wikipedia page for Libertalia today and it's still like, yeah, a real place (and I'm like: ha-ha). And, sorry, just one last thing I wanted to say: treasure maps?!

**Seiler-Smith:** Tracey and then Rebecca have hooks.

**Tracey Hutchings-Goetz:** Yeah, I just wanted to quickly throw out the term sideshadowing (which David brings up on page 244) in relation to conspiracy in particular? And I think that one way to maybe think of pirates, in particular is that they cast their own sideshadows, like from the beginning. That they always kind of, like—and that's part of their problem, right?—that they're these figures that, like, kind of, spread out (right?) into possibilities that are sometimes marked as patently false and sometimes marked as possible, right? And at *this* point we now always see as possible, right? And, that's what conspiracies do, is that they sideshadow an event that happened,

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<sup>4</sup> Editor's Note: Peter Leeson, *The Invisible Hook: the Hidden Economics of Pirates* (2009); Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners and the Hidden History of the Atlantic* (2000).

right, so you can imagine, well these same sort of facts exist (like, right, [President] Kennedy died), but it's how did that happen, right? How did you get there?

**Spang:** When you said that you don't call it a "project" if it actually comes to fruition, I suddenly realized that project is the inverse, 180 degrees, from a "cause." You only call for a cause if it does happen, right? *Something* happens, and then you go and look for a cause.

**Seiler-Smith:** Next we have Dan.

**Daniel O'Keefe:** Yes, I had a question for you, David. So, so far we've been talking mostly about counterfactuals, but I was interested also in your use of fictionality a little bit. And, specifically you have this one point where you say that, where you talk about the counterfactual world that the project has become, right? When a project fails it becomes a counterfactual, but it didn't start out as a counterfactual; it started out something kind of more like, like a fiction, in that it is like a story, but it's something that is actually meant to cause action. And so, I'm just kind of interested in this idea you had that that both projects and (say) novels start out as fictions. One of which begins...you know, the novel begins as a story presumably in the past tense about something that's happened, whereas a project begins as a fiction about the future and only afterwards becomes a counterfactual. So, just wondering if you'd elaborate a little about that. It does seem like an interesting way in which these two different forms of fictionality are oriented towards time in different ways.

**Alff:** Yeah, I mean it seems like... So if a proposal is a representation of the future that seeks to become fact—I mean I think it kind of remains fact after it, after it "expires," because then at that point we know what to do with it; it's a plan that doesn't go anywhere. In terms of thinking about the relationship of fictionality to, to something like the novel—I'm trying to think about when it is that we think of a literary project as finished? I mean to go back to Joanna's question, like when is it that, you know, a piece of writing is finished? And is it when a novel becomes a print artifact? Is it when it is something that can receive, that can be received, that can be discussed as an article of culture? But, no... I'm not sure if I'm answering your question very well.

**O'Keefe:** No, that's getting at part of it, because I think part of what's interesting about the idea is: if a project is something that's meant to compel action in a way that we normally think of a fiction as not doing, but we also have, you know, when people talk about—I suppose using Latour or new concepts of agency—to talk about books as agents then we have this notion which... Well, we're starting to think about the idea that something like a novel can be a cultural agent in a way; so it's performing a certain kind of action, but one that's very different from how we imagine projects, usually.

**Alff:** Right, I mean in the projects instead—

**Christina Lupton:** I'll hook in...

**Seiler-Smith:** Any other hooks? And you have the next question, Christina, as well.

**Lupton:** Oh, okay. Well I'll use it as a hook because I want, I want... The question I want to ask hooks directly to what (how you're asking it) Dan, but in terms of an example. So, I've had this example on my mind ever since Michael [Cooperson]'s paper about time-travel yesterday, so what I want to do is just... it will take me a couple minutes to spell it out, but it's an example of a text and a sort of case study of the way I think these categories slide around in time. So, this is, this is what I want to talk about: so, okay, throughout the 1770s there are lots of fictions that discuss balloon travel, alright, so in all kinds of genres, but balloons don't yet exist, alright? So, I'm gonna get all the dates wrong, but, there's lots of historians, someone who knows: 1789, right, I think?

**Jonathan Sachs:** That's right.

**Lupton:** So, 1789 the first balloon lifts off. So, these fictions—so this will be the first part of my question—you know, were these fictions counterfactual, were they projects, were they fictions, and do they change when the balloon takes off, right? But now comes the tricky bit: okay so, then in 1790, the year after the first balloon takes off, an anonymous it-narrative is published which takes the perspective of a balloon which talks about the fact that it can't yet be visible—this balloon, it's a kind of, you know, alienated balloon. [laughter] It exists, it carries someone around, but it can't yet really land because people aren't yet ready to experience the wonders of an air balloon. Now in order to facilitate this fiction, the publication date that is given for this publication (when it comes out in 1790) is 1781, right?

So, is this time travel? Is this (again) is this counterfactuality? What is... I mean how does it relate to the causality project because obviously causality is important here, right? Like the fiction of the publication date allows the author to project its own, kind of, the air balloon narrative in a very different way in relation to the fact that air balloons have now existed. But, of course, it's not going to be read in 1781, it's going to be read in 1790 *as if* it had already been written in 1781.

So, I just want to throw all of this out here because what I—although I love these categories—I think this is a case study in what we're actually dealing with, when we start looking at print history and literary genres and some of these questions about their relation. I mean because this is actually the sort of archival stuff that we're dealing with, and somewhere in there is a fact (which is that a balloon was invented). But, I have no way to explain, you know, what the relationship of the invention of that balloon to this constellation of narratives about the invention of the balloon would be in terms of the vocabulary that we're being given here. And, obviously, temporality is important because it's about how you situate the "before and after" of fiction in relation to the actual event.

**Seiler-Smith:** Just before you guys respond, I'll give you guys a second. Nush has a hook, Lara's next, and then I have Samuel, John, and Helge.

**Spang:** Just a footnote: the first balloon is 1782-83.

**Lupton:** Sorry.

**Spang:** So, the '81 date is—

**Lupton:** The '81's important.

**Spang:** Yeah, '81's important.

**Lupton:** Because the '81 is the first point you can be before the arrival of the actual balloon, yeah, yeah. I knew I'd get the dates wrong.

**Seiler-Smith:** Nush you can respond. We'll go to you, and then we'll go to Lara.

**Powell:** Well, just, you know, a very brief response. The changing of the date there makes—to me at least—that particular example a really good example of counterfactual.

**Lupton:** Yeah, yeah, it is, yeah.

**Powell:** Yeah, that's absolutely what it is. The more general case where they're writing about hot air balloons which are (like) a nascent, but not yet realized, mode... Well that's hard sci-fi. I don't know what else to call that.

But, the point I wanted to make earlier—I'll make it really briefly—is I think in some respects it's easier to talk about counterfictions than counterfactuals because of that, that problem of facticity. Like, so many things can't be agreed upon as a fact, but we know exactly how many novels Jane Austen wrote. And, those novels are not—and, you know, for a long time (because it was more historically based) the most popular counterfactuals had been “what if Hitler won the war” and “what if the South won the war?”, right? I mean those are still major arenas of, like, counterfactual entertainment. But for counterfictions: Jane Austen, oh my goodness gracious. So, so, so, so many “if”... You know, Darcy cheated on her or if she cheated on Darcy or if, like, she solved mysteries while boning Darcy happily or, like—I mean, it is this huge industry of Jane Austen counterfictions—and it's interesting to me that there's such an explosion there off of (you know) a more limited canon than (say) all of what we know about the Civil War. But, I think it's precisely because it's a limited canon, and so it makes it much easier to pick a point of departure and then just go! Because then you don't then have to wrestle with what is my secure point of departure. Those fictions can be agreed upon at the origin point. And, when we're dealing with a counterfactual, the origin point itself is gonna keep being slippery, and I think that's some of the problem with the projects as well: that, that slippage every time you're trying to get hold of something to talk about, it's wanting to move away.

**Alff:** For me, the metaphor that comes to mind is just a kind of nodding, you know, before and after that makes it impossible to tell either apart, you know, in the range of texts and events that you're talking about. I mean—and I think in my deliberately loose definition of what a proposal is or what a project is, it would depend upon what the author was seeking from the reader: were they soliciting action? Were they trying to bring a balloon into being somehow through that work? I'm not sure what to do with the one that was written after balloon travel, but that imagines being prior. It sounds like sci-fi.

**Seiler-Smith:** Lara.

**Lara Kriegel:** Yeah, so we've been... This really interesting discussion has revolved (I mean, as it should at a workshop on eighteenth-century futures) around the ways in which the counterfactual and the project sort of, you know, mediate time and temporal change. And as I was reading your really interesting papers I was thinking a little bit about the ways in which these categories contain tensions or help to kind of work with tensions around the relationship between, say, the individual and the collective. So, we could think of that as spanning over time, but we could also think of that as something that, you know, works in a moment. Like: is a project about social good or is it about individual ambition? Counterfactuals often, you know, "what if X person did this?" but it's really about a *social* effect. So, I don't know if you guys have thought about your categories in (you know) this way; kind of thinking about individual and social? I'd be curious to hear if you have.

And then I was just wondering if—this is a weird kind of academic counterfactual or counter-question—so why do, why do nineteenth-century scholars (of which I am one, but I haven't written on the counterfactual), why do nineteenth-century scholars think that the counterfactual begins in the nineteenth century? I don't think—I mean especially with someone like Catherine Gallagher, I mean—I don't think it's because they're stupid. [laughter] I mean is there, is there some idea either about time or about individual and social? (because I've often heard it talked about in relation to character) that is informing their idea that this happens in the nineteenth century. So, it's a kind of second question, but I think it might relate to the individual-social question that I'm putting on the table here.

**Seiler-Smith:** Do you want to hook before?

**Hutchings-Goetz:** Yeah, just really quickly, Lara. When I've heard it framed it's often (and maybe this is Andrew Miller's fault) framed in terms of the psychological, right?

**Kriegel:** Right.

**Hutchings-Goetz:** The optative.

**Kriegel:** And the individual, right, right; so there's an idea of character and individual that's informing it in that case.

**Seiler-Smith:** Did you want to hook in?

**O'Keefe:** Oh, yeah, just one of the other possibilities could just be sheer facticity, also. Does... Is the nineteenth century the beginning of idea that facts are such a, you know, distinct, concrete thing that counterfactuals then become more distinct as a realm in response to that? Just as another reason why people might imagine that the nineteenth century is where this begins.

**Powell:** Quite honestly, I think a lot of it has to do with neo-Victorianism in popular media. That there's been such a rash in the last like decade and a half of interest in, you know: steampunk. That it's, it's something—those horrible people in Brooklyn that are running around in corsets—... but it's such an aesthetic preference on so many different levels of popular media that I think it kind of was in the ether to lend itself comfortably to people that were already thinking about the kind of strange way that the nineteenth century is being reimaged; that it's a logical beat to

me to then see that basis of that in the nineteenth century itself. Like I think—I don't think this is like a deliberate confusion—but I think it's something that made it kind of comfortable for Victorianists to start looking into the question of, you know, Victorian counterfactuals as kind of an origin point.

**Kate Blake:** Just to sort of throw something in there... I wonder if it, if, you know, what we know about the way that people conceived of literature in the period has anything to do with this as well? Because I'm thinking about Shakespeare and about, well particularly *Antony and Cleopatra*, but a lot of his plays are, you know, rewritings... And *Antony and Cleopatra*, in particular, Plutarch and the love story and sort of imagining it as "What if these characters sort of embodied the gender stereotypes that we believe in in the sixteenth century?" you know.

**Powell:** And, you know, Dryden rewrites *Antony and Cleopatra*.

**Blake:** Yeah.

**Powell:** And was more popular in the eighteenth century than Shakespeare for doing that.

**Blake:** Sure, and so what I wonder about though is just that... is that counterfactual or is it counterfiction, right? I mean so how did they interpret Plutarch, in particular, you know, and how did Shakespeare? And we don't really know, you know, but I mean it's sort of up in the air, right? So...

**Powell:** Yeah, like I do think for me... I'm sorry. Okay, it's easier to answer these questions if we maintain a narrower definition of like counterfactual and counterfiction, which (I don't know that that's the right thing to do) just makes things easier. But, for me, what's kind of special about the counterfactual versus the alternate history, right, is that there has to be an awareness on the part of the audience that you're changing things, right? The reader *knows* that you've made a hypothesis that something was different, right. And now I'm sort of changing my mind in the middle of this... but I don't know how much, like, people go to *Antony and Cleopatra* in the seventeenth century and think, "This is an interesting take on Plutarch," right? Like I think that that is what it is, but I don't know that that's necessarily built into the immediate reception. I do think that in the case of Dryden you can expect—at least for a certain echelon of the audience—a stronger awareness of "And Shakespeare did a different version of this," and so, then you can move more clearly for me towards the realm of counterfiction.

**Seiler-Smith:** Do you have a brief response to the individual-collective comment before we move to Sam?

**Alff:** Yeah, I'll just say that I think sometimes—as we were saying earlier about people putting forward ideas for enterprise seem to repress their individuality by affiliating with organizations—I think the Royal Society was in some ways an institutionalizing effort to do away with the (you know) the kind of ugliness, the stink of projection. And then, Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* comes back and reduces everybody to their discredited individuals, each in their own chamber doing their own ceaseless scientific experiments.

**Baker:** So I would stipulate that I quite like Marcus Rediker and his body of work.

**Powell:** I do, too.

**Baker:** Yeah.

**Powell:** But I disagree with him on this thing.

**Baker:** But, I'm about to complain... so I thought I'd say that first. I'm grateful for it. One of the things I'm grateful for in your paper is it's helping me kind of figure out my really strong ambivalence about that and actually map it out. I'm going to try to do this indirectly. Do you know about the Richard Brodhead hoax in the 1990s? Before he was President of Duke?

**Powell:** Yeah, I was at Yale when he was the Dean of Students there, which... remind me?

**Baker:** So he... In the 1990s, he and some of his friends, cronies put together a job application packet.

**Powell:** Yes, yeah, yeah.

**Baker:** So it was, you know, a job letter and a dissertation abstract and list of references that was Jonathan Arac, Laura Brown for, you know, for a student with a project about pirates, right? And it was at the height of New Historicism and it was supposed to be like a (you know) debunking of, like, New Historicism and its kind of coterie circles? And, the joke was that it wasn't unless you read through the whole dissertation abstract that you got to like chapter four on how the *Pirates of Penzance* is actually based on a whole real pirate colony and so forth... It was supposed to be obviously, you know, impossible.

**Powell:** Right.

**Baker:** So, at the time that that happened, I was working on pirates. [laughter] I have to admit, I kind of... that was the death knell of pirates in my maritime project, because it just... I felt like I was not all that happy with the hoax, but I felt like it [research on pirates] was being ridiculed because it was in some way ridiculous. And, I feel like there's a way in which Rediker's, Rediker and Linebaugh's project is so attractive, and at the same time it's not. I can't justify it as an alternative history, I have to... I justify it as like a historical counter-narrative, if not like a counter-factual just from the point of view of literature. So, then the question is: is there a way to recuperate it on those grounds, and could you extend that strategy of recuperation to a recuperation of certain kinds of like Marxist historiographical projects? You know because (of course) they are closely tied to Hobsbawm, you know, like whole schools of thought. Certain kinds of utopian historical projects that we like as fictions, even if (you know) our like Foucauldian scruples give us problems with them as history.

**Powell:** Yeah, that's really helpful. And, I remember the Brodhead hoax, but I had forgotten until you just reminded me that it had involved pirates, which... Thank you for that. Oh my goodness and I liked Dean Brodhead.

**Alff:** Just to add—to draw out the conversation of form and mode that we were having earlier today—speaking as a job-placement coordinator: those materials to a point are, like, pretty good. And I think it makes a strong point about the formal expectations about materials that one makes an intervention. I don't think it's a surprising that this fake person got interviews.

**Sachs:** Changing my question to a hook to build off Sam's because you've introduced the idea of hoax. And that was going to be my question. What do you do in the context of projects and counterfactuals with the idea of forgery? In the sense that something like Chatterton and something like Ossian (especially Ossian), I mean these, these... You could call Ossian a project, right, but then—it would've become, it becomes a project only after the hoax is revealed, right? Or maybe. And similarly something like Chatterton, right? I mean these are both counterfactual ideas: *what if* there were a second-century epic that told the story of the Celts, right? What if there was, I think, it's a fifteenth-century monk who wrote this amazing, amazing poetry?

So, so... but this gets back to what Nush was saying about how, for you—and you started to retreat on it—but for you a counterfactual becomes a counterfactual when your audience is in on the joke. And in the case of forgery and in the case of Ossian and Chatterton these both seem to be particularly liminal cases, right? That it's unclear the degree to which there was an audience that might've been in on the joke. Who of the circle would've known that these things were forgeries, if anybody, and how does that change our understanding of them as either a project or a counterfactual?

**Seiler-Smith:** Johannes has a quick, yeah.

**Johannes Türk:** Yeah, quick... I would've had a question in a similar direction, and the example that I find striking is that in Argentina, there is an early twentieth/late nineteenth-century debate on the problem of faking certain qualifications. Because the problem is there are large streams of immigrants, some of them say, "look I have a degree as a violin player from the school of Milano, okay?" and they are accepted into an orchestra, but it turns out they don't have it. And so, finally, you know in a way, as far as... if I remember correctly actually, there is legal solution for it, and that is that if someone can pass for being good enough to participate in an orchestra you just, you kind of... you know, you disregard the fact that the qualification is a forgery, simply because the qualification exists irrespective of the legal authority of a certificate with the right seal on it, right. And I think that is a very interesting case because it shows that (you know) it's to a certain degree an arbitrary distinction, right, in some cases to decide between fiction and, and like the reality of something. When it comes to abilities, it's more the fact of being able to make it real, rather than to, to, to know that it's authenticated that is decisive, right. So, I think it's a very... I'm not certain I was clear enough, right, but I think it was an interesting case.

**Seiler-Smith:** We have two other hooks and then we have several other people. So, I'm going to have to start getting tart.

**Baker:** Just to take it real quick back to the balloon, because Tina did an amazing job sketching out like a tableau of possible forms for narrativizing temporalities including the future, but thinking... It's important to think about all these things as future oriented. So that, for example, with



Ossian, Ossian could just be a historical narrative if it's all, if it's all understood by Macpherson to be true. But the extent to which Macpherson knew what he was doing is making up a false, a false, a false Scottish set of myths that were going to establish "what if the Scots had been, had had a kind of authenticity?" that was actually due to the Irish. The extent to which he was doing that, it's actually a counterfactual. But in both cases it's producing the grounds for a different future, what might be a different nationalist future.

**Seiler-Smith:** Nush has requested to jump in.

**Powell:** I just was not quite finished responding to Sam, and things like kind of got, but... Like to quickly to go back to Sam's and Jonathan's question. Yeah, so, like, forgery is not counterfactual—it can't be. But, Ossian is an interesting case because even during the debates there were a number of people who were like, "this is BS, but it's not bad poetry, right. As poetry, it's good poetry, it's just that it's a fictional persona." And to me, that like actually works with the second of your questions, like can we recuperate the kind of stuff that Rediker is doing? Like it's not a bad story that he's telling, and it's not one that doesn't have good and important points to make about the way labor markets inflect other narratives, right? So, like... I think if you can have enough of a conception of factuality to label what is a forgery or what is a counterfiction, like then we can go back to sort of (you know) the good parts and begin to talk about recuperation.

**Seiler-Smith:** Rebecca's hook and then we'll give Dave a chance to respond.

**Spang:** Johannes's story made me think of something that universities are anxious about these days: competency-based learning.

**Powell:** We just started our first new program.

**Spang:** Yeah. And so I think the missing category in Johannes' story was the different *institutions* that, well (as we would say) give credit. In other words: make something a fact.

**Powell:** No, they give badges, not credit.

**Spang:** [Chuckles] Well, make something a fact within their own terms. And so, there are institutional contexts that haven't been part of these stories, and institutions have ways of creating facts in order to keep the institution going into the future.

**Alff:** To that I'd add that individuals sometimes put forward ideas for endeavor to be able to join those institutions. Which is to say that I think a number of the proposals that I've read in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are attempts to audition for a regulatory power, to join a board of trade, to actually have the power to not just be able to project—actually make your language performative. In terms of forgery, there are like all sorts of people who write these satires of proposals. My favorite is somebody who writes a proposal to drain the Irish Sea, so as to facilitate colonizing Ireland and uncovering sunken treasure and whales who could be fed to the inhabitants there. But, I think with those works, you know, I keep thinking about how satire has its own social project in that it's trying to clarify or cleanse the public sphere of this kind of reckless scheming. So, you know, even something like *Gulliver's Travels*, which is anti-projecting litera-

ture, is putting forward its own maybe conservative view of what science should look like, what the state's relationship to ambition should be.

**Seiler-Smith:** John?

**John Han:** With all the mention of hoax, I wanted to come back to Captain Hook.

**Powell:** Yeah.

**Han:** So I thought about the way Barrie... I mean, because *Peter Pan* is kind of a counterfactual, right? I mean it's what would happen if during this historical period people could fly. [laughter]. The link between that and sort of getting back to counterfiction and, again, I'm reminded of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* for some odd reason, but I'm not certain if... Have you read? So J.M. Barrie wrote a prequel to Captain Hook, *James Hook* in which he gave a speech at Eton.

**Powell:** Yeah.

**Han:** And he gave an entire, so he gave a speech on Captain Hook (James Hook) and he was an Eton grad and he had like yellow blood, kind of weird. The degree to which the pirate figure somehow, there seems to be some kind of friction between counterfiction, counterfactual, and the move toward believability, to make it seem real. Like to, you know, if (you know), if you believe in fairies then they're still alive, and I think that's, that's... I just wondered if you'd thought of that and sort of, yeah.

**Powell:** Yeah. I like that and it also takes us back to conspiracy, right? Because initially Barrie is coy about Hook.

**Han:** Right.

**Powell:** If I told you who he really was it would cause unrest in political circles, right. He looks a lot like Charles II. [laughter.]

**Han:** Well-educated and he's—

**Powell:** And he's also, like, there's this other stereotype that gets transported forward from Bart Roberts: he's well-dressed; he's got that red coat.

**Han:** Right, right, right, right.

**Powell:** Yeah, well, actually that's kind of a Disney thing. It's a blue coat and bearing.

**Seiler-Smith:** Are you cutting yours; you're removing yourself? Helge?

**Jordheim:** Okay. I wanted to see if this wonderful juxtaposition of pirates and projects could make us, help us think about historicity and our own moment and maybe the future of eighteenth-century studies. For a certain reason: what does it mean to be of the moment, to be con-

temporaneous? And I'm saying this because in my feeling (I guess it is), there's nothing as non-contemporaneous as pirates. Pirates are *so* of the past.

**Richard Nash:** Somalia.

**Powell:** I was going to say! [laughter.]

**Jordheim:** That's exactly the point; that's what I'm getting at. So, the moment for me when I felt that (sort of) that it was true, that we're living in a moment that is desynchronized... and where the nonsynchronicity and the catching up with our moment came is when we suddenly had pirates in Somalia. And they were called pirates and they went out dressed as pirates and they did what pirates used to do. And so I suddenly felt like we were entering that moment.

And the other thing at the opposite example is projects, with nothing as contemporaneous as "projects." I mean we see this maybe better in, in Scandinavia—because we've been a culture of institutions, and now we're *moving away* from institutions to projects. Everything is defined in terms of projects. So, it's a neoliberal, if there's one neoliberal successful slogan that we all adhere to at the moment—and you have it at the end of your paper also, you gesture to it—it's projects. So we have this sort of two indexes of historicity: the incredible contemporaneity of the project and the incredible non-contemporaneity of pirates that I think it's really interesting to think about when we... this is our moment and our role in that.

**Powell:** It's really interesting that you say that because I like feel that is correct, and yet, factually, I think it's not. [laughter] That's one of the things that is going on in Johnson's *General History* is he's trying—like, at the point that he writes this, piracy is hard on the decline in the Caribbean. And by the time like the fourth edition is out there's still a couple of pirates floating around like you know harassing colonists here and there. But as a major force that's an economic problem, like, they had been contained—but the popularity of that book does not at all wane. So, what Johnson's trying to do—and he starts us with Avery who hasn't been heard from in thirty years—is to make it seem present again and to make it seem more of a present problem than it really was. And, he starts with an introduction that's you know urging the British government to take a stand, get control of these pirates, give them jobs as fishermen because there are no Dutch pirates—he asserts because the Dutch have a thriving fishing industry there—and none of that was true. But, like, you know, it doesn't... I don't think he meant that to be counterfactual, I think he just didn't know what he was talking about.

But there's this whole project, that the whole—I just said "project" [chuckles], but actually that's like the right word—there's an attempt and, by and large a successful one, to kind of capture a reading market by bringing pirates more close to the present than they in fact were. And I agree that we tend to read pirates with this lens of nostalgia, but I think that has to do with the way that the *General History* has become the ur-text about pirates. When we think pirate, we think eighteenth century. That's what Stevenson thought he was doing, even when he was thinking nineteenth century.

**Seiler-Smith:** Johannes has a hook.

**Türk:** Yeah it's kind of a hookish thing. [laughter]

**Seiler-Smith:** It has to be quick, Johannes, I'm being tart. It has to be quick.

**Türk:** Yeah, so it seems to me that... I mean, the Somali guys, I'm not certain why and how they can be pirates. I think part of the story of pirates is that they inhabit the seas before the sea becomes a legal space?

**Powell:** No, that's wrong.

**Türk:** Or at the transition, right?

**Powell:** No, you're wrong. You're wrong. You're incorrect. You cannot have a pirate without the sea being a legal space.

**Türk:** Okay, so it's the other way around.

**Powell:** That's exactly the legal definition of the: *hostis humani generis*, a man with no nation. You have to have nations in the seas, or there are no pirates. The nation state is a precondition for piracy.

**Türk:** Okay, so, then—

**Zabel:** So then there's only after Hugo Grotius.

**Powell:** Exactly. [laughter.]

**Türk:** Okay. No, that's great, then... Right? Then it's more interesting than I thought in a way, right because— [laughter].

**Seiler-Smith:** Dave did you want to respond to Helge?

**Alff:** Just very quickly. It ties projet contra projet. What are other ways of moving forward, but through projects even when we seek to resist them? I mean it's hard to imagine alternatives, this is obviously... I mean I'm very self consciously aware of it being a project of projects that has it's own horizon and hopeful conclusion, and it is that inescapability is one of the critical challenges that I've faced since writing this as a dissertation.

**Seiler-Smith:** We have ten minutes left and we have three people, so I'm going to sort of close the comments if I may. We have Christine, then Joanna, then Christina. So go ahead, Joanna, okay, yeah. Christine?

**Zabel:** Which Christine?

**Seiler-Smith:** Christine.

**Zabel:** Christine?

**Seiler-Smith:** Yep.

**Zabel:** Yeah, sorry, I'm coming back to like kind historical comments, just very quick: in Germany there was a Pirate Party, like a political party that called themselves Pirate Party. [laughter.]

**Powell:** When?

**Zabel:** Last election they actually came into the Bundestag, yeah.

**Powell:** Oh my goodness.

**Zabel:** They were elected, so that might be interesting as a presentist—

**Nash:** Did they steal the election? [laughter]

**Zabel:** They are now like completely forgotten, but for like one—

**Jordheim:** What do you mean completely forgotten? [laughter]

**Zabel:** Almost forgotten. [laughter] I mean it was actually one platform, it was about cybersecurity. So... and one very little remark about fictionality and factuality. A dispute I came across was that in 1676 a guy named Georges Guillet writes an account of ancient and modern Athens, and says that this account is—he says he has the account from his brother who is a captive of the Ottomans and in Athens. And, then two other guys, Jacob Spon and George Wheler go to Athens and get his book and like show all his mistakes and find out that there has never been a brother and he has never been to Athens, but he really, like, made it seem factual and there was a whole dispute between them if it's important if it's factual or if it's fictional. But, Guillet still publishes a lot of books, and he gets republished and translated into English. So, there was this dispute.

But, one other thing I wanted to say—sorry to come back to this Englishness in the engagement with the future—but I was just thinking... and I'll try to explain very quickly. That Defoe, for example, who's... Or the problem is: projector... or you can only fail if you have a project, you can only get divorced if you were married [laughter], and if you don't have a project you cannot fail. And the thing is, which might be interesting in a guy like Defoe (who was running from a bankruptcy trial when he was writing his *Essay Upon Projects* where he tried to display very virtuous projects), that in the English bankruptcy law there was only the kind of law where there was no distinction between a moral fraud or not. If you're bankrupt, you're bankrupt. You lose your civil rights and you get imprisoned. The French by contrast had a distinction between *faillite* and *banqueroute*, and *faillite* was the insolvency that was not your moral fault and bankruptcy was your moral fault and there were very different courts that judged it. The *faillite* courts were the merchant courts. They were private courts, and you couldn't (or you didn't necessarily) lose any civil rights. You could have prolongation of payments. And the bankruptcy was really the... you were trialed at the Royal Court and you would lose all your civil rights and it was a really bad thing and also didn't happen very often, like twenty times in the Ancien Régime.

And so, the French had a notion of an exposed kind of dealing with failure that the English didn't have. And so, the projects—and also all continental Europe tried to make it easier to deal

with bankruptcy for example or failure—and the English made it even more severe (the bankruptcy laws). And I'm just wondering how projects are actually an engagement with the future? In a sense it's an immunization against failure because there is no other exposed dealings with it and... but also, in a sense, that they are counting on that you can actually fail. So, it is, it is making a plan for the future, with the acceptance that it cannot come to this future. And, that was just my historical comment on how that plays into—

**Alff:** Defoe knew about that distinction.

**Zabel:** Yeah.

**Alff:** That's why one of his projects is for a bankruptcy court—

**Zabel:** Yeah.

**Alff:** —that he proposes while running from bankruptcy.

**Zabel:** That makes maybe a difference with why this is such a notion in England, and there's so many novels about projects (many more than in French). Because the French had a dealing with failure that was very different and hadn't exposed and English had only these other dealings with failure.

**Alff:** Many, many of the, the essays in *Essays*, I mean *Essays Upon Projects* seems like it could be this kind of triumphant vision of a future, but really it's about like homes for maimed seaman; it's about taking care of widowed women and their children; it's about anticipating bankruptcy. So many of Defoe's projects are colored by an anticipation of failure or in which failure seems inevitable (especially if you're a Québécois farmer, brickmaker, you know, in later novels somebody like Daniel Defoe for whom failure was always present).

**Zabel:** And I think there's a very practical reason to why the projects are so English.

**Alff:** Yeah.

**Powell:** He also proposed a copyright law at the time when he was getting his work pirated all over the place.

**Alff:** Right.

**Seiler-Smith:** I would like to ask Joanna and Christina to pose their questions back to back, and then end with our authors responding—if that's okay?

**Stalnaker:** Okay yeah. So, I... David, I wanted to ask you to speak a little bit concretely, elaborate on your research and search methods for delimiting your corpus and finding, finding these projects. So, we understand from what you've written why certain difficulties...—in that the card catalogue doesn't really work, right, because the word might not be in there or they wouldn't be classified as such. More cutting-edge keyword searches and things of this kind don't

seem to fully work either. So do you have some sort of model for future research-search methods for eighteenth-century studies that would try to deal with some of those problems when you're trying to localize something that can't be done through, can't be found through keywords or—

**Alff:** No. I mean it's an idiosyncratic muddling through. I think in the sense of like... you know, James Scott in *Seeing Like a State*. I think that over time I've tried doing it—I'm sorry we were going to have back-to-back questions.

**Seiler-Smith:** If it's quick enough, you can go.

**Alff:** But I'll just say... I mean it's a kind of muddling through, and then looking back and trying to figure out which of these proposals seemed to matter, which had a posterity in its period, which were most talked about. And then, reading more and more by brute force accumulation, trying to come up with laws for describing them. But nothing so systematic or nothing that I could give to somebody else.

**Lupton:** Which is nice because I was also going to ask a sort of “state of the discipline” question. So, I've been sitting here troubling about the idea that failed projects, that projects only become evident when they fail... and I've been thinking about Helge's question or comment on the fact that projects in Europe at least are the sort of currency with which we conceive of our own place in history. And, it seems to me... I mean for me this is a very vivid paper because going, leaving a sort of decade of teaching in North America and going back to being an academic in Europe has been, for me, very much about fulfilling the...—everything in Europe, in academia, in particular, is about projection of a certain kind that involves people having to, you know: make bids for all kinds of institutional forms of existence, personal grant money, collective group projects. I mean this *is* the way, this is the language we speak, and I do not believe that it's quite right to talk about the invisibility of those projects in terms of their success. Because I feel as if I also live these days in a kind of infrastructure of at least half-successful or half-realized projects to which people are answerable in all kinds of odd ways. Where it is in fact about a forward backwardness that comes about when people in different scales project something into the future for their own work, and then get caught up in the trap of that succeeding.

This is a fairly sort of accurate description, I think, of what it feels like to be an academic in Europe who is caught in a sort of terminology that you... I mean I'm sure everyone... I'm sure Christine: her speculation project began in a projection for that project which (you know) you now feel more or less, kind of you know indebted to as a description of your future. But you also probably wish that it wasn't there in the form that it was originally. I mean all of us, we... This is how it works, so I would just like to say that I'm not sure... Insofar as I think the project thing is beautifully current and makes this a fantastic book that will be much fêted, I'm also not sure that it's right to think about the sort of disappearance of projects at the moment of their realization where they just become causes or something. It doesn't seem viscerally right to me as a description of where we're at in history as Humanities academics. Which may or may not be because if you (to link to Joanna's question)—I mean, David, if this had been a European book, you would've had to get grant money for it in the form of a project where you really would've had to say what you wanted to do methodologically, and you couldn't now sit in response to Joanna's question, and say, “Well, I just kinda muddled through.” [laughter.] Because you would've had to describe five years ago what your method was and what you could now say, “Well, oops, I

didn't quite use the method I set out to do," but you couldn't say "I just muddled through" because there would be a transcript in existence for what...

**Sachs:** There is going to be a transcript of this! [laughter.]

**Zabel:** And then, after, you have to say why you didn't do it.

**Lupton:** Yes, and then you have to write a long report about why you—

**Alff:** Stop! Stop! [laughter.]

**Powell:** You just have to say "My original proposal was a counterfactual."

**Lupton:** Yeah. [laughter.]

**Alff:** Okay, so I mean... I can think of... The Manhattan Project is always the thing that I come up with as (you know) project-that-succeeded and we refer to as such. I still think projects that succeed are less conspicuous than those, and usually graduate to other names. And, I'm sure we can think of more examples together, and maybe it's not complete invisibility.

**Sachs:** I can think of one. I was once told by my research office, "Okay, look, you've got to change this project thing, just call it a program every time. 'Cause program, a research program is more encompassing than a research project. Your book project can be part of your research program."

**Lupton:** Canadians. [laughter]

**Jordheim:** They're only half-way European.



# Time's Arrow: The Theory of the Earth in Eighteenth-Century Britain

JESSE MOLESWORTH

Over the course of the eighteenth century, especially in Britain and in France, the metaphor of time's arrow gradually replaced the metaphor of time's cycle as a means of understanding the unfolding of human history. One might say that this movement is central to understanding everything from *A Harlot's Progress* to *Tom Jones* to Haydn's oratorios. This paper traces the emergence of the metaphor of time's arrow in the important scientific subgenre known as the "theory of the earth," as expressed in works by Thomas Burnet, William Whiston, John Woodward, and Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon.

## Comments from the Past and from the Future

SARAH C. KNOTT

Good morning, and welcome to the first of the workshop's last two panels: this first is decidedly concerned with understanding the eighteenth-century's own temporalities and futures, while our final panel addresses present and future in eighteenth-century's light.

My name is Sarah Knott and I'm a historian here at Indiana University. I'm here this morning partly as an interloper from the past—that is, the past of the workshop's opening session. Usually I am able to immerse in the workshop conversations, to stay with the workshop as one long present, but not this year. So my remarks are less in the spirit of bringing forward the ongoing conversation, than a voice from two days' past, before discussions got really underway. I leave it to others to bring the conversation fully into an immersive present, to forward an ongoing discussion into an unfolding future. I am also here as a scholar of early America, a historian interested in that place many intellectuals in the late eighteenth century (if not today) deemed a place of future hopes. Think Richard Price. Or think Turgot, describing the United States as the hope of the human race, and perhaps its model.

This panel brings together two paper-givers who were surely fated to be present. Jesse Molesworth, my colleague in our English Department, is one of the Steering Committee master minds behind this year's workshop. Many of you know his first book, *Chance and the Eighteenth-Century Novel: Realism, Probability, Magic*. All of you can intuit that his second book concerns the historical construction of time within eighteenth-century literature and culture, its title is projected as *Years, Days, Hours: Temporality and Form in Eighteenth-Century British Art and Fiction*. Those of us in the Center for Eighteenth-Century Studies know that the enquiry takes Jesse to compelling subjects that he makes yet more interesting, including that century's British calendar reform.

Christine Zabel, currently a visiting fellow at the Center for European Studies at Harvard University, is equally fated to be present. Her first book, *Polis and Politeness: The Discourse of Ancient Athens in England and France, 1630-1760* (published in German) came out this January. That she is fated to be here is signaled perhaps, by two of her many articles and reviews. The pair of forthcoming reviews concern books by two of our three directors: one by Rebecca Spang and the other by Dror Wahrman (co-written with another former Center member, Jonathan Sheehan). Clearly Christine is already in conversation with the people of this place.

So what is happening in these papers? Each assembles an archive of eighteenth-century intellectual discussion. Each proposes a very clear account of ideational change across the eighteenth century—a before and an after of temporal notions, or perhaps a series of nested changes, or of new meanings of time and future forged and old meanings faded or forgotten.

Jesse's archive is British natural history or, more particularly, discussions about the dating and origin of the Earth. He offers a reading of prominent theorists—Halley, Burnet, Whiston, Woodward, Goldsmith's Buffon, Whitehurst—founded on one underlying contrast. On the one hand (the early hand, the inherited hand), there is cyclicity, symbolized by the spinning top. Time is a set of events that may be repeatedly set in motion. The musical model is the fugue.

On the other hand (the later hand, the becoming-hand), there is linearity, articulated as time's arrow. Time is a set of events understood consecutively and with direction. History moves forward along a line. The musical model is the symphony. Jesse's own question follows the direction of time's arrow: How, he asks, did linearity ascend? The answers reside in the twists and

turns of natural historical argument about the Earth's past as well as about its future. Will there, or will there not be a second deluge?

Christine's archive is British, Dutch and French (especially French) intellectual understandings of "speculation." She is impatient with impoverished accounts which either restrict that long eighteenth-century notion to economic vocabularies, or that deploy it lazily and ahistorically, to describe all manner of contemporary practices: speculating on the political news or on life expectancy or on grain or on the sex of an unborn child. What, she asks, is speculation's ideational history? Her answer is primarily metaphysical, or at least, initially metaphysical. In the early part of her account, including in the years of the South Sea Bubble, speculation largely meant abstract reasoning, a mode of understanding that emerged in tandem with its contrast: sensory empiricism. Speculation then was applied to practical questions about the future in 1760s France: the *Physiocrats* applied the idea of "speculation" to commerce, mindful of changing market conditions that exceeded past experience, and it appeared in discussions of life annuities in the following decades as well. And finally arrives Revolution, where buying and selling *rentes* overwhelmed speculation's previous meanings, and earlier stockjobbing disasters like the South Sea Bubble got renamed speculation. Burke complained that the Revolution made speculation as extensive as life. We arrive perhaps at the exploded usage in whose wake scholars have unwittingly followed.

So we have here, then, two subtle accounts of conceptual change, themselves firmly rooted in the regime of time's arrow. "Befores" are superseded by "afters," without any shadow of Hogarth's or Burke's declension narrative. There are plenty of wonderful analytic moments: Jesse's use of E.M. Forster on story and plot, for example, to illuminate Woodward's hatchet job on Arbuthnot's theory of fossils. Or Christine's formulation of how metaphysical speculation transformed future presents into present futures. But given this is a closing eighteenth-century session, let's go broad, wide, even "speculative." One way to do so is to ask Jesse to return to the "most importantly" of his page five, to his suggestion that what matters about the ascent of time's arrow in eighteenth-century discussions of history is the impact such ascendance may have had on a *variety* of artistic forms. "Impact" is an interesting term here—all collision and velocity in its eighteenth-century terminology, an admixture of space and time, and not much less forceful in our own usage. Jesse names musical form and he looks back to his earlier work on the novel. I want to ask about impact resistance: about forms that dulled or refused time's arrow, as well as about how to conceptualize impact between different forms and genres, or in relation to other disciplines, spheres of activity, or practices. As a historian of early America (where a credible secularization thesis has never taken root), I also want to ask about what other *longue durée* phenomenon are preconditions or accompaniments to time's arrow.

My invitation to Christine to go broad, wide, and speculative takes a more geographic turn. Set these French debates in a more Atlantic context and it's hard not to notice the importance of two other kinds of late eighteenth-century speculation. One is insurance not for life but for people as line-items: the insurance for the enslaved men and women of the transatlantic slave trade. Some 433,000 people were traded in the French slave trade of the last quarter of the eighteenth century; Nantes, Bordeaux, and Marseilles—like London or Liverpool—were centers of slave-trade insurance. The other is New World land speculation. Think of figures like Rochefoucault-Liancourt, or Talleyrand, speculating on a substantial scale for European investors in American backcountry lands. How do these histories from beyond the hexagon bear on a late eighteenth-century history of the idea of speculation in which 'Revolution' is not the only massive phenomenon?

There are, I'm sure, other speculations to be raised in, between and around these two papers. Echoes of narrative book-ends of open futures (Daniel's paper) or slowness and acceleration (Jonathan's) from the first session. The poetics and politics of time and the future, to borrow Rebecca's coinage. But first I'll give our paper-writers a chance to respond before opening the floor for discussion.

# Anthropocene, not Anthropocentric: Towards an Ecological Re-reading of Eighteenth-Century Poetry

RICHARD NASH

The future of eighteenth-century studies imagined in this paper is a future we very well may not have: the climate is not propitious, and catastrophe looms ahead like the iceberg awaiting *Titanic*, even as we seem unable or unwilling to respond. I refer simultaneously, of course, to our perilous ecological situation in the world at large and to our equally perilous condition within the liberal arts (for the moment, we are still embedded (like a tick or journalist) in the neoliberal or corporate university). In response to both these dire predicaments, I advocate a conscious turn to New Materialist philosophies and their engagement with ecological (rather than environmental) thought, as a way to re-think our relation to the past. I want us to re-read eighteenth century poetry in the generation after Newton in a mode that deliberately resists the overt anthropocentric, humanist agenda that so often serves as “doctrine” (in Irvin Ehrenpreis’s phrase). Instead, reading against the grain of that agenda, I want to suggest we can recover in these texts anticipations of contemporary ecological thought as we seek to engage the world more productively after Humanism.

The following exercise in prophetic provocation will proceed in stages, none of them definitive, but each building on the shaky foundation asserted in preceding ones. In the last stage, I will gesture tentatively toward some of the particular interpretive claims that might be advanced in a re-reading of Pope’s *An Essay on Man*. Those gestures will emerge from a more general framing of how I imagine one might mobilize New Materialist philosophy to re-read Eighteenth-Century poetry in a deliberately contrarian—yet constructive—way, reading against the grain of a poem’s overt doctrine to recover insights more pertinent to current readers than to their dead author. This framing and the case I will put forward in favor of it emerge, in turn, from a direct consideration of how not only contemporary culture but also our relation to the past needs to be reconfigured in an explicitly post-humanist, ecological, non-anthropocentric context. Such consideration should prompt us to re-imagine reading strategies in ways that may still find value in traditional practices, by deploying them differently. That phase of my essay itself emerges as a possible consequence of a prior consideration of our current moment in the academy, and an assessment of what is changing and what is likely to continue changing ever more rapidly in our own institutional ecology in (especially public) higher education.

The preceding paragraph was deliberately and somewhat perversely written in a reverse order, beginning with where I will end in order to trace back to where I will begin. Partly that was done for my own organizational clarity, to help me better track how I want to get to where I want to go. And partly it was done to disrupt and interrupt our usual expectations of how arguments will unfold—as though of necessity—leading forward to a certain conclusion; I am not certain of any future at all, even the critical future that I am so hesitantly trying to forecast. But also partly it was done because the reading practice I want to advocate here is not one of critique in which a new and improved practice will replace an old and ineffective practice, but instead one of deliberate (and I hope productive) disagreement with what we think we have learned, working backwards to reconsider our victories as perhaps concealing alternatives that need to be completely reconsidered. When I take this practice into the classroom, that is the hook that I hope will awaken fresh interest in dead authors. Having done that exercise, let me here offer a more direct roadmap that I hope the next several pages will follow: consider the institutional ecology that is

changing and the new pressures this will put on us in the humanities generally, and in eighteenth-century literary studies in particular; consider how this specific set of ecological constraints underlines how important it is for us to turn away from an anthropocentric humanism toward a more ecological posthumanist mode of understanding our relation to the past as well as to the present; consider further how one response might be the development of explicitly posthumanist reading practices that deconstruct the notion that the familiar works of the traditional literary canon are fully characterized by the cultural hegemony that often turned to those works for ideological support; and finally propose some general interpretive claims, one of which at least might be hesitantly and provisionally illustrated.

## Reading and the Materiality of the Future

CHRISTINA LUPTON

This paper is about the way books have made the future seem graspable despite—or, perhaps, because of—suggesting that better times to come depend on the fraught project of finding more time away from work and reproductive labour. At the furthest horizon of my argument is a sense of modernity's having been imagined as one in which working hours would decrease. As recently as 1981, Ralf Dahrendorf, then the Director of the London School of Economics, wrote confidently of the “fundamental reduction of work in modern society” as an “irreversible” trend.<sup>1</sup> Predictions like this have reading in view as one of the activities most closely associated with a surplus of leisure time. In their capacity to help us anticipate that possibility, books have been as significant in orienting us towards a future as they have been in linking us to the past. Today (for many reasons) the association of reading with an ideal future is weakening. Along with the kinds of loss this might represent, this juncture of media history offers us a moment for thinking about why and how the presence of the book in its concrete form—as something that incubates, something that *assumes* time to come—has played a role in the history of progressive thinking.

My focus is on texts from the 1780s and 1790s, years in which attention was easily riveted to the present, but in which a different and more democratic future could also be felt close at hand. While the most obviously revolutionary kinds of reading from this period responded to a flowering of pamphlets, an accelerated speed of print transmission, and the multiplication of literary forms—that media ecology of urgency and quantity in which Cliff Siskin, William Warner, Mary Favret, Andrew Piper, Chad Wellmon and others have found the textures of the later eighteenth century—the old fashioned book surfaced also here, I will argue, with the glow of a futuristic object. Not only did it feature as the vehicle by which old and new Republican ideas were to be carried forward to an audience still in the making—it put in people's hands a future both fully unfolded *and* yet still in wait; a future both strangely graspable and yet ambitious in its vision.

With these claims, I want to keep in mind the physical shape of the late eighteenth-century book, both in terms of the particular heft it acquired in a sea of pamphlets and as a model that set book consumption apart from the reception of serialised publication. It is, Bernard Steigler argues, constitutive of all writing—though not of analogue or digital media—“that an event typically precedes its seizure, and that the latter precedes its reception or reading.”<sup>2</sup> This is the lag that the rapid relay of news works to overcome; the distance that technical media, to use the terms of Friedrich Kittler, are able to eliminate. But to books it is native: the time of their publication and their reading diverge much more radically than in most other forms of print. And the more surely a book is made to last, the more positively that distance between the time of it being produced and that of the reader's time is expanded and affirmed. As something distinguished in medial terms from the time of the event, the time of reading can be practically and imaginatively expanded, extracted, and deferred. As such, it can be grasped as a horizon of political promise with which the book as object becomes

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<sup>1</sup> This is cited as the epigraph to André Gorz, *Paths to Paradise: On the Liberation from Work*. Trans. Malcolm Imrie, 1985.

<sup>2</sup> Bernard Steigler, “Memory,” in W. J. T. Mitchell & Mark B. N. Hansen (eds.), *Critical Terms for Media Studies*, Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press (2010): 66–87.

proximate in interesting ways. This, at least, is the argument that I'll make here about *A Simple Story* and *Political Justice*. For those writing in the 1790s, the future was a time in which there would be time to read. This project, while difficult to articulate *in* a book, was easily grasped *as* a book.

The first part of my argument concerns the different roles of reading in Inchbald's *A Simple Story*. The logic of reading's time coming after narrative's space is explored here through the very different appearance of books in the two halves of the novel. While unread (and unreadable) volumes feature in the first part of the novel as sources of contention in Dorriforth's relationship with Miss Milner, in relation to his daughter, reading becomes a crucial medium of contact. I read the second part of *A Simple Story* in these terms as Inchbald's stirring time back into a project that has conspicuously emptied it from books. We can think of it as the staging of a relation between the space of the book and the time of reading that has begun with their uncoupling; with reading being delayed. When Bakhtin comments on the creative work having its own chronotope, he stresses the possibility of just such a conjunction, with the narrative contained in the work being overlaid by the very different kind of event that comes with its reception:

these events take place in different times (which are marked by different durations as well) and in different places, but at the same time these two events are indissolubly united in a single but complex event that we might call the work in the totality of all its events, including the external material givenness of the work, and its text, and the world represented in the text, and the author-creator and the listener or reader...<sup>3</sup>

This narratological proposition helps explain a chronology that Inchbald makes intrinsic to her bifurcated novel. Beginning with a form of happiness on display as a woman's fully realised set of desires, she later on inserts reading as a deferral of that fulfilment, reinstating time as prior to that version of events that the first draft of the novel has already put in place. As the heroine who reads, and whose story needs reading, Matilda's role is to make the time spent with books apparent in a way it was not in her mother's ill-fated theatre of fulfilment.

My second example concerns William Godwin's more politically worked out version of this chronology. I find this largely in the connection he weaves, in his own life and in his writing, between the time given to the reading of old books and the democratic future he envisions. While Inchbald senses the problem of the female protagonist who wants to act and to read, Godwin hones in on the same problem more directly by flagging that, for most people, temporal access to books is restricted. In the present, he states:

Literature, and particularly that literature by which prejudice is superseded, and the mind strung to a firmer tone, exists only as a portion of the few. The multitude, at least in the present state of human society, cannot partake of its illuminations. For that purpose it would be necessary, that the general system of policy should become favourable, that every individual should have leisure for reasoning and reflection...(22)

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<sup>3</sup> Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel" in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, Caryl Emerson & Michael Holquist, trans. Austin: University of Texas Press (1981): 255.



Of course, he's right. As E.P. Thompson and others tell us, working hours increased enormously in the last part of the eighteenth century.<sup>4</sup> All arguments about reading spreading as an Enlightenment activity, and about readers struggling with the quantities of material being printed, need to be offset against this other social historical fact: that working people were losing the hours in which they might previously have had time to read.<sup>5</sup> A future such as the one Inchbald made for herself and her characters' through social withdrawal is cast in this context by Godwin as a political ambition; his is a form of democracy that depends for its vision of progress as much on the spreading of "leisure for reasoning and reflection" as on improving material enfranchisement of the new members of the public sphere.

Godwin's own reading practice also supports this idea of reading as a dedication of time that comes after and that remains distinct from events as they happen. For most of his life, he was a diligent and regular reader of the classics. He had, gibed Lamb, "read more books not worth reading than any man in history."<sup>6</sup> Even when he was at his busiest and most socially active, Godwin read each morning before breakfast, ring-fencing these hours for that purpose. Throughout the first part of the 1790s, he read from a Greek or Latin author each day; later in the decade, from an unfashionable range of seventeenth-century English authors.<sup>7</sup> In these hours, the point of his reading was not to keep up with or absorb current thought, but rather to find a tone and a distance that became the hallmark of his own writing. Advocating the kind of "unplugged" thinking that was to be won by spending time with old texts, Godwin wrote in his 1811 *Advice to a Young American* that young men "will soon enough be plunged into the more sordid realities...I could wish that those who can afford the leisure of education, should begin with acquiring something more generous and elevated."<sup>8</sup> In "Of Choice of Reading," he argues the content of books matters very little compared to the frame of mind in which they are read—one that is understood as being ideally a step back from, a space of reflection on, life.<sup>9</sup>

Godwin's time of reading, then, comes after the time of action. It comes after the action of the event described in a text, and it comes after the event of the text as a media. He likes old books because they make this belatedness felt. This reiterates at a more practical level what I described in relation to *A Simple Story* as the time of reading being something that could be retroactively added to the dramatic situation. It's not that Godwin was not active in the contemporary setting as essayist, speaker, theatre-goer and dramatist: he was all of these things. But the best reading as he defines it

<sup>4</sup> E.P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism" *Past and Present* Vol. 38, 1967, 56-97, 73 and Hans-Joachim Voth, "Time Use in Eighteenth-Century London: Some Evidence from the Old Bailey" *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 57; No 2, 1997, 497-499.

<sup>5</sup> I am thinking here of different strands of history and media theory relating to the management of information in the period that emphasize indexing, abridgement, "systems," collections, catalogues, disciplines and canonicity being symptoms of a burgeoning world of print culture. Recent work by Chad Wellmon, Brad Pasanek and Cliff Siskin serves as an example. Media historical scholars who think in these terms often approach the problem of there being too much to read as a spatial problem that produced spatial solutions. An equivalent form of solution to the same problem, I'm suggesting, involved no change to the media landscape as such but only the ventilating of books to the future.

<sup>6</sup> Lamb reference

<sup>7</sup> I am drawing here on two sources: William St Clair's *The Godwins and the Shelleys*, New York: Norton (1989) and Mark Philp's digital edition of William Godwin's Diary: <http://godwindiary.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/index2.html>

<sup>8</sup> William Godwin, *Letter of Advice to a Young American on The Course of Studies it Might be Most Advantageous for Him to Pursue*. London: Printed for M.J. Godwin (1818): 11

<sup>9</sup> William Godwin, "Of Choice in Reading" *The Enquirer* (1797) 134-35.

is consciously sequestered from the time spent being present in contemporary political debate. This makes Godwin an active spokesperson for the kind of chronology that Inchbald senses: one by which the purpose of revolutionary action can be understood as having nothing as urgent as the making of time for the book. Reading, which comes with this making of time, involves an affirmation of the kinds of change that a text itself may advocate long before it is read.

## Futures' End

JOHANNES TÜRK

The workshop began with a discussion of the open future: the future as the potential for change or the emergence of the new; in other words, a panel that located eighteenth-century futures in relation to something like “modernity.” This was understood in terms of finding a point at which the future opens—at which something like progress can begin to happen and folds and orients our different heterogeneous temporalities, synchronizing them more or less successfully. We touched too on the question of whether we could know, or needed to know, something about the content of the future, or whether it was precisely the acceptance of and increasing room for “not knowing” that enables us to live and to go towards an open future.

This last panel is concerned with the opposite phenomenon: a certain type of closure as the horizon in which we experience the future and as the horizon in which we experience our own time. The open future has been replaced by a future in which futurity (the ability to have a future) seems foreclosed. Here, we find the future as a possible—maybe even a *certain*—end, rather than the promise of openness. From this perspective, it is the past that had a future, whereas the present is forced into a temporality of the accelerated loss of futurity. One of the papers faces this horizon explicitly, it speaks about threats to the university as an institution and the threat to an ecological future; the other explores the future inherent in the materiality of the book, in view of that form’s impending disappearance.

Richard Nash, author of the first paper, is Professor of English at Indiana University. He is interested in British Literature and Culture in the Long Eighteenth Century, with a special interest in Literature and Science, concentrating on the Restoration and Early Eighteenth Century. He has published *Wild Enlightenment: The Borders of Human Identity in the Eighteenth Century* (University of Virginia Press, 2003) and he is generally interested in racehorses, agricultural criticism, and the Anthropocene. It would not be an exaggeration if we called the temporal horizon his contribution invokes apocalyptic (even just metaphorically), and the gesture it forces upon us seems an equivalent to the *katabasis* that slows down the apocalypse or the end of time (appropriate enough for the last panel of the Workshop).

The stakes of his intervention are double. On the one hand they are institutional: What can the Humanities—what can Eighteenth-Century Studies—be in the world of the neoliberal university that betrays the freedom from economic constraints envisaged by “higher” education and focuses instead on the idea of an institution that builds skills? Here Richard leaves us with an alternative: Literary Studies can either again become the “custodian of literary history and cultural heritage” or can strive to “find a way to make itself relevant to the institution transforming around it.” He suggests a compromise: namely, to combine the two “in support of the university’s ongoing transformation.” We should understand our possible contribution as a complexification [*sic*] of the way in which the present is perceived (i.e., in human-focused terms). Advocating a thematic redefinition of our work, Richard argues against anthropocentrism and for a move from the posthuman to posthumanism, towards environmentalism and a posthuman ecology. At the center of his essay stands the suggestion of a new genealogical practice, a practice he exemplifies in a cursory reading of Pope’s *Essay on Man*. It tries to read the essay against the grain by detaching a strand of ecological thinking—characterized through the three concepts Complementarity, Entanglement, and Mattering—in a text that on the surface seems to focus on a logic of anthropo-

centric domination. What does reading these two layers against each other mean? What does it make visible? And what future does it open in the shadow of an anticipated loss of futurity?

While Richard's contribution suggests a thematic and critical response to an institutional and environmental crisis, Christina Lupton uncovers a dimension of materiality that hosts a future that we do not seem to recognize as such. Christina Lupton is an Associate Professor in the Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies at the University of Warwick in Great Britain. Before going to Warwick, she taught at the University of British Columbia and the University of Michigan as well as at the Universities of Lund and Copenhagen. Her current book project, *Reading Codex and the Making of Time* takes its cues from Habermas, Luhmann, and Latour in focusing on the material effects of print reading on the eighteenth-century experience of time. Her first, *Knowing Books: the Consciousness of Mediation in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, is on the subject of self-consciousness and media awareness in mid-eighteenth-century England.

Her contribution to our Workshop opens reading as a space of a "not yet" that is already here as a promise. It discovers the book as futuristic object. She starts from a commonplace experience most of us share: the fascination of buying books makes us buy books that we then don't have the time to read immediately. So she begins with the phenomenon of delay. For her, the book is linked to a logic of time in which there "will be" time. The book promises that we will have time to read it; it therefore promises an encounter with the future. We could also say that the materiality here opens a future of "deferred reading." There is a time of "incubation" inherent in the materiality of the book. The "we can do this later" from our earlier conversation reappears here as a form of temporalization. The event promised is a future unfolding, a complexity still in wait, but unlike perfectibility it consists of a future encounter with an already unfolded entity and not in a teleologically oriented anthropological potentiality. Therefore, the book separates an "event" from the "seizure" inherent in it, or from the effects it implies. This is exemplified in Inchbald's *A Simple Story*, whose first part was written in 1780. It was followed by a second and a third part, written and published significantly later. At that point, the biographic circumstances of the itinerant actress and writer have changed to a more reclusive life. In a fascinating reading, Lupton understands the text as one in which (on the level of the plot) fulfillment precedes reflection and reading. This relationship is reflected in the lives of two women, mother and daughter. Whereas books are bought for their value, but not read in the first volume by Miss Milner, her daughter leaves the contemporary and becomes a reader in whose experience the anachronistic experience of reading replaces eventfulness. Therefore, reading and action are alternatives. Reading the events of action twice, the reader is forced into a development that for Lupton "measures the reader's progress." In Godwin's essays, the dimension of reading is translated into a political demand: it is the demand for leisure that would be the condition of possibility for reading and the future of reading in our living-together. It is a dimension of surplus, a time after the event that measures its impact and gives it a future beyond its mere occurrence. It presupposes the departure from contemporaneity and the room for a withdrawal. This dimension is forward facing but not messianic, neither is it uncertain.

The question then arises: "How can a book remain a promise in a world where pressures and media revolutions have displaced it from the showcase in which it seemed so clearly to promise—or to represent—an aesthetic pleasure?" In this context, it is interesting to think of the book market. I don't want to be too Eurocentric, but I think German publishers have understood this: over the past few years, they have begun again to produce hardcover books, beautiful books with beautiful illustrations that are actually sewn (not glued) into the binding. So there's a real attempt

(unique, I think, in Europe and probably in the world) to recreate the book as an aesthetic project. (It may be relevant to note that the German market has been resistant to electronic books, sales of which have stagnated in the same time period.)

There is a political stake here as well: to *make* time for reading. Even on the Left, leisure time and making room for reading seem problematic (faced as we are by near constant emergency and multiple immanent crises). What then is a more promising futurity for us, the departure from contemporaneity and the promise of the materiality of the book, or a different genealogy? In the face of institutional and ecological challenges, what future do we have, and what future does Eighteenth Century Studies have? Where and from where does the future arrive—if, indeed, we have one?

## Discussion

**Johannes Türk:** I apologize for not having been here for the last session; I probably missed the culminating points of the workshop so far because of a problem that intimately relates to the future: that is, the care of one's children. [laughter] And I thought we'd get to that maybe later—to care, and to many other things... So, good. It's a great pleasure for me to comment on this last panel. I'll take the opportunity to remind us where we started from. [See written comments.]

... So how do you see your project[s] as responses to that, and how does the workshop as a whole allow us to re-situate our work and our time? Those are the big challenges that I want to begin with.

**Richard Nash:** I'll take just a—just a—minute to say very quickly that I think you're right. I sort of apologize for the reading of Pope—it gets tacked on inadequately at the end of what I was moving toward... But I think you're right to describe what I'm doing as in some ways a compromise formation located towards what I see as a “near term future”—that is, “What is the near term future for eighteenth-century studies within an academy that's changing in ways that in some ways I want to resist, in some ways I think it is not good, not propitious?” It certainly means that we're going to keep getting smaller for one, in the humanities. But I also think he's [Pope's] responding to real cultural transformation, real changes, and I think there's a certain sense in which the period that we *study*, that we are invested in reading and re-reading, has hastened a movement towards, has brought about—has contributed to—the rise of the Anthropocene. That is something we do need to be responding to, culturally. And my own sense is that one of the things we can do is to be thinking about how we re-formulate the humanities into a posthumanist project, one that thinks more ecologically and less anthropocentrically. So I'm hoping to think about strategies for reading that might enable that and might open a renewed place. The alternative to which—it seems to me—is a neoliberal university that will find less and less funding for the humanities, and require fewer and fewer job openings, and will bracket the modern humanities off into what was once the classical humanities (you know, that position where your office is in the very small wing in the very small corner of a very small department).

Just recently I found myself reading a book with the propitious title of *The Future of The “Modern Humanities.”* It was written in 1968 (auspicious year) and was the final volume in a jubilee celebration of the Modern Humanities Research Association (England's version of the MLA). The final paper is the title paper for the volume, and it was delivered by William Riley Parker, who was at that time not only the head of the MLA—for whom the Parker Prize is named—but also the chair of the department of English [at Indiana University], and he's a Miltonist. When students go through their doctoral exams they have a bust of blind Milton looking down on them and also a portrait of an even more unsympathetic William Riley Parker looking down on them... and this was the last thing he ever wrote. He in fact died during copyediting, which was probably some sort of omen about “What is the future of the humanities?” He was ready for giving up on the modern humanities in 1968 it turns out. So, this is in some ways a fulfillment of that...—but I am thinking it's up to us to re-imagine what would be the—what would be useful and productive—about retaining what I think has been enormously valuable in the humanities in some sort of reconfigured academic environment. So that's what I'm shooting for.

**Türk:** I'm not sure who was first—

**Lupton:** Well, do I get to respond—?

**Türk:** Oh, yes.

**Christina Lupton:** Well so I want to get—I want to get in quickly, because first of all, Johannes, I thought that was an incredibly eloquent summary of my argument. I'm very grateful for it, and I'm going to feed all your phrases back into it and it will become clearer. So I guess what I understand your question to do (I mean) is open a complete sort of Pandora's box of things for me in the sense that (I mean) this book project is bizarrely personal for an academic book in the sense that... I mean, in my sort of other, more political, nonacademic life, I really, deeply believe that if we give up on a future where we work less, then basically we're screwed. I mean, I think that there is a renewed sense in which we must grasp that as a political project for ourselves and our children, and that any sort of environmental discourse or discourse about how we want to defend the humanities has to start with a vision of the future where we're all going to work four hours a day instead of twelve. So for me in some ways it's very personal to go back to this moment here where people are formulating that as part of the democratic project, because now it seems laced with all of these kind of environmental things. And obviously if we're going to linger, to live—continue to live—on this planet we have to live at a much sort of less intense rate than we do. So all of this is, for me, tied up with defending the humanities as the place where we model what it might mean to live lives which are divided between kind of low impact practices and, you know, high impact activity in a way that is more or less sustainable in relation to other lives. You know, in my own life I've obviously just resolved this in some sense by going and hanging out in Scandinavia where people work half the hours of Americans—and Helge will confirm this so...—I mean, you know, it's not to me unrealizable: it's just not American [laughter], which doesn't mean that it's not the future. I guess, you know, the future isn't America anymore; the future is Scandinavia. So okay, that's the light bit, the other bits—

**Helge Jordheim:** The Bernie Sanders moment? [laughter]

**Lupton:** Yeah.

**Unidentified Speaker:** That's what I was thinking.

**Nash:** They're going to make Scandinavia great again. [laughter]

**Lupton:** So a couple of things I just wanted to respond to from Johannes's comments. First of all, I mean, I—with this argument—I mean, this comes at the end of a book that is very much about books in their physical form and Johannes has invoked what that might mean: to think about that physical form as a sort of path of return to a certain kind of reading practice. I'm a little undecided myself about whether I think you need the physical prop of the book in order to do this kind of reading. I mean, to some extent I think that it's certainly there in this form of the argument, but I also think that the book serves metaphorically—to go to the metaphor argument—for a certain kind of reading that would not preclude, you know, a way of thinking about the future that...you know, has relied in the past on having [physical] books that you are going to read but might as well involve downloading stuff to your Kindle or simply imagining the future in the

way that that practice once facilitated... which is to say, as one that is going to be quieter, not more agitated, not more accelerated. As the sort of margin of time that is going to come after—after the action, after retirement, after the end of the week, after your kids are in bed—you know, the “after” that is so vital to, I think, the practical work of being book owners and readers is also one that is metaphorical for me in lots of very old ways of thinking about time and, of course, very Christian ways of thinking about the future in some sort of way that would get us back to the earlier discussion.

**Türk:** Can I just add a phrase that just went through my head? “After now.” That would be the political slogan, right?

**Lupton:** Yeah, exactly. [Laughter] I might not win the election. [General murmuring, laughter] And then, I just also wanted to sort of tick the box that Johannes sort of referred to the way in which I’ve been thinking about a not-open future, and I think that’s true. And one of the reasons it’s been great to be here is to think through about the ways in which I do genuinely believe in the book as both a tool of optimism and an instrument in thinking about the grounds for that optimism being the fact that the future is to some extent already in view, already closed. I mean that it’s not about—it’s not about an openness—that it’s about something that, you know, arrives in a way that... I haven’t formulated it very well yet, but I’m sort of really interested in a kind of reverse-antiquarianism, where you would... —you handle the book as something that has literally arrived from the future and therefore feel the proximity of that future as one in which that book will have been read at the level of a sort of material practice: that would show, show the availability—the accessibility—of that future as something that is already on hand in a very sort of immediate, tactile way (that maybe goes to the touch stuff [in the discussion of Samuel Baker’s and John Han’s papers]). So I’m also interested, I guess, in some of the discussions that have come up about contingency. So one of the sections of this book is about contingency and how that’s modeled in (sort of) physical reading practices and ways of thinking about reading and time. And I would just stress here that for me contingency *is not* about an open future; it’s about the understanding that things might have been or be other than they are, which requires things to *be* in one way in order for you to see that they might have been other ways. Now, in Luhmann’s terms, this is constitutive of our modern experience because while we live in institutions that are one way (and we feel they can’t be resisted or changed by us), we are living in the awareness that they could be different; they’re not God-given institutions—they are in some sense contingent institutions, so we could theoretically have had them otherwise. But we don’t; we have them this way. And so I want to get that back in there, because for me at least that version—that very much more specific understanding of contingency as characteristic of what it feels like to live in modernity—has been very useful in thinking about some of the experiences that inflect our relationship to time and to narrative, and it’s not the same as the chance stuff, or the open future stuff... So I just want the full vocabulary available because in the last few years I’ve relied very heavily on the idea of contingency, partly through Luhmann, and I *don’t* think it’s the same as the open future. In fact, I think it might be the opposite of the open future, and I’m interested, obviously, in what Christine and others have to say about that because I think we’ve been a bit sloppy in the ways that we’ve sort of invoked contingency to imply some version of openness, whereas I think it’s something else.

**Daniel Fulda:** Why “opposite”?



**Türk:** Oh yes, graduate students jump the queue. I think—

**Kate Blake:** Kate?

**Türk:** Kate first.

**Blake:** So my question was for Tina, actually. I really enjoyed your paper—thank you so much—and it would be great even just, I was thinking about, I would love a, like a popular version of this essay to give my freshmen on the virtues of reading and its connection to writing, because sometimes just saying, “There’s going to be a paper on this book,” is not good enough to compel them, but—it gave me a lot to think about.. —But what I—my question was about *Simple Story*, and maybe it’s more of a clarification maybe? Just walk me through, because I always—you know, I don’t really know what to do with the second part of that book and I’m trying to, I’m looking sort of at some of the quotes on pages nine and ten, about “the heroine who reads, and whose story needs reading, Matilda’s role is to make the time spent with books apparent in a way it was not in her mother’s ill-fated theatre of fulfillment,” which I think is great, and I just... My question is just sort of about how the books play a role in—that there is still that sense of absence and pain and trauma, right, and the working through and the trying to get back in touch with Dorriforth and also the transition away from a story about kind of him and his problems with, you know, interpretation and then onto her, and so I’m wondering what—how do you see this sort of centrality of books to Matilda at the same time as, you know, the pain that they cause, right? And sort of the distance and the... I mean, I guess what I’m asking is, “Is there, like, a—in her future, where they’re... you know, after the reconciliation: are there still books?”

**Lupton:** Ah, right. Interesting: Or do they become redundant when they’re at the point where they’re realized?

**Blake:** Right.

**Lupton:** Well, I mean, I think that for me—at least in this reading, I mean—... *A Simple Story* becomes this novel that sort of models the irreconcilability of reading and actions—which is one of the problems here, right? That, you know, and it would be writ large, the fact that in utopian fictions there is no reading either, right? You know, once you get there you don’t have to read because there’s nothing left to...—because you don’t need the future anymore because you’re in the future, and this is, I think, something that is just painfully felt for Inchbald at all levels in her own life as a woman who’s had a very social sort of moment (decade) and then has a very non-social decade in which she reads. And in everybody’s life to some extent the problem is that reading involves investment in a future. It is the nature of reading that to some extent—however pleasurable it is in the now—it’s future-oriented because it is about the fact that somehow the quality of its—you know, you go to bring it back into action—you know to bring it back into action, and the action will be better than it would’ve been beforehand, but that involves a consistent jarring problem of deferral; like, you know, why—“If I can act, why not just act now? Why wait? Why read?”—this is your undergraduates for you. So I don’t know if I think Matilda’s future would have reading in it. I mean, insofar as I think Matilda isn’t much of a character but

more of a sort of device to show a problem, I would say that she shows this problem in a way that isn't resolved. I mean, the fact that that book doesn't work it out, it doesn't work it out.... It's two bits that fall apart: one is a reading bit, one is an acting bit. How do you put them together? I don't know. You just go back to the... you go back to the acting bit. You read the reading bit, you go back to the acting bit. You begin again in the cyclical—but you don't... do you ever bring them together? No. You can't read and act at the same time unless you're, you know, texting... which is what, you know, why this is in some ways the natural zenith of a kind of accelerated media history where... you know, for someone like Kittler or Steigler this is where they all come together; action... when action and writing and reading all come together what you get is that sort of hyperbolic kind of twenty-first-century texting/acting/reading all at once! Isn't this great, it all converged?! But I guess I think in some ways... to think of it—them—as a problem is the answer.

**Türk:** I think next...oh, Rachel was, I think, next.

**Rachel Seiler-Smith:** I'm kind of now a hook because I had a similar question, but reading these papers together was really helpful for me in the sense that even though Richard, I think, is talking about some material crises, it still takes on this sort of totalizing aspect. Whereas, you know, Christina's paper is much more about the immediacy and the material practice, and both of them made me want to ask a question—sort of akin to Kate's—about pedagogy: What does this have to do with the actual thing? And I'm thinking, you know, I've read a lot of criticism on Elizabeth Inchbald, *Simple Story*, and one of the most tickling things I found about Christina's reading is when you said that Inchbald—the second half is, like, “punitive.” That close reading, actually, becomes this sort of punitive practice of, you know, “You didn't read closely or slowly enough, or at all; you need to go back and read it again,” and I'm just thinking of how—at least at IU—on student evaluations they ask, “How many hours did you spend on this class?” And they ask you to reflect on that in comparison to others, and time and again you get students who say (a lot of times business students) who say, “This took too long. This took me too long. I don't want to read close enough. I don't want to slow down; x, y, z...” And I'm wondering, when we think about reader time and we think about our students and the times they devote to our classes and to reading, and if you're thinking about leisure time, right, as a sort of democratizing futurity—which I think is great—at the same time, what does that mean for the actual immediate structure of your classrooms, possibly in the Scandinavian/British context? But, I guess, how would you apply this to the classroom is, I guess, what I want to know. And we haven't really talked about actual classroom practices yet in this “About Eighteenth-century Futures.” We've sort of referenced it, but I guess I want to know if we were to do a pedagogical model, what would it look like, you know, teaching this and talking about this in the classroom? And to Richard's end as well, I guess.

**Nash:** Do you want me to go first? I mean, I'm happy to do it. It's really easy for me to give the short answer to that, which is, “I have not yet attempted to teach this; I'm looking forward to it next year.” But what I am thinking, and what I'm writing my way towards, is trying to develop my own critical vocabulary as a way of taking students—asking students to engage... —and I think *Essay on Man* is probably a text where I will work this most clearly because we have the voluminous [Maynard] Mack construction of *Essay on Man*, and what I'm going to be interested in trying to do is to get students to read through the way in which a critical apparatus has been

built up around the poem in order to structure a particular reading of the poem and [ask] how, if we bring a different critical vocabulary to the poem, can we read the poem against itself and against the reading that's been built up around it? What I'm doing in imagining that practice—which right now is a future practice, and so I don't know if it works—is the idea of something like the compromise formation, where I am trying to find ways for what I consider to be incredibly valuable skills about close reading and attentive study of texts to remain viable but to now contribute to a project other than the one that I think Mack was interested in (to use him as just an example) building up, which is, it seems to me, one of cultural inheritance, and it does seem to me that the endpoint of what I will be striving for in that classroom is not to have activities where students will say, “This was an excellent course because I spent almost no time on it,” but rather, “This course took a lot of time, but the kinds of work I was doing in the class I find of value in other courses that I'm also taking,” right? That. How does the work that I'm trying to re-imagine in my classroom contribute to what is a changing landscape of higher education? And hopefully I can make peace with that and feel good about it, though I'm not sure; I'm a little nervous.

**Türk:** Helge has a hook, but he's also after Monique, the next one on the list.

**Helge Jordheim:** Yeah, but they're different; this is a short hook. This is interesting because that question is the one that Bruno Latour takes on in his “Facing Gaia” lectures. It is actually that question: How do we deal with the pedagogical issue? How do we communicate these kinds of, well, dystopian visions in a way that is politically mobilizing? And he tries out these different ways of doing that—largely unsuccessfully, I would say. He returns to the idea of natural religion, where we worship Gaia as a god and Gaia mobilizes us to fight for her—it's really a very strange, Schmittian political theology language, but the question is the same, right? So how do you find a way to sort of scare young people into understanding these... well, this threat facing us, right?

**Türk:** Yes, Rachel?

**Tracey Hutchings-Goetz:** Tracey.

**Türk:** Ah, Tracey! Sorry.

**Hutchings-Goetz:** It's okay, yeah. So my kind of question or comment I conceived of as a way of potentially bridging both of the papers, and that was through Jane Bennett's “vital materialism” because it seems to me, Christina, that part of—and please correct me if you don't think this is what you're doing—but it seems to me that part of what you're advocating for through these reading practices is similar to what Bennett argues for in terms of improving and honing our sensual and material practices in a way that will kind of... reflects the precarity of our ecological situations. So one of the things that she argues is that we need to learn to be more sensitive to this world around us (this material world and these nonhuman actors around us) so I wanted to see if you sort of agreed with that or disagreed with that as a potential additional framework for, you know, what you're doing and how you see these texts advocating for reading practices in Godwin and Inchbald. And then, Richard, I guess it was, you know: Do you see that

as productive? Or do you think that that might be a way to advocate for the type of reading practices you want these students to learn in the classroom?

**Lupton:** Well, I mean, one thing I can say for sure about Jane Bennett's kind of politics and a lot of the kind of new materialism is that... I mean, for all the things that we might learn from attention to the material world, we will not learn about how to conceive of a better future. Objects can't have a future. They don't... they're not going to teach us how to do that. So if what we're actually invested in here is thinking about a better future, then it's going to have to be a humanist project in a pretty old-fashioned way I'm afraid. I don't actually think that—I mean—no amount of attention to objects can teach us to think time, and in some ways this has been my own sort of intellectual experience in the last... Well, I guess in the last seven or eight years I've gone through sort of stages of infatuation with (sort of) new materialism and (sort of) non-humanist ways of thinking about the world. But right now I feel fairly old-fashioned, squarely old-fashionedly humanist in what I imagine to be a sort of political project. If there's one here, I think it is simply about human beings rather than about the human beings as... you know, as in interaction with objects.

**Nash:** Well, I'll just jump in and say that's where I'm staking my—staking out precisely the opposite ground, okay?

**Lupton:** Yeah, I know. Which is why it was a good question, because I have, you know, this is, you know—

**Nash:** There is a sense in which one of the things I was struck with coming back to—when you come back to Godwin—the texts, the way in which Godwin is advocating for reading is very much this idea... precisely the kind of reading that we assign students, right? “Don't read contemporary literature; we want you to read this literature that belongs in libraries,” you know, that... And in fact that is—I very much worry about—that's the other context that I'm bringing in here—I'm very much worried about what that position does for us in the institution of the university, because that makes us very much the curators of a cultural inheritance. You can put that argument right back in F. R. Leavis and company, and it's putting us back—and there are administrators who want to put us in that particular path and assign us the duty of, “This is where students will go to get the texts that they need to have read in order to say that they went to college while they're getting their degree to get a job in business,” and I don't want to be part of that future. So I want to be—

**Lupton:** That is a very specific version of it though. I mean, yeah, what I was thinking in relation to the pedagogy question was about courses—I mean the kind of courses that I think will represent the future of the humanities as I'm sort of now feeling involved in it, are courses that will foreground media experiences that were offered by, say, long novels. Like, I don't think you can slip *Clarissa* in or... You teach a course called “The Long Novel.” You know, you can teach a course—I mean, I've taught this course, and I've taught a course in Denmark called “The Long Novel.” All we read was *Tom Jones* and Franzen's *The Corrections*, you know, and it was like, “Okay, so let's just see what it means to read ‘a long novel.’” And, I mean, one of the most popular courses for the Michigan students was this thing where they had to go and unplug for the summer. Like, you know, they read—also go and read Thoreau—but basically this course was

about, you know, just going and sitting on the, you know, a lake somewhere and giving your phones up for the summer. And I joke—I mean I joke about this—but actually I think one of the most kind of marketable courses in the future of the university is going to be one that forces, you know: “Let’s force you into the phenomenology of going offline for a month and writing with pen and paper.” Like, it’s going to be a seller, that course. It’s going to be great; they’re going to be queuing up for that course, and it’s not—

**Nash:** Especially if you could offer it as a MOOC [laughter]

**Lupton:** Yeah, a remote version. But it’s not, I mean, I don’t think, I mean... —and this is where, like...—Okay, so let’s offer courses in the phenomenology of what it was like to live in a previous media environment. These are not nostalgic courses. These are going to be (I think) forward-looking courses, because they’re going to be about different, about the sort of exploration of a media environment and its others that’s going to become a completely, sort of, contemporary issue. This is my prediction, where—

**Nash:** It’s a wildly optimistic prediction. [laughter]

**Lupton:** I’m a wild optimist; my forties are my optimistic decade.

**Türk:** So there are two hooks. First Joanna, and—

**Joanna Stalnaker:** Yeah, so I’m not sure if I misunderstood what you said earlier in response to—Tracey, right?—and Jane Bennett, but what you’re saying right now makes me think that you might be more in line with Jane Bennett than you’ve just said. Because I thought the point of her argument was, you know, you start thinking of yourself in relation to objects in a different way, or (whether that be natural objects or garbage or whatever it is)... that it’s not that the objects are going to create a new future for you, but that you’re going to create a new future for humans because of the fact of seeing yourself in this network of relationships to nature but also to waste and the things that... you know, the havoc that we wreak on the environment. So, you know, if there’s this idea of a course that would bring us into a new relationship—possibly to time, to nature, to garbage and other things—then maybe it would start to do precisely the kind of thing that she seems to be advocating.

**Lupton:** I think that’s right, but I still think that the futuristic aspect of it, the “project” aspect of it, right, the idea—the commitment to something being other than it is now—still... the human still has to kick in. But you’re right. I mean, you’re right, there is lots there in Bennett’s project that would work for the subject of this enquiry.

**Türk:** Yes, Nush?

**Manushag Powell:** I just had a quick anecdote about the kind of course you’re describing. Yale is doing something like this; they have been for—and, you know, it’s Yale, so this is maybe not wildly applicable, right? But—oh gosh, maybe five, six years ago—they started a program to get students off their phones by having, like, every residential college do some kind of class that requires, like, you know, use of the hands and mind unplugged from the phone. I know about this

because my mother (who did not finish college) is a master weaver, and somehow got roped into teaching hand weaving. And I was like “Ma—like nobody’s going to take that class; like, this is insane,” but in fact, like, they have to keep asking her to do more hours and adding more students. It’s been bizarrely popular. But I—you know, what does that mean for us? Because it is certainly something that you can study to do these, like, kind of artisanal, unplugged activities, but I don’t know that that saves the eighteenth century in the way...

**Lupton:** Well, Sean Silver at Michigan would say the opposite. I mean, what Sean wants to do is exactly this: kind of workshop-based learning that’s based on eighteenth-century artisanal practices that gets people actually reproducing the kind of origins of Enlightenment thinking through the material practices that are—that then sort of allow you to (in a sort of Latourian way) go back to the moment where the Enlightenment all went wrong... through your hands.

**Powell:** Well, they teach teaching eighteenth-century cookery, like, in a lab.

**Lupton:** And, I mean Leah [Price] and Deirdre [Shauna Lynch] teach a course at Harvard where you have to—you move through media forms each week. So the first week you write with, you know, you write on papyrus. The next week you... I mean, of course, it’s Harvard, so who... you know, not—I don’t teach at an institution that’s going to give me money for seventeen typewriters (which is the end of this). But, I mean, maybe some of you do, I don’t know....

**Türk:** Yeah. Transitioning to Monique, I just wanted to say that it seems to me that Hannah Arendt’s idea of “world” is actually very interesting with these questions, as well as Heidegger’s critique of self-understanding as Cartesian subjects—I think one is a response to the other. But I’ll elaborate later on; I put myself on the list. Monique?

**Monique Morgan:** So this is a very different line of thought. So this is for Richard: it’s a specific suggestion and then a separate specific question. So the suggestion has to do with the reading at the very end of the essay, and I thought it was a lovely reading of this image of a pebble in the lake and the expanding circles and that Pope performs the repetition in the subsequent lines... But I thought there was a bit of a missed opportunity with the last two lines—“Earth smiles around, with boundless bounty blest, / And Heav’n beholds its image in his breast”—because you have the repetition of the alliteration of the “b,” right? The “boundless bounty blest,” which then spills over boundlessly into the next line with “behold” [*sic*] and “breast,” but you have also the assonance of “around . . . boundless bounty.” And that “o” sound is spelled with circles, with “o”s on the page. When you say it, your mouth forms a circle, and so the image of the expanding circles is happening on the page but also being reproduced in the reader’s body.

**Nash:** So it’s a phenomenological experience. Yeah.

**Morgan:** Yes. But the question, which is separate, has to do with the use of “complementarity.” So in the broader stakes I understand you to be finding agential realism and complementarity useful because it allows for nonhuman agents and so allows a way out of anthropocentrism, right? But with complementarity in Pope’s *Essay on Man*... You make the duality in the poem very clear, but I’m wondering if it’s “complementarity” in the narrow sort of Niels Bohr/Karen Barad sense, and is that complementarity, like, in Pope’s poem, or is it because of various critical

apparatuses that are applied and make some aspects determinate and make other aspects illegible?

**Nash:** Okay, great. So this is something where I still have a good deal more work to do. But even the stress of having submitted this paper in *this* form and facing this question has moved me forward a little beyond where I am here. I'm particularly interested in mobilizing those three critical terms that I have identified as linked to one another (complementarity, entanglement, and mattering), but also in doing so... Using them both in the sense in which I take them first from Barad but also taking them in the larger—in various larger senses than the ways, the specific ways in which Barad brings them up (and obviously “complementarity” is not hers). In doing that I'm particularly interested in positioning these against privileged categories that I also see as being linked in a humanist tradition that (I'm trying to work away from). So one of the ways that Barad particularly takes Bohr's notion of complementarity and pushes on it is in the argument that complementarity makes epistemology—epistemological notions—of uncertainty rearticulated as ontological indeterminacy, and so she winds up using complementarity specifically as the complementarity of ontology and epistemology. And it's—of the various ways in which in the fuller reading of *Essay on Man* that I want to use this—it's *that* notion in particular that I want to follow out, and one of those aspects is that... The argument that I only gesture towards here but don't really carry out is that in seeing the influence of Pascal behind Pope there is... While we're used to reading Epistle One as this sort of rational doctrine that Pascal lined (that the heart knows a reason that the reason knows not) is one that I think actually structures the rhythm of the poem's four parts, so that you have that chain of being in that first epistle is echoed again in the chain of love in epistle three. And the movement that goes back and forth between—throughout—between what the first half of that poem—the first two epistles—are articulating as a sort of rational conception of man and the universe gives way to a more emotional understanding of sociability and human happiness. So that in the reading of the poem that I ultimately want to mobilize as a whole... is to see Pope's argument as ultimately, while asserting a rational doctrine, at the same time troubling that with his own complementary rhythm that he's borrowing ultimately (I think) from Pascal, and that sense... But none of those are—and this is where I get tied in knots in the version that I have now—I don't want to be saying we should all go back and read Pope and Pascal in order to understand Niels Bohr. I mean, this is, like—I don't want to be—and there's a certain sense in which I'm very much aware that what I'm doing here is I'm appropriating a particular development in physics, and partly using it to now go back and re-read poetry from the generation immediately after Newton. So that I'm trying to locate poetic responses to changes in understanding of the physical world as ways of re-reading history.

**Türk:** So John jumped the queue...

**John Han:** No.

**Türk:** ... and I think this is an example of how synchronization... I mean, we're still waiting for the second person with a regular contribution: Helge.

**Zabel:** I'm not a hook.

**Türk:** Yeah, yeah, you're not a hook. I put you as number eight or something—

**Han:** I shouldn't be jumping the queue though.

**Nash:** Are you a graduate student?

**Türk:** Oh, right, you—

**Han:** Yeah, yeah, come on; geez. I'm at the adult table now. [Laughter. Applause]

**Nash:** This is—the futurity has become the present.

**Türk:** That's the last chance at a jump, right?

**Han:** Yeah, I'll just forgo that chance

**Spang:** Am I on the list, Johannes?

**Türk:** Let me see. You are on the list, but when did you—I hope I didn't miss you the first time—

**Han:** Number ninety-nine

**Türk:** Helge is next. That I'm certain about, because the first three I identified.

**Stalnaker:** Can you read your list?

**Türk:** So my list is: Helge, Joanna, Sam, Jonathan, Jesse, Christine, Rebecca, Johannes, and John.

**Han:** Okay, well now I might need to... —no, I'm kidding. [Laughter]

**Türk:** And David—but David, where were you, actually? Did I miss you?

**David Alff:** Just back here. [Note: Alff is seated at the far end of the room]

**Türk:** I mean temporally...

**Lupton:** We can collect, right?

**Nash:** I think so.

**Lupton:** Yeah, just give us thoughts. We're on the ball.

**Nash:** Yeah.

**Alff:** We can go 'til 5pm, right? [Laughter]



**Türk:** Well then there's Helge anyway.

**Jordheim:** Now?

**Türk:** Yeah.

**Jordheim:** Okay, I'm going to make this try to not sound like rambling. I think I'd just like to thank the organizers, to start with, for pairing these—giving us another fantastic pairing, that I think is... I didn't see how well this fit before the discussion started, but now I just feel like this is the most crucial thing that we'll ever discuss. [Laughter] So I want to see if we can think about both of these papers in terms of the question of limits. You said "closure"... I just... Thinking about terminology we might use "limits"—limits—spatial limits and temporal limits. And it sort of also to go back to that UNESCO report from the 70s called *Limits to Growth*, because that's really in a sense what we're discussing. So how do we think about limits now? How do we think about crisis? And they're linked in the sense that crisis, as you know, etymologically is about drawing limits, right? So it's a limit in time, or a limit in space and you move beyond that. And then I wanted to sort of point to eighteenth-century—long eighteenth-century—books that have become incredibly important for me for thinking about this, and one is Fontenelle's *Dialogue on the Plurality of Worlds*. That—for me and the work I do in conceptualizing the world—has become this incredibly important book. Partly because it's read all over Europe, but partly also because it's a book that people read [as on] the endlessness of the universe. It isn't. It's a book on human anthropology seen from outside. What happens to us as humans in the moment that there might be people looking at us? What happens to us as humans when we see our planet is limited and [consider] the possibility of other planets being there? It's really—it's a huge move as I see it for thinking about humanist...—and I'm not sure if I agree with you that humanism is necessarily anthropocentric, because I think that is a move to think about humanism in a non-anthropocentric way because you think about the idea of seeing humans from outside our species in a certain sense. I think it's incredibly important and interesting. It can be used for suggesting that move that you're referring to.

The other thing is in time—and this is what you put so beautifully—is how to think about—and I discussed this with Johannes the other day... Living in—in Norwegian we have this word: "aftertime." You can live in the "aftertime." So how do you live with the idea, or how do you live when everything has happened? When sort of the story is ended, when the revolution sort of passed, when growth has ended? How do you live, and how do you imagine that living, right? Because that's the question that you're asking. So how can we now have a pedagogy to think about how it is to live in the aftertime, where all those sort of modern spatial/temporal configurations (that we have been so used to) are slipping, in a certain sense. So we need to think about what it would mean to be—and I don't mean sort of post-apocalyptic "after the catastrophe," but just after many of those things that we've taken for granted are not that valid anymore. So thinking—so it's something about seeing our position partly from beyond the spatial limit. Looking down, in a certain sense, and partly beyond the temporal limit, looking back and projecting how the aftermath—how the aftertime—really would look. And the fantastic book for that is Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Wanderjahr*, but not where he's still in the process of the *Bildung*, but the second volume where everything's just finished. He's finished; his process of building a revolution has passed. He's just living. He's helping people. He's a doctor; he goes around meeting people

and helping them in this weird sort of strangely—almost post-apocalyptic—landscape. So it's just a book about living when everything that... Where the open future, it isn't really closed, it's just behind you in a certain sense. It's an open future that's behind you.

**Jonathan Sachs:** Is that called middle age? [laughter]

**Jordheim:** So that was my rambling intervention.

**Türk:** Oh yeah, okay. So we go to Joanna with a real contribution.

**Stalnaker:** Okay, I'm not sure if it should be framed as a "real contribution," but I'll try, I'll try.

**Türk:** Meaning not a hook.

**Stalnaker:** No, no, no, I understand, but I'm just not sure I'm feeling able to do anything real right now. So I guess these questions might be related, or they might not. Richard, I was really interested in this question of the sort of microcosm and macrocosm, reconfiguring the place of the human with the difficulty of piercing the vast immensity of the universe, in relation to what we've been saying about deep time, you know, doing that in a similar way with this tiny sliver of human history in it. And I guess what I wanted to ask you was, you know, we've talked a certain amount about close reading in (as a method)—you've used close reading as a method for getting at that in Pope—and I guess I just wanted to ask you a little bit about the question of sort of microcosm and macrocosm in reading strategy. So I'm not technologically astute at all because I'm always trying to unplug, so I don't know how to do distant reading of the kind ... or surface reading with these sort of machine readings of poetry, but I have found, you know, in my work on, you know, eighteenth-century descriptive projects, you know, the question of these huge, sprawling, multi-volume works—how do you read them; how do you deal with them? How do you sort of go back and forth between a real attention to form on the level of, you know, a sentence or verse or whatever it is and then the macrocosm of this sprawling work, and does it actually have a shape? And if so how do you account for that shape? So I guess my question would be sort of how you think of that both in terms of your own reading practices and in terms of your teaching? Which brings me to something that I think is related for Tina: just to talk a little bit more about the question of multi-volume books as opposed to, you know, "the book" in this way, because of course you're dealing with a multi-volume book—or at least a two-volume book—in the first case, and, you know, how do you see the sort of promise of the future and also the book? You know, a book has an ending, right, but it—you sort of buy the first book in a subscription series or whatever. I'm thinking of my son, who's an avid reader of the *Percy Jackson* series and, you know, there's this promise that there will be always a new series and, you know—and now he has to wait a year for the next book and he really can't understand that he's going to have to wait that long, so.

**Türk:** Oh, so we go to Sam.

**Samuel Baker:** Yes, so I have just a comment for Richard and then a question for Tina that's the allegory of a question for Richard; I guess we'll see how that works. So my comment for Richard is just that I think you're a little hard on ol' F. R. Leavis; he might be a friend for you. The early

Leavis—like if you look at *Culture and Environment* [1933], right?—he’s really posing his whole project as a, you know, like an engagement with a society that’s left behind what he values. But what he values isn’t exactly humanism; it might be compatible, it might be like what you’re seeing because it’s about culture and environment, right? You know, so like... Granted the great tradition—that does look a lot like that Classicism that you see, eighteenth-century studies and the study of literature in general is being turned into, but I think there are some resources for you there. Simon During is writing very well right now on Leavis in ways I think... which I think you might find very interesting. So my question for Tina is just a question about Godwin’s metaphysics, right, and about not contingency but necessity. I just think it’s so interesting that the way I understand Godwin, I might be wrong about this—this is, like, my cartoon Godwin, the history of philosophy—my understanding of Godwin is that he thinks that the future’s closed, right? Everything’s necessarily going to happen in the way that it happens, and we’re reading not because our reading is going to help us intervene in an open future, but because it’s in the speculative mode (that reading opens up to us) that we can come to, like, a higher ... a better attitude with what’s going to happen. And so it’s, it’s a stoic cosmology, right? that reading is like this stoic reconciliation to what’s going to happen and I said—I used the word “speculation” advisedly because it connects to me with Christine’s paper, right?—I think that for Godwin reading is this zone for metaphysical pondering on something that however you could see...you’re not figuring it out, but you could *see* it. And I’m not sure exactly what to do with that, but it does seem to me that—just because I’m sure these are short papers—that you talk about Godwin in really provocative ways that resonate so much with what I know of Godwin’s metaphysics, but then you didn’t directly address that, so I’m curious how you would? Or if you think that I’ve got it wrong, and there’s some other way that you read Godwin’s metaphysics, right? that would be more conducive to your argument.

**Türk:** Should we take one more and then have a response phase and then go through the rest of the list? Yes? Are you ready? Okay, then Jonathan is the next and then—

**Sachs:** I have very little to say, actually, except to pile on a little bit to what Joanna was saying in response to Tina. And that is that you describe yourself as an optimist and you’ve given us a very optimistic account of what the book can do, but I think there’s a really profound question in what Joanna was getting at, which is: “What happens when the book is not the promise of the future, but actually an obstacle to that future?” Right, when you’re reading a ten-volume descriptive book and you know you need to, you know—

**Powell:** It’s definitely an obstacle in my future.

**Sachs:** Yeah, but at some point you need to, right,... yeah, but there are some books that exist not as a promise but as a threat. [laughter] You know, we know we need to reckon with them, but how, right? So I just—that was just a pondering... But I also wanted to try to point out what I see as a kind of overlap and distinction between the two papers, which is the way that for you, Richard, that you’re trying to look at past—I want to call them “objects,” but that pushes against my point—past poems immaterially, as that which might contain residue or traces to tell us about our future, right? And in Tina’s case what you’re suggesting is that the book exists in the future and is a kind of material promise sitting in front of us that’s going to take us to a future. So there’s an issue I think of directionality and materiality that cuts quite nicely across both papers; that they

seem to be working in different directions with different approaches to materiality and immateriality but in quite sympathetic ways. I'll leave it at that.

**Nash:** Okay, shall I go first? So thank you for that; I'm still digesting that, but I think you're right, and I'm going to leave my response to you at that...For now, anyway. Samuel, I had not been thinking that I should be more sympathetic to F. R. Leavis, but as soon as you started saying that I realized that I probably should be, so you've given me something to do. Thank you for that. And for, "How do I bridge close reading and distant reading?"—so here my answer would be, "As I do everything: non-systematically and probably badly but, I hope, productively." And the particular instance that I'm aware of here is that in Mack's edition of *Essay on Man*, he—the word "pervasive" appears in one of the opening lines, and his gloss (because almost every line of that poem is glossed) is that the *OED* records this as the first use of "pervasive" in the English language. Well that's no longer true; that was true in 1908, but now the *OED* is better and it goes back to Hooke. But also now you can now go to *ECCO* and you can search for "pervasive," so this is one of the—one of the forms of distant reading is...—and that's what actually led me around to realize that when Pope uses that term he's picking it up from what is a really widespread theological debate with a lot of very obscure pamphlets and in the midst of which appears Mallet's poem, *The Excursion*, as one of the other earlier uses, and the more I was reading into this the more I found myself thinking, "Oh, I'm beginning to think that..."—and because we know Pope read Mallet—"that that poem is behind this opening image Pope's using." So there's a certain sense in which in this...I just look at distant reading—and the various tools that we have available to us—as enabling ever more bizarre and idiosyncratic ideas that I want to pursue much more rapidly than may contribute to feedback—in some sort of feedback loop—into the close reading that I then want to do, and that quite frankly is how I'm doing this, which I suspect is not the best way to use these tools, but when I get a new tool I tend to play with it.

**Lupton:** Okay, so... Helge, I think, "How to live in the 'aftertime'?"—I really like that. I mean, it raises the question of whether we want to consider the possibility of giving up on a future as in fact an incredibly optimistic acceptance of the fact that we don't have to go anywhere anymore. That in fact, you know, teaching our kids to keep things just the same might be an ethical imperative of a new kind. Yeah. So the—Joanna and Jonathan I'm going to do together, the sort of media question—so, I mean, in my, in this project, there's a reason why this book ends in the early nineteenth century, and that is because serial publication becomes the norm. And so to some extent in terms of my history this story that I'm telling about the unit of the book ends with true serialized publication of the novel, but these multi-volume eighteenth-century novels aren't serialized publications. They're just multi-volume novels. And to some extent as soon as one is reading something from the past, even if it had a seriality in its own moment, one is accessing that narrative (or that form) in the form that I'm interested in, which is something that's already...it's already happened. And it's happening again as a sort of reading experience, requires access to it in that sort of complete form. And I would say that that is also where the ten-volume—I mean, your son may well be threatened in some sense by the infinite future of the *Percy Jackson* series, but this is very different from the idea that there's ten volumes that already exist that you might or might not want to get through but which, in their already existing, offer you the opportunity to do that at your own whim. It's very—it's really different, I think—and there's something very relaxing about something's already existing and yet being your future while its future is already finished. So it's something about that that I like. But it's not that I ha-

ven't thought about these things; it's just, and I—it's very important, I think that I—you know, this wouldn't work as a nineteenth-century project because the phenomenology of reading Dickens for his contemporaries is just very, very different from the thing that I'm talking about, and there's all kinds of questions about finding and, you know, stuff as well, but I'm on the case. [Laughter]

So the hard one is Godwin's metaphysics. So, yes, I have thought about... I mean, Godwin ultimately believes, I think, not in an open future—but he does believe enough in a sort of malleable, immediate future to join with Coleridge, for instance, in planning the, you know, the colony in America. And at the same time, I mean, I... Basically, we're on the same page. I agree with you because I think that what Godwin is imagining for reading is very different from what we imagine as kind of, you know—it's not pain. It's not like, "Oh, I'm going to say this thing, you're going to read it, and you're going to have this 'ah-ha' moment, and it's going to reveal for you something that wasn't evident to you before, and you will be now enlightened." It is much more performative than that, in the sense that in order to understand the future Godwin believes that you have to *sit down and read*. And to sit down and read is already to be in the future because if you have—if everyone has time to sit down and read in the way that he imagines, then the future's already arrived. There's something very, very—the logic of that is very mixed up, so...

**Baker:** Yeah, it's like communing with the future, which is the idea that's come up earlier.

**Lupton:** Exactly. That's right, yeah. So it's not—it really isn't instrumental; reading isn't instrumental to the future. It *is* the future, because insofar as everyone can do it, the more everyone can do it the more we're already in the future. There's something about that that ties in with the metaphysics, in the sense that it suggests a kind of known future rather than a mysterious future and also suggests this kind of physiology of revelation that just requires you to sit with it even if you're, you know, only doing that two hours a day, somehow.

**Baker:** Now I'm thinking about the flashback plots in his novels as enacting that too.

**Sachs:** And the way he writes them serially backwards.

**Lupton:** Yes, I have a reading of *Caleb Williams* as well in the longer... yeah.

**Nash:** Can I hook on that? Because isn't it important in that notion that what you're reading is specifically not the present, but reading that from the past, which somehow has deserved to survive into the present? Which...Isn't there...?

**Lupton:** Well it's kind of about content, but it's kind of not. So there's an interesting anecdote from Godwin where, you know—so you would think that reading *Caleb Williams* might then qualify as reading—it's in the present, but it's reading from the past, right? Except there's people who read *Caleb Williams* wrong, according to Godwin, like his friend, who read it as a novel. This was so horrifying to him because you were meant to read it slowly, and the idea that you just sat down and gobbled it up in one reading was the wrong thing. So within that text—which could flip either way—there's the possibility of two kinds of reading. So it's not completely coupled to what you're reading; partly it is *how* you're reading it, which is, I think... I mean, we

have analogies for this, because in some ways we don't care what our kids are reading as long as they're "off their phones and reading," it's good. Like, it could almost...but it couldn't quite be anything—but it could *almost* be anything, and Godwin kind of feels this too about reading, I think. But certainly it's not about reading stuff that's just hot off the press. But there's a wide understanding of this as a kind of contradiction in this period that, you know—I mean, Lackington (the bookseller) reports that whenever something happens that's exciting, the sale of books falls because people only read stuff in book form when they're not reading newspapers that are sort of feeding them this plugged in stuff, you know?

**Nash:** I think we've encountered this in the classroom.

**Sachs:** Quick, I mean there's... Coleridge also talk explicitly about this, right, the idea is that there's—reading a book is very different from reading a newspaper. And you can trace, in many cases, the metaphorical use of arboreal features—sorry, of bookish features—in Coleridge's writing (that he uses explicitly to push against newspapers).

**Lupton:** Yeah.

**Türk:** So in one row now: Jesse, Christine, Rebecca, Johannes, and David, and then I'm afraid we need to close it. And if you don't mind... I mean, we can go a few minutes over, but, you know...

**Jesse Molesworth:** I'll actually make it short. I mean, Richard, Pope believed in genius. I mean, Pope believed that he was uniquely positioned as, you know, Dryden's successor, as Milton's successor, to "vindicate the ways of God to man." He...The man believed in hierarchies; this is what *The Dunciad* is about, the lament about the loosening of hierarchies that he sees within his world. His—you know—when he says, "Whatever is, is right," that is an expression not simply of God's mastery in creating the world, but it's also an expression of his own mastery as a poet in making this particular line. So, you know, I mean there's a certain, you know—for me this, you know, clear sense of genius that emerges makes it difficult for me to accept, you know, this view of Pope as an ecological thinker. I'm just going to raise that objection.

**Christine Zabel:** I have two comments or reflections I just would like to share. One is where I want to second this—or what you said, that we need to engage more in distinguishing contingency and open future—and I think in might be difficult to always manage to distinguish them in very concrete terms, but I think conceptually we should do it at least. And I think one key term might be "necessity." You have mentioned it before, too, and I think contingency (at least in philosophical terms, but also in a logical term) is something that is non—there is non-necessity to what is coming, a non-necessity to the existence of something. And I think—and the more I think about it, open future seems to me very problematic. Because "open future"... I think we need a more relational term, as you just suggested with "pace"—that is, "acceleration and slowness"—and "open future" always implies also the closing up of future, because a "future" implies there is a future and it is a set of choices, and the set of choices kind of give causal—other set of choices. And it's always closing up and opening up again, and we need a more relational term in order to grasp that problem, I think. And in this way I would say in my project the speculation part would be the contingency part, because if—when my Duvillard guy, for example,

tries to speculate the life insurances or life annuities he tries to come up with the maximum profit, or calculate the maximum profit of life annuities and how long you might have to survive in order to get there, but he calculates the chances on it. There is no necessity at all that it will be the case, and you cannot know; there's no way to know. And in logical terms it might be right or wrong; you cannot know. And I think that is a big difference; there is no necessity to contingency and there is a kind of cost in necessity, at least for... Yeah, the more I think about it, I don't like "the open future" at all. We need a more... Like "pace" it is relational, there can be acceleration and slowness; but open future is just one side. We need... I don't know if we can come up with something different—and I think in that way opening a book is an encapsulated choice so it is an openness, not a contingency (I would say). And also with the plans, it is encapsulating choices in a way, that it would be a set of choices that you have of the future, which would be an openness but also a closing, so—and then I just wanted to give another reflection. I encounter very often in this—in discussion with an Americanist Anglophone world when it comes to eighteenth-century studies or early modern studies—that it is very interesting to me, being trained in Germany and France, that at least in continental Europe (I'm not sure if that is the case for Britain as well), there is this total fear of—especially early modernist or—to say something that is at all political. And it has longstanding repercussions of how Germans or French people do history, because there is this angsting about narratives or plots as well in history because you could actually engage with presentist questions. And here in the States I encounter much more of this, "We need this in order to survive." It is the contingency of the humanities that is maybe more at stake. And I don't know, I just encounter these two different—very different traditions about this, what I see maybe as a German angsting about—I think being an early modernist is kind of a removal of, or a distancing of, presentist questions. Although everybody would say of course your own question[s] have repercussions on the research that you're doing. But that's it. You should leave it with that. And here I encounter much more of this desire to actually engage with presentist questions, also see the need for it. And I don't know, I... It's just, like, my personal experience, but I also try to bring these two traditions together or in conversation with each other because I notice this European suspicion towards also American academia who have narratives and that there is this fear that you force history into narrative, and I think it might be helpful to have a discussion about that across the Atlantic. It's just a reflection I had when reading the papers.

**Türk:** Rebecca?

**Spang:** So ... I started out and I was going to ask somewhat flippantly of Richard: "Do we need 'neoliberal'?" And now I actually feel pretty strongly that we don't, that "neoliberal" has become such a catch-all word for basically "everything I don't like," that as soon as you use it you're simply saying, "I don't like this." And I find that to actually be quite a temper-tantrummy kind of behavior, and I'm not sure it's one that's part of making a very effective argument. Because I think you do make a very, very strong argument in your paper, but it's one I recognized through Johannes's gloss on Tina's paper. Because you [Johannes] said that buying a book is a promise, and so I was thinking about that and my immediate thought was, "Is it only in buying a book that you make yourself a promise? Are there other kinds of purchases?" And then suddenly—before you mentioned Dickens, but now re-enforced by your mention of Dickens—I thought of Miss Havisham's wedding dress. There are other sorts of things that one buys that are part of a promise.

**Sachs:** Always “stuff and money” with you. [Laughter]

**Spang:** It is. And so then thinking about the kind of promise that was and the kind of promise that that didn’t fulfill, I realized that what I think is happening in Richard’s paper is simply that he is demonstrating—“modeling,” we would say—love of Pope. Not papacy [laughter], but love of Pope, and that this is something that really... And that through loving the poetry—there is also something there about loving the world in which it was possible for people to write poetry and that if we can, in some tiny little way, shape, or form, inspire in our students (our children of sorts) a love of poetry, Pope, and the world that made it possible, then in fact we don’t have to go beyond the “now.” We can be “after now,” because we love what there is. And so that brought me to my final thought about reading as action when I thought about reading *to* a small child. It is not the same thing as reading to oneself.

**Türk:** So I think I have John and David, and I can actually go last, and I’m not sure if you want to respond at all; I mean, you can just say—

**Han:** I just had a quick comment about different futures for the material book, and I’m thinking—and this was already brought up—like *ECCO*, right? The way in which the eighteenth-century book was experienced in a certain way, but then the way we recover it now gives it a new future, right? And I’m wondering if that would occur with current material books now. Like, what’s the *ECCO* of *Harry Potter*, right? What’s that going to look like, right? I mean, we’re already kind of seeing it with iPhones and the way you read it, but I’m just curious. I mean, there seems to be a lot that we recover from having the digitization of the actual source text. So....

**Türk:** Yes?

**Alff:** Yeah, so I think the choice of Pope for critiquing the modern university is really fortuitous, not just because of *Essay on Man*, not just because of Windsor Forest as [a] sort of retreat from the city, but also for *The Dunciad*, in which the emblem of intensification and over-production is exactly the material basis for Tina’s optimism in the book—because there’s Grub Street, the cave of poverty and poetry, Lintot’s rubric post, and I’m wondering how a late eighteenth-century representation of book as time beside, time after now, time exempt from toil...What does it matter that that experience relies upon (presupposes) a time/labor/material-consuming industry that had to exist to make that experience possible?

**Türk:** So my short—what I thought was actually how to relate, you know, the questions we’ve talked about to a practice in the classroom. And I find myself—and I’ve repeatedly said this—since maybe two or three years, increasingly wary (is that the right word?) of the idea that what actually we do is to perform a certain intelligence. So I’m very skeptical of the original theses or the attempt to in a way promote oneself by thinking something surprising and I’ve come to recognize more and more that in the activities—intellectual activities—that a certain thickness of the world is actually necessary—and that’s why I was pointing to Hannah Arendt—and is a constitutive part of what we do. And so it’s a mistake to think that we are Cartesian subjects and in this quote “new wave” of realism, and especially in European academia there’s this new realist turn in a way in the wake of a French philosopher at the Sorbonne...I forgot his name, even. And I think that’s a profoundly bad direction to go, because it seems to me what you’re pleading for



is (in a way) thickening the world again, right? Because my sense is that it gets very thin. Like, the world is extremely thin because we're constantly asked to re-act and usually in the form of, you know, projects that are merely conceived as intellectual and that are in a certain way detached both from an embodied sense of being in the world—from being sensitive, even, to a certain social environment. And so to me really the task is not to discover creativity or to—you know—other forms of temporality as another resource that we just can feed into goal-oriented behavior. But rather to really break down the goal-oriented desire to be constantly making progressive contributions, to go forward, to be original—and rather focus on embedding those into something like a thick reality that carries its own intelligence, that maybe is only recognized at a slower speed, and so actually to write less, but thicker books, is actually the way to go.

Concerning—I wanted to end—and you're welcome to add more things, but I wanted to end by a small comment, I think. I wanted to thank Rebecca again for having gone through all the incredible accelerations that were necessary in order to create this slow space of reading over the last days, in which to my mind a lot more has been happening than just, you know, discussing papers but... you know, experiencing someone's fatigue or their leaning backwards in their chair or their facial expression or seeing the beauty of some of you thinking was actually equally part of this. Yeah, so thank you, Rebecca, especially [since] I'm not sure how the future will look like: I know that she has incredible administrative additional future burdens on her, so she might be willing—and I hope so—to steer us for another year or so, but that concerns institutional future, so I—yeah—thank you for this workshop but also for your, you know, steadfast, robust, at times idiosyncratic, and resourceful really steering of the Center for Eighteenth-Century Studies over the last years in spite of a lot of difficulties that you have also gone through also personally which.... yeah.<sup>1</sup> And [to the room] thank you for coming, so—

**[Applause]**

**Nash:** May we take a minute to try to reply? [Laughter]

**Spang:** Encore, encore!

**Nash:** So, Rebecca, I like your comment and would rush to say, “Yes, I can give up ‘neoliberal’ if I hadn’t already given up ‘posthuman’ and discovered to my regret that I need to drag it back,” so I’m going to think about that, but I couldn’t help but think when you were asking, “What else can one buy besides books?” is “Well, one can buy credit hours,” and there is just someone who was telling me the other day, “Well, what you do at IU is there’s a little shopping cart on top of where your courses are when you register.” I’m not sure that I’m ready to give up neoliberalism. I like the ideal that I’m in love with Pope. I do need to respond to Jesse, who would jump right in and say that I’m mis-loving Pope, and say that you are... I agree with you, and that’s one of the differences in the project I’m doing now and what I’ve done before that makes me very nervous about this kind of presentist argument. I’ve never been a presentist, and it seems to me to be one of the differences between what I’m doing now and what you [Molesworth] are doing. And one of the things you’re doing is you’re recovering what eighteenth-century writers believed in and you are telling that story and you want to tell it in a very strong way—even a provocative way—

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<sup>1</sup> Editor’s Note: At the time of these comments, Spang had recently been named Director of the Liberal Arts and Management Program and was about to become President of the Bloomington Faculty Council. Both her parents had died within the previous year.

in order to get people to think about what *those* people believed. And there's a certain sense in which I'm trying to get back—and I'm very tentative about this because I'm hesitant about doing presentist arguments—I'm trying to get back at reading Pope against Pope. So that the fact that Pope believed in genius—he didn't just believe in genius; he actually believed in God, right? There's a lot that Pope believed in that I am in many ways discovering elements in Pope's poetry that work against what Pope asserts. So there is a sense in which I take the criticism that you're mounting there, but I'm hoping that I can find a way to incorporate that fully and make an argument that is simultaneously presentist and relevant and yet also historically alert. To that end, I do want to say that I especially appreciate the reference to *The Dunciad*. Among other things, I strongly believe that *Essay on Man* is part of a project that includes *The Dunciad* and certainly grows out of what began with the first *Dunciad* and contributes to the full *Dunciad*. I want to say I skipped over one point with Jesse: that Pope not only believed in genius but I would point out that when he writes those lines, "whatever is, is right," it's also worth thinking about the... John gave us Pope as a sixteen-year-old boy in Windsor Forest, but when he's writing *Essay on Man*, he's also a forty-six year old man knowing he's not going to live a long time—will write the next year about "this long disease, my life"—and attending to his ninety-odd-year-old mother who (in the course of his writing this poem) has a small stroke, falls into the fireplace, is severely burned and winds up dying from that. So "whatever is, is right" is not just an assertion of belief as I would read it, but also an assertion of the belief that one must have given the realities of elder care and what you're actually living with. It's that kind of complicated reading that I'm hoping to recover... and while I accomplished very little else while thinking about how ominous today might be, I did write a brief first paragraph of doggerel verse that begins "Oh blindness to the future! kindly giv'n," and then goes skewing astray into a *Dunciad*-like parody of what my paper is trying to argue in Popian couplets. I do think you're exactly right in that line that Monique quotes, "Earth beholds"—I don't have the quote from memory, but that line that you were pointing me to is echoed in *The Dunciad* in Tibbald's "monster-breeding breast"—and that's actually in *The Dunciad* 1728 version before it shows up in the positive version in *Essay on Man*. So I think that there is that sense where Pope is re-working Duncical material to serious ends, in part so he can come back with "Salvo Two" of the *Dunciad* world, which... "Makes a mighty trade school in the land" was the line in this particular doggerel. So that's my brief response to everyone and all at once. Thank you very much.

**Lupton:** I'm happy to let Johannes have had my last word.

**Spang:** Well, thank you everybody again. Thank you Johannes, Richard, and Tina for this wonderful last session. I wish it didn't have to end, but so it does. Thank you, everybody.

[Applause]