**ch 1 - intro**

**1.** **intro**

According to the English Short Title Catalogue (ESTC), the most popular English authors of the 1790s were Thomas Paine, Hannah More, John Wesley, and William Shakespeare. Of course this inflammatory claim immediately falls apart on further scrutiny. In fact, by the metric of ‘unique entries in the ESTC database,’ the most popular author of the decade is by far Great Britain, followed by Great Britain, Great Britain, Great Britain, and King George III.[[1]](#footnote-1) Paine, More, Wesley and Shakespeare are only able to rise to our notice if we intervene in the dataset to filter out all authors whose names contain the phrase “Great Britain”; otherwise, Shakespeare is outnumbered by the House of Lords and by the Church of England. These claims demonstrate that a poorly-formed question will produce a useless and stupid answer even (or perhaps especially) if computation is used to answer it. This dissertation is dedicated to the formulation of better questions. At its core, the question is: given that it is not possible to read everything (or even most things), how do we, and how *should* we, determine what to read, preserve, study, and teach? This “question” is, of course, many questions: what we do is by no means what we *should* do; what we read is not necessarily what we study or teach. Different areas of literary history, too, will provide different answers. I focus specifically on writing printed in England between 1789 and 1799, to explore how works have been selected as important, literary, or popular. I also narrow my focus to how these works have been preserved and studied, particularly in digital research. I take Charlotte Smith, Mary Robinson, Hannah More, and Ann Radcliffe as case study authors because all four had their greatest literary productivity in the 1790s, and all four have presented different challenges to the literary memory of their works. Contextualizing these authors within the print mediascape of the 1790s will produce multiple conflicting models of ’1790s literature’ and multiple possible conclusions regarding the superlative works of the decade: rather than resolve these conflicts, I will delineate the reasons they exist.

The problem of evaluating literature is not a new or a simple one. In the eighteenth century, the debate took the form of urgently needing to distinguish ‘trash’ from ‘treasure’. Michael Gamer, in *Romanticism and the Gothic: Genre, Reception, and Canon Formation*, highlights the role of the eighteenth-century reviewer as a crucial mediator between the writers and readers of books. Reviewers sought to dictate the social assessment of individual literary works in order to enforce morality for society at large. [They say so themselves in their reviews all the time—I’ll quote a juicy representative one.] Importantly, Gamer also argues that the critics’ objections [don’t impact audience behaviour, and are more of a rote performance]. Gamer is only concerned with the gothic and romanticism, but the overall regulatory function of literary reviewers as moral arbiters— and the irrelevance of their judgments to some audiences— applies to all forms of writing in the period. For example, George Taylor sees the same dynamic in the theatre. In *The French Revolution and the London Stage,* heargues that, “Critics might make sharp comparisons” between the many kinds of entertainments that were staged, “but little of the programme was dismissed [by audiences] as ‘trash', or ‘immoral', or irrelevant ‘fancy’” (3). Taylor sees the repetitive discourse of eighteenth century literary critics as proof of a larger social divide: “Disagreement as to what is trash and what is treasure suggests cultural crisis, when values are put under question by social stress or political conflict” (3). [Gamer and Taylor both suggest that moral judgment of literature by its critics was driven by social friction, rather than by the aesthetic judgment provided the terms of the debate.] The emerging idea of the ‘public sphere’ [WHICH I PROBABLY HAVE TO CITE/CONTEXTUALIZE, UGH] in the eighteenth century brought with it an urgent task of literary assessment.

[John Guillory, in](scrivcmt://1522D181-0C9D-473D-8BDA-4C991CF9F440) *[Cultural Capital](scrivcmt://1522D181-0C9D-473D-8BDA-4C991CF9F440)*, calls this eighteenth century public re-assessment of literature “the first crisis in the status of the vernacular canon, the problem of assimilating new vernacular genres such as the novel” (xi), linking the idea of emerging genres and cultural crisis to the contemporary framework of canon formation. The notion of ‘cultural capital,’ as formulated by Pierre Bourdieu and applied to the history of literature by Guillory, [unites my take on 18thC lit and contemporary DH archives]. Guillory argues that “in fact ‘aesthetic value’ is nothing more or other than cultural capital” (332), [which means that the renegotiation of definitions of ‘literature’ over time have not been driven by real differences between different kinds of writing, but have instead been fundamentally social and class-based.] In the eighteenth century, for example, the cultural capital of vernacular English literature is defined by its use within the school system to enable and restrict social mobility. English vernacular literature first begins to accumulate cultural capital, he argues, in middle-class schools where it is “a substitute for the study of Greek and Latin, but with the same object of producing a linguistic sign of social distinction” (97). [[SUMMARIZE/REPHRASE](scrivcmt://8588F3C4-CCD8-4B42-B5EC-6CFD2D060B59) QUOTE.] Once they have been institutionalized, and “the school becomes the exclusive agent for the dissemination of High Canonical works,” he argues, “**the prestige of literary works as cultural capital is assessed according to the *limit* of their dissemination**, their relative exclusivity” (133): [‘serious’ literature may not be identifiable linguistically, but it can still be identifiable by the difficulty of accessing it. That which is ‘popular’ is not ‘serious.’] As Guillory himself insists, this [undermines the notion of literature itself as a category of writing distinguishable in aesthetic terms from non-literary writing](scrivcmt://72009655-39AE-4D95-A505-C7ED350E561D). Guillory’s book is motivated by the canon debates of the 1990s, which [DID A THING]. His response insists that it is untenable to conceive of [the problem in terms of ‘representation’]. Instead, [the problem is with literature itself.] “If literary criticism is ever to conceptualize a new disciplinary domain,” he says, embedding his prescription in that “if,” “it will have to undertake first a much more thorough reflection on the historical category of literature; otherwise I suggest that new critical movements will continue to register their agendas symptomatically, by ritually overthrowing a continually resurgent literariness and literary canon” (265). [TRANSITION TO NEXT PARA]

Twenty years later, [people still talk about] the need for “literary criticism … to conceptualize a new disciplinary domain,” [now in the context of computation]. The reconceptualization of literary study itself is at the core of Franco Moretti’s infamous coinage of ‘distant reading’: [QUOTE HIM, ALAS]. Distant reading, as I discuss at greater length below, has been moving away from Moretti[[2]](#footnote-2). However, it is still shaped by the attempt to redefine the disciplinary domain of literary studies. In many cases, the new domain is no longer the “canon” but the “corpus,” a collection of texts which are studied *en masse* for macroanalytical insights[.](scrivcmt://A5D1DB6F-8C74-4A9C-A6AB-51D1115C8950) Katherine Bode, for example, in “The Equivalence of ‘Close’ and ‘Distant’ Reading,” argues [SOMETHING ABOUT OUR CURRENT PROBLEMS]. In response, she calls for “a new object for data-rich literary history” (CITE), which she envisions as scholarly editions of literary systems. An edition of a literary system would contextualize corpora and models as intentionally-crafted expressions of the particular literary system they are being used to explore. Lauren Klein, too, treats the textual corpus as the new object of literary analysis requiring curation, contextualization, and interpretation. Her critique begins with [GENDER], to argue that “it’s not a *coincidence* that distant reading does not deal well with gender, or with sexuality, or with race,” but also that these failings are not inevitable: “it’s not that distant reading *can’t* do this work,” she insists, “it’s that it’s yet to sufficiently do so” (CITE). Bode, too, despite her strong critique of distant reading as it has been practiced by Moretti and Matthew Jockers[[3]](#footnote-3), does not blame distant reading itself. Distant-readers like Moretti and Jockers, she argues, “while claiming direct and objective access to ‘everything,’ … represent and explore only a very limited proportion of the literary system, and do so in an abstract and ahistorical way” (Bode). Klein, like Bode, calls for “more corpora—more accessible corpora—that perform the work of recovery or resistance” to allow research “beyond quote ‘representative’ samples, which tend to reproduce the same inequities of representation that affect our cultural record as a whole” (CITE). This framing re-creates, at the cite of the corpus, the identical narratives of exclusion and representation which were previously located in critiques of the canon[.](scrivcmt://70431F70-1FF6-4174-979B-E5141E3B2357)

The relocation of the debate from the canon to the corpus is not without grounds. As this dissertation will explore in depth, challenges to the technological accessibility of texts have created new hierarchies, and a new “great unread.” Each archive represents a unique set of choices in response to the same sets of questions: what to include, why, how; what to make accessible, why, how, to whom; what, in the end, makes a text matter, and what we are meant to *do* with texts. For example, the English Short Title Catalogue records [XXX] titles printed in England between 1789 and 1799. The corpus most commonly used for DH work on eighteenth century literature, ECCO-TCP, includes only XXX titles for that same time period. What are the other XXX titles, why are they accessible in the ways they are, and what does it mean for digital eighteenth century studies that they are not included? In a series of computational and non-computational research processes, I examine X corpora of eighteenth century texts to learn about four eighteenth century authors, and I examine four eighteenth century authors to learn about eighteenth century corpora. This dissertation, therefore, takes place within three scholarly conversations: the digital humanities, as an increasingly self-reflective set of practices; eighteenth century studies, and the challenges presented by the 1790s; and the frameworks of reparative reading within queer theory which seem to offer valuable resources for both. The remainder of this chapter will describe in more detail the relevant scholarship in all three fields, then discuss the overlaps between them which enable my work. Finally, this chapter concludes with a description of the major research experiments which drive the dissertation as a whole, and providing a sketch of their development across the dissertation.

**2.** **archives**

Eighteenth century materials of various kinds have been collected in many digital archives, of very different scopes. I will draw materials from the English Short-Title Catalogue (ESTC), Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO), the ECCO Text Creation Partnership corpus (ECCO-TCP), HathiTrust, ProQuest, the British Library’s Nineteenth Century Book Corpus (BL), the Early Novels Database (END), Gale’s digitized microfiche of the Corvey collection, Google Books, the Internet Archive, and Project Gutenberg. For several of these databases, especially HathiTrust, Google Books, and Project Gutenberg, their status as ‘scholarly’ or ‘serious’ is contested. Chapter two will explore in greater detail the structural logic and the scholarly reception of these databases in light of their 1790s holdings. Since they are the direct object of study of much of the dissertation, however, a general introduction to their contents is useful here. The corpora vary from each other in terms of two main qualities: their size, and their reputation. The reputation of any given digital resource is shaped largely, I argue in chapter two, by its ability to signal ‘rigour’ in its collection practices. Several corpora of different sizes have established reputations of seriousness, and, correspondingly, cultural capital within scholarly communities.

The most prominent rigorous, scholarly corpus of eighteenth century texts is Gale’s Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO), containing over 180,000 titles 1701-1800, of which 42,000 were printed in England between 1789 and 1799. ECCO is itself (mostly) a subset of the broader English Short Title Catalogue (ESTC), which contains more 460,000 texts 1473-1800, of which 51,965 were printed in England between 1789 and 1799 (indicating that nearly 10,000 titles in the decade appear in the ESTC but not ECCO). The ESTC does not provide access to texts themselves: instead, it is an authoritative bibliographic catalogue, available as a searchable database. It is ECCO which provides texts: ECCO’s 180,000 titles works are available as photographed facsimiles of the full text of each title. The facsimiles can be searched within ECCO’s online interface; these searches examine a plaintext version of the facsimile pages that was generated by Optical Character Recognition (OCR), but this OCR text is not made directly available. As a result, the facsimiles may be read individually by scholars, but cannot form the basis for computational corpus analysis. A subset of ECCO’s texts have been hand-prepared, as part of the Text Creation Partnership (TCP), to be easier to use in computational research. The resulting corpus of ECCO-TCP texts contains 2,231 titles, of which 466 were printed in England between 1789 and 1799. These titles are available as carefully-edited texts encoded according to the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) standard, which not only provides an accurate version of the text’s words, but encodes substantial details regarding its context on the page. [Most large-scale distant reading of eighteenth century literature relies on the ECCO-TCP corpus as its ‘model’ or ‘sample’ to represent the period](scrivcmt://0F16EFF9-6395-4223-BBF5-9BCBFCC77470). Accordingly, one of the tasks of this dissertation is to examine the makeup of this corpus, and how it differs both from other corpora and from print culture in the period itself. These three digital collections — ECCO, ESTC, and ECCO-TCP — are the primary digital resources for the period, which form the basis of most digital research. However, they represent only one approach toward the collection and presentation of digital texts, to which there are two broad kinds of alternatives. These large but meticulous collections occupy a middle space between, on the one hand, highly selective thematic collections, such as The Shelley-Godwin Archive, of which there are many, and the giants of indiscriminate textual accumulation, such as Google Books, of which there are few.

Smaller collections allow for more scholarly curation, but have corresponding limitations. Whereas the ‘main players’ of the the mega-archives can be easily enumerated, these specialized collections are numerous. Some will focus on particular kinds of texts, such as the Early Novels Database (2,041 novels 1700-1799) or Broadside Ballads Online (more than 30,000 broadside ballads). Others exhaustively index particular publications, such as *The Hampshire Chronicle* (1,950 references to fiction in issues from 1772-1829), the Index to the *Lady’s Magazine* (14,729 articles from 1770 to 1818), or the Novels Reviewed Database (1,836 reviews from *The Critical Review* and *The Monthly Review*, 1790-1820). Feminist scholarship in particular has seen the creation of resources like the Orlando Project, the Chawton House library Novels Online, Northeastern University’s Women Writers Online and UC Davis’s British Women Romantic Poets. The virtue of these collections is that they achieve even greater accuracy and comprehensiveness within their defined scope. The Shelley-Godwin Archive, for example, can reasonably aspire to digitize *every* known manuscript of Percy Bysshe Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, William Godwin, and Mary Wollstonecraft, and to provide these manuscripts in hand-encoded plaintext transcripts. However, as is inevitable, these specialized archives have the vices of their virtues: their specialized focus allows them to adapt precisely to their materials, and their idiosyncratic data structures can rarely be combined with other resources. The William Blake Archive, for example, benefits enormously from designing its archive around the unique images of each page of each copy of each of Blake’s works. But because this approach is so well-suited to Blake, it cannot be applied beyond Blake. Even if the archive’s resources were available for download, they could not be directly compared to materials from another source which does not record its information at such a minute level of detail.

The best known mega-archive is Google Books. In a scholarly context, one hesitates even to designate this as an “archive,” particularly in the same breath as resources like ECCO: books of all kinds are scanned indiscriminately with only the bare minimum of roughly-accurate metadata collected about them. Books are sourced from libraries whose collections are being scanned in bulk, or are submitted directly by publishers or authors who are attracted by Google’s call to “Promote your books on Google—for free” (CITE[[4]](#footnote-4)). These rapidly-scanned books are prone to unpredictable errors, including inaccurate dates, misspellings, duplicate copies, and inaccurate subject classifications (Harper 2016; Jacsó 2008; Weiss 2016) (CITE Mike Sutton and Mark D. Griffiths) — infamously, many books have “1899” assigned as their publication date because this date was used as a placeholder for “no date”.[[5]](#footnote-5) Many photographed pages still include the fingers of the employee holding open the book. Nonetheless, Google Books is frequently used to study the prevalence of various “n-grams” (words or short phrases) over time, thanks to Google’s built-in tool. The tool is able to search books which are, for copyright restrictions, not available directly to readers, making it highly tempting for questions about contemporary language use. Similar in scope to Google Books but with more limited research tools is The Internet Archive. The Internet Archive, unlike Google Books, is a non-profit, but like Google Books, it carries out mass scanning of books. The Internet Archive declares that it contains 20 million books and texts, and scans 1,000 books per day in 28 locations around the world (CITE).[[6]](#footnote-6) Equivalent numbers are not currently published for Google Books, but in 2013 books were scanned at the rate of [1,000 pages per hour](scrivcmt://46FFA73D-5B8E-4789-A8BB-5E3C022E9AFB), and in 2015 more than 25 million books had been scanned. Google Books and the Internet Archive are not “canonical” sources of texts, but they are nonetheless part of the ecosystem of digital eighteenth century studies.

TODO: move half of this HathiTrust stuff to chapter 2, and write more about Project Gutenberg instead

Moreover, as in eighteenth-century texts themselves, the boundary between “canonical” and “noncanonical” digital archives is a permeable one: Google Books and the Internet Archive, distinctly ‘noncanonical’ archives, are also integrated into HathiTrust, an increasingly popular ‘canonical’ resource for scholars[.](scrivcmt://F786BEC7-7D93-4034-8DE2-A77298CDD56F) HathiTrust’s collection contains digitized content from “a variety of sources, including Google, the Internet Archive, Microsoft, and in-house member institution initiatives” (HathiTrust)}. The “in-house member institutions” are six consortia (such as the University of California state university system), and one hundred and forty-nine individual universities and colleges(HathiTrust)}. The aggregate scholarly authority of these institutions carries the weight of elevating HathiTrust above the Google Books scans which form the backbone of much of its contents: “The members ensure the reliability and efficiency of the digital library,” the website assures us, “by relying on community standards and best practices” (HathiTrust)}. The collection itself is always expanding: the website contains a dedicated set of instructions for “Getting Content Into HathiTrust,” providing an “Ingest Checklist” for those who might contribute either existing or new digitized content(HathiTrust)}. The texts themselves are all stored as facsimile page images and full-text OCR transcripts. In order to comply with copyright law, however, HathiTrust only provides large-scale downloads and OCR transcripts for texts which are in the public domain. What does, in fact, distinguish HathiTrust from similar repositories is its commitment to enabling fair use and research-based access to texts as much as possible. Rather than favouring maximum restriction of access in order to ensure maximum protection from legal complaints, HathiTrust has innovated several ways to allow scholars to carry out text-mining analysis on copyrighted texts. The scholarly benefit of HathiTrust is most evident, therefore, in the study of contemporary literature, where copyright has been a major barrier to study. However, eighteenth-century texts are so firmly in the public domain that copyright issues rarely arise; instead, the major challenge in building large-scale corpora of transcripts (rather than facsimiles) is the resistance of eighteenth century typefaces to OCR. Especially since many eighteenth-century digital facsimiles are themselves fascimiles of microfiche (with resulting loss of image fidelity), running an eighteenth century page image through OCR software generally produces useless [gibberish](scrivcmt://86D87A9D-2241-46DD-A000-4C9FE3321297). As a result, HathiTrust’s key intervention — using OCR to circumvent copyright restrictions — has limited applicability to eighteenth-century studies.

As this survey of eighteenth-century digital archives shows, there is no ‘perfect’ corpus for large-scale study of eighteenth-century texts. Moreover, I argue, the imperfect samples which each archive provides are shaped not only by historical factors of eighteenth-century print culture, but also by contemporary digital culture. Each archive represents a unique set of choices in response to the same sets of questions: what to include, why, how; what to make accessible, why, how, to whom; what, in the end, makes a text matter, and what we are meant to *do* with texts. As this dissertation will argue more fully in chapter two, these questions of digital history have important resonance with literary questions about literary canon formation.

**3.** **my authors**

All of the computational work in this dissertation aims to identify, in as minute detail as possible, all works printed in England between January 1 1789 and December 31 1799. This eleven-year “decade” was a turbulent one across the Channel, encompassing the whole of the French Revolution, from the Estates General in 1789 to Napoleon’s coup in 1799.[[7]](#footnote-7) In England, these events caused strong and variously nationalist reactions in a country which had so recently lost its colonies in America and feared that a French invasion could come at any moment. This is the decade of *Common Sense*, it is the decade of *Lyrical Ballads*; it is the decade of Hannah More, it is the decade of Ann Radcliffe; it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness; it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity. Charles Dickens’ now-famous superlative degree of comparison captures the tension often seen by scholars between ‘Enlightenment’ modes of writing and ‘Romantic’ or ‘Gothic’ modes. To navigate the 1790s, I turn to four authors whose careers and works usefully focalize my core questions of genre, publics, and the status of literature and writers. These authors are Hannah More, Charlotte Smith, Mary Robinson, and Ann Radcliffe. All four authors were highly productive in the 1790s, and all four had complex and contested literary legacies after the 1790s. In the following chapters of this dissertation, I will ask whether and how contemporary digital archives make these authors visible. First, however, I provide here a brief overview of each author’s major works, general biography, and critical reception.

**3.1.** **Charlotte Smith**

Charlotte Smith’s literary career began with the publication of her volume of poetry *Elegiac Sonnets*, in 1784. Six sonnets by Smith had appeared in periodicals in 1782 and 1784 prior to the publication of *Elegiac Sonnets* (Roberts). The first edition (1784) contains sixteen sonnets: ten original sonnets, then “other essays” in the middle of the volume (a translated “Song. From the French of Cardinal Bernis” and a poem in couplets, “The Origin of Flattery”), and six more sonnets, three of which are translations “from Petrarch”, and three which are “Supposed to be written by Werter.” A second edition of *Elegiac Sonnets* rapidly followed the first in the same year, with only slight amendments. In the next year, 1785, Smith’s translation of Prévost’s *Manon Lescaut* was published, but not under Smith’s name “after criticism of the work’s morality” (Fry xi). The third and fourth editions of *Elegiac Sonnets* appeared in 1786. These introduce 20 new sonnets, and the non-sonnet poems are removed. A new preface is added, now dated from Woolbeding, a small West Sussex village where Smith moved in 1785. In the first edition, twelve of Smith’s sonnets are Shakespearean in form, and the remaining four vary in their irregularity. As she expands the volume, Smith’s use of the sonnet becomes increasingly experimental (Roberts); as she writes in the preface to the third edition, despite attempting the Italian model, “I am persuaded that, to the generality of readers, those which are less regular will be more pleasing.” 1786 also saw the publication of Smith’s *The Romance of Real Life*, a translation of *Les Causes Célèbres*. In 1788 she published her first original novel, *Emmeline, or the Orphan of the Castle*.

1789 begins this dissertation’s decade of interest, a period of intense productivity for Smith: she had at least one new publication almost every year from 1789-1799. In 1789, she published her second original novel, *Ethelinde, or the Recluse of the Lake*, and a fifth edition of *Elegiac Sonnets* was issued. According to Roberts, “[t]he fifth edition of 1789 perhaps marks the high point of Smith’s sonnet success. The edition was published by Thomas Cadell by subscription, with list of the names of over 800 ‘noble, literary, and respectable names [...] a brilliant assemblage’, as Smith describes them in the new preface. The edition also includes five illustrations, engraved by the eminent Thomas Stothard among others. As well as twelve new sonnets, the non-sonnet poems were now re-inserted (due to popular demand), together with an elegy and ode” (Roberts). 1790 had no publications. In 1791 she published *Celestina*; in 1792, *[Desmond](scrivcmt://C0006E63-AA33-44EE-8561-D8B5C5581CC4)*, and a sixth edition of *Elegiac Sonnets*. The sixth edition features eleven new sonnets and four non-sonnet poems, which completed the first volume, together with the new preface bemoaning Smith’s personal circumstances. Most of the new poems added were from the novel *Celestina*. Although it continued to be reprinted, reaching its tenth edition in 1812, after this edition no further poems were added. In 1793 she published *The Emigrants*, a poem in two volumes, as well as *The Old Manor House*, a novel. In 1794, *The Wanderings of Warwick* and *The Banished Man*. In 1795 she published her sixth novel, *Montalbert*, and began writing in a new genre with *Rural Walks: in dialogues intended for the use of young persons*. 1796 saw its sequel in *Rambles Farther*, as well as the novel *Marchmont*, and *A Narrative of the loss…* of several ships. 1797 saw the [eighth edition](scrivcmt://6F8B08C3-EBC1-4CD0-BF1C-1DAEA5CF7BE5) of *Elegiac Sonnets*, unchanged since the sixth. 1798 saw the novel *The Young Philosopher*, and more natural history for children in *Minor Morals*. In 1799, Smith tried her hand at theatre with *What Is She?*, a comedy, and published the first two volumes of *Letters of a Solitary Wanderer*.

After this dissertation’s decade of interest, Smith continued to write at a slightly less frenetic pace. In 1800 she published three additional volumes of *Letters of a Solitary Wanderer.* In 1804, she published *Conversations, Introducing Poetry: chiefly on subjects of natural history for the use of children and young persons*. In 1806, Smith published *History of England […] in a series of letters to a young lady at schools*, and Smith herself died, age 55. The next year saw the posthumous publication of *Beachy Head* and *The Natural History of Birds, intended chiefly for young person*s.

Smith’s personal life sometimes overshadows this career. As her works often make clear to her readers, after a briefly comfortable youth as the daughter of a well-off country gentleman who lived beyond his means, she was married at age sixteen to Benjamin Smith, “son of a prosperous London merchant and owner of Barbados sugar cane plantations. The marriage was contracted hastily to remove her from her paternal home, now dominated by her new wealthy stepmother. Looking back in bitterness nearly forty years later, Charlotte Smith described the event as her father's decision to sell her like a ‘legal prostitute, in my early youth, or what the law calls infancy’ (Smith to Sarah Rose, 15 June 1804)” (Roberts). Benjamin Smith was cruel and violently abusive. He was also so financially irresponsible that his wealthy father, Richard Smith, wanted to prevent Benjamin from inheriting. Charlotte Smith assisted Richard with business correspondence and impressed him as responsible and competent. In recognition of her husband’s unreliability, “she persuaded [Richard] to relieve his son of all his ties to the business and establish him as a gentleman farmer in Hampshire” in 1774 (Zimmerman). Richard Smith died in 1776. “In an attempt to provide for his daughter-in-law, Richard bequeathed the bulk of his property to her children. But he had drawn up his will without professional advice; legal wranglings over the inheritance worth nearly £36,000 soon arose and were not settled until almost forty years later. By 1783 Benjamin had already unlawfully squandered more than a third of this trust and, as a consequence, found himself first in deep debt and then in King's Bench Prison.” (Roberts). “Her husband Benjamin Smith had been arrested for debt and embezzlement in December 1783, and it was from King’s Bench Prison that Smith negotiated the publication of her sonnets, partly to fund her husband’s release and in order to support her family of, at that point, nine children. James Dodsley of Pall Mall, who had initially refused the sonnets, finally accepted and published them after the intervention of the popular poet and near neighbour of Smith, William Hayley, to whom the edition is dedicated” (Roberts). After the success of the *Elegiac Sonnets* allowed Smith to pay for her husband’s release from prison, Benjamin Smith fled to France to escape further creditors. Charlotte Smith moved between England and France over the next year and a half to negotiate his debts, and in 1785, the family was able to return to England. In 1787, after 22 years of marriage, Charlotte Smith legally separated from her husband, “an unusual step for a woman of her time” (Fry 7), and moved to a town near Chichester with her nine surviving children (of the twelve she had given birth to). However, despite this separation, Benjamin Smith retained a legal right to Charlotte Smith’s profits from her writing. Smith moved frequently after her separation, due to financial instability and declining health. “Judith Phillips Stanton estimates that Smith's greatest earning years were from 1787 to 1798 (Stanton, Charlotte Smith's “literary business”, 393). When volume 2 of Elegiac Sonnets appeared in 1797, the list of subscribers had shrunk to 283 names.” (Zimmerman). “On 23 February 1806 Benjamin died in a debtors' prison and some money reverted to Charlotte Smith. By then she was far too ill to execute her favourite scheme, to settle on the shores of Lake Leman. On 28 October 1806 she died, only eight months after her husband, and seven years before Richard Smith's estate was finally settled.” (Blank)

Smith’s posthumous critical reception has undergone multiple shifts in appreciation and obscurity. Duckling’s study of her presence in anthologies indicates that shortly after her death in 1806, Smith was widely eulogized and anthologized, remembered and emulated as an important British poet. As the nineteenth century went on, poetesses began to be anthologized separately from poets, in collections with ambitions that were commercial rather than intellectual; Smith, too, “lost intellectual ground” even as she continued to be sold (Duckling 2016). By the end of the nineteenth century, even these volumes marginalized Smith’s poetry, with prefatory material which dismissed them as trite and depressing, unenjoyable reading. In the early twentieth century, Smith began to be considered as a novelist, rather than a poet; this new field did not lead at first to a much better reputation for her. Florence Hilbish produced the first extensive study of Smith, considering her as both poet and novelist, in 1941, to unappreciative reviews: Ernest Bernbaum’s faint praise said that “‘much time and care have been devoted to it; whether deservedly, is perhaps questionable,” since “the subtle or intricate is absent from Charlotte Smith's writings” (138). Hilbish presents Smith’s emotional poetry as sincere rather than conventional, and her prose as more motivated by politics than commerce.

Duckling credits the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s with the beginning of Smith’s recovery (217): the renewed interest in women’s writing rediscovered her novels, and especially the radical political content which Hilbish had observed. At the same time, Bishop Hunt published a record of Smith’s influence on Wordsworth, as demonstrated by an almost overwhelming amount of physical evidence: Wordsworth owned copies of her works, which he annotated; he copied out some of her sonnets in his own hand; he paid her a personal visit; he edited some of her poetry for publication; he wrote explicitly of her influence in notes to his works. Hunt calls Smith “an important early influence on Wordsworth which has not been explored in any detail up to now” (85); his abstract somewhat snarkily asserts that “Wordsworth did not suddenly start writing sonnets in 1802 simply because he happened to read Milton’s.” However, Hunt has little praise for Smith herself: of one poem, he says, “Whatever the artistic value of such verses,” what matters is the underlying theme which Wordsworth would later express more masterfully (89). Smith continued to be treated separately as an interesting woman novelist, and a minor pre-Romantic poet, through the 1980s. Smith rose to greater prominence in both of these fields in the 1990s: with work by Stephen Curran, Roger Lonsdale, Jennifer Breen, Andrew Ashfield, and Jacqueline Labbe, “Smith became established not only as a prominent figure in the revised female canon, but also as a central figure in Romanticism” (Duckling 217).

Throughout this history, two aspects of Smith which have prompted frequent re-assessments are her personal life, and her work across genres. The first matter, the importance of a female author’s life as a woman to her importance as a figure worth remembering, is implicit in several phases of the rise and fall described above. Fry is not alone in concluding that “[f]ew writers have presented themselves in their works so fully as did Charlotte Smith” (3): Smith’s poetry lyricizes her personal experiences, her novels feature autobiographical stand-in characters, and “the often intensely personal pleading prefaces” (Behrendt 189) to her works explicitly ask for them to be read light of her ongoing struggles. Perhaps as a result, much scholarship on Smith takes the stance of *The Literary Encyclopedia* in defining her as a woman who wrote because of, and chiefly about, her personal distress. Antje Blank’s article there highlights Smith’s financial motive to write: “Smith turned to writing when a failing marriage and a costly lawsuit left her without resources to raise her large family” (Blank). “And so,” Blank says, Smith “churned out” her novels (and the many editions of *Elegiac Sonnets*, and her other poetry, and her educational writing) to support herself and her nine children (Blank). Even when Smith’s Elegiac Sonnets “won her the reputation as an author of serious verse,” this is important primarily because it “lent greater respectability to her ensuing productions in a less prestigious but more lucrative genre – the novel” (Blank). At the same time, as Labbe argues in her article “Selling One's Sorrows: Charlotte Smith, Mary Robinson, and the Marketing of Poetry,” Smith cultivated a public persona as a paragon of victimhood and motherhood, suffering deeply but turning her suffering into marketable prose out of a duty to her children. In periods where this image of womanhood is valuable, Smith is more easily valued, as in the eighteenth and nineteenth century anthologies which saw Smith as a moral exemplar (Duckling 203-4). Or, in periods when women’s resistance to patriarchal oppression is of scholarly interest, the direct, personal nature of Smith’s writing is valuable in itself, as in early feminist scholarship.

A complicating factor to these evaluations of Smith is that, as Labbe’s edited volume *Charlotte Smith in British Romanticism* thoroughly demonstrates, Smith’s writing is neither as uniform nor as simplistically personal as autobiographical readings sometimes see it. Labbe contends that Smith-the-novelist and Smith-the-poet have been largely studied as separate entities, “and consequently we have been learning about two separate Smiths, each closely linked to the genre she writes in, neither closely linked to the other” (5). Labbe is not quite the first to attempt to unify Smith: Carol L. Fry’s 1996 monograph *Charlotte Smith* also addresses her poetry before moving on to the several phases of her novel-writing, including the children’s writing which made up much of Smith’s later career but does not appear in Labbe. Indeed, from the beginning, Hilbish’s 1941 monograph explicitly identifies Smith as “Poet and Novelist” in its title. However, Labbe is accurate regarding the somewhat different assessments of Smith current in the somewhat separate study of novels and of poetry in general: Labbe argues that as a novelist, Smith is now often praised for her innovative narrative techniques (implying a mode of writing that is intellectual and ‘distant’), whereas as a poet, she is praised for her innovative expressions of interiority (implying a mode of writing that is emotional and ‘close’). Labbe draws greater attention to important differences between Smith’s writing personae in different genres, and her edited collection “pulls together many Smiths” (2) to address these disjunctions. The volume not only addresses her novels and poetry, but also includes her plays, letters, and posthumous reception. Each of these Smiths, the volume contends, has something innovative and unexpected to reveal, important to the formation of British Romanticism. In [ARTICLE], for example, Smith’s letters, less studied, reveal a third kind of writer, different from both the novelist and the poet, who conceives of herself as a professional businesswoman of her craft. More Smiths are available in genres not included in this volume, such as Smith the naturalist and children’s author (touched on only lightly in Labbe’s volume), or Smith the political philosopher who drives Amy Garnai’s *Revolutionary Imaginings in the 1790s,* a highly political Smith who consciously participates in the “political public sphere” conceived by Habermas, despite Habermas’ insistence that women were excluded from this sphere (1)*[.](scrivcmt://3EE927F6-B68C-4C4C-B4CF-0A9CD40F29BA)* From these distinctions, Labbe concludes that “Smith, significantly, composes herself anew according to genre” (2) — and then asks, [“Is it all to do with inherent qualities of genre, or is it more to do with the expectations we as readers bring to different genres?”](scrivcmt://60432D3B-EE8E-4BC9-896D-20A0B57A4283) (5). This question about genre is one of the driving questions of this dissertation: to see it asked as a core question about Smith demonstrates Smith’s suitability as a figure whose career can shed light on important questions about the mediascape of the 1790s.

**3.2.** **Mary Robinson**

Mary Robinson’s first literary foray was the volume *Poems by Mrs. Robinson*, published by C. Parker in 1775, shortly followed by the poem *Elegiac verses to a young lady on the death of her brother; who was slain in the late engagement at Boston*. “Though *Poems* received little critical support, and made little money, Mary Robinson continued to write” (Mark Ockerbloom), but she would begin her career as an actress before this writing saw publication. Robinson’s theatrical debut as Juliet in December 1776 led to an increasingly acclaimed and prolific career. “She took on a range of roles, sometimes playing multiple parts in the same week, or even night” (Mark Ockerbloom). In 1777 she published a volume of works written earlier, *Captivity, A Poem: and Celadon and Lydia, A Tale*, and in 1778 she wrote and starred in her own musical farce, *The Lucky Escape,* from which she published *The Songs, Chorusses, etc. in The Lucky escape, a Comic Opera.* In 1780, Robinson retired from the stage. Her next published volume did not appear until 1791, but the intervening decade was not empty of literary activity. From 1784 to its publication in 1787, Robinson collaborated with Banastre Tarleton on the composition and revision of his *History of the Campaigns of 1780 and 1781*. In 1788, Robinson began the writing which would make her career as an author. She contributed poems to *The World* and *The Oracle* under the pseudonyms “Laura” and “Laura Maria” which responded to popular poems by a coterie of writers now called the Della Cruscans, who addressed each other in periodicals with Miltonic, Italianate, and political poetry. Robinson’s poems successfully inserted herself into their conversation, prompting replies from the other poets.

This dissertation’s decade of interest, 1789-99, captures Robinson’s most prolific period. Her 1790 poem *Ainsi va le Monde, a poem inscribed to Robert Merry*, published under the name Laura Maria, was her breakout Della Cruscan poem. It addressed the ‘chief’ Della Cruscan, Robert Merry, and “sold better than Merry's poem, requiring a second edition before the end of the year… A watershed event in Robinson's career, proving that she could successfully reinvent herself as a poet and as a political writer” (SOURCE UNCLEAR). The success of her Della Cruscan poetry led to the publication in 1791 of another *Poems by Mrs. Robinson*, this time byJ. Bell. “The book was handsomely produced in a leather binding, with gold details. The subscription list of 600 people was headed by His Royal Highness, George, Prince of Wales, and included many other members of the nobility. […] Reviews were generally kind, and noted traces in her poems of a sensibility that would later be termed Romanticism.” (Mark Ockerbloom). 1791 also saw the publication of *The Beauties of Mrs. Robinson. Selected and Arranged from her Poetical Works* printed by H. D. Symonds. She also produced a pamphlet that year, *Impartial Reflections on the[Present] [Situation of the] Queen of France [by a Friend to Humanity]*. The next year saw the arrival of a successful novel, *Vancenza, or the Dangers of Credulity*, which would reach five editions by 1794, and two elegiac poems: *Monody to the Memory of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, and *An ode to the harp of the late accomplished and amiable Lousia Hanway*. 1793 saw three more poems, two under her own name (*Monody to the Memory of the late Queen of France* and *Sight, The Cavern of Woe and Solitude*) and one under the pseudonym “Horace Juvenal,” *Modern Manners: a poem in two cantos.* In 1794 she published her second novel, *The Widow, or a Picture of Modern Times*. In 1795 she published another novel, *Audley Fortescue*, under the name “Mr. Robinson.” In 1796 she published four major works: the novel *Angelina*, under her own name, as “Mrs. Mary Robinson, Author of Poems, Vancenza, the Widow, &C. &C. &C.”; another novel also under her own name, *Hubert de Sevrac*; a sonnet series *Sappho and Phaon*; and the gothic verse tragedy *The Sicilian Lover*. 1797 saw two more novels: *Julie St. Lawrence* and *Walsingham*. 1798 was Robinson’s first year since 1790 with no publications, but in 1799, she perhaps made up for it by publishing two novels, *The False Friend* and *The Natural Daughter*, as well as a political treatise, *A Letter to the Women of England on the Cruelties of Mental Subordination.* She also began contributing weekly essays to the *Morning Post and Gazetteer* in 1799.

After 1799 (and thus after this dissertation’s decade of interest), Robinson’s career and life is short. In 1800, she published a novel, *Ellinda: or the abbey of St. Aubert,* her verse collection *Lyrical Tales* in volume form as well as *The Mistletoe, a Christmas Tale* (as Laura Maria) in its own small book, and a translation from the German of Joseph Hager’s *Picture of Palermo.* Robinson died in December 1800. After her death, her daughter Mary Elizabeth Robinson oversaw the posthumous publication of three more works: *Memoirs of the Late Mrs. Robinson, Written by Herself, with some posthumous pieces in verse* (1801), a collection of poetry titled *The Wild Wreath* (1804), and a final collection of *The Poetical Works of the Late Mrs. Robinson, including many pieces never before published* (1806).

Mary Robinson’s early biography shares striking resonances with that of Charlotte Smith. Robinson was also married at the age of sixteen to a man who squandered his income. Robinson spent more than a year in King’s Bench debtors’ prison with her husband and infant daughter, from 1774 to 1775, from which she published her first volume of poetry. Rather than immediately taking up the mantle of a professional author, however, in 1776 she became an actress. As an actress, she met increasing success for four seasons — so much so that she attracted the attention in 1779 of the 17-year-old Prince of Wales, who determined to make her his mistress. After a period of semi-public flirtation, Robinson agreed, and retired from the stage. “Although the affair lasted less than a year, 'the Perdita' was notorious from then on; her gowns, her carriages, and her alliances became a constant source of discussion and speculation in the newspapers” (Mark Ockerbloom). The Prince of Wales had given her a bond of £20,000 at the start of their relationship, but when their relationship soon ended, he refused to pay. “She demanded £25,000 for the return of the prince's letters. She apparently settled for £5,000, paid by George III ‘to get my son out of this shameful scrape.’ It was enough to stave off her creditors. In 1782, Mary obtained a further £500 annuity for herself, and a £200 annuity during the life of Maria Elizabeth, in return for the surrender of the Prince's bond.” (Mark Ockerbloom). Robinson continued to live in high society and the public eye, involved with Lord Malden, and then with Colonel Banastre Tarleton in a relationship which would be her longest. In 1783, Tarleton’s debts grew pressing, and his family attempted to sever his relationship with Robinson by promising to pay them if he moved to France without her. He left England in July 1783. Robinson, pregnant, borrowed money for his debts and set out alone to intercept him in Dover. The rough travel led to a miscarriage, the mistreatment of which ultimately paralyzed Robinson’s legs and left her with acutely painful rheumatism the rest of her life. For the next five years, Tarleton and Robinson lived variously in France, Germany, and England, variously together and apart. At one point, while Tarleton lived with Robinson in England, “Mary's possessions were seized and auctioned off. She saved only the diamond-studded portrait of the Prince of Wales” (Mark Ockerbloom). In 1788, Tarleton’s fortunes and Robinson’s health had recovered enough for her to move permanently back to England, and the two established neighbouring households on Clarges Street in London. Over the next decade, they continued their relationship, while Tarleton’s political career and Robinson’s literary one both flourished. In 1797, Tarleton ended the relationship, and in 1798 married a young heiress, to Robinson’s dismay. Her health worsened, and she died 26 December 1800, aged 43.

Robinson’s public stature fell sharply after her death. Behrendt’s comparison of posthumous reviews of Robinson’s work with reviews of Charlotte Smith’s work highlights the fact that “unlike Smith she was widely regarded as the instigator rather than the victim of her misfortunes” (192), due to the ‘immorality’ of her choices; as a result, her claims to sympathy and sensibility are dismissed by early nineteenth century reviewers. Behrendt argues that her “notorious public behaviour seems to have ensured that she would not get anything like a fair hearing as *an artist* among the conventional critics of the time. Her case is a painful reminder of the pervasive power of a self-appointed coterie of predominantly male critics who considered themselves custodians of national public morality” (192). Susan Civale’s work on Robinson’s immediate nineteenth century reception bears out this dismissal of Robinson “as *an artist*” (Behrendt 192). Civale highlights the disparity between Robinson’s poetry and fiction and her *Memoirs*: even after Robinson’s other works had fallen out of print, the *Memoirs* continued to be reprinted, and to spur new writing in the form of “reviews, essays, spin-off novels, illustrations, poems, mini-biographies, entries in multibiographies, and citations in the life writing of other key figures” (194). It was Robinson’s biography, rather than her writing, which “continued to interest, perplex, and charm readers” (Civale 194).

When literary scholars began to be interested again in Robinson in the 1990s, their work continued to be shaped by an intense awareness of her personal life and her theatrical career, often examining her works for the performance of Robinson’s identity communicated within them. [For example, Judith Pascoe’s 1997 *Romantic Theatricality - “*According to Pascoe, Robinson enacted in her writing an ever-shifting public identity” (Cross 6).] [Also Susan Luther, Stuart Curran, Eleanor Ty, and Sharon Setzer]. The theatrical performance of celebrity remains, as Ashley Cross argues, “the dominant lens through which her writing and her career have been interpreted” (6). The other major lens is Robinson’s interaction with other Romantic poets, “in particular her relations with Coleridge and the Della Cruscans, to a lesser extent Wordsworth and, more recently, Southey and Smith” (Cross 6). This examination of the poetic Robinson nonetheless often employs the same framings as work on the theatrical celebrity Robinson, in emphasizing the strategic development of personae for public attention. Cross argues that “[t]he publication of the eight-volume complete *Works by Mary Robinson* by Pickering and Chatto (2009–2010), under the direction of William Brewer, marked Robinson’s official reentrance into the literary canon” (12), [but is she really “in” the canon as *an artist*?]

**3.3.** **Hannah More**

Hannah More’s first book published was the pastoral drama *A Search after Happiness*, published in 1773. In 1774 she published her play *The Inflexible Captive,* which was produced in 1775 at the Theatre Royal in Bath. In 1776, she published *Sir Eldred of the Bower and the Bleeding Rock*. In 1777, she published her first conduct-book, *Essays on Various Subjects*, dedicated to the bluestocking Elizabeth Montagu. Her play *Percy, A Tragedy* was also produced at Covent Garden in 1777, running through 1778. In 1779, her third play, *The Fatal Falsehood*, was performed but was considered a failure, after which More stopped writing for the stage. In 1782, she published *Sacred Dramas* and *Sensibility: A Poem*. In 1783, she wrote *The Bas Bleu: or, Conversation*, a celebration of bluestocking culture, which circulated in manuscript but did not see print until 1786. In 1784 she was made a member of the Rouen Academy of Arts, Sciences, and Letters. In 1786 she published *Florio*, a poem in praise or rural life, and *The Bas Bleu*. In 1788 she published, anonymously, *Thoughts on the Importance of the Manners of the Great to General Society*, as well as *Slavery: A Poem*.

More’s first publication in this dissertation’s decade of interest is her 1789 poem, *Bishop Bonner’s Ghost*, published as a broadsheet by Horace Walpole’s Strawberry Hill Press. In 1790, she published, anonymously, *An Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable Works*. In 1793, she published, anonymously, “Village Politics,” one of many responses to Thomas Paine’s *Rights of Man*, a counter-revolutionary tract for the poor. In 1793, she published *Remarks on the Speech of M. Dupont* in aid of French emigrant clergy. In 1795 she began the massive undertaking of editing, and largely writing, *The Cheap Repository Tracts*. These tracts were distributed as inexpensive chapbooks from 1795 to 1797. In 1798, she reprinted many of these tracts in volume form. In 1799 she published, under her own name, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education,* and another volume of Cheap Repository tracts.

Unlike Charlotte Smith and Mary Robinson, More had a long career after this dissertation’s decade of interest. A third volume of Cheap Repository tracts was published in 1800. In 1803, she “publishe[d] patriotic ballads to stiffen the national sinews during fears of a French invasion” (Stott). 1804 saw “‘The White Slave Trade’, an attack on the frivolity of the fashionable world, published anonymously in the Evangelical journal, the *Christian Observer*” (Stott). In 1805, she published, anonymously, *Hints toward forming the Character of a Young Princess*. 1806 saw another edition of tracts in volume form. In 1808 she published, anonymously, her only novel, *Coelebs in Search of a Wife*. In 1811 she published *Practical Piety*. In 1812 she published *Christian Morals*. In 1815 she published *Essay on the Character and Writings of St. Paul*. In 1817, in response to civil unrest, she began republishing the *Cheap Repository Tracts* as *Cheap Repository Tracts Suited to the Present Times*. She reprinted and distributed these from 1817 to 1819, and wrote some new ones. In 1819, she published *Moral Sketches* and an abolitionist poem, *The Twelfth of August, or The Feast of Freedom*. In 1821, she published *Bible Rhymes*. In 1825, she published *The Spirit of Prayer*, her last new publication, written at age 80 after more than 50 years of writing. A fifth volume of Cheap Repository tracts appeared in 1827. More died in 1833.

More’s biography differs strongly from Smith’s and Robinson’s in that she never married. Instead, much of More’s personal life centred around educational ventures. In 1758, when More was thirteen, her eldest sister Mary More opened a girls’ boarding school, which Hannah More would soon assist in running. In 1762, this school moved to larger premises. In 1767, More accepted a proposal of marriage from William Turner, though this did not end in marriage: “After a rather humiliating six-year courtship (during which the pending marriage was postponed three times by the gentleman), a settlement was reached on behalf of More by her family, resulting in an annuity that granted her enough financial independence to embark on a literary career” (Prior). When the engagement was finally broken in 1773, More made her first visit to London, and her life’s focus shifted from education to literature. She moved in literary circles, joined the Bluestockings, and particularly befriended the famous actor David Garrick. More was the “permanent house guest” (Stott) of David and Eva Garrick from 1776 until David Garrick’s death in 1779, after which she remained in the household as Eva Garrick’s companion.

However, after Garrick’s death (and the failure of her third play, also in 1779), More’s focus shifts again, from London literary life to religious life. Her interest in the growing movement of Evangelicals ultimately brought her to the Clapham Sect, whose foremost cause was the abolition of the slave trade (Prior). She returned to Somerset, buying her own house, Cowslip Green, in 1785, and religion brought her back to education. She and her sister Patty More founded the first of the Mendip Schools at Cheddar, Somerset in 1789; other schools follow at Shipham, Rowberrow, Nailsea, Blagdon, Wedmore, and elsewhere (Stott). “With the encouragement and support of the Clapham Evangelicals … More undertook opening and operating Sunday Schools … in order to teach the children of the laboring classes to read and write, to learn the catechism, and to lead moral lives informed by Christian teaching. Though the effort was clouded by political and theological controversy from various sides, More eventually opened sixteen schools that taught hundreds of students.” (Prior). In 1790, the More sisters hand over the Park Street school to Selina Mills. In 1792, she founds women’s benefit clubs at Cheddar and Shipham. 1799 marks the beginning of the “Blagdon controversy”: “one of More's teachers is accused of Methodism; the accusation widens into a series of attacks on More for alleged religious and political subversion; as a result she suffers depression and nervous collapse and for a while is unable to write,” until 1802 (Stott).

In 1801, More retired— somewhat. She moved to a new home, Barley Wood, outside the village of Wrington, but “[t]hough her years of publishing had come to an end, her pen was not stilled as she responded to the volumes of letters she received,” and she continued to receive and advise many visitors (Prior). In 1813 she founded an auxiliary Bible Society at Wrington. “She continued to support generously efforts at poverty-relief until her death. More died September 7, 1833, having survived all of her sisters and most of the members of her London circle of friends” (Prior).

As with Robinson and Smith, More has presented scholars a challenge in the quantity and range of writing produced during her lifetime. “With a lifetime that spanned the Augustan age to the Victorian age, and a writing career nearly as long, Hannah More can be considered at once both the intellectual child of the Age of Johnson and, in spirit if not quite in chronology, the ‘first Victorian’.” (Prior) More’s “pre-Victorian” evangelical leanings, and especially the Cheap Repository Tracts, have typically attracted the most attention. The Cheap Repository Tracts are a bibliographic challenge: it can be difficult to confirm the author, publication date, or circulation of any given tract, and there are at least a hundred tracts. Additionally, since the twentieth century More has presented an additional challenge in her subject matter: as Scheuermann observes, “[t]he problem with More is that while she is a most interesting figure, her ideas are largely repugnant to modern sensibilities. Critics often deal with this inconvenience either by apologizing for their subject or by changing what she says so that she seems closer to us in spirit” (237).

More’s literary afterlife began the year after her death, in 1834, with William Roberts’ publication of a collection of her letters. Roberts’ editorial choices set the tone for More’s biographers by emphasizing her [conservatism](scrivcmt://16DB1AA4-F5F6-4E45-8842-956DD2BDD9FD). His omissions may have improved More’s standing in the nineteenth century, but by 1952 historian M. G. Jones already acknowledges “the unsympathetic portrait of her which has been handed down to posterity” (Jones 152) due to her approach to social reform. “Unable to refute these charges, Jones can offer only the partial excuse that More’s attitudes were typical of her time” (Nardin 268). Unlike Smith and Robinson, More’s reputation did not necessarily improve when she came to the attention of feminist scholars in the 1980s and 1990s, though work on More did increase. When Pederson writes about More in 1986, the previous scholarship that she cites is all historical: More matters to historians of 1790s politics, and to historians of the evangelical movement (Pederson 85), but Pederson sees little precedent for her own discussion of More’s writing as having literary, rather than historical, importance. Pederson argues that “only by examining the Cheap Repository within the context of popular literature can we understand the tracts for what they were: a broad evangelical assault on late eighteenth-century popular culture” (88).

Pederson’s attention to More’s literary contexts is shared by other scholars of the 1980s, though only Mitzi Meyers, who in 1986 contextualizes More’s didacticism alongside children’s literature more generally, seems to form a positive opinion of More. “Mitzi Myers, delighted to have found a female eighteenth-century writer who was clearly successful, largely rewrites More so that her ‘didactic’ works ‘scarcely stand second to the canonical novel in interest and importance’ in terms of ‘what they reveal about women’” (Scheuermann 238). Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace’s 1991 monograph, *Their Fathers' Daughters: Hannah More, Maria Edgeworth, and Patriarchal Complicity*, better sums up the consensus on More: complicit in patriarchy. Blanch’s assessment is that “[d]espite the contemporary criticism that More was usurping roles that had traditionally been reserved for men, feminist critics such as Kowaleski-Wallace, Ellen Jordan, Mona Scheurmann, and Eleanor Ty have maligned More as antithetical to the course of social reform and have dismissed her as a passive agent of the patriarchy” (Blanch 87). More’s next biographer, Patricia Demers, continues this assessment in her 1996 biography *The World of Hannah More*. “Patricia Demers argues in a recent study that More’s “belief in a natural hierarchical social order,” a belief which Demers finds “angering in its condescension and immobility,” prevented More from doing anything significant to improve conditions among the poor (Demers, 2)” (Nardin 268). The emphasis on More’s politics also begins to shift attention away from literary interpretation. “Writing for More is primarily a mode of instruction, whether in poetry, drama, essay, or tract, conveying either a female or a male voice of authority.” (Demers 109)

In the early 2000s, scholarship emerges that is more ready to find merit or sympathetic politics in More. Scheuermann describes this phenomenon as critics “changing what she says so that she seems closer to us in spirit” (237); Scheuermann herself presents More as reprehensible propagandist. But it is work like Jane Nardin’s — which argues that “although More was a less enthusiastic believer in the ‘hierarchical social order’ than most scholars have argued, the evasions and compromises she engaged in as a practical reformer helped to damage her reputation with posterity” (269) — which takes the more common stance. This is the More who can be inspiring in her importance and innovation, as suggested by titles like Kevin Gilmartin’s “Hannah More and the Invention of Conservative Culture in Britain” and Anne Stott’s *Hannah More: The First Victorian*, both published in 2003.

Throughout this history of struggling with More’s conservatism, More has been almost synonymous with the Cheap Repository Tracts. “At the time of the Repository’s conception in 1794, More’s public profile was that of a playwright and a controversial political commentator, yet, the annals of literary history emphasize her contributions as an educator and religious writer … Indeed, the ‘sublime and immortal’ Cheap Repository is the primary reason she is considered by some to have been the most prominent woman evangelical campaigner in England between 1780 and 1810” (Blanch 1). The history of these tracts begins with G.H. Spinney’s 1939 bibliography of extant Cheap Repository tracts held by the British Library. Spinney’s work filled an important need — “Scholarly recognition of the lack of clarity regarding the Cheap Repository bibliography, including authorship, dates back to Augustus De Morgan in 1864 (241-45)” (Blanch 11) — and has remained, eighty years after its publication, an invaluable source. It is perhaps only surpassed by Anna Maree Blanch’s 2009 thesis, *A Reassessment of the Authorship of the Cheap Repository Tracts*. Blanch makes the case that “[s]tatements describing Hannah More’s contributions have been repeated by generation after generation of scholars uncontested” (12), and describes with evident frustration several works which appear at first not to have based their claims on Spinney, but which, when traced, have their origin in the same single paragraph. Blanch herself has carried out new original research. Blanch identifies 127 tracts in the original run of the Cheap Repository Tracts, of which “58 tracts are either conclusively or tentatively attributed to More and 17 to others, while 52 tracts are described as being yet unattributable to any particular author” (Blanch 85).

**3.4.** **Ann Radcliffe**

Ann Radcliffe stands in contrast to More, Smith, and Robinson in many ways. One of these is the relative brevity of her bibliography. She published six works during this dissertation’s decade of interest— five novels and a volume of travel writing— and this is all that is published during her lifetime. Where her bibliography grows extensive is the number of reprintings. The following overview bibliography includes only publications in England, but these works also appeared frequently in Ireland, America, and France, and less frequently in Italy, Germany, and even Russia.

In 1789, Radcliffe publishes *The Castles of Athlin* *and* *Dunbayne* in London. In 1790, *A Sicilian Romance* in London. In 1792, *The Romance of the Forest* appears in London. This novel earns her more positive notice and revives interest in the first two; *Sicilian Romance* has a second London editionin 1792. In 1793, *Athlin & Dunbayne* has a second London edition. In 1794, Radcliffe publishes her fourth novel, *The Mysteries of [Udolpho](scrivcmt://873338C6-0416-4EF8-B776-5E94BAD85C0B)*, which has two London editions that year. 1794 also sees the continued popularity of *Romance of the Forest* in a second London edition. In 1795, Radcliffe publishes her only non-novel work, the travelogue *A Journey Made in the Summer of 1794*, which saw two editions in London that year. In 1795 *Udolpho* also reached its third London edition. In 1796, Radcliffe published no new works, but *Sicilian Romance* and *Romance of the Forest* both reached their third London editions. In 1797, she publishes the last new novel to be released during her lifetime, *The [Italian](scrivcmt://C8BBB498-858E-4485-9AEF-579C44827177)*. In 1798, there are no domestic editions of Radcliffe, though, as in previous years, many international editions. In 1799, *Athlin & Dunbayne* has its third London edition, and *Romance of the Forest* its fourth London edition.

After this dissertation’s decade of interest, Radcliffe’s works continued to be reprinted domestically and internationally nearly every year. In 1802, Radcliffe wrote, but did not publish, *Gaston de Blondville*, which would finally appear in print posthumously in 1826. In 1803, *Udolpho* reached its fifth London edition. In 1806, *Romance of the Forest* reaches its fifth London edition, and *Udolpho* its sixth and seventh London editions. In 1809, *Sicilian Romance* reaches its fourth London edition, and *Udolpho* its eighth London edition. In 1810, *Romance of the Forest* reaches its sixth London edition and *Udolpho* its ninth London edition. In 1811, *Athlin & Dunbayne* reaches its fourth London edition, and *The Italian* its second London edition. In 1814, *Journey in Summer 1794* reaches its third London edition. In 1816, a “new” publication appears: an unauthorized volume *Poems by Mrs Ann Radcliffe*, anthologizing poems previously appearing in her novels. *Udolpho* also reaches its tenth London edition in 1816. In 1818, *Sicilian Romance* has its fifth London edition. In 1819, *Romance of the Forest* has its seventh London edition. In 1820, *Sicilian Romance* reaches its sixth London edition, *Romance of the Forest* its eighth London edition, and *Udolpho* reaches its eleventh and twelfth London editions. In 1821 *Athlin & Dunbayne* reaches its fifth London edition.

Radcliffe dies in February of 1823. This prompts reprints of all of her works by S. Fisher in 1823, and by Ballantyne in 1824. In 1826, her husband published several pieces posthumously: a final novel *Gaston de Blondeville*; a poetic piece *St. Alban’s Abbey, a metrical tale; with some poetical pieces...To which is prefixed a memoir of the author, with extracts from her journals*; and, in *New Monthly Magazine*, her unfinished essay “On the Supernatural in Poetry”.

Radcliffe’s biography, too, is short. Radcliffe never cultivated a public literary persona, which itself led to the development of a mythos of her seclusion. Scholars often turn to The Edinburgh Review to evoke the impact of her reticence: ‘She never appeared in public, nor mingled in private society, but kept herself apart, like the sweet bird that sings its solitary notes, shrouded and unseen’ ([NEED CITATION](scrivcmt://8B3D8092-FDD0-48A3-BDE2-989BB5E84682)). In fact, so little was known about Radcliffe’s life that only sixty years after her death, Christina Rossetti abandoned a projected biography due to a lack of material (Rogers 2). Almost all biographical information comes from Thomas Noon Talfourd’s 1826 “Memoir of Radcliffe,” written in close consultation with Ann Radcliffe’s husband William. Radcliffe kept extensive journals, which Talfourd occasionally extracts, but her manuscripts were all destroyed shortly after her death, with the exception of forty-two pages of her commonplace book from near the end of her life, and a two-sentence letter to a Miss Williamson (Rogers 2). Deborah Rogers’s 1996 *Ann Radcliffe: A Bio-Bibliography*, the first to examine the commonplace book, remains the best account of Radcliffe’s life and major works.

Some simple facts are known. She was born in London on July 9 1763, the only child of Ann Oates Ward and William Ward, a haberdasher who later managed a china shop. Both of her parents were close to their slightly more illustrious relatives, and encouraged an old-fashioned sense of gentility in their daughter (Rogers 3). Radcliffe was married in 1786 at age 23, to William Radcliffe, “a hardworking Oxford law graduate who became part-editor and owner of *The English Chronicle*” (Facer). Unlike Smith’s and Robinson’s husbands, William Radcliffe appears to have used the household’s funds fairly responsibly, though when Ann Radcliffe’s mother died, one stipulation of her will was that Ann’s inheritance not be used to pay any of William’s debts. Certainly, William Radcliffe promoted the image of himself as a nurturing helpmeet to his wife: in the ‘origin story’ of Ann Radcliffe’s writing which Talfourd writes based on William’s descriptions, Talfourd credits William with encouraging his wife’s shy talents. Facer says, “He often came home late and in order to occupy her time, Radcliffe began to write, reading aloud the lines she had written during the day on his return” (Facer). Given how many critics emphasize Radcliffe’s obvious responsiveness to reviews — each novel directly altering the aspects most criticized in the previous — her writing seems not to have been *entirely* an idle amusement to pass long hours. Her six major publications appeared rapidly between 1789 and 1797. In 1798, Radcliffe’s father died, leaving some of his property to Radcliffe, some to her mother, and a small amount to William himself should he outlive his wife (Rogers 11). In 1800, Radcliffe’s mother died as well, leaving her property to Radcliffe on the condition that nothing be left to William and none of the money be used to pay William’s debts (Rogers 11-12). In 1802, Radcliffe wrote, but did not publish, *Gaston de Blondville,* her last major work of writing.

That Radcliffe lived another twenty-six years after the publication of *The Italian* with no further works is a fact which has apparently demanded explanation since the eighteenth century. “In the total absence of documentation, contemporaries were willing to believe, presumably because she was the reserved (female) author of Gothics, that Radcliffe was insane. … So reticent and self-effacing was Radcliffe that she never corrected rumors of her death or madness” (Rogers 13). Her husband was more interested in countering these rumours, and after her death in 1823 publicized a report from her doctor unequivocally stating that she had died of asthma and that her “mind was perfect in its reasoning powers [(E131 104)” (Rogers 20)](scrivcmt://43FC64BC-216D-4715-BE86-F27FEDC0AFEE), suggesting instead that Radcliffe had withdrawn from publication after her inheritance made the increased income no longer important to maintain the luxuries of her life. Scholars largely accept this financial explanation, and add to it the explanation that Radcliffe had always been a fundamentally shy person who found public criticism of her writing distressing. Although her works were widely praised, they received so much attention that inevitably there were also critiques, and she may have wanted to remain distant from “the parodies as well as the many inferior imitations of her work” (Rogers 13).

Radcliffe spent the second half of her life enjoying the domestic retirement praised within her novels, sometimes travelling within England with her husband. She died in 1823, evidently as a result of the asthma which had caused recurring problems for the last twelve years of her life (Rogers 13).

In contrast to the brevity of Radcliffe’s bibliography and biography stands the mountain of secondary writing on her works. At her death in 1823, despite the twenty-six years since her last publication, an outpouring of obituaries marked her as an esteemed literary genius. Much of this praise followed the template so famously set out in Walter Scott’s ‘Prefatory Memoir to Mrs Ann Radcliffe’ in the tenth volume of James Ballantyne’s Novelist’s Library series. [EXPLAIN SCOTT’S WHOLE DEAL — “he nonetheless takes care to defend the unquestionable genius of Ann Radcliffe on at least three accounts: her presiding over ‘a separate and distinct species of writing’ (Scott 1824: xx); her ability to sustain her readers’ interest and attention across three major novels … / … and her exploration of extreme human passions in appropriately southern European settings” (Townshend and Wright 5-6)]

In 2014, *Ann Radcliffe, Romanticism and the Gothic* edited by Dale Townshend, Angela Wright commemorated 250 years since Radcliffe’s birth. “Once-dominant psychoanalytic and feminist interpretations have given way to critical work drawing on political and religious history, print culture studies, theories of media and remediation, and new formalism” (Carson 127).

[BASICALLY, JUST ASSUME I HAVE PUT A WHOLE LIT REVIEW ON ANN RADCLIFFE HERE: she’s been consistently praised, often in ways that establish the worthlessness of works similar to her; a ‘token’ who justifies the exclusion of women or feminine writing. [A valuable and informative contrast to Smith, Robinson, and More.](scrivcmt://9A15EB61-CB47-49D0-A488-B0108E414EF0)]

**4.** **DH**

This dissertation undertakes computational distant reading. My questions are macroanalytical, and my research proceeds from hypothesis through experiment and results. At every possible point, however, the underlying methodology will be made visible, and its assumptions scrutinized. The bibliographic histories of my multiple corpora are explicit objects of inquiry. Much of the code underlying this project I have written myself. Some has been written at my request. In every case where the code is available to me, the program itself appears in Appendix A (“Codebase”), accompanied by a plain-language explanation of how it operates. Where I have used closed-source software, Appendix A contains an explanation of my best guess at its underlying process. My exact use of these tools — sufficient for another to replicate my work — is provided in Appendix B (“Methodology”). These details are explicated in full in the appendices in order not to over-burden the body of the dissertation, but they are by no means *confined* to the appendices. Computation is not a “black box” to be consulted for simple answers, but is inextricable from my reasoning and argument.

My attention to the *sources* of digital knowledge creation comes, in part, from Johanna Drucker, and her distinction between “data” and “capta.” Drucker, in “Humanities Approaches to Graphical Display,” specifically addresses the digital humanities practice of creating, and then close-reading, data visualizations. She argues that the tools for visual representation which may be effective in the sciences cannot be simply and uncritically transposed to humanistic subject matter. When an experiment is presented as a ‘data visualization,’ she says, “the rendering of statistical information into graphical form gives it a simplicity and legibility that hides every aspect of the original interpretative framework” (Drucker)}. In fields where the readers of such charts are also frequent creators of charts, and where norms exist to explicitly describe one’s interpretive frameworks in a methodology section, the simplicity and legibility of an individual chart may be a benefit which does not impede complex scrutiny of the information it presents.[[8]](#footnote-8) In a field like literature, however, the “graphical force” of something like a network graph or even a simple pie chart “conceals what the statistician knows very well — that no ‘data’ preexist their parameterization” (Drucker). Drucker problematizes the term “data,” the etymology of which presents it as a “given” which is stable and independent of observation. She proposes that humanities visualizations embrace, instead, the framework of “capta,” that which is “‘taken’ actively” (Drucker), “fundamentally codependent, constituted relationally, between observer and observed phenomena” (Drucker). Drucker’s assessment shapes my own prioritization of qualitative and reflective computational research. The term “capta” itself has not seen uptake in subsequent digital humanities scholarship, even in cases where scholars explicitly take Drucker’s warnings to heart. Accordingly, for clarity, this dissertation will continue to use the more usual term “data” to refer to the information gathered for analysis here. However, as I integrate and compare a wide variety of data from many disparate sources, a preliminary task of my analysis is always to determine, as precisely as possible, how the information was captured and quantified.

Additionally, all of the figures presented in this dissertation are of my own design. My design praxis is informed by the work of Edward Tufte and Alberto Cairo, both of whom provide practical design advice in service of demystifying the visual rhetoric by which graphs present their arguments.[[9]](#footnote-9) Neither Tufte nor Cairo is a scholar of media studies; rather, they are professional practitioners of ‘data visualization’ who reflect critically on the assumptions of their work. Tufte’s work primarily strives to correct badly-designed data visualizations, and the dangerous decisions that bad design can lead people to. His most famous example is an analysis of the engineers’ report at NASA which led to the ill-fated launch of the Challenger space shuttle in 1986: as his extensive visual analysis argues, the engineers (untrained in graphic design) unintentionally obfuscated crucial information about the day’s launch conditions. The poorly-designed graphics these engineers produced made the launch appear low risk to their superiors; despite the engineers’ strong warnings, their verbal argument was disregarded in favor of their accidental graphical argument. As Tufte demonstrates, a few simple alterations of their graphic design would have made it obvious that the day’s unprecedentedly low weather was extremely dangerous, and potentially averted disaster (Tufte).[[10]](#footnote-10) Tufte’s six principles of design[[11]](#footnote-11) primarily seek to guide undertrained designers away from misleading themselves. Cairo, following on Tufte’s work from the perspective of an active journalist, more often turns his attention to successful designs which mislead their audiences intentionally. His forthcoming book, *How Charts Lie*, addresses the readers of infographics with insights into visual literacy (Cairo). His preceding book, *The Truthful Art*, addresses the creators of good-faith infographics with insights into visual manipulation (Cairo). Cairo draws a distinction between “data visualization” and “infographics”: “an infographic tells the stories that its designer wants to explain, but a data visualization lets people build their own insights based on the evidence provided,” summarized more succinctly as “infographics to explain, data visualizations to explore” (Cairo). Using this terminology, my argument will proceed with infographics in the body of the dissertation as curated figures to support my argument, with fuller data visualizations available in Appendix C (“Data”) to allow further exploration. Following in both Tufte and Cairo’s footsteps, I conceive of the figures throughout this dissertation as rhetorical devices. In service of arguing honestly, therefore, my designs — in the body of the dissertation and in Appendix C — are accompanied by footnoted explanations of my design rationale.

This dissertation understands archives, bibliographies, anthologies, and corpora to all be, variously, *models* of an imagined object of study. In the language of social science, these models might be described as ‘samples,’ which are intended to permit discoveries about an underlying ‘population’ by being ‘representative’ of that population’s features. Only the language and not the methods of social science need to be imported here, since it has long been ordinary practice in literary studies to select and examine representative texts for insights about larger [movements](scrivcmt://15F5F4D7-F7E8-4B16-8B51-AF4E02B99403). A work like Ann Tracy’s bibliography *The Gothic Novel 1790-1830*, for example, clearly names the population of works which are of interest to her: all Gothic novels published between 1790 and 1830. But in providing detailed information on 208 texts — mostly Gothic, mostly novels, mostly between 1790 and 1830 — Tracy obviously does not claim to have presented all that might belong within this population. Instead, her book operates as a model of the underlying population, which can be queried for further insight into ‘the Gothic novel, 1790-1830’ only so long as one keeps the limits of the model in mind. Indeed, by presenting plot summaries and bibliographic data, rather than reproducing the novels in full, Tracy provides a model of a model. Importantly, a model is a tool for thinking, and not necessarily a truth-claim in itself: creating a model is a way of saying, ‘it might be helpful to think of X as Y,’ not an assertion that X is equivalent to Y. Willard [McCarty](scrivcmt://CCF03F1E-2441-4838-8310-8A197DA94FE0) articulates this important feature of models by stressing that a model’s value is determined not by its exact correspondence with the object it models — if it were possible to fully examine the underlying object, then no model would be necessary — but by the *fruitfulness* of its simplifications. Even a deeply incorrect model can be fruitful if its divergence from observed phenomena rules out an incorrect theory. As I examine the many existing models of ‘English literature, 1789-1799,’ and create several more of my own, I articulate the underlying assumptions of each model, and assess the fruitfulness of the results.

**5.** **theory**

My primary theoretical framework, as I conceptualize my work, is that of reparative reading. Eve Sedgwick’s “Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading” persuasively describes in the dominance of paranoia in literary criticism, and attempts to sketch an alternative in what she terms reparative reading. My touchstones are two descriptions from Sedgwick’s original chapter:

The desire of a reparative impulse... is additive and accretive. Its fear, a realistic one, is that the culture surrounding it is inadequate or inimical to its nurture; it wants to assemble and confer plenitude to an object that will then have resources to offer to an inchoate self. (149)

What we can best learn from such practices are, perhaps, the many ways selves and communities succeed in extracting sustenance from the objects of a culture - even of a culture whose avowed desire has often been not to sustain them. (150-151)

What Sedgwick describes, here, is a “desire,” not a methodology. I therefore understand “reparative reading” to refer, not to a precise set of practices, but to a position one might occupy in relation to a text. What I posit is also a desire: that my methods here can provide useful practices for others. The reparative position is a generous one, both in terms of giving of oneself to a text, and in terms of seeking a text’s strengths over its weaknesses.

For examples of literary practices which move away from paranoia, I draw upon the work of Rita Felski, and the theories of “surface reading” described by Sharon Marcus, Stephen Best, and Heather Love. Felski, in her article “After Suspicion” and then further in her monograph *The Limits of Critique*, seeks to attend seriously to literary attachments, including our own attachments as critics. Felski’s approach to these attachments is essentially sociological, drawing heavily on Bruno Latour’s actor-network-theory, and thus involves almost no close reading. “Surface reading” positions itself as an alternative to “symptomatic reading”; rather than seeking to expose hidden truths concealed within texts, it attempts accurate descriptions that “make visible what is invisible only because it's too much on the surface of things” (Best 13). The analogues to reparative and paranoid reading are obvious, but not perfect: [all paranoid reading is symptomatic, but not all symptomatic reading is paranoid](scrivcmt://0977C0DE-D6DA-43BF-975D-159F2F065096). Reparative reading, as described by Sedgwick, is often still interested in ‘deep’ meanings of texts, in which striking textual features can be interpreted to locate additional meanings. Felski’s readings are often symptomatic in this way. In contrast, “surface reading,” as Heather Love describes, pursues “a turn away from the singularity and richness of individual texts” (374), seeking descriptions that are “complex and variegated, but not rich, warm, or deep” (378). Love’s disavowal of “richness” here is part of her attempt to move away from “the ethical charisma of the literary translator or messenger” (374) who characterizes the paranoid, critical figure that both Sedgwick and Felski also seek to escape.

Love’s articulation of this mode of is, partly, struggling with the task of describing something which does not yet fully exist. Her later article, “Close Reading and Thin Description,” provides a more precise articulation of the kind of close reading that she calls for, in which an “exhaustive, fine-grained attention to phenomena” (404) enables “taking up the position of the device; by turning oneself into a camera, one could—at least ideally—pay equal attention to every aspect of a scene that is available to the senses and record it faithfully” (407). Although Love is uninterested in “distant reading” as synonymous with Moretti (Love 411), this invocation of the [mechanical](scrivcmt://E70A42FD-29D7-4817-A37B-B5212F37B288) implies, I argue, an obvious potential for computation. [MORE ABOUT THE MECHANICAL — the actual practice of computational research is a lot of laborious, intimate encoding.] Love says:

Good descriptions are in a sense rich, but not because they truck with imponderables like human experience or human nature. They are close, but they are not deep; rather than adding anything “extra” to the description, they account for the real variety that is already there. (377)

C[omputation does enable](scrivcmt://D2C537D8-2F5A-4CAC-95B4-91DC14D102D2) *[closeness](scrivcmt://D2C537D8-2F5A-4CAC-95B4-91DC14D102D2)* [without depth. As I discuss more fully in [FUTURE SECTION], a good computational model is unlikely to “truck with imponderables,” but it](scrivcmt://D2C537D8-2F5A-4CAC-95B4-91DC14D102D2) *[absolutely](scrivcmt://D2C537D8-2F5A-4CAC-95B4-91DC14D102D2)**[must](scrivcmt://D2C537D8-2F5A-4CAC-95B4-91DC14D102D2)* [“account for the real variety that is already there” or else one’s code will simply fail to run.](scrivcmt://D2C537D8-2F5A-4CAC-95B4-91DC14D102D2)

if you are forced to manually encode assumptions into real code you have to confront them - if you do computation reflectively, you neither conquer your material nor claim an algorithmic grasp of objective truth. Can ask, “where is it that my system encountered resistance?”

“Inspecting and hand-counting individual records has the advantage of allowing the bibliographer to make careful discriminations, even as it introduces a degree of subjectivity (to say nothing of human error) and, hence, guarantees the irreproducibility of exact results.” (Suarez 42)

“**sets of protocols for each of these categories were / developed and strictly adhered to” (Suarez 44-5)**

**“the results of this study are repeatable, but not exactly so**.” (Suarez 45)

**5.1.** **distant reading without Moretti**

**This is actually kind of how distant reading started? / There are histories of distant reading that lead to here]**

Distant reading is undergoing a shift away from its figurehead in Franco Moretti, who famously coined the original term(Moretti)}. If we wish to think about distant reading without Moretti, Ted Underwood and Rachel Buurma both provide valuable histories. Ted Underwood’s “Genealogy of Distant Reading” presents a history of distant reading which is not for the most part centrally concerned with computers, and is therefore fundamentally distinct from concepts of “digital humanities” (Underwood)}. In Underwood’s history, distant reading is “a tradition continuous with earlier forms of macroscopic literary history, distinguished only by an increasingly experimental method, organized by samples and hypotheses that get defined before conclusions are drawn” (Underwood)}. Underwood “tease[s] out the elided social-scientific genealogy behind distant reading” (Underwood)} to argue that the term “[d]istant reading was not coined to describe a radically new method. The first occurrence of the phrase, in [Franco Moretti’s] ‘Conjectures on World Literature,’ seems in fact to describe the familiar scholarly activity of aggregating and summarizing previous research” [\cite{Underwood:2017uca p.9}](scrivcmt://C15250BF-B326-4BC8-A863-0672791467E9).

Rachel Buurma’s history of Josephine Miles adds a specifically computational alternate geneaology for distant reading

(Buurma and Heffernan)}. Miles is proposed as an alternative not to Moretti, but to Roberto Busa, who is often credited with the first large-scale computational literary study. Miles’ history, briefly, is as follows:

In the 1930s, as a graduate student at Berkeley, she completed her first distant reading project: an analysis of the adjectives favored by Romantic poets. In the 1940s, with the aid of a Guggenheim, she expanded this work into a large-scale study of the phrasal forms of the poetry of the 1640s, 1740s, and 1840s. In all of this distant reading work, Miles created her tabulations by hand, with pen and graph paper. She also directed possibly the first literary concordance to use machine methods. In the early 1950s, Miles became project director of an abandoned index-card-based Concordance to the Poetical Works of John Dryden. Partnering with the Electrical Engineering department at Berkeley, and contracting with their computer lab and its IBM tabulation machine, Miles used machine methods to complete the concordance. It was published in 1957, six years after she and several woman graduate students and woman punch-card operators began the work. It was thus begun around the time that Busa circulated early proof-of-concept drafts of his concordance to the complete works of St. Thomas Aquinas, and published 17 years before the first volumes of the 56-volume Index Thomasticus began to appear.

(Buurma and Heffernan)}

Buurma brings Miles’ history to our attention not simply because Miles predates Busa, as a correction of a minor matter of fact.[[12]](#footnote-12) Rather, Buurma emphasizes, Miles’ origin story for computational literary study “can stand as an example of how we might write a history of literary scholarship that does not center originality and individual accomplishment”

(Buurma and Heffernan). Unlike Busa, Miles not only gave authorship to the (female) graduate students who carried out much of the labour of creating the concordances, she also thanked and credited the (female) punch card operators who encoded the resulting data.[[13]](#footnote-13) Moreover, when talking of Penny Gee, one of the female staff members of the computer lab, Miles praises her as “‘very smart and good’ and—most importantly—a true collaborator, as opposed to those ‘IBM people from San Jose’ … ‘I’ve never been able to connect with them,’ Miles explains, ‘though I did with Penny Gee. She really taught me’”

(Buurma and Heffernan). Of the positive qualities highlighted here, only one, “smart,” is traditionally valorized among literary critics: to be “good,” a “collaborator,” who can “connect” and “teach” — as I will discuss more fully in section 1.3 when I turn to Eve Sedgwick’s critique of paranoid reading, these qualities are often seen as incompatible with the singular authority of the figure of ‘the critic.’ Miles’ work, too, struggled to find appreciation “among literary critics who viewed her datasets as merely preparatory to the true work of evaluation” \cite{Buurma:[2018wt](scrivcmt://80741D7B-97A6-4B72-A18B-022743004B3A)}.

**5.2.** **critical algorithm studies**

**What’s crucial, to use computational reading reparatively, is to use it *reflectively*.** The desirable kinds of computation which I describe above will not happen inevitably. Here I draw upon the rich body of work emerging in critical algorithm studies, which examines (and attempts to reform) the human elements of computational algorithms. Any methodology is, to a certain extent, an “algorithm,” in the loose definition of ‘a series of pre-defined steps to be carried out’. But computational algorithms differ from “algorithms” implemented by humans. Computational algorithms have two key vulnerabilities: first, their operations are less easily scrutinized; second, their results are more easily trusted. The second vulnerability — the cultural aura of empirical trustworthiness which accrues to anything ‘computational’ — is another flavour of the same vulnerability that Drucker describes with ‘data’ generally. Because the human agents who designed and trained any given algorithm appear to be absent from its operation, the algorithm appears able to discover truth directly. This is how Daily Wire reporter Ryan Saavedra was able to tweet with disdain that “Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) claims that algorithms, which are driven by math, are racist” (Saavedra)}: anything “driven by math,” he assumes, must be incapable of human fallibilities like racism. But as Safiya Noble shows extensively in *Algorithms of Oppression*, algorithms by default reproduce, and can easily exaggerate, the assumptions and biases of the culture in which they are made(Noble)}. In other words, in a racist world, algorithms *are* racist — and sexist, and duplicative of all other systemic inequities.

**5.3.** **reparative DH**

[But “critical” is literally in the name of “critical algorithm studies”; I still want to be post-critical and reparative.] As I encounter the limitations of the various information and tools through which I attempt to understand the 1790s, my goal is to do something other than facilely observe that they are limited. Instead, I want to identify the best ways to continue building on their foundations. In a digital humanities context, a focus on building connections can be mundanely practical: typing indexes from print works into spreadsheets, correcting errors within datasets, writing programs to process metadata: all of these maintain the functional usability of existing resources in new contexts. When this kind of extended, detail-oriented labour is combined with serious reflection on the histories and possible futures of these resources, I contend, they bring us to new knowledge. In this, maintaining and using digital resources is also a way to repair them — and to produce reparative readings of their contents.

**6.** **upcoming 2 experiments**

Having described a large and complex scholarly context for this work, and made some preliminary efforts toward synthesis of these disparate backgrounds, it is time, now, to describe the work undertaken here in more detail. This dissertation has two major parts. The first examines the literature of the 1790s through the lens of ‘titles,’ and the second through ‘persons.’ In both cases my central interest is the vexed category of ‘popularity.’ With both ‘titles’ and ‘persons’, I establish the materials with which I will be working and their implicit models. I will draw materials from the English Short-Title Catalogue (ESTC), Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO), the ECCO Text Creation Partnership corpus (ECCO-TCP), HathiTrust, ProQuest, the British Library’s Nineteenth Century Book Corpus (BL), the Early Novels Database (END), Gale’s digitized microfiche of the Corvey collection, Google Books, the Internet Archive, and Project Gutenberg. Substantial time is taken to establish the history and constraints of each of these resources to contextualize the role they play in contemporary digital research. Using the information they make most readily accessible, I explore which works and individuals emerge as ‘popular’ or ‘important’ in each resource. I also probe each resource for its representation of (or failure to represent) my touchstone authors, Ann Radcliffe, Charlotte Turner Smith, Hannah More, and Mary Robinson. The resulting findings are primarily used to evaluate how the underlying digital resources participate in or resist the projects of canon-building. Then, for both titles and persons, there is a ‘turn.’ For each area of inquiry I introduce a novel experiment which synthesizes my materials and repurposes them. These experiments are then used to draw conclusions about 1790s print culture.

The first phase of this project takes up titles and databases. Throughout this work, a ‘title’ is the broadest possible umbrella term for a text: it is synonymous with ‘a database entry which I believe to represent a printed work.’ Each individual database will shape the precise correspondences between a ‘title’ and the printed texts about which I use ‘titles’ to reason. For example, it will vary based on my source whether multiple editions of the same work are several ‘titles’ or one ‘title,’ and whether the titles exclusively represent ‘books’ or also include chapbooks, broadsheets, or even ephemera. Due to the inscrutability of much digital infrastructure, a problem discussed above, it is often not possible for me to know prior to experimentation what kinds of titles I am working with. These variations form part of my object of inquiry.

Chapter two, therefore, takes up the topic in the form of contemporary digital archives directly; I examine corpora of eighteenth-century literature through the same critical lens by which anthologies and classroom teaching are often scrutinized. I make the case that digital archives can implicitly shape scholarly research, and begin the process of revealing and interrogating their structural assumptions. The chapter begins with a task somewhere between a literature review and a scientific meta-analysis. My first goal will be to survey as broadly as possible the accessible mass holdings of digital eighteenth-century texts (all those containing at least 100 works from the 1790s). I begin by simply attempting to establish how many titles each database includes from each year, 1789-99. Answering this basic demographic question will also illustrate the nature of each resource’s data structures, and allow the first comparisons between them. I am particularly interested to see which resources have ‘spikes’ in 1790 and 1795, years which are often assigned to works of uncertain date. I will also check each database for my four key authors. For each author I compile, based largely on non-digital resources, a list of every edition of every work that they published during this decade. Manually comparing each digital resource against this comprehensive list allows me to spot-check the completeness and accuracy of the corpus. I am particularly interested to see which works by each author are most widely distributed, and how successfully each corpus handles ambiguities of authorship.[[14]](#footnote-14) As I compare corpora to each other, I expect to find systematic exclusions where archives are investing more labour in their holdings, with narrower selections as they move from bibliographic data to facsimiles to scholarly transcripts. To contextualize these decisions about inclusion, I research the history of how each corpus was formed. As part of this process, I also discuss and theorize the difficulties involved in researching these histories: drawing on, for example, my experience with HathiTrust’s codebase, I critique the assumption that digital resources make all information transparent and accessible. Returning to the actual contents of each archive, I discuss the nature of the works they do not contain. The second chapter thus establishes the contents and limitations of the corpora which will drive my argument in chapter three, and will shape the later phases of my research in chapters four and five.

In chapter three, I intervene in these corpora with code which I have written myself. First, I seek to determine how many of the titles in each database are attributed to men, how many to women, and how many are unsigned or unattributable. I will consider both the authors listed on the title pages and the authors identified by the database itself, since these often differ. This experiment will rely on a small program which assigns a probable gender to each author name.[[15]](#footnote-15) One of the core questions of this dissertation, as discussed, is about the content of the works which are not preserved and distributed by the new structures of canonization which contemporary digital archives create. In this experiment, I ask pointedly: are men preferentially preserved? My second experiment in this chapter is related, as I seek to determine what kinds of writing are included in each corpus. I write a less-simple series of programs in order to make reasonable guesses at the contents of texts, using topic modelling. Topic modelling is a methodology used in computer science to group texts which discuss similar subject matter. It is designed for search engines, and relies on clustering related keywords. Topic modelling is usually applied to long texts: it was designed for news articles or web pages, but literary scholars often apply it to entire novels. Since my work is partly motivated by the unavailability of full digital texts, I apply it to just the title pages of works. In doing so, I take advantage of the eighteenth century’s distinctively rich title conventions.[[16]](#footnote-16) In most decades, a title would not offer enough information to contain multiple ‘topics,’ but in the eighteenth century, the title page doubled as an advertisement, trying to convey as much appealing information as possible about the work’s contents.[[17]](#footnote-17) Once I have created my topic models, I will use them to compare the prevalence of categories like plays, songs, prose romance, histories, poetry, political treatises, and other broad categories of writing. One advantage of using topic modelling, rather than classifying works by hand, is that the clusters of texts will emerge based on the eighteenth century vocabulary for genres. At this stage, however, I do not take any corpus as representative of the ‘true’ distribution of various genres in the eighteenth century print marketplace. Instead, I use these categories in conjunction with my previous identification of authorial gender, to ask: if there are differences in gender distribution between corpora, are they attributable to differences in the kinds of writing which each corpus preferentially preserves? That is to say, if men are over-represented in the smaller and richer corpora which have seen the greatest investment of scholarly resources, is this because those corpora primarily preserve male-dominated categories of writing? Or do they preferentially select male authors from categories which are not male-dominated at the larger scale?

In chapter four, having spent the previous two chapters examining my digital corpora as corpora, I finally use them to draw conclusions about the eighteenth century itself. Chapter four examines random samples from each corpus. Random sampling, which Steven Zwicker (Zwicker) and Leo Lahti, Niko Ilomäki, and Mikko Tolonen (Lahti et al.) have applied successfully to the English Short Title Catalogue’s holdings, makes it feasible to apply a greater level of human scrutiny to a large body of texts. For each corpus, I select a small enough number of titles that it is feasible to examine each title individually, and manually research its bibliographic details and contents. Comparing my manual assessments to the databases’s defaults allows me to calculate a probable error rate for each kind of information the database provides, which can then be used to correct the results of experiment run on the full database. I use this information to reflect again on the findings I calculated in chapters two and three. Working manually also allows me to supplement database entries with my own research. In particular, it will allow me to use better metrics of quantity or popularity. Influenced by Lesser and Farmer’s articulation of “structures of popularity” (CITE), I will consider the popularity of the works in my random sample in terms of total number of editions, frequency of reprinting, and market share. Taking up David Brewer’s challenge to account for the increased “footprint” of some texts beyond the moment of their original publication, I pay particular attention to works originally written before the 1790s which nonetheless can be considered important “1790s literature” due to prominent reprinting. Identifying this information for the few hundred titles in my sample is not easy, but it is at least *possible*, unlike carrying out the same process on tens of thousands of titles. Again, I use the results of my manual investigation of my sample to calculate a guess about the corpus as a whole. At the end of the chapter, synthesizing all of my experiments across the dissertation, I postulate my own assessment of the number of titles published each year 1789-99, the relative quantity of various categories of writing, and the gender ratios of each category.

Chapter five returns to the small scale of close-reading and my four authors. Looking again at their publications, and contextualized by my findings about the decade as a whole, I analyze each author’s place within the eighteenth century print marketplace. I explore their posthumous reception. And, finally, I present my own reading of how to remember, study, and teach their 1790s works.

**7.** **18thC lit review**

**[****Somehow, I still haven’t sorted out this 18thC lit review section. I’ve distilled key works and tried to arrange them into a structure here. But what do I actually need from this? Where would it even go in the chapter? DO I need this???]**

**Scholarship on 18thC works often takes the form of evaluating or assigning the cultural capital of individual works, or, perhaps, analyzing the strategies by which they accrue or fail to accrue that capital.**

**The winners of the cultural capital game are the Romantics and Walter Scott.** (And Shakespeare?)

Brainbridge and Cronin, for example, cannot get enough of Scott, and the terms of their praise reveals that it boils down to his masterful acquisition of cultural capital.

Analysis of poets’ work often doubles as an analysis of their success or failure in the pursuit of cultural capital. For example, Simon Bainbridge, in *British Poetry and the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars*, sees the decade and its poetry through the lens of war. His own interest is in what he terms “the attempts made by several writers to fill the role of national bard prior to Scott” (3). This framework leads Bainbridge to examine Charlotte Smith alongside Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Wordsworth, Robert Southey, and eventually Walter Scott. In his conception of ‘a national bard’ he imagines a particular marriage of poetry’s special status as imaginative literature to a specific poet’s cultivation of a nationally important public persona. **Both poetry and the poet are thus pursuing a particular kind of cultural capital that allows them to rise above their own popularity**. [“Rise above” = because popularity-with-the-masses is anathema to cultural capital]

Bainbridge is not alone is taking [Walter Scott](scrivcmt://ECC37355-0F64-43C6-82FD-51050E6B1791) as a kind of pinnacle, and looking backwards in search of his antecedents. Richard Cronin, in *The Politics of Romantic Poetry*, concerns himself with “poetry that speaks to a divided society in an attempt to constitute its readers as citizens of […] ‘the pure commonwealth’” (13). This definition of “political poetry” leads him to Erasmus Darwin as the poet of the the Revolution and the Revolutionary war, William Blake as the poet of the Napoleonic wars, and Richard Southey and Walter Savage Landor as the poets of the post-war period — ending, irresistibly, as so many do, with Walter Scott. His discussion of Scott praises him for [successfully playing the capital-transformation game]: “Scott’s *Minstrelsy* transforms ballads freely passed from speaker to speaker around cottage fires on the Scottish Borders into luxury items, items only available to book-buyers of some means” (94). The Romantic poets, in both Bainbridge and Cronin’s accounts, support their claims to insight and importance through the inaccessibility of their work in print.

**The loser, in these contests for cultural capital in the 1790s, is surely the Gothic.**

Histories of the novel attempt to simply skip the Gothic, or otherwise see it as a problem which needs to be explained away. [They are really histories of the realist novel.] [Kiely, Tompkins, etc]

Gothic criticism has required several different strategies to revalue disreputable literature. (Queer studies, feminist studies, psychoanalytical)

There are three histories of three sorts of Gothic studies: queer Gothic studies, feminist Gothic studies, and ‘serious’ Gothic studies. Those who work on the queer gothic identify, as the catalyst for a reconsideration of the Gothic itself, Eve Sedgwick’s 1985 monograph, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. Sedgwick often goes hand-in-hand with George Haggerty’s 1986 article “Literature and Homosexuality in the Late Eighteenth Century: Walpole, Beckford, and Lewis,” which examined the same authors. But those who examine the Female Gothic, employing feminist rather than queer critique, see earlier origins for the field in Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar’s *Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) and Juliann Fleenor’s *The Female Gothic* (1983). And many discussions of the Gothic-*qua*-Gothic skip directly from Montague Summers’ 1938 *The Gothic Quest* to David Punter’s 1996 *The Literature of Terror*, more than a decade after Sedgwick[.](scrivcmt://79247688-70F4-4B3D-8C42-F500C9D968C8) The Summers-to-Punter historiography is generally invested in a rhetorical move by which Summers’ work is dismissed as sloppy, unscholarly, motivated by mere enthusiasm (though usefully obsessive), such that Punter emerges in contrast as the first examination of the Gothic to be serious. Of course, implicit in this rhetorical move is the idea that feminist and queer scholarship on the Gothic is also unserious, perhaps contaminated by personal [enthusiasm](scrivcmt://06401704-1A7C-4250-95B0-2D4EFDA97242).

**As Michael Gamer has illustrated, the “winners” of the game require, and are defined by, the “losers”.** Romanticism gains it cultural capital by performatively rejecting the Gothic, and gains its *monetary* capital by slyly capitalizing on the Gothic.

E.J. Clery’s *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction, 1762-1800* provides an account of what was at stake for the representations of supernatural events in supernatural stories in fiction, drama, and popular news. The “rise” she describes is not an increase in volume and prominence of supernatural stories, since her starting point in 1762 (the Cock Lane ghost) is a major national phenomenon with many imitators. Rather, supernatural fiction ‘rises’ when it acquires cultural legitimacy. Michael Gamer has more recently expanded on how this ‘rise’ fuelled Romanticism’s own rise. In *Romanticism and the Gothic: Genre, Reception, and Canon Formation*, he details the interconnectedness of what are now seen as the separate categories of ‘high’ Romantic literature and ‘low,’ popular Gothic writing. By using Gothic materials in self-avowedly non-Gothic ways, Gamer argues, Romantic writers could appeal to popular taste without risking the loss of cultural capital which attended the Gothic’s “popularity”. Gamer, like Bainbridge and Cronin, primarily examines Wordsworth and the ‘winners’ of the struggle for cultural capital: I, like Clery, am more interested in the ‘losers.’ Accordingly, I attend to much that is *not* literature, in order to better understand why it is not.

George Taylor, in *The French Revolution and the London Stage*, sets forth some key contentions about literature’s cultural capital. He argues that although eighteenth-century critics sought to make distinctions in the social value of different plays, or different parts of the theatrical program at a single show, audiences did not make these distinctions. “Although audiences were divided according to class between pit, box and gallery,” he argues, the division was purely physical: “all came to see the same shows, for within one programme there was a variety that not only satisfied the different groups but satisfied them all […] all received plaudits from all corners of the house” (3). Although reviewers in the eighteenth century sought to police class boundaries in their discussions of the theatre, these critiques operated like the critiques of Gothic fiction which Gamer analyzes: [SUM THEM UP AGAIN HERE.]

[Probable intended structure for this section: one of my concerns is the way that 18thC studies ends ups segregated by genre (even though writers don’t confine themselves to one genre); so here’s the conversation in poetry, in the novel, in drama; and here’s how they’re all engaged in the same question about ‘trash’ vs ‘treasure’; and here’s how that dichotomy employs the same techniques of obnoxiously defining ‘literature’ through a rejection of the ‘popular’, sticking us with Wordsworth, Walter Scott, and a sainted Shakespeare; and here’s John Mee and ‘print magic’ tying them together.]

I can no longer remember how “print magic” can possibly tie these things together, though I do still find the idea of “print magic” really compelling.

John Mee: *Print, Publicity, and Popular Radicalism in the 1790s.* Although his title leaves open the possibility that he could consider any kind of writing in print, Mee is concerned solely with the activities of the London Corresponding Society, placed in the context of Romanticism. He examines “public lectures, toasting, tavern debates, and song, but also more mundane and less colourful associational practices, such as day-to-day editorial discussion about what to publish under the LCS’s name” (28). Mee sidesteps the question of whether the texts he studies are ‘literature.’ A partial claim to the status of ‘literature’ is suggested by the participation of his book within the series ‘Cambridge Studies in Romanticism,’ which, he acknowledges “implies an understanding of popular radicalism as a kind of ‘literary’ culture. At least, it argues for the centrality of the writing, production, and circulation of printed texts that took up so much of the time of the radical societies” ([18](scrivcmt://031B5C67-E5B0-422B-9840-055DEA1C14EC)). Nonetheless, the book distances itself from “Romanticism and its major poets, novelists, and playwrights” (18). Mee thus replicates the way that the period’s definitely-literary “poets, novelists, and playwrights” sought to put distance between themselves and the potentially sub-literary “role of print personality[[18]](#footnote-18) as a form of mediation” (29) that interests Mee in the LCS.

Rather than concerning themselves with distinctions between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ forms of writing or publication, Mee argues, [“At certain points the societies seem to operate under the spell of ‘print magic’, that is, a faith that print could liberate mankind simply by bringing ideas into printed circulation”](scrivcmt://F0871A7E-6A5B-4AC8-8CE8-B041777DFBE4) (24).

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1. More specifically, these “authors” are “Great Britain, Parliament,” “Great Britain,” “Great Britain, Parliament, House of Commons,” “Great Britain, Lords Commissioners of Appeals in Prize Causes,” and King George III. After King George comes Thomas Paine and Hannah More, and then it’s “Great Britain, Parliament, House of Lords” and “Church of England.” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THIS INFORMATION? Lauren Klein’s paper at MLA 2018, “Distant Reading after Moretti,” in fact poses the turn away from Moretti as an urgent imperative: “what do we do about distant reading, now that we know that Franco Moretti, the man who coined the phrase ‘distant reading,’ and who remains its most famous exemplar, is among the men named as a result of the #MeToo movement” (Klein)? Klein, drawing on Sara Ahmed’s observation that “sexual harassment is a structural, as well as personal problem,” draws together critiques of distant reading’s exclusion of women in terms of its “issues of *representation* in the field,” its “unduly masculinized *rhetorical* positioning,” its “failure to engage with the *conceptual* issues that relate to women,” and the “actual computational *models* of gender that are often deployed” (Klein). All of these critiques of distant reading, Klein argues, show that “it’s not a *coincidence* that distant reading does not deal well with gender, or with sexuality, or with race,” but also that these failings are not inevitable: “it’s not that distant reading *can’t* do this work,” she insists, “it’s that it’s yet to sufficiently do so” (Klein) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Jockers typically uses the term ‘macroanalysis’ to refer to his work, which is closely tied to Moretti’s distant reading, as in, for example, his monograph *Macroanalysis: Digital Methods and Literary History*  \cite{Jockers:2013uc}. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. https://books.google.ca/intl/en/googlebooks/partners/ [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. CITE http://languagelog.ldc.upenn.edu/nll/?p=1701 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. https://archive.org/about/ [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Although these events, of course, did not occur on January 1 or December 31, respectively, the entirety of 1789 and 1799 are both included in my study, out of sheer technological necessity. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. It may also be the case, of course, that even fields with a long history of graphical display would benefit from greater scrutiny of the evidence they use; see: the Data Dinosaur. But this is beyond the remit of what an English PhD can address. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. I cite Tufte and Cairo as the thinkers whose design philosophies best accord with my own current understanding of the work and craft of persuasive data visualization, but my actual practical training as a graphic designer is indebted to Judith Galas, Sonia Davis Gutiérrez, and Tom Hapgood. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Tufte is careful not to blame the engineers for being better at engineering and systems analysis than they were at design: rather, this example shows that design is a skill that involves expertise; when designs matter, people with that expertise need to be involved. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. 1. show comparisons, contrasts, differences 2. show causality, mechanism, explanation, systemic structure (intervention relies on manipulable causality -- can't do anything with the information without causality) 3. show multiple variables (3 or more) -- the world is multivariate 4. \*completely integrate\* words, numbers, maps, graphics, etc, etc. Provide information at exact point of need 5. documentation must thoroughly describe evidence and its sources, provide complete measurement scales 6. presentations succeed based on their content. for better presentations, get better content. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Indeed, Buurma notes, “There are good reasons, of course, that scholars and journalists like to begin with Busa: he was the first concordance-maker to automate all five stages of the process, in 1951,” and he intentionally foregrounded and publicized the innovative nature of his work.

    (Buurma and Heffernan) [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. In the interest of preserving this history of citation, the students were Mary Jackman and Helen S. Agoa, credited on the cover of the published Dryden index. (Miles herself attached her name only to the preface.) From the computer lab staff, Miles particularly thanked Shirley Rice, Odette Carothers, and Penny Gee. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. For example, how many unsigned works, or works published under pseudonyms, are correctly attributed? Are there any mistakes made between Ann Radcliffe and Ann Ward Radcliffe? Do they unify Charlotte Smith and Charlotte Turner Smith? Exploring these questions through authors with whom I am deeply familiar can indicate the error rates of the corpus as a whole. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. The automatic attribution of a gender to a name is the sort of thing which would be untenable in a modern corpus, and which is uncomfortable even in the eighteenth century. However, my core question is about how gender is represented on title pages, as a visible component of print culture, rather than about the personal identity of any given author. In that limited context, it seems justifiable to say, for example, that a book attributed to ‘Charlotte Smith’ or ‘the authoress of The Romance of the Forest’ or ‘Mrs. Robinson’ advertises itself as being by a woman. I have been unable to find a first name in my eighteenth century corpora which cannot be assigned an unambiguous gender. Differences between the advertised author gender and what scholars have assigned in the database as the ‘actual’ author gender (as, for example, when Mary Robinson published as Mr. Robinson) will be discussed and theorized when they occur. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. For example, a typical title in the English Short Title Catalogue for the decade is “The injustice and impolicy of the slave-trade, and of the slavery of the Africans: illustrated in a sermon preached before the Connecticut Society for the Promotion of Freedom, and for the Relief of Persons Unlawfully Holden in Bondage, at their annual meeting in New-Haven, September 15, 1791. / By Jonathan Edwards, D.D. Pastor of a church in New-Haven. ; To which is added, A short sketch of the evidence for the abolition of the slave-trade, delivered before a committee of the British House of Commons.” The usefulness of this title, as an advertisement for (if not necessarily an accurate representative of!) the work’s content, I argue, presents an opportunity unique to the eighteenth century. The eighteenth century is often dismissed as unsuitable for computational distant reading because eighteenth century printed type produces very low-quality OCR transcripts — but a focus on OCR-based distant reading itself seems to me like a response to the poverty of paratextual material in later literature. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Of course, these title pages are not always accurate descriptions, since they might wish to mislead readers to encourage purchases. These disjunctions [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. By this, Mee means “both attacks on personalities by the radical press but also the development of personae by writers and booksellers” (29) [↑](#footnote-ref-18)