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Gilles Deleuze. *Difference and Repetition*. Trans. Paul Patton. (NY: Columbia UP, 1994), xxi:

Following Nietzsche we discover, as more profound than time and eternity, the untimely: philosophy is neither a philosophy of history, nor a philosophy of the eternal, but untimely, always and only untimely – that is to say, ‘acting counter to our time and thereby acting on our time and, let us hope, for the benefit of a time to come’. [GD quoting Nietzsche, “On the Uses and disadvantages of history for life,” in *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, CUP 1983, p. 60]

Bill Brown. “Secret Life of Things,” *Modernism / Modernity* 6 (1999): 8 [Citing Walter Benjamin, “Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century,” in *Reflections*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (NY: Schocken Books, 1986), 148]:

With a logic learned from *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, Benjamin imagines that the decorative use of iron, rather than its structural deployment, marks the way novelty first emerges in and depends on residual form, which is the way social dissatisfaction with the present expresses itself in a citational longing for the future, a longing that cites a past that is anterior to the recent past: [quoting Benjamin] ‘These tendencies direct the visual imagination, which has been activated by the new, back to the primeval past.’

Romanticism began with idealist and political hopes for a new beginning. Wordsworth’s famous declaration in *The Prelude* captures this euphoric moment: “Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive, / But to be young was very heaven!” French and American declarations of human rights, English hopes for parliamentary and social reform, and revolutionary hopes travel abroad. But those hopes, as Coleridge says in another context, were soon defrauded: the French Revolution morphed into the Reign of Terror, being at war became the norm for English citizens, and the definition of the human for which human rights would be enacted rapidly shrank. Women and slaves were soon out of the picture, and the British became imperial powers at home in Ireland and around the globe. So circumstanced, the future now looks to some Romantic writers as though worm eaten by a sharpened sense of the contingency of events, not as events managed and order by laws of probability, but as the roll and pitch of events and motives that double back and confound each other.

Romantic writing with the future in view (or in the rearview mirror) is by turns idealist, bleakly material. Not so surprisingly, imagining the future becomes a more complicated and ironic activity. Subjectivity and the sense of history will never recover. From this array of disappointments, a different understanding of how to think historically and imagine the future emerges. How it emerges and what it becomes is the topic of this seminar. How do Romantic writers write after the collapse of the early Romantic sense of the future as full of possibility? What discourses about the future remain? What formal traits or developments accompany

Romantic writing on, about or around the question of futurity? What genres or kinds of writing accommodate the Romantic vision (or visions) of futurity? As these questions suggest, we will be looking for formal markers of Romantic thinking about futurity: in the way a poem or novel is plotted; how time and space are narrated, located; how characters or speakers talk or unfold.

Course expectations: One 5-7 page essay early in the semester (25%), weekly round robin electronic responses to readings (25%), seminar report on final essay (15%), final essay, 15-20 pages (35%) and a sense of futurity.

1) **First essay:** due **October 3**; length 5-7 pages, plus works cited

Use one work and one brief reading from that work to offer one local reply to this question: What formal traits or developments accompany Romantic writing on, about or around the question of futurity?

2) **Weekly round robin responses:** each week, seminar participants will be responsible for initiating and completing the “round robin” for the Monday seminar. The round robin works like this: someone in the group begins it with an extended electronic query, sent to the entire seminar, that is illustrated with relevant particulars and probably a brief excerpt from the reading for that week; subsequent responders continue the line of inquiry thus initiated by responding, extending, reflecting on what has come before. The round robin ends when the 7th or 8th person adds the last link to this chain. The others in the seminar will take up questions, topics raised during the round robin, along with other points generated by the readings. **Note: the round robin must be completed by Tuesday at 5 PM. Late entries will not be included or read.**

Each seminar participant is responsible for participating in 5 round robins during the semester. To receive credit for these responses, please keep paper copies of your own responses and turn them in on **December 5**. There will be no round robin on September 5, the first session.

3) **Seminar report on final essay** : The last three class meetings (**December 2 at my home, Dec. 5 and Dec. 12**) will be reserved for the future of Romanticism: each seminar participant will present the argument/topic of her/his final essay, illustrate that argument with a key reading and explain how the essay addresses the future of Romanticism and Romantic criticism.

Guidelines: each report gets a maximum of 15 minutes to permit time for a 10-minute discussion after each and a concluding discussion at the end of the session in which members of the seminar consider issues, possibilities collectively suggested by the reports. Handouts should be sent electronically to members of the seminar 48 hours before each report is scheduled to be delivered.

4) **Final essay:** 15-20 pages plus bibliography. **Thursday, November 1:** brief descriptions of the topic of the final essay are due (send them electronically to me, with “final essay topic” in the subject line). **December 14, 4:00 PM:** hard copy of the final essay is due in my office.

Guidelines: as your contribution to the future of critical thinking about Romanticism, this essay should convey both its relation to the work of the seminar and your own critical understanding of one piece or problem whose working out contributes significantly to thinking about Romanticism form our critical present. The essay should aspire to be the first draft of a publishable essay and argument.

Required Texts:

Stael. *Corinne*. Ed. Raphael and Isbell. Oxford World Classics. O-19-282505-4.
Wordsworth. *Prelude*. Ed Wordsworth, Abrams, Gill. Norton 1979. 0-393-09071-X.
M. Shelley. *Valperga*. Ed. Rajan. Broadview Press. 1-55111-144-6.
P. Shelley. *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*. Ed. Reiman and Fraistat. 2nd edn, Norton, 2002. ISBN 0 393-97752-8.
Equiano. *An Interesting Narrative*. Ed. Caretta. Penguin, 2003.
Marx. *Selected Writings*. Ed. David McLellan. 2000.
Blake. *Continental Prophecies*. Vol. 4 *Illuminated Books*. Princeton UP. 0-691-00145-6.

Recommended:

Keats. *Complete Poems*. Ed. Stillinger (Harvard UP).

On 3-Day Reserve in College Library:

Kant, Immanuel. *Practical Philosophy*. CUP.
What is Enlightenment? ed. James Schmidt.
Koselleck. Reinhard. *Futures Past*.
Baucom, Ian. *Specters of the Atlantic*. 2005.
Gilroy, Paul. *Black Atlantic*.
Schiller. *Naïve and Sentimental Poetry / On the Sublime*.
Pocock, J. G. A. *Virtue, Commerce and History*. CUP 1985.
Burke, Edmund. *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Ed. J. C. D. Clark. 2001.

SYLLABUS:

1. Contingency, Probability, Revolution and Romantic Futures

9/5: Introduction:

Hacking, *Taming of Chance*. "The Argument" 1-10
Hacking *Emergence of Probability*. "Table of Contents"
Daston, *Empire of Chance*: 1-13 on classical probability
Koselleck, *Futures Past*. 1-5, 17-25 and 58-64.
Balfour. *Rhetoric of Romantic Prophecy* 1-18
Coleridge. *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*
Moore. *Lalla Rookh*.

9/12: Kant

Kant, "What Is Enlightenment?" 13-23 and "Toward Perpetual Peace" 313-351, from *Practical Philosophy* and "An Old Question Raised Again: Is the Human Race Constantly Progressing?" (297-309), from *Religion and Rational Theology*. Ed. Allen Wood (Cambridge, 1996).

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On Kant: Laursen, "The Subversive Kant" in *What is Enlightenment?* 253-69 and Adorno, "Antithesis" 27-28 from *Minima Moralia*

9/19: Marx

Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (327-42), in *Selected Writings*
And selection from *Capital* (458-89) in *Selected Writings*

On Marx: brief introductions given in *Selected Writings* for these readings, and as you choose

2. Futurity and Prophecy

9/26: Burke and Barbauld

Burke: 145-286 from *Reflections on the Revolution in France*

Barbauld, *1811* (160-173) and “Sins of Government, Sins of the Nation” (297-320) in *Anna Letitia Barbauld: Selected Poetry and Prose*. Ed. McCarthy and Kraft.

Read as you can, from this book on reserve in College Library: J. C. D. Clark, “Introduction” (23-111), from *Reflections on the Revolution in France*

Re Barbauld: William Levine, “The Eighteenth-Century Jeremiad and Progress-Piece Tradition in Anna Barbauld’s ‘Eighteen Hundred and Eleven’,” *Women’s Writing* 12.2 (November 2005): 177-186.

Re Burke and Barbauld: [this reading is one we may “carry” through several sessions]
Walter Benjamin, “N” [On the Theory of Knowledge, Theory of Progress], from *The Arcades Project*, 456-88 and “Theses on the Philosophy of History”

10/3: Wordsworth, 1805 *Prelude*, Books 5 (opening sequence through Arab Dream), 9-11

On Wordsworth: Balfour, 19-27 from *Rhetoric of Romantic Prophecy*; Koselleck, “Historia Magistra Vitae” from *Futures Past* (26-42)

First Essays Due

10/10: Blake, *America*

On Blake: Balfour, *Rhetoric* 127-46

10/17: Percy Shelley, *Prometheus Unbound*: Acts 1 and 4

On PBS: Adorno “All the world’s not a stage” *MM* 143-5

Adorno “Bequest” *MM* 150-52 [topic of dialectic]

Adorno, “Late extra” *MM* 231-38 [against idea of the new and thus of possibility, futurity]

3. Negative Futures

10/24: Mary Shelley, *Valperga*

On M. Shelley: Deleuze, (50-53) from *Difference and Repetition*; Koselleck, “Chance as a Motivational Trace in Historical Writing” (115-27) from *Futures Past*.

10/31 and 11/7: Germaine de Stael, *Corinne* [basically, we'll split the novel and the Adorno readings into two equal parts]

Re Stael: from Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Le Bourgeois Revenant*, Protection, Help and counsel, On the dialectic of tax, Proprietary Rights 33-38; and Since I set eyes on him 95-96

Sketch of final essay topics due November 1 (Thursday)

11/14: Charlotte Smith, *Beachy Head*, from *Poems of Charlotte Smith*, 217-47

Re Smith: Adorno, "Mammoth" 115-16 from *Minima Moralia*; from Smith's *Minor Morals* (99-115); Cuvier, via Rudwick's *Georges Cuvier, Fossil Bones, and Geological Catastrophes* (7-9 and 18-24); Hutton, from vol. 1, *Theory of the Earth* (175-200, 371-373, and 282-87); Koselleck, "Representation, Event and Structure" (105-115) from *Futures Past*; and Baucom, "The Fact of History" from *Specters of the Atlantic* (213-41).

4. Future of the Human and Non-Human

11/21: Erasmus Darwin, "The Loves of the Plants" from *The Botanic Garden*; and "Of Generation" (431-477), from *Zoonomia* (Bibliobazaar, 2007).

Re Darwin: Michel Foucault, "Classifying" from *The Order of Things* (125-165) and "Spaces and Classes" from *Birth of the Clinic* (3-21)

Re Darwin: Pheng Cheah, from *Spectral Nationality* 25-59 [organicism and reason]

11/28: Olaudah Equiano, *An Interesting Narrative*

Re Equiano: Ian Baucom, 3-31; 56-66, 116-17, and 123-40, from *Specters of the Atlantic* and Barbauld, *Epistle to William Wilberforce, Esq. On the Rejection of the Bill for Abolishing the Slave Trade* (121-127) in *Barbauld: Selected Poetry and Prose*. Ed. McCarthy and Kraft.

12/2, 12/5, and 12/12: Seminar Reports

Final Essays (15-20 pages) due at 4:00 PM, my office.

Further thoughts toward the future of Romanticism—possibilities for final essay exploration:

Adorno's Negative Dialectics

Some of Adorno's thinking about negativity as essential to his understanding of dialectic is indicated in the shorter readings included in the syllabus. I have included in the packet as well his long introduction to *Negative Dialectics*. We will not discuss it in seminar unless a great window of time opens to do so (unlikely). However, I wanted you to be able to refer to his fullest statement on this topic:

Adorno, from *Negative Dialectics* "Introduction" 3-57. relevant subheadings:

Dialectics not at a standpoint
Reality and Dialectics
Infinity
Speculative Moment
Antinomical character of systems
Vertiginousness
Fragility of Truth
Dialectics and Solidity
Thing, Language, and History

Keats's Histories

On the Recommended List for this seminar is Stillinger's edition of Keats's poetry. It is there in case someone wishes to think about Keats's poetics and the question of futurity. Readers have noted, for example, that Keats's sense of mythological arrival in the two *Hyperion* poems is short circuited, differently, in each. For though he sets out to write the story of how Apollo and the other Olympian gods overcome the rule of Saturn and Thea, he cannot bring himself to complete the story, but lingers instead with those fallen Titans and their confederates. Not quite the march of intellect and futurity one might have expected from Keats as the Romantic poet who most insistently identified his poetic art with the figure of Apollo.

Finance and futures/speculation

Hovering just behind the philosophical and historical accounts of speculation included in the readings for this seminar is a question that would be worth further exploration: financial capital and speculation in the Romantic era. The notes below sketch some of the possibilities (contingencies) that might be available for further inquiry:

Baucom, *Specters* 150, citing J. G. A. Pocock, re 18th century financial revolution, says that this revolution contributed, as did novelistic discourse, to "speculative program of reifying and bearing witness to the 'real' existence of speculative values and forms." This claim is part of Baucom's longer view of history of capital in modernity, which he pursues by way of Jameson, Kant, Pocock, Suleri:

Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. 1991.

Kant, "On the common saying," in *Practical Philosophy*. Ed. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge, 1996) and "An Old Question Raised Again: Is the Human Race Constantly Progressing?" (297-309) from *Religion and Rational Theology*. Ed. Allen Wood (Cambridge, 1996).

Baucom (246) on word "speculation" in Burke, 33-35 ; cf. too Sara Suleri re Burke, speculation, India

J. G. A. Pocock, Burke on system of public credit, in Pocock's introduction to his edition of Burke's *Reflections*; and via Zizek, *Tarrying with the Negative* chapter "Money and Subjectivity" 27-28.

Pocock. *Virtue, Commerce and History* (CUP 1985), re finance capitalism of late 1600's through early 18th century:

(112) “property—the material foundation of both personality and government—has ceased to be real and has become not merely mobile but imaginary” and (109) “the century that followed the Financial Revolution witnessed the rise in Western thought ... of an ideology and a perception of history which depicted political society and social personality as founded upon commerce: upon the exchange of forms of mobile property and upon modes of consciousness suited to a world of moving objects 110-11.

Speculation, the British in India and global imperialism:

From Warren Hastings, Governor-General of British India who was tried (and ultimately acquitted) on charges of financial corruption in India:

Nor is the cultivation of language and science, for such are the studies to which I allude, useful only in forming the moral character of the [EIC] service. Every accumulation of knowledge and especially such as is obtained by social communication with people over whom we exercise dominion founded on the right of conquest, is useful to the state: it is the gain of humanity: in the specific instance which I have stated, it attracts and conciliates distant affections; it lessens the weight of the chain by which the natives are held in subjection; and it imprints on the hearts of our own countrymen the sense and obligation of benevolence ... It is not very long since the inhabitants of India were considered by many, as creatures scarce elevated above the degree of savage life; nor, I fear, is that prejudice yet wholly eradicated, though surely abated. Every instance which brings their real character home to observation will impress us with a more generous sense of feeling for their natural rights, and teach us to estimate them by the measure of our own. But such instances can only be obtained in their writings: and these will survive when the British dominion in India shall have long ceased to exist, and when the sources which once yielded of wealth and power are lost to remembrance. -- Hastings, Introductory Letter to Charles Wilkins’s translation, *The Bhāgvat-Gēētā* (1785)

Guillaume Thomas François Raynal (aka Abbé), *Histoire Philosophique et Politique des Établissements & du Commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes*, fifth edn, 7 vols. Plus atlases (Maestricht: Jean-Edme Dufour & Philippe Roux, 1777).

Vol. 1 meditation on the future: 3: The people who have “poli” ie polished everyone else were “commerçants.”

Vols. 2-6 History of European colonization, commercial enterprises in India, the Portuguese, then the Dutch, then the French, then the English

Vol. 7 English colonies in North America (engraving features friendly Quakers and Indians...) Closes with discussion of whether the American colonies might [break the ties (*liens*) “*qui les réunissent à la métropole*” [“the ties that link them to the metropole” ie England]. The title of the next chapter,: “How might the nations of Europe help the English colonies become independent of their metropole” (p. 145), tells you what the answer to this question is.

Last “book” in vol. 7: ch 34: pp. 149-310 is a summary, organized under thematic heads (religion, commerce, etc) concerning European commerce with the two Indies. Raynal is concerned here with what might be done in the future to assure a salutary and moral advancement of trade and human society. Raynal’s key hope (rather negatively put) is (310): “*Puissent-elles [ie les nations*

policées] ne plus porter aux nations sauvages l'exemple des vices et de l'oppression!" "Might polished/developed nations not transmit vices and oppression to primitive/savage nations?"

Gayatri Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 170n.: "one must reconcile oneself to writing for an anthropology of the future."