

## Discussion

**Nick Bujak:** Yeah, I guess I'll go first, since I think my answer to your question actually ties into Colin's paper. So, I think you're... I think you're right, obviously, that there are... Just as there are similarities between the examples that I've chosen, the differences are also significant. Particularly, as you mentioned, the temporal dimension of the care that I argue the narrator in *Simple Story* administers on behalf of Matilda. And so imagining, you know, what that looks like. It keeps, it would be, as you say, the death of narrative. It would keep Fanny—no, not Fanny, *Matilda*—in something like the eternal present, and this is no coincidence that this happens at the very end of the novel, because beyond that point you can say no more.

I was actually thinking about this before you even brought it up because of Colin's paper when he describes various kinds of love conceived of in *Prometheus Unbound*. And I was thinking that it's actually kind of perversely interesting that you can compare the kind of care administered by the narrator to Demogorgon's notion of love that is the only thing that's free from chance, time, and ... I forget. The formulation is?

**Colin Jager:** Free from chance, occasion—

**Bujak:** “Free from time, occasion, chance, and change.” Colin, you go on to say that that's not Shelley's vision finally, that's why we have Act IV. But, yeah, I guess, I guess this would be to say that Inchbald is allied with Demogorgon here.

**Jager:** Right. Okay. Nick, can I ask you to just take me through your ending question again? I felt I lost the strain right at the very end.

**Nick Williams:** Well, it's... The sentence I quoted from you is: “the obvious name for the transformation of love into fraternity is secularization.”

**Jager:** Yeah, yeah.

**Williams:** So you're, you know... That's in the section where you're talking about the emergence of this idea of fraternity. And it was always kind of the most fragile of the three ideas, and that this kind of neuters it and, de-... Well, *territorializes* it.

**Jager:** Yeah, right.

**Williams:** And it seemed to me that that, combined with your example of the *curé*—that that was a crucial mistake, and the reference to Paul. I mean, it seemed like there was an awful lot of religious background floating around there, and I... so I wondered about that real stigmatization of secularization in that sentence. “Can a secular love be political?” seemed to be the way to put it, since you raised the question can love be political.

**Jager:** Right. Okay. I mean, I guess I would say that I don't think of secular love as being apolitical. It's a question of what the politics is, right? and whether the politics is sort of contained or *captured by* nationalism. So, that's certainly a politics. So, I guess that's not quite the way I would've asked the question. I was trying to get away from the language of secularization (as I

point out) ... just because that's, that's sometimes taken to be a gradual progress and I was interested in this kind of herky-jerky movement.

So can... If I could reframe your question: could secular love be appropriately political or something like that? I think, of course. I think that's what Arendt is after, despite her own claim to the contrary. But it would have to be disarticulated from nationalism, and this is Shelley's point. And, I'll just... I won't say what I think about this, but I think this is Shelley's point: looking at the way, you know, looking from England at the way the French Revolution unfolded, you know, what it looks like from England to be looking at France at that moment.

So, that's the task, right? A secular international love or something like that. Whether that's conceivable is, of course, a question. I think you get something like that in the fourth act of *Prometheus Unbound* with this kind of thing.

**Williams:** I guess that sentence just looked to me like more of a blanket indictment of secularization.

**Jager:** That's right. Sure, yeah [I understand why you say that]. I... Let me just go on, while I have the floor for a minute, let me just thank you for the clarity of your presentation of my paper, which was really well put. And I want to underline the business about time, which I wondered about in Nick Bujak's paper as well, so, I hope we can come back to that. I was thinking, Nick, about the bit near the end of *Mansfield Park* where—it's kind of narrator's care for the reader—but where the narrator says, "I'm not going to tell you how long it took Edmund to transfer his affections from Mary Crawford." So, for Fanny... Imagine the, sort of, the appropriate amount of time passed, and then suddenly Edmund learns to imagine that, you know, that Fanny is everything that he ever wanted. So, "time"—that's a moment of intrusive narration.

**Bujak:** Right.

**Jager:** I don't know if that's care for us, care for some kind of implied reader, so that the whole incest narrative—or the kind of incest possibility—that's in that novel can somehow be blunted. But, in any case, that's about time, right? and not space.

**Bujak:** Right. So, right... Yeah, I guess my reading of that moment is not a particularly sophisticated one. I would turn to the example of the way that Walter Scott's novel *Waverley* ends where he does a similar kind of thing, and he says something to the effect of, "I won't try the reader's patience in detailing all of these little effects. We're at the end of the novel now." And, I think, we get moments like that in Fielding as well. So, I think it's just kind of like, "Well, let's wrap it up." I mean, you're right, it's a kind of intrusion.. and I'm talking about intrusive narration. But I wouldn't think to use that example. I wouldn't turn to it as a particularly significant one in terms of the kind of intrusive narration that I'm interested in.

**Williams:** Fritz.

**Fritz Breithaupt:** Thank you. My first question is for Nick, and I'll only ask that one (there's too many people here). I want to address your main point about this intrusive narrator, and your assumption is that the intrusive narrator is *good*. I mean, he intrudes in order to protect a character who needs protection or saves them from something that they don't want to do, like making a

decision. But, I wonder: How do we know that the narrator is actually good? Maybe I'm much more skeptical here, but I see a lot of other possibilities, too. I mean, I'm not sure whether this is necessarily about ethical goodness. This could be a rhetorical effect. I mean, the narrator kind of says, "Oh, I'm not telling you how this person is feeling now, so that you have to imagine it." It could also be a self-empowering gesture of the narrator: I am now suddenly more important because I don't let you speak. It could also be self-empowering, in another way: "I'm so good because I do this thing," drawing attention to the narrator as such. You talk about this: the narrator is at the fringes, but the narrator suddenly also becomes center stage at some of these places. And, even more so, it could be a gesture of sadism. I mean, you're actively suppressing characters, not letting them speak. Sadistic empathy, that's something I'm interested in! [Group laughter.] So, I want to know: Why do we know that this is really an ethical gesture of goodness, to keep them in privacy? Privacy, there's also an interesting question: why is privacy a real value that we need to bestow on characters? But I'll leave that. That could be a follow-up for someone else.

**Bujak:** Yeah. You know, that's a good question. I guess there is a kind of suppressed claim or tendency in my readings to think of this as being good, the intrusions as being good... But really they're good *for* the characters, which may not be *good* for other reasons. It's good for the characters, because it's what they want. But, you know, there are problems, obviously, with suppression and silence and lack of publicity and clarity and all that, which I think certainly could be—in other contexts, would be—thought of as problematic, as bad.

I wouldn't... So. I guess, I don't want to really own the claim that intrusive narration is good. I'm interested in the example of *Mansfield Park* (and Austen more generally) about how intrusive narration figures as kind of double-edged sword of sociality and asociality. So, to commit to being a part of society means that eyes are on you and you necessarily give up some aspect of privacy, but you also get to have relationships with people and people who you care about and people who care about you. So, yeah... I'm interested in the complexity of sociality versus asociality, which I guess in some registers would be a question of good or bad, but . . . [pause]... Yeah, I would say in the context of these kind of domestic novels that I'm analyzing, it's hard for me to think of the intrusions as being anything other than good because they're so... I mean, how could they be bad in these examples?

**Breithaupt:** I could think of ways. I think they can be quite bad. I mean, the example here of *Mansfield Park*... I feel like the narrator is superimposing himself or herself over Fanny. That is always ambivalent. I mean, you suddenly speak for the speechless in this indirect voice thing, and there you start to victimize them. I didn't bring quotes to really fully emphasize that... So, I can see, I can see your first point is to say "the narrator is giving Fanny what she seems to be wanting."

**Bujak:** Right.

**Breithaupt:** So, in that sense one could say on that level, on that plain level, there's something good about it... But then it also, of course, immediately turns into a suppression and cementing of that, too, which maybe would be different if there would be a little bit more.

**Bujak:** I mean I just can't see that in the case of *Mansfield Park*. I think the narrator cares about Fanny in the way that we would care about somebody that we love.

**Breithaupt:** Yeah. Okay. Last follow up here. "Caring for," absolutely agree to that... but it's also something... The narrator gets a certain self-empowerment out of the fact that Fanny does not speak up. So the narrator has a certain, there seems to be... I see this as an increasing tendency in the novel of the narrator establishes a certain kind of security of it (as long as she doesn't speak). So, the narrator may even develop a self-interest of not giving her that speech ...until fairly late. So, there is something, I would say, yes, the narrator can have positive feeling of doing something good, but it turns into something sadistic. That's my comment.

**Williams:** I have John here first, and then Tracey.

**John Han:** This is a follow up on Fritz's question, I think. How much... I notice that... Maybe I over-simplified it, but I noticed that there was a clear binary between the male authors and then Jane Austen. So, you have the protrusion of ... and then intrusion. It seems to me like you have a very male-centric text with the Fielding. The narrators intrude in a very powerful way, and then you have Jane Austen and that's more of a protective thing. And I'm wondering if there's a gendered aspect to it? And not only that, but, moreover, is there, as a result, a *political* motive in intrusion? Is there some way that because the author is female and in society that the poor lady has to be protected? Versus, say, in like *Tristram Shandy*. Sterne is very protective of Uncle Toby, right? And there, you, you, you have lots of great examples of em dashes, the way that they... I think at one point you talk about these experiences "vacated of content" as a way to shield them off, but Sterne does the same thing. Most of... I don't think Toby ever completes a sentence [group laughter] in the entire novel, right? So my point is, right,... Is it gender? How much of this intrusion is—kind of linking to Fritz's comment—is the *narrator's* idea (in sexual form) to protect, attack, based on their, you know, motive?

**Bujak:** So, I definitely think it is gendered. I think that this is a kind of historically sensitive use of formal intrusion to speak to a particularly kind of gendered situation that we see in Austen. I don't think though that... Well, so I think, in general, you're right, there is a kind of gendered binary. Though I do have the quote from *Waverley* and there's more than one example in *Waverley* where the narrator intrudes to protect Waverley's feelings from being represented because he's just so distraught. So, does that answer your question? I feel like you were getting at something... like you were accusing me of being gendered in a... in a bad way. [group laughter]

**Han:** No, no I wasn't accusing you at all. I was just wondering if, I mean, because I know that you—I'm sure you have a lot of other examples. I was just throwing into the mix the idea of how does gendered intrusion look? How does... what would that protection look like from a male author? Would that be different than in Austen, for instance? Formally, in Austen you have free indirect discourse What would intrusion look like in a text by, you know... who knows? Like, Scott and other examples?

**Bujak:** Henry James.

**Han:** Henry James. What would that form be, right? Would it be the same endgame? Would it be different?

**Tracey Hutchings-Goetz:** Well—

**Bujak:** I think—go ahead.

**Hutchings-Goetz:** Sorry, my comment follows directly from Jon's. I was going to say [Walter] Scott is the person you need to be looking at for this (at least that's what I think), because Scott's narratorial interventions or mediations or whatever he's doing are very political—it's very historicist. I mean that narrator is definitely someone where I'm buying Fritz's claims more... but I'm inclined to think that you're very spot on with Austen, right? but I think you have the perfect test case for what you're discussing here. Scott is this really great counterpoint because his narrator invites us to be very skeptical about how much he's caring about someone like Fergus or Waverley, right? The way that he's positioned in relation to the characters is very different than Austen's kind of ghostly narratorial presence.

**Bujak:** Yeah. There's a moment in *Waverley*, I think it's at the beginning of a chapter, and the narrator says, "Shall this be a long chapter or a short chapter? Thankfully, you reader, have no say whatsoever...." [group laughter] and he proceeds to talk about whatever he wants and it turns out to be a long chapter. So, yeah, I think that's a good example of where we can see intrusion having a kind of... not providing "care" in the way that I'm talking about.

**Williams:** We'll go over here.

**Anita Lukic:** Thank you very much. Nick, if we accept your model of the ethics of care, then I wonder what kind of *subject positions* it creates for both the readers and characters?

**Bujak:** If you accept my model of ethics and care, what kind of subject position does it create for readers?

**Lukic:** Right. So, for example, the characters you clearly mark as victims and you represent as victims—you twice use the word, the adjective "vulnerable." So, what kind of readers does it promote?

**Bujak:** Well, I think... You know, you may be skeptical of my reading where I say the intrusions basically tell readers that *they* are shamefully intruding on character's lives and should feel bad about that. You might be skeptical of that. I think that that possibility is available, so the subject position would be the reader who respects another's privacy. That's not a particularly satisfying way to be a reader. Because, certainly, the psychological novel—you read it to get to know the characters. But...

**Lukic:** I was wondering if you could contrast your position with the new theorists, the ethical theorists that you stand against... And so (as you paraphrase or summarize) for them it's about character identification, readers are positioned in a perspective of otherness and strangeness and difference, etc. And so, in your model, how's... what is the relationship between readers and

characters, I suppose? And, I hope you don't say it's one of "care," because I still don't know what that means.

**Bujak:** I don't think it's one of care. I think in my model, readers are the ones doing the harm; we're the aggressors, we're prying, when the characters would prefer us to leave them alone. I mean, that's kind of a weird way of talking about it because, of course, the characters don't know that they're characters. So, that's, I mean, it's a simplification, I would want to get more precise about it, but... yeah, over-simplifying slightly, readers are the ones who are doing harm. And, you know, I didn't bring this up in the paper, but as I was writing, I was thinking, you know, this really ties in, I think, with tabloid culture and reality TV and basically many features of the contemporary media landscape in which private lives of others are not respected and that's precisely what we're interested in as viewers. So, yeah.

**Williams:** I think I have a comment here.

**Ellen Malenas Ledoux:** Yeah. So, I don't know how far you are into this work, but it might be interesting if you're developing it further to think about drawing in somebody like Cleland who actually does look through a bunch of peepholes and takes us... Sort of doing the opposite, right? To just be a voyeur and purposely let us look through the holes in the walls to see what other people are doing privately. And, the way that he just sort of self-consciously positions himself as narrator in a sort of pornographic way—that would be a kind of interesting counterpoint to what you're talking about here in terms of respecting privacy. And, the reason why I did the "hook"<sup>1</sup> is because it relates back to your idea about tabloid culture in this sort of exposé about our sort of pornographic interest in other people's private lives.

**Williams:** And, in the back. Yes.

**Laura Stevens:** So, I have a question for Nick. I was wondering if you could talk about whether epistolary narrative plays any role in your project? And, if so, if you see the epistolary narrative framework as intrusive or not? Because as long as we're talking about voyeurism it seems the figure to really discuss is Richardson. Or, at least, Fielding's critique of Richardson in something like *Shamela*. So, where we simultaneously get too much information, but we're lied to. So . . .

**Bujak:** Umm—

**Stevens:** But, I mean at least as Fielding accuses him.

**Bujak:** Right, so... Many years ago I did think about Richardson in relation to this project. I'm not sure if it's something I still completely believe in, but let me just throw it out there and everyone can attack me if I'm wrong [group laughter]. So, I think in *Clarissa*, when she's writing letters in which she describes some horrible thing that happens to her (which is most of her letters), she tends to fill in the moments before the horrible thing happens with more detail so that

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<sup>1</sup> [Editor's Note] To facilitate conversation, discussion participants were told that they should raise their hands in the usual fashion if they had questions or comments. If they wanted to make a brief, immediately relevant point—one that "hooked" into the conversation at the current moment and whose significance would be lost later—they should raise a crooked finger.

she creates a kind of buffer between—she kind of extends the moment before the harm is represented. And this would be another kind of deferral, a rhetorical deferral. I would say that is certainly a capability of the epistolary form: for the character/the writer to *control* how the harm is represented. So, that's what I would say about epistolarity. I was also just thinking of *Robinson Crusoe*, which is not, of course, an epistolary novel, but it is first person. And, I'm thinking: he represents the shipwreck twice in that novel. The first time, it's much more matter of fact. Later he talks about how distressed he was. So he's kind of protecting himself from disclosing his emotional situation in that novel by... because, the first time he represents it, he appears less weak.

**Stevens:** May I?

**Williams:** Sure.

**Stevens:** So, I think those are interesting comments about *Crusoe*. On *Clarissa*, one go-to point might be the letter that immediately follows her rape, when—I don't know if you remember this letter—but there's this sort of visual rendition of papers torn to shreds. I don't know, but that could be a moment to look to where there is a kind of veil pulled down between us and Clarissa and what happened.

**Bujak:** Yeah.

**Stevens:** Also, a veil within her mind.

**Bujak:** That's a real interesting point and I was also—I'm just thinking now—that novel is almost entirely epistolary, but there are one or two moments in which the voice of the editor jumps in. And I think one of them is the crucial moment when Clarissa elopes with Lovelace, and the editor jumps in to tell us what happens then. So, I guess my reading of that is Clarissa's responsibility and her culpability for making the decision or for being forced into Lovelace's carriage is left--left to the reader's imagination as it were.

**Williams:** Rachel.

**Rachel Seiler-Smith:** I want to go back to the question about character, and I tried to hook—I'm not a hooker [group laughter]. Take that out [of the transcript], Tracey.<sup>2</sup> I really didn't mean to say that! [group laughter]. Wow. What was I going to say . . .? [group laughter].

**Stevens:** Character.

**Seiler-Smith:** Thank you. I want to go back to the question of character and readership and sort of throw you a bone here because I think that, I think that what you are doing with Austen and free indirect discourse is really unique and I don't think we see it very often when people are talking about Austen. And, I think that, you know, Nick said it spot on when he said, "oh, this is a well chosen example," because Fanny Price is *absolutely* vulnerable; and, what's really interesting is if you look at the film of *Mansfield Park*—

<sup>2</sup> [Editor's Note] Tracey Hutchings-Goetz recorded this session and transcribed it.

**Williams:** Which one?

**Seiler-Smith:** The one with, Flannery.. not, what's her name? O'Connor? [snaps fingers] *Not* Flannery O'Connor [group laughter]. It's not! I'm like... I can't speak today!

**Jesse Molseworth:** Frances.

**Seiler-Smith:** Frances O'Connor. Thank you, Jesse. The one with Frances O'Connor and ...what's his name? Anyway, yeah, that. In *that* one, right, she's doing the narration and it's—a lot of it's borrowed from Austen—and what's interesting is...It's sort of a reading of the novel in which Fanny never wants to be the one read, but wants to be the one reading, right? And so, it's really interesting about Fritz's "sadistic narrator" thing. I guess I wouldn't buy that, because if the narrator is trying to sort of take over for Fanny in these moments, it seems it's eliding with Fanny's position herself. You know, think about the play: she always wants to be the reader or the prompter.

**Bujak:** Right, right.

**Seiler-Smith:** She doesn't want to be on the stage. She practices reading with them, but she won't do all these other things. So, I think that actually: it would be masochism, rather than sadism, in that sense. She doesn't want to be narrated, but she wants to be the narrator. And so, it's so interesting that the film takes that up and translates it in various ways.

I want to take up this question of the reader doing harm, and I think that Fanny would buy completely that the reader is doing harm. But, I want to tie that into Nick's idea about temporality (and particularly generationality) in *Inchbald*. You say that Matilda is "freed from the burdens of choice and futurity—the very burden that plagued her mother throughout the first part of the novel" (p.4). And, it's been a while since I've read it, but if I remember correctly, *Dorriforth's* besetting sin in the second part of that novel is that he reads his daughter as the mother. That he, you know, refuses to acknowledge that Matilda is not her mom, and that she's not going to make the same mistakes and the same problems. And so, he refuses to engage with her, you know, narrative-wise or otherwise until it becomes, sort of... the exact moment you talk about: the brink of her utter, you know, demise and violation, that he begins to come in. So, his refusal to read her is an element of harm. And so, I wonder if, first of all, this sort of lapse in saying that the narrator is protecting her from the same choices as her mother might be simplifying the simple story in the way that's not simple, in that she's not her mom; that there's a distinction between those generations, and that that is a sort of form of protection in that leaving it for the reader to decide is sort of asking us to be tested in the way that they tested *Dorriforth*, right, to not make that same mistake. So, it's not suspended necessarily; if it is suspended it would be this sort of one in which the demand is placed on the reader, as you say, but one in which it's asking us to not mis-read in the same way that another character did. So I guess that's my... I don't know that that's so much a question as a different offer of complication.

**Bujak:** I think it's a really interesting question that the novel raises at the end is what we do imagine, how do we read Matilda. Mary, you wanted to jump in?

**Mary Favret:** No, no. No, I'm raising a full hand. [group laughter]

**Bujak:** Oh, Okay. Right, "Whether the heart of Matilda, such as it has been described"—it's worth noting that it hasn't been described at that great length—"could sentence him to misery, the reader is left to surmise—and if he supposes that it could *not*, he has every reason to suppose that their wedded life, was—a life of happiness." I think that the way that's written is kind of leading us towards imagining her as saying, "yes, I would marry you," but I... You know, it's left open intentionally and I think it's a really interesting question how we are supposed to read Matilda such that we can determine what she would say here.

**Williams:** I think there was a question here, on . . . ?

**Michael Meranze:** Me? I'm going to change topics, so if there are things...

**Williams:** I don't know. Are there more hook-like? Yeah, in the back.

**[female participant]:** I have a question about *Villette*, which also ends with a very open-ended... You know: does this ship with the person (the loved one) return or does it sink in the storm? And, that's an ending, an open-ended, you know, point of anxiety for the reader, and I guess the backstory of this open-endedness is that, like, Charlotte Brönte wanted him to die and some people who were reading it were like, "no, please don't make that happen." So, I was wondering if you would consider that as fuel for care, the sort of open-endedness or intrusiveness as care for the reader? I know you've been thinking a lot about care for the protagonist?

**Bujak:** So, just spell that out a bit: how would it be care for the reader?

**[same]:** Well, so, you're attached to these characters that you've been reading about, and so—

**Bujak:** You don't want to see them die.

**[same]:** [chuckles] To slap on a sad ending could be a bit harsh.

**Bujak:** Yeah, I think that's a really interesting point. So, yes, that's care for the reader.

**Williams:** Yes?

**Christy Pichichero:** Okay. Great. I would like to sort of dovetail back to the question of character and the relation to the narrator. In your conclusion (p.18) you make this distinction between caring "for" a character and caring "about" a character and I'm wondering what's in that distinction for you? Whether "caring for" a character is precisely that formal, narrative caregiving (what you're calling "formal, narrative caregiving") or whether there's something else that you want to say about the distinction?

**Bujak:** Yeah, I just wanted... I was thinking as I was writing this that people... I guess I was trying to forestall an objection where someone would say, "of course narrators care, narrators care about their characters, that's obvious." And, I agree that that's obvious, so I wanted, I just

wanted, you know, to insert that distinction to say, “Okay, obviously narrators care about their characters—some of them, many of them, do. You know it’s obviously possible for narrators to hate their characters, and to despise them or whatever, but in many cases they do care about the characters, but that’s not that interesting.” And so, I just wanted to emphasize what it would look like for a narrator to care *for* a character, so it’s really just about emphasizing and distinguishing the formal point that I’m making.

**Pichichero:** Okay, thank you.

**Williams:** Yes.

**Kirk Wetters:** It’s just in a certain way a small comment on the topic... The part I find really interesting and productive is the tension between an intrusion or an intrusive narration and the idea that the reason for the intrusion is actually something like tact or discretion. So, it’s weird that it’s like a complication of silence (or something like it) that causes this whole effect in the first place. So I see a kind of opposition, maybe, between tact and discretion on one side and a tendency toward gossip, prolixity, curiosity, etc. on the other. And, I tried to think about how it works in terms of my novel, *Wilhelm Meister*—the novel I will talk about on Friday—and that’s also an interesting case because you really have a lot of moments of something like tact or discretion. Points where there are little lacunae in the storytelling, which lead the reader to jump to conclusions which then much later on turn out (many times) to be false conclusions.

**Bujak:** Right.

**Wetters:** And so, it feeds more into Fritz’s model, I think. It’s something like a manipulation of reader and character which encourages the reader (as I look at it) to not jump to conclusions, to not believe stories, to read between the lines, so to speak. It’s a kind of—it introduces a kind of resistance within this strategy of tact and elision or something like that.

**Bujak:** Umm. Mmmm. So, in one of my footnotes—one of my endnotes—I raise this issue of the difference between what Fielding is doing and what Austen is doing in these silences. There’s this essay that I cite: there’s a similar moment in I think *Tom Jones*, where ... I talk about how there’s a five year gap in *Mansfield Park*, we just jump over it suddenly, and there’s a similar kind of large temporal jump in *Tom Jones*.<sup>3</sup> And what Fielding does as he’s describing—or his narrator does as he is describing—that temporal gap is to say, “the sagacious reader can imagine, can fill it in with whatever details that should be there because they’re smart enough.” So, he’s encouraging you to perform that kind of imaginative work, whereas... that’s less the case in Austen.

**Jager:** I wanted to get back to the ending of *Simple Story*. Either way you answer the question, it’s disappointing. [Group laughter]. You don’t want her to marry the guy, but you also don’t want her to not marry the guy, right? So there’s a, there’s a... the conclusion towards which everything is tending, of course, is that they are going to marry because there’s this repetitive kind of structure. But, that feels pretty deflated or deflating, and I think the same thing is true in

<sup>3</sup> Henry Power, “Henry Fielding, Richard Bentley, and the ‘Sagacious Reader’ of *Tom Jones*,” *The Review of English Studies* 61.252 (2010): 749-772.

*Mansfield Park*. So, I'm going to try and bring the two novels back together again, though we've been talking about them as two different examples following what Nick Williams had to say.

I think most people who read *Mansfield Park* want Fanny to marry Henry Crawford and want Edmund to marry Mary Crawford. The Crawfords are so much more interesting than either Fanny or Edmund [group laughter]; and, obviously, this is deliberate on Austen's part, to kind of set up this expectation, and then pull the rug out from under it. So, the kind of protection, the kind of care that you're talking about, Nick, might be a way to have the unsatisfying, the kind of emotionally or even narratively unsatisfying ending (the actual ending), feel like a satisfying ending. The ending is made to feel quite full and marvelous. I was just thinking, one can't see that, I think, unless you've thought about the kind of suspension that takes place at the end of *Simple Story*. So, that could be a kind... That care for Fanny could be not protecting Fanny from prying so much as allowing Fanny to have the kind of full and happy life that we presumably want her to have, while also, as readers, we see what a constrained and relatively joyless conclusion the novel actually tends to.

**Bujak:** I think that that is a beautiful interpretation, and I'm willing to accept it. I sort of... I think I talk around that issue a little bit in the conclusion of the paper where I talk about the limits of imaginative care. Like, what do we actually imagine is going on here? I think that that is—so, you know, I don't think I've closed the case on that—it's a (I think) an open question; I think it's a big question. What is imaginative experience and how can we describe it in a way that is accurate? So . . . I don't know for sure if there is an answer to what we imagine happening to Fanny—not Fanny, Matilda—at the end of the novel and I agree in a way that that is disappointing. But, in another way I find that to be invigorating and really interesting: the idea that... Because it makes you see her as a character in a novel, as opposed to a real person whose story you're hearing. So one way of thinking about the ending is that there is no future; the character known as Matilda at that moment ceases to be with everything, without ever having to make that choice. That is, I think, the kind of... I like that because it's counterintuitive and weird, and so that's the way I would push it, but I don't think that that's the only way you could answer that question.

**Williams:** Now for something completely different.

**Michael Meranze:** Now for something completely—I just wanted to raise or put out two issues: one more for sort of on-going discussion, the other is to build off some of your comments about time. The first for on-going discussion (because I think this is going to come up in all the papers in a way) is that there's something, it seems to me, interesting about the skepticism about an author caring for a character. What I think that's about is the difficulty that we have in recognizing that before care there is aggression, and [our tendency to think] that if it is going to be “care” it has to somehow be pure and lacking in aggression, in a Winnicottian sense. That—and this I think runs through a lot of the papers—it's part of the implicit anti-Foucault theme of the conference: that somehow if there is aggression then it is worthless, that we need to find care that is pure and free of aggression. And I wonder if that's either possible or even all that interesting a way to approach things.

So, that's just one issue. The other one that I was curious about, as long as we're—or as long as I am—babbling on about Winnicott... You know there's, it struck me in both papers... And this is something that Nick Williams's comment suggested to me or sharpened for me. Both the

ending for Matilda and the way that Colin sort of linked gratitude, forgiveness, and the missed opportunity were all ways, or are different ways, in which time gets frozen and/or becomes meaningless in a way. In that Matilda is sort of left in this position—which those of us who are neurotic are very familiar with—in that moment before you actually make a decision because once you make a decision you have to give something up. And, therefore, the way to fend off death is to never decide (you know, in fantasy).

And, in Colin's case the missed opportunity is a sort of way—although it's a really interesting way—a sort of way to pretend that time doesn't happen, that you can somehow avoid the irrevocability of time, if you either give forgiveness later on or express gratitude later on. And, by linking forgiveness and gratitude in the same sentence (which you do on several occasions), it sort of conflates the people who would be doing that, right? I mean, it's like in the French Revolution case, the forgiveness would have to be given by the Church whereas the gratitude would have to be, in your model, given by the French Revolutionary Assembly. But when you start in your rhetoric at the end about love, forgiveness, blah, blah, blah, missed opportunity, all that—the fact that they're not actually the same people—gets swept away, so that this possibility of somehow reimagining this narrative around a missed opportunity that we could now recognize and make whole is itself a sort of fantasy that these things had been destroyed and cannot be recovered. So, they're both ways of denying the movement of time. So, I don't know if that makes sense.

**Jager:** That's really useful. You know there's a long tradition of reading Shelley—of reading that play and, I guess, other Shelley texts, too—as sort of all happening simultaneously. And I try to resist that, in the interest of *time*. You know, exactly as you're pointing out, in the interest of something that happens slowly, bit by bit, in transition. The reason that I am attracted to Arendt's take on forgiveness and the reason that I try to use it to sort of pry apart Billy Galperin's sense of the missed opportunity (which I think is ultimately kind of tragic and really irredeemable. I mean he says quite explicitly he's not working off Sedgwick and others, and he says, you know, "I'm not talking about some residual something that we can go back and find"—it's not really reparative in that sense). What I like about Arendt (or at least my sense of what Arendt is after in her account of forgiveness), is that she doesn't like the sort of dramatic—you know, kind of courtroom or truth-and-reconciliation-commission—kind of moment of forgiveness or reconciliation. I think, you know, she would say if she were around now, she would say that's too close to a kind of religious model. So, there's something kind of prosaic about it, but it has to have been always happening for her because otherwise we would never be able to act at all; it's the condition of action.

So, forgiveness is not redemptive in that sense and, therefore, I think, not the kind of fantasy that you're describing. It *may* have that fantasy structure in Shelley, I'm not sure—you might be right about that. But what I'm trying to do by pulling Shelley towards Arendt is to think about a way in which more prosaic kinds of everyday forgiveness have to have been happening so that anything new is possible. So, even if one doesn't recognize them, even if we don't have a kind of dramatic moment, the very fact that human beings can come together and ever bring anything new into the world—the condition of that has to have been that we've been forgiving each other, as it were, all along. Maybe even without knowing it. So, in that way, I think it maybe avoids the kind of fantasy structure that we're talking about. Her model does; whether mine or Shelley's does, I don't know.

**Williams:** Rachel gets to leap here.

**Seiler-Smith:** Could I just ask you to qualify that a little bit more; why forgiveness? Because it sounds like what you are saying is even if we don't have a moment where we say, "I forgive you," or "you've been absolved" or you know, that type of thing, we just go on with everyday life. So, is that "forgiveness," or is it just moving on in a very different way? So, why... I mean you say several times that forgiveness makes politics possible. But of course, what types of politics? but, can you just qualify and unpack that a little bit more, even quite literally for me, like, why you would phrase that as "forgiveness," if it's not? Maybe I am thinking of it in too much of a religious model, where it has to sort of be acknowledged in exchange, but why does forgiveness have to be the condition of action, rather than in some cases oppression or suppression of things that have happened or confrontation or encounter? Why does that have to be the form—

**Jager:** Yeah.

**Seiler-Smith:** That's my question. And what type of action? or is it just action?

**Jager:** Right. Well. Right. So, you know, my excuse... Let me just sort of back up for a minute and say my excuse for thinking about Arendt in the context of Shelley is the fact that she's really thinking through a sort of classical world, right? So, politics for her is, you know... she's thinking about the Greek *polis*, and, you know, there's endless discussion about whether her sense of what the political is update-able. But, since Shelley, too, is working through these kind of classical models—that's the reason for thinking them together.

So. Politics for her really is, you know, the thing that happens when people come together in a space and are able to speak. You know, speech is the highest form of politics for her. So again, it's that kind of Greek model. Given that, forgiveness then becomes a kind of speech act, right? It's the kind of speech that makes any other kind of speech possible or meaningful. So, that's the way that I would unpack it especially in terms of a text—Shelley's text—that's just obsessed with speech.

**Seiler-Smith:** So, it has to be a speech act, but that's not an event or a recognition? Because you said that forgiveness doesn't have to be, like, recognized.

**Jager:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Williams:** I have three hooks. [Group laughter]. Kirk first.

**Wetters:** This is in a way a very small and trivial hook, but I think we actually have a lot of language for talking about the minor, everyday, not even always acknowledged and recognized forms of forgiveness. So, like, "moving on"—the opposite of that would be "holding a grudge," as far as I understand it. So, all these things happen. It's a question of how much we can raise the level in different contexts, so to speak.

**Seiler-Smith:** But we can still act when we're holding a grudge, right? and we can still speak—

**Wetters:** No. We don't speak about it if we hold a grudge, right? We don't say, "I hold a grudge against you." You just act on it, maybe.

**Seiler-Smith:** But then that's still action, right? I mean, so this is where I'm sort of I guess getting confused, and I understand where you're coming from with Arendt, particularly. I'm just wondering especially in your text because you're also talking about transitional justice and you're using very contemporary models, as well; so, I recognize that problem.

**Meranze:** May I hook onto her?

**Williams:** Sure.

**Meranze:** Because I think, actually, although it might seem to help him against me, [group chuckles] I think the crucial distinction which maybe you need to make more explicit is that it's not that it makes politics new, but it makes new politics possible. So, the difference is between something that is genuinely new and something that is simply repetitive, right? So, that there's a question of whether or not what's moving through time is a series of repetitions, or whether there's something genuinely new that's possible. And the argument would be that the reason you need forgiveness is because it's only with forgiveness that you're not, in fact, replaying the old things and actually trying something new. So, it's not that it's politics, its new politics, in a way.

**Jager:** Yeah, sure.

**Williams:** And Rebecca?

**Rebecca Spang:** To be, perhaps, vulgar or material for a minute. We talk about Greece, we talk about forgiveness. Right now, if you think about things that maybe could be forgiven to Greece, it would be debt.

**Jager:** Yeah.

**Spang:** So, debts also need to be forgiven. And there is, in the moment of the French Revolution, a very big debt that the revolutionaries inherit from the absolute monarchy that they could have simply decided to default on, but that would not be caring for the monarchy's creditors, so they hold on to the debt and then they have to find a way to pay it off. So, the debt pulls the past into the present, and by their calculations if they pay it off in a sort of non-revolutionary incremental way, "it will take at least thirty-two years and it will cost us this much more in interest payments, so we need to do something that will be more of a break." Just offering that as a whole other register of thinking about what it is to forgive, and what needs to be forgiven in order to move forward.

**Jager:** Yeah, I love the language of pulling the past into the present. That's... that's really lovely.

**Williams:** I have Johannes and then Rob, I think.

**Johannes Türk:** Yeah. I'm not sure... this is something between a small comment and a hook. It seemed to me that one of the really interesting things linking the papers—and we've already

touched on this—in multiple ways, is the relationship between possibility and care. And I think if you look at the etymology of “care,” then it actually comes from “grief” and “lament.” So, in other words, its history (the history of the word) pre-supposes that something *has* happened that we lament and it gains the orientation to future care only very late. And I think if you project that into a historical dimension, then you would say care is, in a way, turning the possibility of lament towards the future in order to avoid it. And, I think today then, strangely, we have these scenes or these scenarios in our minds where we imagine care as something pure. Where, envisioning all the laments of history, you want to create a complete erasure by saying we can avoid everything by just...in the gaze of a mother onto her child, for example. So, it’s this strange attempt to (on the one hand) feed on history or experience as a chain of lamentable events, and then [on the other] to say, “Look, there’s the possibility of absolute caesura.” That seems to me a very political stake that care entails because the difference—I think that’s what I saw as very interesting in these narratological questions—the difference between the production of a lamentable possibility and the experience (or the past) of a lamentable possibility is, as we have seen since 2001 (at least), a very fine line. So, it’s very difficult to say where the production of lamentable possibilities starts, you know, and where the measure would be that would limit its implications. And I think there would certainly be a lot to learn about that, you know, from novels.

I had a couple of very precise questions, about what it means that the novel *shows* that it cares at the moment when there is nothing to experience (the moment when it gives us nothing in the fictional world to experience). I thought that blank in formal terms seemed to correspond to this erasure or something like the pure possibility of care, devoid of precise content? But, I just wanted to throw this out in order to bring us back to the general discussion because the time is almost over, and see how they relate. ... I mean: possibility is more real than the real in many cases, especially when concerning emotions, so I don’t think... I think it’s actually very interesting to think about history and possibility in the way that you do.

**Jager:** Can I put it in the reverse?

**Williams:** Absolutely.

**Jager:** I just thought of something to say to Rebecca and I think that it connects to this, too. So, there is this critique of the TRC that they had these kind of amazing courtroom scenes, but meanwhile all the land had been distributed. You know, all the economic power had been organized in such a way that—on a sort of very material level—South Africa couldn’t move, or that the movement could not be this kind of euphoric reconciliation because there’s *so* much inequality built into the system over the course of apartheid. So, that’s just a kind of structural, *very* political, kind of conditions that—just as you said—pulls the past into the present and that’s a great analogy with the French. It’s not an exact analogy, but it seems close enough to be interesting to me.

So then the question is—this is the critique of reconciliation discourse that it, you know, that it’s therapeutic and apolitical, that it doesn’t address those kind of structural issues. What I, what I like about what I thought I was finding in Arendt is that she’s thinking about forgiveness structurally, you know. So maybe this would be another way to describe what I think is going on there: the sort of everyday forgiveness. So, it’s a kind of possibility, but it... What I’m hoping to do is avoid the—what could seem like the—sort of sentimentality of reconciliation discourse when it’s layered on top of structural economic inequality.

**Williams:** Rob?

**Rob Schneider:** Yeah, just on Rebecca's point... I mean one of the things that the reconciliation process *does* do—and I agree with the way Arendt criticizes the therapeutic aspect—is the recovery of the past. And the importance of that, just in terms of data! I mean look at what Carol Elkins has done for Kenya and this sort of recovery of what has been obscured, destroyed, lost, denied. This recovery of crimes, of whatever—people killed, imprisoned, tortured, and the like—because it's useful; and this kind of politics doesn't address the question of land allocation and the like which you proposed, but it is useful in terms of authorizing and legitimizing people in the present.

But my other point really is about—and I guess in some ways it kind of builds on what you, Colin and Michael, have pointed out and I like the fact that you mention the prosaic aspect of it because I didn't see the prosaic in the paper, I saw the paper taking off in some other dimension that was hardly prosaic, so I do like that and I guess that it's the way you see Arendt. And, it seems to me that she can be seen as somebody who really is addressing not so much the Revolution—of course, it's a rather dramatic opening to how we think about reconciliation or forgetting—but I think she's really talking about the process of politics which is about winning and losing. I mean if we're going to have a politics which preserves a polity, that doesn't degenerate into civil war. And I think this goes back to the *polis* as well: if you don't care about something else... You *have* to care about more than the issue that you're debating or voting on, because someone's going to lose. If you care only about that, then the polity wouldn't exist and you would be cold and in the eighteenth century. [sic]

And so, the level of care has to be invested in something which perdures and which is from the past. Whatever the past is, compromised and fraught with horrible losses that are rarely recognized and certainly not adjudicated, but somehow you're invested for good or for ill in that as a legacy... and then the future, as well. And... But it means that you, it's a sort of, notion of alternation, that you lose, somebody loses and if you lose you forgive the winner for losing, for making you lose because you care about something other and I suppose you hope that one day you will be the winner. But of course there are some people who always lose, and that's a real problem. It seems to me that Arendt is talking about the process of democratic politics which involves acknowledging through speech, acknowledging that politics is conflictual through the dialogue which is debate and conflict. In this sense—although I don't agree in general with what Michael said about care coming after aggression—here it certainly does. There would be no...otherwise, the care would be gratuitous. I mean, it really is: it's an indication of whether you really mean or care for something if you're willing to sacrifice. If you're willing to sacrifice: you lose this bill, we don't get this allocation, you know, but damn it, I care, and so we care and we go on.

**Jager:** That's extremely helpful. The only thing that I would add to that is that, for Arendt, that's what it means to be human, right? This is her humanism.

**Schneider:** Investing in politics, humans arguing over grievances. ...

**Jager:** Exactly, that's right, that's right. So that, too, is a very secular sense of what the human is, you know. This kind of thing that we as humans have made, this kind of institution (the *polis*).

The capacity to come together to, you know, to bring something new into being, and to care about the maintenance of that thing. Just as you were saying, that's, that's what it is to be human. So, you know, I guess for me the—maybe the interesting effort to square the circle here would be: could you think about that sort of very secular sense of the human as the kind of humanism that might've emerged in the French Revolution, you know, but didn't (at least from Shelley's perspective). For it to emerge, for it to have emerged, it would've had to have been routed through what seems like religious rhetoric around forgiveness and reconciliation, but the ends would've been profound humanism.

**Schneider:** Let's let the real French revolutionary historian respond. [Group laughter].

**Spang:** Oh, there's a hook over there.

**Williams:** I have a hook over here.

**Erin Myers:** Grad student privilege. [Group laughter]. Arendt gets a lot of speed from the *Iliad*, right, in her analysis, which starts with Achilles' anger and the foreclosing of political speech. I'd like to hear you speak more on that, once Rebecca has said her thing.

**Spang:** I was just going to say that what isn't forgiven in the French Revolution is the counter-revolutionaries don't forgive the Constituent Assembly for saying, "We are the nation." Right? You've got a story where it's the revolutionaries who are unwilling to be generous in their love, but there are ways to tell the story of the Revolution where the revolutionaries are positioned that way by the actual existence of opponents to change.

**Jager:** Yeah, yeah, right. So, the cowardly thing to do would be to say, that's the view from England and it's Shelley's, but...umm, mm... So the historical question—and I lean very heavily on John MacManners here—so his claim is that really the forces of counter-revolution are given a kind of, a kind of backbone by the behavior of the National Assembly. And so, that's the, you know... in the kind of broader scheme here, right? It's secularism that creates the religious opponent that it then claims to be matching. So that's the claim, I...you know, yeah.

**Spang:** We can talk about it. [Group laughter].

**Jager:** Okay. [Group laughter].

**Williams:** John.

**Han:** Yeah, I was actually really fascinated by thinking about the emergence of temporality in the eighteenth century. I'm not sure how much, exactly when the shift between what we would now call empty, homogenous time and messianic time; thinking about forgiveness in those contexts, right? Arendt seems to be very much on the side of empty, homogeneous time, opens up the possibility there is always that potential, whereas messianic time is very loaded, right, you can't really... I forgot, this is a big part of it. So, I was thinking about that in terms going back to Johannes, in some ways that—this might be a complete stretch and also I'm running out of cof-

fee—the idea that... Actually I looked this up, the word “care” in Latin means both anxiety and to give assistance. So—

**Türk:** The etymology is false between *cura* and “care,” I do not think there’s an etymological link.

**Han:** Okay, okay.

**Türk:** So—

**Han:** Well ...[Snaps his fingers. Group laughter], well, in that case... Never mind [group laughter]. There seems to be some—

**Spang:** There is in English.

**Han:** There seems to be some... even in the word itself there seems to be some, even in Rachel’s paper the idea of “care” has potential for both harm and assistance and the way that comes across time and the way that we think and figure that as forgiveness, seems—

**Türk:** The *Oxford English Dictionary* says it’s in no way related. [Group laughter].

**Seiler-Smith:** I have it in my footnote in my paper. [Group laughter].

**Williams:** Back here, yeah.

**Stevens:** I have two questions for Colin. The first is one word I can’t find in your paper—maybe it’s there—is “confession.” And it seems like, on a sort of a common-sense basis, it’s hard for forgiveness to proceed without confession, which brings us back to this notion of truth and reconciliation and transitive justice, transitional justice. And, I was just wondering if that was a term you were deliberately avoiding because of its evocation of a trial-type format. It came to mind partly because you talked about forgiveness as a kind of speech act, and so I was wondering if you see the poem as cycling between these two different types of speech acts, of confession and forgiveness.

And, the other question is a little bit more tentative. Since you’re talking about this as a sort of reworking of Aeschylus’s play, I was just wondering also about whether—I just don’t know much about this play—whether Shelley is influenced by the *Oresteia* and whether that’s on his mind? Because that is a trial and it is about a kind of reconciliation brought about through trial, but also what happens is they remake the gods, you know. So, you have, you bring in new gods and you turn the Furies into Eumenides. And, I was wondering if that, if there’s a thread of that in this.

**Jager:** That’s a great possibility. I don’t, I just don’t know the answer to that. But I’m *sure* that’s right. [Group laughter].

**Meranze:** That’s a waffling answer. [Group laughter].

**Jager:** Because it has that, well... Yeah, it has a kind of—I'll use the word—secularization narrative that doesn't seem to have the structurally repetitive quality that secular (what I'm calling "secular transition") does.

Confession and forgiveness, yeah. You know, I mean, so the TRC sort of replaces confession with truth. If you come in and tell the truth, then amnesty will be granted. Which, again, just thinking in terms of our common sense definitions of those words, that feels—truth feels different from reconciliation. I mean the gentleman at the back [Rob Schneider] spoke wonderfully about truth there, I think, you know, just as kind of the recovery of what happened, but I guess you don't have to apologize.

**Stevens:** That's interesting.

**Jager:** If you come in and say what you did, but ... "Confession"—I think we assume that people have to be sorry and demonstrate that somehow. I mean there's not a kind of, there's not a courtroom scene in *Prometheus Unbound* and there's not a courtroom scene in those moments of the French Revolution that I've picked on. There are obviously plenty of courtroom scenes, but there was no moment for confession, I guess, in this, this, this moment of the curés, what there was—and, again, I'm just following these historians, both of whom picked up on, you know, fastened on this word "gratitude"—what there was was an opportunity for gratitude.

**Williams:** Richard. Richard?

**Richard Nash:** Yeah, I'm actually not sure whom my question is for or what it's about. But I think, Colin, it's for your question about the ending of *A Simple Story*, which struck me as you were laying it out, as being an ending that is precisely the moment of transitional justice about which you're writing, in which—as dissatisfied as you managed to sound as though you were with the ending of that story—it is a story which ends precisely on this open-ended possibility of "a better future than we could possibly imagine now" (that nice formulation that you have on page thirty). So, I'm not certain how to turn this observation into a question, but since you're the one who raised the ending of *A Simple Story*, speaking to Nick, I just wonder can I ask you to think a little bit about that in the context of your own argument?

**Jager:** That's interesting because the implication would be that there's—if I'm right on both counts—there's something sort of dis-... sort of emotionally incomplete, or one is left wanting more than what transitional justice is ever going to deliver.

**Nash:** That's what I've been brooding about ever since you brought it up.

**Jager:** Yeah. That's got to be... I mean, yeah, that's got to be right, yeah. Better than anything we might have hoped for, but less than, also less than we might have hoped for, yeah. I'm not sure how to quite put that, but that's really helpful.

**Williams:** Yes, back there.

**Alex Tipei:** Well, so I think this comment is actually Rob's comment. He brought up a word which came up in the paper and I wanted to know more about which was: there's talk about for-

givenness, there's talk of love, but what about hope? There is a couple sentences about hope, and isn't hope also sort of a thing which says, "well, we can hope for a better ending. We can hope that our side wins again. We can hope for forgiveness or for a confession or for a reconciliation." So, I wanted to know a little bit more about the function, I guess of hope in this argument, which seems to kind of do... To work more flexibly than some of these other emotions or ideas or concepts.

**Jager:** So, so as part of Paul's triumvirate—"faith, hope, and love abide, these three"—I'm just going with Paul on love. [group laughter] ...In the sense that, politically, that's the most, politically the most powerful of the three.

**Tipei:** Don't tell Obama that.

**Jager:** Sorry?

**Tipei:** Don't tell Obama that. [Group laughter].

**Jager:** Yeah, or, I mean, the last eight years, maybe. [Group laughter]. I mean... hope is Shelley's word actually, "hope till Hope creates / From its own wreck the thing it contemplates." So, hope is a... Well love is—how about this? Love is less secular; love stays closer to its Pauline sources, which is why the Revolution didn't want love, it wanted fraternity (in my reading of Shelley's reading of the Revolution). And it's precisely... Whereas hope feels more secularizable or already secularized, not attached to a kind of, to a kind of metaphysic the way that love is. And so it's precisely, that's precisely why love makes people nervous and precisely why I wanted to hold on to it. Yeah. Something, there's something a little airy about hope, but, yeah, I mean we could connect that to maybe the possibility earlier, too; those words seem connected, right? And, you know, maybe "opportunity," in the sense of missed opportunity. All of those affects seem to me to float free, I guess they seem a little bit more detached—in an important way—at least from the way that Paul is thinking about love. You know, love is very grounded in, in obligation, and it creates a kind of social world that hope doesn't necessarily.

**Meranze:** Although—

**Jager:** Pretty abstract answer, I'm off in Shelley's world here.

**Meranze:** If you follow someone like Benjamin, hope is much more tied to the past than love is, because hope actually comes out of childhood and from past opportunities and that's what sustains hope is the possibility that something was different and could be different again. Given Arndt's indebtedness to Benjamin, you might actually find that hope has more of a socio-historical rootedness than Pauline love does.

Jager: For her.

Meranze: For her.

Jager: For her, oh, for sure, yes. She has got very little interest in love.

**Meranze:** Even for you.

**Jager:** She has very little interest in love.

**Meranze:** But, even for you. If you're actually trying to be connected ...as opposed to. In that sense, love is airier as a concept.

**Jager:** Yeah, yeah...That, that kind of Benjaminian sense of hope can be rooted back to the distinction between empty, homogenous time and messianic time. I think Arendt's looking for a third term, you know, I don't think she wants either of those. *The Human Condition* is filled with a certain kind of criticism of the sort of emptiness of modernity, but she doesn't have the kind of... I don't think she has the kind of stinging dismissal of it that Benjamin does and she certainly doesn't want messianic time or messianic hope.

**Meranze:** But there's hope from the things like [Arendt's] *Men in Dark Times*. Isn't this also sort of an Adornian thing?

**Jager:** Yes, that's about stepping into the light, right.

**Meranze:** It's also about one's thought that doesn't ever get unthought.

**Williams:** Yes.

**Ledoux:** Yeah, thinking about Jupiter: you stole my thunder. I wanted to talk about how to link these three terms with temporality, and I was specifically thinking about the source text you use, right. So, if you think about *Prometheus Unbound* and *The Prelude* (which you refer to), I mean those are retrospective looks and it seems to me that love looks like the answer in the retrospective. But if you think about Helen Maria Williams, there's a lot of sanguine hope in those letters in a kind of—you know, to get back to our present moment, that reflects that kind of Obama first election moment, right. Where it seems like in the present moment hope is more viable; in a retrospective, the love and reconciliation seems like the answer. So, I don't know—

**Jager:** So, love is always missed then, in a sense.

**Ledoux:** I think it is missed in the moment of the contemporary, you know, contemporary witness and then the retrospective seems to evoke the love.

**Jager:** Right, right. I mean there's that moment in *Prometheus Unbound* where (I talk about it), where love springs and it springs at the very end of this really long, complicated sentence. So, there is a sense of love always being, of—I think maybe exactly what you're saying—kind of a little too late. So, that I... Maybe one question would be whether that, whether there's a kind of Pauline vision that actually puts some sort of more—

**Ledoux:** I think of it more as like a foxhole prayer. I mean, you know [group laughter], in the sense of like, well, you can do with that what you want! But, yeah, I think about Paul as also in a

retrospective moment when, when Agape love has failed, right? He's the second generation. I mean I know that you're talking about secularization, but you can't really divorce it from thinking about it in sort of New Testament terms, because that's the whole lens through which any sort of British person is writing in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, right? So, I mean, Paul's recourse to love is because, you know, we killed the Savior (who was love) and that was what he was preaching. I don't know.

**Williams:** My dance card is empty. Mary?

**Favret:** Yeah. I want to go back to something Johannes said. And when I read these two papers I had sort of meta-response to them and I was thinking of them as both ways of thinking about our efforts as scholars of the past or students of the past. I mean it seems to me that we're talking about temporality, but it also seems to me—especially with the notion of transitional justice—that it's partly how we respond to the past. And, I was thinking... If we take Nick's (which is to say, Austen's narrator's) view of it, if we think of the historian as a narrator of the past, it seems to me that Nick is suggesting there are moments where we should actually shelter the objects of our scrutiny and other moments when we should, in fact, bring them into the fold, as it were, but that the tact that that requires is more complex than we thought. We're not simply asked to build empathy with people in the past; there are perhaps other gestures and other obligations we have towards the past than simply establishing empathic, you know, caring.

But, if we look at Colin's paper, the stakes are quite different and there it seems to me that... I'm trying to think about, there's one line which comes on page twenty-three.

**Williams:** Which twenty-three?

**Favret:** Twenty-three in the binder? No, his twenty-three, forty-five in the binder. Colin says, "For it is only time, with its relentless forward movement, that makes forgiveness, with its curious backwards motion, necessary and even possible." I'm not sure I understand time as always relentlessly moving forward. I think I have a goofier sense of time than that [group laughter], but—I think time moves in all kinds of directions; you know, it moves—but it seems to me what Colin is suggesting about forgiveness and, perhaps, gratitude is that our response to the past *need not be* judging, but that it might be open to these other gestures or these other acts. And, that that, again, as students or scholars of the past—let's call it "the eighteenth century," for lack of a better past [group chuckles]—that somehow ... Right, how do we as students of the past respond with forgiveness and/or gratitude rather than, say, judgment (let alone reenactment)? But anyway, I just want to throw this back to the writers, to Nick and to Colin and ask them to think about... Did you, do you have a kind of meta-ethics here that applies to what *we* do as scholars, readers, and narrators of the past?

**Bujak:** Well, umm, so, let me... I was going to ask a question before you asked yours, and it's actually like a really good hook into it, so let me sort of begin answering your question by asking my question.

**Favret:** As long as I don't have to answer it! [Group laughter].

**Bujak:** The question I had was for Colin, but I think to a certain... you know, it's a question that I need to answer as well. So, Mary's asking about how do the things we describe reflect on our practices as scholars of the past? I was also thinking one of the things that you [Colin Jager] don't do in your paper and I don't do in my paper is to say whether we think of these things that we're describing as actually, literally viable for politics or for caring or for whatever. So, I mean, you were very careful in your response (to a question) that it's your reading of Shelley's reading of the French Revolution. That this kind of like multi-folded layering is the key, and so my question was: What do *you* think of that? So, is this just Shelley being Shelley? And we can just say, "OK, Shelley, shelly on" or [group laughter] ... Or do you think that there's something valuable about it for our moment?

To answer that question for myself. I think... Well, with respect to Mary's question about how does this, how does this ramify into our practice as scholars of the past? I don't know. I think that's a really good question. It's hard for me to really think, it's hard for me to think of an example of the value, as a historian, of like covering something up. I like the more abstract way that you put it: that there are other gestures than, than empathy. I agree with that. I think that that's... but the specific question about... You know, I talk about intrusion as a way of blocking access, do I think that that's... actually I would think that that's, like, morally suspicious in a scholar of the past. So, I think it's—I hadn't thought of that—but it's an interesting question. And, it's hard for me to think of the kinds of care that I describe in my paper as actually being anything other than a fantasy. It's pure imagination. I think it's really interesting that the authors I look at turn to these formal experiments to kind of express a desire for deferral or for privacy, but I think that they are, at the end of the day, only fantasies. And not particularly useful for everyday life, actual everyday lived existence.

**Jager:** So, I... just a couple of points. One. I really began thinking about this paper when I was reading Rudi Teitel's history of transitional justice and that phrase "the chastened political expectations"—you know, as a result of failed political experiments of the recent past—was the one that caught me. And just that "chastened political expectations"... that the lessons of the past are such that we, now (she's writing *about* the international human rights community and *to* the international human rights community) that we now have "chastened political expectations." So, that's one model of what the past might do. And there's a kind of resignation there that I was interested in—the tone... what seemed to me to be a tonal connection between that moment and the post-revolutionary moment in England. I'm not qualified to speak about whether that's an accurate description of what it felt like to be French in the aftermath, but it certainly was one way that it felt to be English in the aftermath of the French Revolution.

So, that's one kind of nodal point, and the other nodal point for me is, is—where I'm trying to go at the end, Mary, and I think this is the closest that I'm going to get to answering your question—by way of Shelley again. But this, the effort to become or make a person... So, Asia. At the very end of my paper, Asia has this dream, she goes back into this dream and what she sees there (when she goes back into the past) are, are shapes, but they're also people or potential people. And, you know, whatever our "chastened political expectations" are, I think this is the kind of Arendtian humanism... any politics is going to be about persons and, perhaps, the kind of making of persons or the granting of personhood to what is, after all, only a shape in the past. And so, that seems to me like a, like a model of a way to relate to the past that is perhaps not quite so chastened.