

Summer Thesis Fellowship - Report on Work Completed

Overall, my work this summer added around 15,000 words to various parts of my dissertation draft, and allowed me to think through several important aspects of my plans for future work. At the time I applied for the summer thesis fellowship, I still conceived of my chapter one as my “corpora comparison” chapter; I intended to complete the corpora comparison chapter before the summer, and write my “topic modelling” chapter as the primary work of the fellowship. A meeting with my advisor before the summer made it clear, however, that introductions come first for a reason. Putting the corpora comparison on hold, I wrote the first draft of an introduction and literature review as my new first chapter prior to the summer. My new plan for the summer was, therefore, to revise this introduction chapter, and then resume work on the corpora comparisons which would now be my chapter two. This new plan was successful.

I began the summer by meeting with my advisor to discuss the draft of my literature review chapter. We identified two major areas which required more research. First, in my discussion of the theoretical and methodological groundings of the thesis, I had forgotten to actually introduce my four key authors. Second, it became clear that my core argument needed to engage more closely with the concept of ‘cultural capital’ as discussed by Pierre Bourdieu and John Guillory.

To address the first, I researched and wrote 8,400 words of biography and literature review, summarizing the publications, life, and critical reception of Charlotte Smith, Mary Robinson, Hannah More, and Ann Radcliffe¹. It was primarily this research which expanded my list of ‘works consulted’ from 32 titles at the beginning of the summer to 96 titles now². To address the second, I spent several weeks reading Guillory’s *Cultural Capital* extremely closely, alongside responses to his work, writing summaries for myself which I can refer to during the future of the project. It appears that I took a total of 42,000 words of notes of various kinds on the idea of cultural capital, which in retrospect seems perhaps excessive; luckily, my ‘executive summary’ is a much more manageable 3,700 words. My next step for chapter one is to rewrite the ‘framing’ of the chapter in light of my theoretical re-grounding, integrating the conclusions from these notes into my draft, and then to discuss the revised chapter with my full committee.

I also continued to carry out work on the corpora comparison chapter which I had originally envisioned as chapter one but have now converted to chapter two. I researched the history and

¹ Well, almost — Ann Radcliffe has received by far the most extensive discussion in secondary criticism, and my literature review of her reception remains incomplete.

² I also spent some time ‘back-citing’ works which I had consulted earlier in the project but not written up, to save myself from having to do all my citations at once at the very end, but a rough glance indicates that I consulted at least 30 new works this summer.

data structure of my largest corpus, and wrote 3,200 words explaining it. I also began the first phase of my first 'experiment,' locating Charlotte Smith's works in each corpus. Much of the work achieved for this chapter is in the form of much clearer notes on what work to carry out next, and how and why. Although I did not carry out the computational experimentation which I outlined in my initial "Work to be Completed" proposal, I believe that the concrete progress made on my dissertation this summer was the most important next work for the project, and am satisfied with the progress I made.