Discussion of the Papers by Hester Bell Jordan and Mark Vareschi

Andrei Molotiu (AM): Would you like to start first, either of you, and then we'll take questions?

Mark Vareschi (MV): Sure. So the first question was –

AM: I can repeat it if you want me to.

MV: Yeah, that would be helpful. I wrote very sketchy notes.

AM: How does relating contemporary practices such as biometric surveillance or DNA analysis to historically discredited pseudoscientific theories, how could it be positioned strategically to reach beyond the academy or the workshop that actually can have more success, you know, politically, socially, and so on.

MV: Yeah this is the thing at the top of my mind – I mean, when I started this project was, you know, as I'm trying desperately to finish my first book, and the Snowden documents come out, and I was like "this is a big deal!" And so I started teaching courses about surveillance and I was like, "this is a big deal!" And my students were like "nah." [Laughter] So part of the way I've been thinking about this book is why ask and answer the question "why don't we care about surveillance," and then the last hundred days happened and we actually do, and I'm like, leading workshops in digital security and privacy. So we *do* care about surveillance. I actually think this is a very particularly rich time when you have people openly, like, using Lavaterian theory even if they don't, have never read Lavater, they've read some you know, Twitter exchange about it, to show these origins, right. This is an, sometimes I worry that I'm just doing the thing like, "oh, this thing looks like this thing," but no, they're going back to Lavater either directly or indirectly. So I wish I had read the Hegel – thank you so much, but I think like, maybe Hegel's the answer here? [Laughter] So often I'm interested in non-specialists in like, the history of philosophy will be like "well Descartes did all these things!" and I'm like "Descartes was debunked the moment Descartes published!" And I feel that way about things like physiognomy and phrenology – this was debunked in the moment. There were critiques immediately. So that's what actually makes me amplified and the people who won't hear it won't hear it. That's very clear to me. At the same time, people who will hear it will. So I was at a party last spring, I was talking to a journalist who had just come back from covering the RNC in Milwaukee. And she told me this story about being in a bar because it had better wifi and she was doing her reporting, not wearing any sort of political stuff, and these guys were like basically Proud Boys adjacent, like "look at her, you look like a Liberal." She's like, "I'm not wearing anything," and I was like, so I said to her, "oh, it's your forehead." And she said, "that's exactly what they said to me."

Around the room: What? Oh wow.

MV: And I was like, "yeah, because this is a long train of Lavaterian thought." And she's never heard of physiognomy. So when I think about how we reach out of academia it's actually like, here is this tradition, here's this body of thought, here's how it was critiqued *in that* moment, go forth.

AM: Hester.

Hester Bell Jordan (HBJ): Yes, I – thank you for this Andrei, for your comments, and for giving us an overview of Hegel in relation to this. I literally discovered that he had written about phrenology last week and [laughs] had not had time to fully engage with it so thank you so much.

AM: I can send you all my quotes.

HBJ: I would love that.

AM: They come by two different translations, by the way.

HBJ: Okay. Yes, so Mark I think you're precisely right that showing the critique from the moment that these ideas were set down on the page or you know, communicated in a lecture, there were loud critiques.

MV: Mm-hmm.

HBJ: For Gall, so much so that he left Vienna – he wasn't exiled but he left Vienna because he could no longer make a living. And thinking back to, I think, Johannes's point about afterlives being, showing us that culture is a repository – sorry if I've misremembered that – but it strikes me that this is exactly what's going on with physiognomy and phrenology in that they've never gone away and that despite their immediate and repeated debunking they continue to linger. I'm thinking that I really need to visit Avery Gordon's *Ghostly Matters* to help understand what's going on here. Yeah, I don't have solutions at this moment in time, but I think it is *the* central question when engaging with afterlives with these pseudoscientific movements, and I do think that ignorance of their existence and their historical impact is so essential to breaking that ignorance. Hm, what else?

AM: May I then go on to this question about the literature about phrenology and physiognomy in neuroscience?

HBJ: Yes, yes.

AM: I'm asking this specifically from the point of view of, I don't really know about the musical studies but, ten, fifteen years ago neuroscience really had this moment in art history and oftentimes seems to be this very scientistic mode that oftentimes was used to reject a variety of cultural, and to claim higher authority to cultural analysis.

HBJ: Yeah, thank you for bringing that up. Yes, so some of Gall's ideas are essential, like an essential basis for modern neuroscience, neurobiology, psychology, anything to do with the brain. Particularly his idea of faculties and brain localization, the idea that there are different parts of the brain and they do different things and they interact with one another. And there are various other credible scientific issues that could be traced back to Gall. So it's a very complicated legacy. And I think that some contemporary scientists have unfortunately emphasized or reanimated the wrong elements of phrenology at the same time within that process, and like you said, giving credence to some very regressive ideas under the guise of science. I think that's a core issue in my paper and I guess in some ways I'm saying, scientists, please don't do musicology. [Laughter] But also, maybe it's good if you do, but like, please listen to us first.

AM: Yeah, so many like, oh my god, in art history so many interpretations of El Greco and Van Gogh –

HBJ: Right, right.

AM: – are from scientists. Should I move –

HBJ: Yeah, go –

AM: – Mark?

MV: Yeah, so literary studies – I think right around the time I was finishing up my PhD – also had its cognitive science, neuroscience moment, people were putting people in MRI or fMRI machines reading Jane Austen. [Laughter] I mean, Lisa Zunshine is still doing all sorts of different cognitive science work, so it's there, and I get the initial seduction, right. Within literary studies the cognitive turn also tracked with the kind of like, rapid uptake of digital humanities methods, for the same reason which is like the constant declensionist narrative of literary studies, you know, more broadly, so giving it an air of science was imagined as "that will save us, look where we're now."

HBJ: Yes, yes.

MV: Yeah, I mean, I just, I'm not sure what we learned from this work necessarily.

Crystal Lake (CL): I couldn't agree more.

MV: We learned some interesting things maybe about what happens when we read. But for me, as you know, at least in being a literary scholar, that doesn't help me with my core function of literary interpretation, I don't think. And it does risk, as Hester said, repeating this kind of deterministic, putatively objective ideas and claims which are ultimately damaging.

HBJ: Yes, yes.

AM: And also universalizing, in many ways.

MV: Yes.

AM: I think – I also am a comics scholar, and there is a really famous comic scholar who has been tracking eye movements, so he always makes people read comics and tracks eye movements and he's come up with the idea of a kind of unsubjective grammar assuming that they speak all common expressions the same because there's a kind of innate human way of processing images and sequences which seems to me completely made up. Okay so, may I then ask just the question to you about Heroic Beethoven and Late Beethoven?

HBJ: Yes. It's a great question.

AM: Thank you.

HBJ: First of all, to tie this in with your comment about universality, the idea that

Beethoven's music is universal still continues to be a kind of pretty central tension in musicology. [Laughter] Yes, so I mean, so much amazing critical work from Feminist scholars, from Black scholars, from many different kinds of scholars in the nineties have already questioned and upended the centrality of Beethoven to the study of music, his centrality to the performance of classical music. Yet, there are very strong strains within musicology, music theory, and music performance that very, like really tightly hold on to the idea of Beethoven as universal and as genius – pervasively, almost so I would say. And I think that it's really important to reception of his music, reception and also public outreach around his music, and I would say it's a really central narrative in the public and public interaction with Beethoven's music, in a concert hall, on the radio. That is the reason that is given for them to listen to classical music, to value this art form, to come to concerts, et cetera. But going back to your question – could you repeat it for me one more time?

AM: I'll just –

HBJ: Just to summarize, yeah.

AM: I wonder to what extent what we might call the phrenological rhetoric of Beethoven's genius matches with the lionization of his Middle Heroic period.

HBJ: Yes.

AM: And challenges to this that might be posed by the Late period.

HBJ: Yes. So I think – many scholars have looked at this – Scott Burnham, *Beethoven Hero*? Am I getting that right? So he explores this very idea of how performance and musicologists really honed in on the so-called Heroic period which is Beethoven's middle period, and the music within that as somehow the defining music and a lens through which we should interpret all of Beethoven. And it's, that has been upended, for example, by scholars looking at what his often being thought of as quite embarrassing compositions that Beethoven composed during for example the Congress of Vienna, such as *Wellingtons Sieg* which has long been pretty uncomfortable or – what's the word I'm looking for – inconvenient for continuing to view Beethoven as a genius. So, and there's been a lot of like, explaining it away. As for the role of the public, and seeing Beethoven as a genius, I – in his day, and immediately afterwards, it was not the public that created, that attached genius to him. It was a very structured and intentional effort to craft him into the defining genius of music and one of – I would hesitate to say – one of the defining geniuses of the nineteenth century more broadly. And then the public agreed after being told that enough. As to how phrenology might engage with Beethoven's music – I'm really going to have to think more on that. In terms of late style... I think you're on to something there, it really does dialogue with late style and an article which I've drawn on a fair amount by Abigail Fine on the physiognomy of late style in Beethoven, I think is going to be really helpful in trying to tease that out.

AM: I have too many more questions so I will not ask any of them – so we'll open up. Noel?

Noel Chevalier (NC): This is – it's partly comments but it's something that Hester, that'll direct you into because it's just popped into my head when I was reading your paper. Well, first of all, I'll say that there is a Beethoven movie that no one's heard of called *Un Grand Amour de Beethoven* by Abel Gance, who was director of *Napoleon.* This was his sound film in '36, and it's not evidence of Gance's genius except there's this one moment, a sequence in

the film where he's walking through a grove of trees and he's listening to the birds and you start to hear the chirping get silent and – have you seen the film?

HBJ: No, but –

NC: It's this famous moment, probably the best moment in the whole picture –

HBJ: Yeah, this is the story that gets repeated.

NC: – where he becomes aware of his own, so Gance experiments with the soundscape to sort of show this, hard silence and Beethoven's reaction to this, and he hears the birds again and then. So there is an attempt, I mean, the film kind of died, but it was as much an exploration of this aural landscape in the way that Gance has done with the visuals in the silent movies. But that's not what I wanted to talk about. There's a really interesting connection if you're talking about phrenology with William Blake and there's a life mask at the National Portrait Gallery that was done in 1823, so that was about four years before Blake's death, by a man named James Deville who was a phrenologist –

HBJ: Yes.

NC: – he was a student of Nollekens, and he was interested in doing this life mask of Blake precisely to find evidence of his artistic genius. So he did, you know, much the way that was described, that you described the life mask of Beethoven being done. But George Richmond, Blake's friend, when they saw the finished product, everyone was highly critical of this thing – he says "that is not like dear Blake's mouth. Such a look of severity was foreign to him, an expression of sweetness and sensibility being habitual." And what's interesting is that, as you talk about the idea of the stern, severe Beethoven, you know, who ends up on the bust, becomes our image of the great composer and part of Beethoven's genius is this inaccessibility, this overpowering, humorless figure who's, he probably wasn't reading him but it was part of, as you see, this having all this plaster on your face [Laughter] and in Blake's case anyway he talks about when the plaster was removed half of his hair came out.

HBJ: Oh no!

NC: It's a wretched kind of thing to try to study this – so as a phrenological object it became useless, but it still exists as a life portrait of Blake. So I don't know what you do with that but –

HBJ: Oh no, thank you for drawing my attention to that. I think that could be very productive for me to look at that especially to understand how contemporaries were responding to these objects, both in terms of their artistic merit and their, I guess, affective merit, and their phrenological merit. Because there isn't much about how people –

NC: Yeah, yeah.

HBJ: – responded to this Beethoven bust. There is one interesting anecdote from Vincent Novello, his music publisher –

NC: Ivor Novello? – is he the same family as Ivor Novello?

HBJ: I'm not sure.

NC: Oh, okay.

HBJ: Anyway, he visited the Streichers and he tells this story, this anecdote of Streicher, Andreas Streicher, taking the Beethoven bust down and placing it on a table beside him, and then Novello gazed at it while he, he was reading through autograph scores of Beethoven. So that's very interesting and I want to get into it but yeah. This Blake example I think, is very enlightening as a different example of how people might have engaged with these geniuses. But thank you for that.

AM: Jesse then John.

Jesse Molesworth (JM): Yeah, Mark, don't you want to talk about gender a bit more in connection to this? I mean, I'm actually kind of taken by, I mean I buy your reading of the aesthetics of anti-blackness of paintings like this, but it seems equally concerned about the contrast of the black silhouette with the white silhouette which is I think purposefully gendered female in something like this. The one place that you could have gone in this paper but you don't is to Josiah Wedgwood. Remember that Wedgewood is the guy that encourages the kind of sexist practice of bleaching hands with arsenic for women, precisely because it gives them the kind of features or form of porcelain which contrasts very strongly with his beautiful blue –

MV: Mm-hmm.

JM: It is the reduction of the female form in essence to its lines and to its aesthetic form. Scholars have made much of this – the line in William Hogarth, the Line of Beauty, is the reduction of beauty to the femininity of form. So you know, I think that the aesthetics of linearity that you're describing, there's a huge and strong and important gendered component to it.

AM: Yeah, if I may, the history of painting always renders Caucasian men and women, but the women always as much lighter in skin tone than the men, big reason being that they're indoors and also, idealization requires the skin tone be completely consistent. So if you have rendered something, you know, like with a more ruddy face, that was not idealized – in idealization, you had to have the consistent tone of a statue.

JM: The whiteness is explicitly feminine.

MV: Yes.

CL: Can I have a tiny hook here? The most famous silhouettist in England – before it's called silhouette, it's shadow painter – was a woman, Harriet Myer.

Around the room: Oh.

CL: So, that's just there as well.

MV: So, you're correct, there's not a lot of discussion of gender in this half. Much of it is in the front half especially when I'm working on Burke, right, because for Burke beauty is

feminine, also black women are a source of terror and not beauty, so thinking through like Zakiyyah Iman Jackson's reading of that particular sublimity of black women and – so a lot of that work happens there. And Abigail Zitin has written beautifully about Hogarth and feminism and his particular, you know, *she* reads Hogarth's practical form as a kind of proto-feminist thought. That's why that's not here – it could be and probably should be. It seems, as I was constructing this chapter which needs to be revised, so this is very helpful, it seems to make sense to talk about the questions of gender with Burke because they're right there, and in some ways Hogarth and gender has been written about very, very recently.

JM: Let me re-ask the question then; can you translate that to a gendering of contemporary facial recognition – you know that is to say that, is there a gendered component to the kind of current moment of facial recognition?

AM: You have a hook?

Rebecca Spang (RS): I've got a hook and I've been – the example that you offered, Mark, of the journalist?

MV: Mm-hmm.

RS: I think it really matters that she's a woman and it's her forehead, because if she can move it it hasn't been botoxed. [Laughter] It differentiates Mar-a-Lago face from Liberal face.

MV: Yeah, and I think especially now that Mar-a-Lago face has entered into the lexicon like, that valence is even more fraught and perhaps less physiognomical. So yes, absolutely, especially when we talk about face identification technologies, a lot of these databases, the initial face databases that early FRT and face recognition, face identification technologies were training on were all white men. And we know from Joy Buolamwini's work at the MIT Media Lab that a lot of these tools were very good at recognizing white men, less good at recognizing white women, and very bad at recognizing any people of color but especially women of color. Some of that has been solved, right, because it's in their business interest, to just have, enroll more people in databases. This is Ruha Benjamin's critique – it's like, do we want equity in the name of you know, making people more easy to surveil? So that's where the gender component comes in. As it sits right now, facial recognition systems, and the most interesting ones are used by policing, border control, those sorts of things – their accuracy with especially white men and white women is pretty close to parody (0:43:52). The problems still remain with recognizing people with darker skin tones, and that was the initial provocation for this chapter but also all the stuff you didn't read.

AM: Can I – hold on a second – James, do you have a hook or a question?

James Ward (JW): Sorry, I was actually just telling my daughter that I'd be finished quite soon.

[Laughter]

CL: I just have a quick hook that's also a kind of question but – Kara Walker, go. [Laughs]

MV: Yeah, so you got the let me fit this into like a clear afterlife with the Hoan Ton-That anecdote because it works so well, but the bigger argument of the chapter is like, facial

recognition has been talked about as a technological problem. That's wrong. Facial recognition is also an aesthetic problem. So what is the alternative? Kara Walker, is like where we end up at the chapter, right, thinking about ways of using the silhouette in reimagining it as a way of black aesthetic practice but also black counter history. There's also this incredible piece – I think it's on this level if you go just down the hall – it's a black woman, it's enamel over oxidized steel. And –

AM: You mean here in the Union?

MV: Yes, yes, I took a picture of it. I can show it to you all later or you can go see it yourselves – and the skin tone is the oxidized steel. So the artist begins with blackness. And I'm really interested in that as a provocation in thinking about like, what are the other possibilities here. Hogarth, when he talks about making an engraving, we go from dark to light. And that's part of why Hogarth is such an interesting figure in this story because he's also a kind of a path-not-taken, but also the lineal form is so seductive to these kind of mathematizable approaches to vision, of seeing.

NC: Mark, when you took that picture, did it show, did it make a box around it to recognize there's a face or not, do you remember?

MV: It did not, because – this is one of the small studies I've been doing, like I went to the US National Portrait Gallery and just walked around like, does face detection work? Sometimes yes, mostly no, depending on –

AM: Can I just ask, if you have a hook, make sure that the hook is not an actual question, because I know that John's been waiting for a while. So if you have a hook – you have a small hook?

Christopher Geary (CG): It's a small hook.

AM: Okay, small hook and then no more hooks and then John.

Monique Morgan (MM): It does look like James has something to say –

George Boulukos (GB): Oh yeah, he has raised his hand.

AM: Ah, okay, James does have a hook or a question? Which one?

JW: Just a short hook on Kara Walker and –

AM: Okay then one more hook and then – go ahead.

JW: There's another great artist also called Walker, Barbara Walker, who takes – she's also part of the afterlives of silhouettes – she takes Baroque portraiture that feature people of color and she traces them in pencil and the rest of the image is totally whited out, it's really interesting to look at. That's me, thank you.

CG: Yeah, just to add on to Jesse's question about gender, there's also this weird resurgence of physiognomy in online discourse around transvestigators and that's – I think that would be really fascinating to look up because they're often literally drawing lines over people's faces.

There was, I saw one cycle is like reaching self-parody now, and they're like "Woke Marxist Pope is also, like, you know, has a feminine skull."

MV: I don't have the scholar's name off the top of my head but there's this book *Going Stealth* which is about surveillance of transness and it begins exactly with like, okay how do we, you know, the epistemology is ultimately a surveillance epistemology of knowing who someone really is on the basis of these totally crackpot physiognomic ideas.

HBJ: It keeps on going back to paranoia.

AM: So, John and then Richard. I'm sorry, do you have a question too?

Ronen Steinberg (RS): I do.

AM: So, John and then Richard I think was next – hold on, okay, John?

John Cowan (JC): Thank you very much, both wonderful papers. Hester, this story doesn't feature in your paper but I'm sure you'd be able to illuminate us much more than I would, the story of escapades concerning Haydn's phrenology? If you can tell us that story it would be illuminating.

HBJ: Yes, yes. So a couple of disreputable figures stole Haydn's skull from his grave. I don't remember the year, but it was a scandal. Oh Kristin, you can help me remember the story. But anyway, it was – yeah, there was this absolute fascination with it – supposedly the heist was motivated by phrenology and I guess they, the commodification of heads, of these artifacts and dehumanization of course, of the deceased, yes, I do believe they were caught and reprimanded.

Kristin Franseen (KF): I think it gets better than that.

HBJ: It's better than that, yeah, so help us out, Kristin?

KF: One of the co-conspirators was Joseph Carl Rosenbaum who was an accountant and the husband of Therese Gassmann Rosenbaum who was a student and friend of Salieri's.

Around the room: Ah.

KF: It's weird because this gets talked about in some of the like sensational literature as like, Rosenbaum, when the police came to reclaim Haydn's skull, Rosenbaum hid it under the mattress and had his wife proclaim that she was menstruating so they wouldn't bother her. But very few of these like pop history things mention that his wife, the incredibly famous singer Therese Rosenbaum, and what actually happened was that Rosenbaum gave Haydn's employer, Esterházy, a different person's skull, that was reburied – reburied in – yeah.

MV: What?

KF: So there's this like whole – I just remember the first time I read this story going like, "oh, he gave them another skull like that was a normal thing." [Laughter]

HBJ: It was – it was kind of normal.

KF: Right – I mean –

HBJ: The idea of they're both anticipators, so, it's such an issue in all of these…

KF: And Rosenbaum kept a diary that I'm reading right now and it is a very bizarre thing because it is a lot of sort of theatrical gossip about his wife's career, and it gets to Haydn who he knew socially because they worked for the same employer for a while, you know, the great Haydn and all that, and then after he dies he wrote in his diary about stealing the skull.

JC: Haydn's body has since been exhumed and moved somewhere else that I believe that they have –

KF: Both skulls!

JC: – now Haydn rests with two skulls. [Laughter] And I have one larger observation point to the discussion I'd like to raise. There is a portrait of Mozart next to my bed that I acquired as a teenager and I thought was very handsome, so I put it up on my wall. And then I was on Zoom with a Mozart scholar and he goes, "that's not, that's not Mozart." It was a nineteenth-century reimagination of Mozart – Mozart was known to be very thin, pallid, very large eyes which is not necessarily very robust, I would say, of a build that he had and so it's not surprising to hear that he was reimagined in this nineteenth-century portrait to give the impression of strength, I suppose, in his face.

HBJ: To be more like Beethoven.

JC: Perhaps. And I think about the pieces of music that the public is most familiar with – say, Rossini you have the William Tell ending of the Overture, for Wagner you have Valkyries, for Beethoven you have the end of the Ninth Symphony – these are all very masculine-coded, vastic pieces. So I'm curious if you have any thoughts or reflections on masculinity in image and masculinity in the pieces that have become associated with these people and these images.

HBJ: I think they're too inextricable, essentially. I see this as a part of a nineteenth-century reimagining of some of its origin stories, I suppose, and with thinking about gender, maybe we could interpret that through the idea of gender categories being understood in new ways and this biologically determined idea of women and men being essentially different which was not the assumption in earlier centuries. And also increasing top-down attempts, though not necessarily real or practiced, of separating women and the home, middle-class and other class women into the home, and men into the so-called public sphere. So I think these composers and their music become useful markers and expressions of certain ideas of nineteenth-century masculinity. Those are some of my initial thoughts.

AM: We have a hook over here, and then – okay. Nicole, do you have a hook or a question?

Nicole Mansfield Wright (NMW): A question.

AM: Okay then, you're in the line.

Titir Bhattacharya (TB): My hook was essentially about – I know you mentioned authenticity

a little while back, and then just like going off of that, the people having their portraits drawn, very often those portraits were embellished, they were made to look better than they actually looked, and you know, that continues to be a trend today. We've also seen like politicians complain about how their pictures look bad and they're not like photoshopped enough, et cetera. And I was just wondering how the question of authenticity might play into that given the fact that there is this attempt to kind of show that, "I am this way because I look this way, and that is a good way to be, and you are a Liberal because you look this sort of way," but in these portrayals there is that element of inauthenticity so how would the two reconcile?

HBJ: I don't think they reconcile, I think that tension is kind of essential to the whole project of representation here, perhaps. But thank you so much for the question, I think it's really interesting. In terms of the Beethoven bust, I feel like who has control over the creation of the image is quite interesting here because it's the Streichers commissioning it and it's Klein making it – Beethoven doesn't actually have a say really in how he is portrayed. And in the context of the concert hall in which it was displayed and the wider collection that was created alongside it, I mean, there is an act of crafting a musical canon in sculpture and well, monumentalizing the people represented there. So yeah, central tension, Beethoven wasn't involved to choose how he was presented, et cetera.

AM: Richard, first?

Richard Nash (RN): This is both a – it's either a question or a comment, I'm not sure how it's going to come out, for both speakers, and maybe for the last panel as well. I get more confused the more I think about it. Basically. my question's going to come out as something like, what are we thinking of when we think of recognition – what does recognition involve, and particularly when we outsource it? What, that's transformed a lot is I think with Mozart growing more beautiful after his death, I think of you know, botoxed foreheads and who's a Liberal and who's got Mar-a-Lago face, but also specifically in these two papers, it seems to be that the interest in physiognomy is on the one hand – I mean, I partly would like facial recognition because tomorrow I'm going to have to remember your names and faces when I'm not going to remember either one, so it'd be nice to have a device telling me who it is that got a hand or a hook up. On the one hand we have the notion of facial recognition that seems to be designed to identify the normative and detect the outliers, right, and it's a technology of surveillance, and on the other hand we have physiognomy that is apparently, in the way it's being told, supposed to reveal genius of some kind. So this question began in relation to our previous session thinking about does genius have an afterlife or is genius supposed to be immortal in and of itself or is, what is it that we're thinking about the affability of genius. But it does seem to me that we've got two different models of physiognomy that are, I'm not sure if they're complementary to one another or in opposition to one another, but in either case, what is it that is involved, and what is it that we're recognizing here? Are we recognizing genius, are we recognizing a threat, are we recognizing those of us that all botox our foreheads the same way, whatever is normative, and what does it mean when that action of recognition is not our own cognition but some sort of outsourced technological substitute for our own cognition? So I'm befuddled and throw my befuddlement on the table for you to do with it what you will.

MV: Yeah, I think Richard, what you said there at the end is really key, right. There's a profound distinction between computer vision and the workflow that gets us to match no match in facial recognition versus, you know, you not remembering my face tomorrow or remembering it. One is a cognitive processes, one is some combination of either statistical

methods or you know, some form of neural network AI. Those are not the same things and they're also asking a very different question. When I – I don't use face ID on my phone because I write about surveillance, but if I did, the question that's being asked is match or no match. When police or DHS or someone is using facial recognition they want to know who was that person at that protest, for example. So the identification is, we want a name to go with the face, which seems familiar to our own processes, but very often their response is well, this person, but it's not that person. So part of my interest in writing this chapter was about all the cases of people who were arrested because facial recognition said, "it was this person," and you know, inevitably this person who tends to be this person of color's like "I was in another state, what are you talking about." One case I begin with is this man Robert Borchak Williams from Detroit, and he says to the cops, "Can't you see these are different people? Do you think all black men look alike?" Which I think really highlights this distinction between like, the forms of human recognition which are about, in their best case, sociability, mutual recognition, and in their worst case, you know, forms of hailing, in the Althusserian way, like, "hey, you stop." You know, the computer doesn't care. The computer is just like responding to a query which could be unlock my phone, unlock my house, this person is going to jail, this person is getting deported.

HBJ: So I think we could distill some of this down to facial recognition as prioritizing sameness, but Gall and his particular moment fetishizing difference, really, because he was interested in the outliers, I suppose, and the oddities, and identifying many other things not just genius but you know, physical musical talent, supposedly indicated by a bulge around your eyebrows but also counting language, you know, all kinds of functions found in the human brain. And Gall is really predating the idea of the average man by quite a long way. I say that as differently being part of the nineteenth-century afterlife of phrenology, once you're getting into eugenics in particular, and demonization of deviation from this norm, but in the moment in the early part of the story I trace, I think, yeah, different priorities in that particular moment. I have forgotten the rest of your comment on genius, so maybe I'll leave that there at the moment.

AM: Over there? I'm sorry if I don't remember your name.

RS: That's alright. I wanted to ask a historical question – and I wonder, and by the way, about Haydn's skull and all that I didn't know that story – but I'm pretty sure that in this period late in the eighteenth century and certainly early nineteenth century, there were a lot of human remains that went to medical school, you know, they at least didn't regulate until the first anatomical act I think in 1830 something.

HBJ: Yes, there's a book on this called *Cranioklepty.*

RS: To regulate that kind of thing, right, so a physician should be careful about where the corpses that they work with have come from. But that's more of an ethical restriction. But I wanted to ask – I'm struck by the interest specifically in the head, the face, the physiognomy, and reading meaning from it, right. So I'm, by the way, it's not contained to genius, it's also about criminology. So the period your prospective projects fall in with what we historians call the Age of Revolution, but, you know, I don't know, late eighteenth into the first few decades of the nineteenth century and I'm struck whether there is a connection between the anxieties around reading meaning in facial features and the inability to understand the social order, the illegibility of the social order. Which I think pertains also the anxiety around, I mean yes, there's a technology that develops, the technology that gives these MRIs, which gives us

these facial recognition with that, it's elevating wanting, we want to be able to find that brain tumor earlier, or whatever it is, but like everything you can put to multiple uses, but the concern around, the anxieties around, is this okay, should we be doing this, how should we be doing this, it seems to be related to periods where we feel we have lost the social legibility. We can't understand the social causes in which we exist anymore, right. And so I'm wondering if there's a connection between that, it can certainly be there. The uncertainty is gone for a while, at least. I want to know what you think about that.

HBJ: Do you mind if I –

MV: Yeah, go for it.

HBJ: So – yeah, thank you for highlighting this. I'm immediately thinking about the date that this Beethoven bust was commissioned, 1812, between two occupations of Vienna by Napoleon's armies –

RS: And Napoleon's getting stranded in Russia.

HBJ: Yeah, yeah, so absolutely a time of – all three, all of the people involved in this had very recent, real interactions with the trauma of being overtaken and under siege – so that's my first thought. Secondly, I think the history of the self, and of crafting the self, and presenting the self is really important here in relation to phrenology, and I'm thinking specifically of Nannette Streicher-Stein herself because she included her own bust in this collection in her concert hall. So what is she trying to say about herself by including herself in this group of elevated people who are for the most part of a much higher social status than she was. So what does this say about emerging middle class ideas of their place in the world, maybe what does it say about her as someone from Augsburg living in Vienna, and these are very specific points here, but my main response is that I believe this anxiety has a lot to do with nineteenth century people and their ways to trying to understand themselves, differentiate or align themselves with others as they're politically useful for them.

AM: Kristin, do you have a hook or a question?

KF: I have a question.

AM: Okay, so you are in the queue.

KF: I can be in the queue.

AM: Rhi, you have a hook or a question? I got one here, continue, right. I just wanted to make sure to keep the line straight. You have a question?

Rhi Johnson (RJ): I have a hook.

AM: A hook, okay, so, hook there.

RJ: Okay. On this, and a couple of the most recent other answers, we see this fetishizing of difference while looking for the normative. The space that that sort of conjunction speaks to for me is the self-policing in the online manosphere, particularly in the context of like, looksmaxxing and biohacking and the curation of an aesthetic masculinity for an exclusively

male gaze. It becomes like this rapidly shifting over to the window of acceptable masculinity where the extreme becomes the expectation of normativity and any failure to adhere to that is then punished – which we can also look back and see in the aesthetics of gender in the eighteenth century with the denigration of the petit-maître or the majo or other types of sort of dandy presentations.

MV: So thinking about the Age of Revolution question, I think that's generally correct. That said, discussions of physiognomy go back to Aristotle. Discussions of – I'm writing about gait, G-A-I-T, right now, and ideas about gait and character also go back to antiquity, right, and we see a very robust discussion in the early part of the eighteenth-century of the way that one moves as, you know, in dancing or in medicine, as illustrating character. So we see those desires there consistently. Like I'm not saying since the beginning of time, but there is a steady flow. What changes is the desire to make it calculable. To turn it into lines, to turn into something that may be understood algorithmically. So part of this is a story about the developments in mathematics, part of it's a story about developments in image technologies, part of it's a story about, you know, early in the case of gait, really foot pressure sensors, right, so that's where the shift is, and I think it is a shift in magnitude that – you're absolutely right – coincides with that moment and I think that kind of acceleration is driven by the forms of, the kind, the modes of social instability that you're talking about.

AM: Hester?

HBJ: I forgot my point. [Laughter] We can move on –

AM: Why don't we – Nicole and then Kristin.

NMW: Thanks. Really enjoyed these papers and I have questions for both of you. So for Hester, I was wondering if you had any ideas as to why the translation by Streicher-Stein into German was never published and what the connections were between that and the censoring, or the censoriousness of Francis II that made him leave for Paris. Was it down to just questions of materialism or did it go into kind of discomfort with what he was writing about in terms of these aesthetic and also maybe tinging on eugenic, proto-eugenicist material. I just wondered if you had thoughts about that. And then for Mark, I was really struck by the word you used for reduction – speaking about the silhouette as a reduction, and I think part of the anxiety around facial recognition is that it reduces human beings to something mechanistic, something that can just be quantified. And I see in Hogarth or if you think back to his work, there's a lot of – maybe not anxiety – but references to the nebulousness of the distinction between the human and the animal. For example, a monkey is described as a burlesque of the human or a wig is likened to a lion's mane and both give their bearers dignity, and then there's that repeated use of "shell," and there's an artist named Kate Clark who actually sews on human faces to taxidermied animals, and I know that at the same time that all this was going on there was the rise of taxidermy and adaptations of that at the British Museum – so all that kind of gathers, coalesces into my question which is when we have that Swiftian, as you aptly described it, description of pulling away everything else and leaving the shell, is there, do you see, maybe policing of the line between the human and the animal, so not just among people of different races but between human and nonhuman. Thanks.

MV: Hester, do you want to go first?

HBJ: Yes, thank you so much for your questions, Nicole. So I am viewing Nannette's

translation as an attempt on her part to rehabilitate Gall's reputation in Vienna because there'd been such a rejection of him there that I suspect she really wanted to defend him and also advance – you know, she was so invested in these ideas for herself. At one point she commented to a visitor that basically phrenology belonged to everyone and I believe she was trying to say that it belongs to everyone as a way to self-knowledge and therefore everyone should have access to it which was exactly what didn't happen in Vienna when Gall was supposed to leave. In terms of why it wasn't published – I don't know. She didn't finish it. I don't think there – there may not have ever been a German translation published. I'm still trying to figure this out. Interesting. So in terms of Gall's exile, I suspect you might be right that there were other motivations for the government and his other colleagues rejecting him using materialism as a reason. I suspect that personal animosity was also just a really big part of it. He had, I think he had broken effectively with the Department of Medicine at the University of Vienna and had already created enemies, essentially. But as to other anxieties – maybe. And I'll keep looking into that. Thank you.

AM: Mark?

MV: Nicole, I think you've hit on part of what is the kind of visceral reactions that people tend to have about facial recognition and other kind of related technologies is that the facial recognition that a fancy cat feeder uses and the facial recognition that you know, my phone uses or face ID that my phone uses – the math is the same, right, there is absolutely no distinction being made between the abstraction of my lovely cat's face and my face. And I think so to that that's working in Hogarth or if you think about the plates that preface *Analysis of Beauty*, there's a chair leg and a corset. There's a human calf – and they're largely interoperable. The line of beauty I talk about on the young woman's face and somewhere in there is the same line of beauty that's on, you know, an attractive chair leg. Yeah, you said this –

CL: It's form.

MV: Yeah, it's form, right? And form is ultimately dehumanizing. These forms are abstractions, and this makes us, like we all get kind of icky about it. And understandably so, because we want to maintain some distinctions between the leg of this table and my leg. But you know, for Hogarth and for you know, a computer with a camera attached, it doesn't matter. It really doesn't matter.

AM: And don't forget that like, Hogarth who loved his English bulldog.

MV: He did.

AM: Whose name was?

MV: Oh my gosh.

AM: It's Trump.

MV: Oh, that's why I've locked that out. [Laughter]

AM: Kristin?

KF: Yeah, so I have a question for Hester and perhaps connecting to some things in Nicole's paper from the previous session. You sort of conclude with some of these kind of pop journalism and pop history and also right-wing uses of Beethoven, and I've been pondering, given that we both have some experience of music appreciation and the world of historical and fictional and kind of pop history texts about classical music that are meant to be fun and sensational and don't necessarily engage with musicology or historical accuracy, and I'm wondering if one can almost see in this more recent fascination with Beethoven's skull and Haydn's skull and the question of how Mozart died in these kind of pop texts, a sort of parallel world of making classical music seem more exciting through a kind of click-bait –

Around the room: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

KF: If not physically click-bait online, but this sort of like, "oh, here's a gruesome story about this famous composer." I'm just wondering if you have any thoughts.

HBJ: I completely agree. I think it has parallels with what Mark said about the turn towards science in the humanities. It's an attempt to preserve something which is constantly under threat and constantly being accused of being irrelevant and that which wouldn't survive without public money or a lot of private money. So I agree, I think, the click-bait-ification of classical music is something that perhaps a lot of performers have embraced, maybe in a "all publicity is good publicity" type approach to saving classical music. Yeah.

AM: A person that like all those anecdotes of composers, they've been around for like, half-century or no, three quarters of a century.

HBJ: Yes, I would say that, I mean perhaps this even goes back to Brahms and questions of historicism and music composition and becoming so ensconced that dead composers will always win out against live, like alive composers. So perhaps we can even trace it back to then.

KF: Well, if I just can have a slight hook to my own question, the mention of our hero of immortality, of course, the only, the question of, the thing about calling a composer immortal – you only do that after they're dead. [Laughter] You don't refer to –

NC: They don't need it until then. [Laughter]

AM: John?

JC: I'd just like to – like you said, I suppose, what's the first thing you think of when you think of Lully? [comments from around the room] The gangrene in his leg. Not the things he did to write music, but the disgustingly horrifying ways that people –

HBJ: Well, the fetishization of death does seem to be pretty essential to Beethoven's legacy, the legacy of maybe all composers – I guess that's also quite a nineteenth-century Romantic preoccupation. Yeah. I'm done.

AM: Okay. Anybody else? Oh, over there.

RS: I think it's a hook – Mark, are you considering in your project, the bigger project, off of what we've read, as a book, or is a book, Paul Eckman's photographs of the basic emotions?

You know what I mean, those kind of define what the basic emotions –

MV: That's the last chapter. It's on sentiment recognition. So my favorite version of this project was a project to identify based on the expressions of Seinfeld characters, what they were feeling. [Laughter]

RS: Hey, we talked about Seinfeld yesterday! Seinfeld keeps coming up.

HBJ: Will you be talking at all about Messerschmidt and the "Character Heads"?

AM: And Ducreux? And Le Brun?

MV: Yeah, Le Brun, obviously.

AM: But it's interesting because Ducreux has become a meme. You know the mocker guy? And he did a number of emotional self-portraits like he's mocking this – and it's really popular online. Well, it is 3:30, we did begin five minutes late so we can have five more minutes. Oz?

Oz Kenshur (OK): I just have to say, yesterday Jesse was talking about ways in which he found, you know, he was able to put together papers for sessions and find things that made them work together across disciplines. I don't think Jesse's genius was necessary for putting these two papers. [Laughter]

JM: This pairing wrote itself. [Laughter]